# Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities of Curriculum Liberalization in Elementary Education at Farhangian University

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| ARTICLE INFORMATION | ABSTRACT |
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| **Article type**<br>Original research<br>Pages: 277-290<br><br>**Corresponding Author's Info**<br>Email:<br>d.tahmaseb@tabrizu.ac.ir<br><br>**Article history:**<br>Received: 2023/07/25<br>Revised: 2023/09/28<br>Accepted: 2023/10/15<br>Published online: 2023/12/26<br><br>**Keywords:**<br>*strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, curriculum liberalization, elementary education, Farhangian University.* | **Background and Aim:** The present study aims to investigate the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of curriculum liberalization in elementary education at Farhangian University. **Methods:** The research method is applied in terms of its objective and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection. The statistical population of the study included all professors (16 individuals) and students (689 individuals) at Farhangian University in Zanjan Province. All professors were selected as the sample, and for determining the sample size among students, Krejcie and Morgan's table was used, resulting in 247 individuals being selected through accessible sampling. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. This questionnaire covered dimensions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, based on a 5-point Likert scale. The face and content validity of the questionnaire were confirmed by professors, including the advisor, and to assess the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, estimated at 0.907 for the professors' questionnaire and 0.934 for the students' questionnaire. To analyze the data, the SWOT method and the method of Hosseini et al. (2014) were utilized. **Results:** The results indicated that from the professors' perspective, ambiguity in the concept of curriculum liberalization and the selection of an incorrect path for liberalization, the potential for managerial problems due to the high diversity of courses and contents and the inability to provide resources, the possibility of ideological and political conflicts or the monopolization of decision-making power by specific groups, the promotional nature of liberalization, and the lack of proper needs assessment of stakeholders and related educational factors, the potential imbalance in content distribution, and the reduction of horizontal or vertical linkage between courses are among the threats of curriculum liberalization. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that curriculum liberalization brings both positive and negative outcomes; therefore, all aspects should be considered in its implementation. |

## Introduction

In a systemic view of the university system, the curriculum is one of the most crucial inputs into this system, which is particularly significant in newly established and emerging universities like Farhangian University (Taheri Nomehil & Siyami, 2015). The curriculum is considered the heart of the educational system (Priestley & Philippou, 2019) and plays a key and sensitive role in changing and reforming the educational system. The curriculum refers to both official and unofficial content, processes, explicit and implicit teachings through which the learner, guided by the university, acquires the necessary knowledge, skills, and changes in attitudes, appreciations, and values (Maleki, 2020). In the university system process, the curriculum is also crucial because it is one of the most important tools for achieving the goals and missions of higher education (Talkhabi, 2018).

Among these, Farhangian University, as a mission-oriented university, has specific missions and goals, with the most important task being the training of specialized and committed teachers (Farhangian University Charter, 2012). The elementary education program of this university is one of the programs offered in all its campuses, and the admission of student-teachers for 98 academic units (comprising 64 university campuses and 34 faculties) is conducted through the national university entrance exam. The academic curriculum of student-teachers in these campuses, including the units and syllabi of all academic disciplines, has been approved by the Supreme Council of Planning of the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology and is currently being implemented with the aim of training teachers who possess the necessary competencies for educational activities at the elementary level (Maroufi et al., 2019).

The elementary education curriculum is one of the most important determinants and tools for achieving the training of competent teachers in elementary education (Ankaya, 2015). Considering that curriculum design has often been centralized, curriculum liberalization and decentralization can be useful strategies for addressing temporal and spatial exigencies and considering the interests of elementary education stakeholders (Amin Khandeqi & Goodarzi, 2011). The term decentralization and liberalization generally refers to the transfer of decisions, resources, and competencies from the government to lower management levels (Ziba, 2012). Liberalization aims to create a "balanced state" and avoid extremes. This balanced state is determined by the social, political, and cultural conditions of countries, and neglecting it can cause ambiguity and disruption in the nature and direction of the national curriculum (Mehremohammadi, 2018). Centralization and decentralization have been significant topics in curriculum development, discussed by theorists, experts, and education specialists throughout the history of the educational system. Based on studies, educational systems worldwide are neither absolutely centralized nor absolutely decentralized but are a combination of both at different levels of the educational system. Due to social, political, cultural, and economic differences in each country, centralized and decentralized approaches vary, and each approach is appropriate and applicable based on the prevailing conditions in that country. It is impossible to declare definitively which approach is more suitable for all countries (Dadkani et al., 2021). The history of the past century (20th century) has shown that many educational systems have dealt with issues of centralization and decentralization. The Iranian elementary education system has centralized characteristics and often attempts to retrieve a decentralized system to address shortcomings and problems. Such a phenomenon—decentralization in the educational system structure—can occur in many parameters such as decision-making, administrative structure, financial structure, etc. (Amin Khandeqi & Goodarzi, 2011). Centralization is a type of practice that shows how and to what extent responsibilities are transferred to subordinates. No organization is completely centralized or decentralized. Modern managers choose a level of centralization or decentralization that helps them make the best decisions and achieve their organizational goals. In a centralized curriculum, the curriculum is usually prepared by the central office, and the subsidiary offices of the schools must follow it faithfully. In a decentralized curriculum, all responsibilities are transferred to subordinate units, local offices, and lower levels, each with its own specific authority. In a decentralized curriculum, policies and frameworks are designed by the central organization, and schools are given authority for their implementation, but the central organization oversees their performance.

The curriculum in different countries may be represented as a continuum based on their level of centralization or decentralization. Iran's curriculum has sometimes been centralized and sometimes decentralized over the past century (Amin Khandeqi & Goodarzi, 2010).

Recently, new approaches such as neo-understanding and school-based approaches have emerged in curriculum planning, focusing more on educational systems and participation in determining educational policies and actions. These approaches strive to enhance the capacity and involvement of various forces in adopting and implementing policies, resulting in improved effectiveness and quality of curricula. They also help deepen the connection between curriculum content and regional social and cultural realities, thereby increasing the legitimacy of the curricula (Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2022). In summary, new approaches in curriculum planning (such as neo-understanding and school-based approaches) strive to improve and deepen the connection between curricula and regional social and cultural realities by decentralizing educational systems and involving participation in determining educational policies and actions (Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2022). Thus, curriculum decentralization can bring many opportunities for curricula, including educational and nurturing innovations, the growth and development of human resources in curriculum planning engineering, the use of curriculum partners, and attention to indigenous cultural heritage. Moreover, decentralization can enhance the efficiency of the educational system (Alipour et al., 2022).

Considering that in Iran's educational system, given the centralized educational system and the need to address the requirements of each region, the national curriculum has been developed with consideration for the environmental conditions and requirements of that region to reduce centralization. The concept of liberalization as one of the two components of the national curriculum model has been anticipated in the national curriculum document (Mahmoodi, 2014). Also, it is important to note that the individual needs and interests of students and even professors are often not considered in the curriculum. Therefore, examining the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of curriculum liberalization based on the elementary education program at Farhangian University can create a significant improvement in the teaching and learning process of student-teachers. Thus, the present study aims to answer the question: What are the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of curriculum liberalization in elementary education at Farhangian University?

## Methods and Materials

The present study is an applied research in terms of its objective and a descriptive-survey research in terms of its nature. The statistical population of this study included all professors (13 male professors and 3 female professors) and students (689) of the elementary education program at Farhangian University in the academic year 2024-2023. Given the limited statistical population of professors, the entire population was selected as the sample, but for students, based on Krejcie and Morgan's table, 247 individuals were selected as the sample size and chosen through accessible sampling. Based on the review of sources and theoretical and practical research backgrounds, a Likert-scale questionnaire was designed and developed to collect data based on the four components of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The questionnaire was then distributed among the professors of the elementary education program at Farhangian University in Zanjan. Subsequently, for weighting the items and prioritizing them, the method proposed by Hosseini, Adnan, and Haseen (2014) was used (as cited in Rouhi, 2021). Since the SWOT analysis uses rankings, the method proposed by Hosseini et al. (2014) was used to convert the collected data into rankings (as cited in Rouhi, 2021). The steps are as follows: Since the data obtained from the questionnaire were on a Likert scale, it was necessary to convert the data to pairwise comparisons first. For this purpose, the method by Hosseini et al. (2014) was used, and the steps of this method are outlined below: 1- Calculate the mean of the items; 2- Convert the mean of the items to a relative mean based on Hosseini et al. (2014); 3- Form a matrix using the calculated relative means of the items, where the relative means are entered sequentially along the line of symmetry (for n variables, initially, there will be n-1 diagonal entries); 4- Complete the remaining cells of the matrix using existing formulas within the matrix for each cell (A32 * A21, etc.); 5- Calculate the geometric mean; 6- Calculate the normalized

weight, for this, 7- Calculate the normalized weight percentage by multiplying the normalized weight of each item by 100; 8- In the final step, calculate the matrix inconsistency rate; 9- If the inconsistency rate is less than 10% or 0.1, pairwise comparisons can be trusted. If the inconsistency rate is higher, review the matrix numbers and make slight changes to the proposed numbers within the matrix to reduce the matrix inconsistency rate to less than 10%; 10- Rank the items based on the normalized weight from largest to smallest. These steps were performed for all four SWOT components, and then all items related to the components were placed in the SWOT matrix based on their final rank. Finally, the internal factors (Strengths and Weaknesses) and external factors (Opportunities and Threats) were analyzed, and strategies related to Strengths-Opportunities (SO), Strengths-Threats (ST), Weaknesses-Opportunities (WO), and Weaknesses-Threats (WT) were presented.

## Results

To answer this research question, the SWOT method (examining strengths) and the method of Hosseini et al. (2014) (to determine the normalized weight of each item) were used. Since the data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale, calculations were done to convert the data into pairwise comparisons, according to Hosseini et al. (2014). First, the mean of the items was calculated, then the relative mean of the items was determined (Table 1). Finally, with the relative mean of the items, a pairwise comparison matrix was formed.

Initially, the strengths from the perspective of professors were examined.

**Table 1: Mean and Relative Mean Related to the Strength Component from the Perspective of Professors**

| Item | Mean | Relative Mean (with respect to the previous item) |
|------|------|---------------------------------------------------|
| s1 | 3.44 | --- |
| s2 | 3.25 | 0.95 |
| s3 | 3.00 | 0.92 |
| s4 | 3.56 | 1.19 |
| s5 | 4.00 | 1.12 |
| s6 | 3.75 | 0.94 |
| s7 | 3.00 | 0.80 |
| s8 | 3.75 | 1.25 |
| s9 | 3.50 | 0.93 |
| s10 | 3.25 | 0.93 |
| s11 | 3.50 | 1.08 |
| s12 | 3.50 | 1 |
| s13 | 3.50 | 1 |
| s14 | 3.25 | 0.93 |
| s15 | 3.75 | 1.15 |

**Table 2: Pairwise Comparison Matrix of the Strengths of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors**

| Item | s1 | s2 | s3 | s4 | s5 | s6 | s7 | s8 | s9 | s10 | s11 | s12 | s13 | s14 | s15 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| s1 | 1.00 | 1.05 | 1.14 | 0.96 | 0.86 | 0.91 | 1.14 | 0.91 | 0.98 | 1.06 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 1.05 | 0.91 |
| s2 | 0.95 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 0.91 | 0.82 | 0.87 | 1.08 | 0.87 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.87 |
| s3 | 0.87 | 0.92 | 1.00 | 0.84 | 0.75 | 0.80 | 1.00 | 0.80 | 0.86 | 0.92 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.92 | 0.80 |
| s4 | 1.04 | 1.09 | 1.19 | 1.00 | 0.89 | 0.95 | 1.19 | 0.95 | 1.02 | 1.10 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.09 | 0.95 |
| s5 | 1.16 | 1.23 | 1.33 | 1.12 | 1.00 | 1.06 | 1.33 | 1.06 | 1.14 | 1.23 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.22 | 1.06 |
| s6 | 1.09 | 1.15 | 1.25 | 1.05 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.16 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.15 | 1.00 |
| s7 | 0.88 | 0.92 | 1.00 | 0.84 | 0.75 | 0.80 | 1.00 | 0.80 | 0.86 | 0.92 | 0.86 | 0.86 | 0.86 | 0.92 | 0.80 |
| s8 | 1.09 | 1.15 | 1.25 | 1.05 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.16 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.15 | 1.00 |
| s9 | 1.02 | 1.07 | 1.17 | 0.98 | 0.87 | 0.93 | 1.16 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.07 | 0.93 |
| s10 | 0.95 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 0.91 | 0.81 | 0.86 | 1.08 | 0.86 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.87 |
| s11 | 1.02 | 1.08 | 1.17 | 0.98 | 0.88 | 0.93 | 1.17 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 0.94 |
| s12 | 1.02 | 1.08 | 1.17 | 0.98 | 0.88 | 0.93 | 1.17 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 0.94 |
| s13 | 1.02 | 1.08 | 1.17 | 0.98 | 0.88 | 0.93 | 1.17 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 0.94 |
| s14 | 0.95 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 0.91 | 0.82 | 0.87 | 1.09 | 0.87 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.87 |
| s15 | 1.09 | 1.15 | 1.25 | 1.05 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.07 | 1.16 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.15 | 1.00 |

After drawing the pairwise comparison matrix, the geometric mean, normalized weight, percentage of normalized weight, and finally, the final rank of each item based on the normalized weight and percentage of normalized weight were obtained.

| Component | Overall Percentage | Item | Geometric Mean | Normalized Weight | Percentage of Normalized Weight | Final Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Table 3: Geometric Mean, Normalized Weight, Percentage of Normalized Weight, and Final Rank of the Strengths of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors** | | | | | | |
| **Strength** | 100 | 1. Increase the possibility of gaining practical and in-depth local experiences from various courses | 0.99 | 0.07 | 6.59 | 7 |
| | | 2. Flexibility in teaching time according to needs | 0.94 | 0.06 | 6.26 | 9 |
| | | 3. Facilitate the connection between student-teachers and educational and executive factors of the educational system | 0.87 | 0.06 | 5.76 | 12 |
| | | 4. Increase student-teachers' participation in curriculum design and optimal implementation | 1.03 | 0.07 | 6.85 | 4 |
| | | 5. Select content according to local needs and learners | 1.16 | 0.08 | 7.68 | 1 |
| | | 6. Increase attention to personal preferences and needs of student-teachers and local needs | 1.09 | 0.07 | 7.22 | 2 |
| | | 7. Enhance individual skills, communication skills, leadership skills, and critical thinking skills in students | 0.87 | 0.06 | 5.77 | 11 |
| | | 8. Develop learners' knowledge and experiences in areas such as art, history, philosophy, local geography, etc. | 1.09 | 0.07 | 7.22 | 2 |
| | | 9. Create a sense of responsibility, greater executive commitment, and high self-confidence in student-teachers | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.71 | 6 |
| | | 10. Foster a sense of independence and counteract inactivity in student-teachers | 0.94 | 0.06 | 6.24 | 10 |
| | | 11. Increase flexibility in all elements of the elementary education curriculum | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 5 |
| | | 12. Optimize the use of all local resources and facilities in training student-teachers | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 5 |
| | | 13. Counter resistance to change and implementation of the curriculum, raising awareness, and motivating greater participation among educational factors | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 5 |
| | | 14. Transform inappropriate organizational structures and common wrong educational habits, creating dynamism | 0.94 | 0.06 | 6.27 | 8 |
| | | 15. Create high cultural acceptance among all educational factors | 1.08 | 0.07 | 7.21 | 3 |
| | | Total | --- | 1.00 | 100.00 | --- |

After drawing the pairwise comparison matrix, the geometric mean, normalized weight, percentage of normalized weight, and finally, the final rank of each item based on the normalized weight and percentage of normalized weight were obtained.

| Component | Overall Percentage | Item | Geometric Mean | Normalized Weight | Percentage of Normalized Weight | Final Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Table 4: Geometric Mean, Normalized Weight, Percentage of Normalized Weight, and Final Rank of the Strengths of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors** | | | | | | |
| **Strength** | 100 | 1. Increase the possibility of gaining practical and in-depth local experiences from various courses | 0.99 | 0.07 | 6.59 | 7 |
| | | 2. Flexibility in teaching time according to needs | 0.94 | 0.06 | 6.26 | 9 |
| | | 3. Facilitate the connection between student-teachers and educational and executive factors of the educational system | 0.87 | 0.06 | 5.76 | 12 |
| | | 4. Increase student-teachers' participation in curriculum design and optimal implementation | 1.03 | 0.07 | 6.85 | 4 |
| | | 5. Select content according to local needs and learners | 1.16 | 0.08 | 7.68 | 1 |
| | | 6. Increase attention to personal preferences and needs of student-teachers and local needs | 1.09 | 0.07 | 7.22 | 2 |
| | | 7. Enhance individual skills, communication skills, leadership skills, and critical thinking skills in students | 0.87 | 0.06 | 5.77 | 11 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8. Develop learners' knowledge and experiences in areas such as art, history, philosophy, local geography, etc. | 1.09 | 0.07 | 7.22 | 2 |
| | 9. Create a sense of responsibility, greater executive commitment, and high self-confidence in student-teachers | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.71 | 6 |
| | 10. Foster a sense of independence and counteract inactivity in student-teachers | 0.94 | 0.06 | 6.24 | 10 |
| | 11. Increase flexibility in all elements of the elementary education curriculum | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 5 |
| | 12. Optimize the use of all local resources and facilities in training student-teachers | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 5 |
| | 13. Counter resistance to change and implementation of the curriculum, raising awareness, and motivating greater participation among educational factors | 1.01 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 5 |
| | 14. Transform inappropriate organizational structures and common wrong educational habits, creating dynamism | 0.94 | 0.06 | 6.27 | 8 |
| | 15. Create high cultural acceptance among all educational factors | 1.08 | 0.07 | 7.21 | 3 |
| | Total | --- | 1.00 | 100.00 | --- |

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the item "Select content according to local needs and learners" (s5) with a geometric mean of 1.16 and a normalized weight percentage of 7.68 ranks first; the items "Increase attention to personal preferences and needs of student-teachers and local needs" (s6) and "Develop learners' knowledge and experiences in areas such as art, history, philosophy, local geography, etc." (s8) both with a geometric mean of 1.09 and a normalized weight percentage of 7.22 rank second; and the item "Create high cultural acceptance among all educational factors" (s15) with a geometric mean of 1.08 and a normalized weight

percentage of 7.21 ranks third among the strengths of liberalizing the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors.

Question 2: What are the weaknesses of the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

To answer this research question, the SWOT method (examining weaknesses) and the method of Hosseini et al. (2014) (to determine the normalized weight of each item) were used. Table 4 shows the mean and relative mean related to the weakness component.

| Table 5: Mean and Relative Mean Related to the Weakness Component from the Perspective of Professors | | |
|---|---|---|
| Item | Mean | Relative Mean (with respect to the previous item) |
| w1 | 2.50 | --- |
| w2 | 3.00 | 1.20 |
| w3 | 3.50 | 1.17 |
| w4 | 3.25 | 0.93 |
| w5 | 4.00 | 1.23 |
| w6 | 4.25 | 1.06 |
| w7 | 3.75 | 0.88 |
| w8 | 2.25 | 0.60 |
| w9 | 2.50 | 1.11 |
| w10 | 3.00 | 1.20 |
| w11 | 3.25 | 1.08 |
| w12 | 3.50 | 1.08 |

| Table 6: Pairwise Comparison Matrix of the Weaknesses of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | w1 | w2 | w3 | w4 | w5 | w6 | w7 | w8 | w9 | w10 | w11 | w12 |
| w1 | 1.00 | 0.83 | 0.71 | 0.77 | 0.62 | 0.59 | 0.67 | 1.11 | 1.00 | 0.84 | 0.77 | 0.72 |
| w2 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.85 | 0.92 | 0.75 | 0.70 | 0.80 | 1.34 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.86 |
| w3 | 1.40 | 1.17 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 0.87 | 0.82 | 0.94 | 1.56 | 1.41 | 1.17 | 1.09 | 1.01 |
| w4 | 1.31 | 1.09 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.81 | 0.77 | 0.87 | 1.45 | 1.31 | 1.09 | 1.01 | 0.93 |
| w5 | 1.61 | 1.34 | 1.14 | 1.23 | 1.00 | 0.94 | 1.07 | 1.79 | 1.61 | 1.34 | 1.24 | 1.15 |
| w6 | 1.70 | 1.42 | 1.21 | 1.30 | 1.06 | 1.00 | 1.14 | 1.89 | 1.71 | 1.42 | 1.32 | 1.22 |
| w7 | 1.50 | 1.25 | 1.07 | 1.15 | 0.93 | 0.88 | 1.00 | 1.67 | 1.50 | 1.25 | 1.16 | 1.07 |
| w8 | 0.90 | 0.75 | 0.64 | 0.69 | 0.56 | 0.53 | 0.60 | 1.00 | 0.90 | 0.75 | 0.70 | 0.64 |
| w9 | 1.00 | 0.83 | 0.71 | 0.76 | 0.62 | 0.59 | 0.67 | 1.11 | 1.00 | 0.83 | 0.77 | 0.71 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **w10** | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.85 | 0.92 | 0.75 | 0.70 | 0.80 | 1.33 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.86 |
| **w11** | 1.29 | 1.08 | 0.92 | 0.99 | 0.81 | 0.76 | 0.86 | 1.44 | 1.30 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 0.93 |
| **w12** | 1.40 | 1.16 | 0.99 | 1.07 | 0.87 | 0.82 | 0.93 | 1.55 | 1.40 | 1.17 | 1.08 | 1.00 |

After drawing the pairwise comparison matrix, the geometric mean, normalized weight, percentage of normalized weight, and finally, the final rank of each item based on the normalized weight and percentage of normalized weight were obtained.

Geometric Mean, Normalized Weight, Percentage of Normalized Weight, and Final Rank of the Weaknesses of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors

| Component | Overall Percentage | Item | Geometric Mean | Normalized Weight | Percentage of Normalized Weight | Final Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Weakness** | 100 | 1. Inadequate preparation of students for the job market due to lack of access to local non-educational resources and facilities | 0.79 | 0.06 | 6.45 | 10 |
| | | 2. Inability to cover some specialized courses with the respective fields and professors | 0.95 | 0.08 | 7.74 | 8 |
| | | 3. Potential shortage of access to specialized and experienced professors | 1.11 | 0.09 | 9.06 | 4 |
| | | 4. Potential inefficient performance of some professors in implementing the curriculum | 1.03 | 0.08 | 8.42 | 6 |
| | | 5. Creation of incompatibility between various courses in a province and neighboring provinces | 1.27 | 0.10 | 10.36 | 2 |
| | | 6. Imbalance between the designed curriculum and the national curriculum and higher-level documents | 1.34 | 0.11 | 10.98 | 1 |
| | | 7. Potential disharmony between various curriculum elements | 1.18 | 0.10 | 9.67 | 3 |
| | | 8. Threat to national identity and unity of common national culture | 0.71 | 0.06 | 5.80 | 12 |
| | | 9. Potential decline in the quality of teaching and learning | 0.79 | 0.06 | 6.44 | 11 |
| | | 10. Increased lack of commitment and coherence as well as resistance to the curriculum by student-teachers or professors | 0.94 | 0.08 | 7.72 | 9 |
| | | 11. Improper implementation of the curriculum due to the inappropriate distribution of resources | 1.02 | 0.08 | 8.34 | 7 |
| | | 12. Difficulty in identifying student-teachers' learning priorities | 1.10 | 0.09 | 9.01 | 5 |
| | | Total | --- | 1.00 | 100.00 | --- |

Table 7: Pairwise Comparison Matrix of the Weaknesses of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors

Based on Table 6, it can be seen that the item "Imbalance between the designed curriculum and the national curriculum and higher-level documents" (w6) with a geometric mean of 1.34 and a normalized weight percentage of 10.98 ranks first; the item "Creation of incompatibility between various courses in a province and neighboring provinces" (w5) with a geometric mean of 1.27 and a normalized weight percentage of 10.36 ranks second; and the item "Potential disharmony between various curriculum elements" (w7) with a geometric mean of 1.18 and a normalized weight

percentage of 9.67 ranks third among the weaknesses of liberalizing the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors.

Question 3: What are the opportunities for the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

To answer this research question, the SWOT method (examining opportunities) and the method of Hosseini et al. (2014) (to determine the normalized weight of each item) were used.

| Table 8: Mean and Relative Mean Related to the Opportunity Component from the Perspective of Professors | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Item** | Mean | Relative Mean (with respect to the previous item) |
| **o1** | 3.25 | - |
| **o2** | 3.50 | 1.08 |
| **o3** | 3.25 | 0.93 |
| **o4** | 2.50 | 0.77 |
| **o5** | 3.25 | 1.30 |
| **o6** | 3.00 | 0.92 |
| **o7** | 3.25 | 1.08 |
| **o8** | 3.75 | 1.15 |
| **o9** | 3.50 | 0.93 |
| **o10** | 3.75 | 1.07 |
| **o11** | 3.25 | 0.87 |
| **o12** | 3.75 | 1.15 |

| Table 9: Pairwise Comparison Matrix of the Opportunities of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | o1 | o2 | o3 | o4 | o5 | o6 | o7 | o8 | o9 | o10 | o11 | o12 |
| **o1** | 1.00 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.29 | 0.99 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 0.87 | 0.94 | 0.87 | 1.01 | 0.87 |
| **o2** | 1.08 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.40 | 1.07 | 1.17 | 1.08 | 0.94 | 1.01 | 0.94 | 1.09 | 0.94 |
| **o3** | 1.00 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.30 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.01 | 0.87 | 0.94 | 0.88 | 1.01 | 0.88 |
| **o4** | 0.77 | 0.72 | 0.77 | 1.00 | 0.77 | 0.84 | 0.77 | 0.67 | 0.72 | 0.68 | 0.78 | 0.68 |
| **o5** | 1.01 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 1.30 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.01 | 0.88 | 0.94 | 0.88 | 1.01 | 0.88 |
| **o6** | 0.92 | 0.86 | 0.92 | 1.20 | 0.92 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.81 | 0.87 | 0.81 | 0.93 | 0.81 |
| **o7** | 1.00 | 0.92 | 0.99 | 1.29 | 0.99 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 0.87 | 0.94 | 0.87 | 1.00 | 0.87 |
| **o8** | 1.15 | 1.06 | 1.14 | 1.49 | 1.14 | 1.24 | 1.15 | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 1.16 | 1.00 |
| **o9** | 1.07 | 0.99 | 1.06 | 1.38 | 1.06 | 1.16 | 1.07 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 1.07 | 0.93 |
| **o10** | 1.14 | 1.06 | 1.14 | 1.48 | 1.14 | 1.24 | 1.14 | 1.00 | 1.07 | 1.00 | 1.15 | 1.00 |
| **o11** | 0.99 | 0.92 | 0.99 | 1.29 | 0.99 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 0.87 | 0.93 | 0.87 | 1.00 | 0.87 |
| **o12** | 1.14 | 1.06 | 1.14 | 1.48 | 1.14 | 1.24 | 1.14 | 1.00 | 1.07 | 1.00 | 1.15 | 1.00 |

After drawing the pairwise comparison matrix, the geometric mean, normalized weight, percentage of normalized weight, and finally, the final rank of each item based on the normalized weight and percentage of normalized weight were obtained.

| Table 10: Geometric Mean, Normalized Weight, Percentage of Normalized Weight, and Final Rank of the Opportunities of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Component** | Overall Percentage | Item | Geometric Mean | Normalized Weight | Percentage of Normalized Weight | Final Rank |
| **Opportunity** | 100 | 1. Provide opportunities to improve the quality of education and learning by educational factors themselves | 0.98 | 0.08 | 8.14 | 7 |
| | | 2. Increase opportunities for collaboration with industry and related organizations | 1.06 | 0.09 | 8.79 | 4 |
| | | 3. Increase the possibility of full participation of all stakeholders in the educational system in preparing, developing, and implementing the curriculum | 0.99 | 0.08 | 8.18 | 6 |
| | | 4. Create opportunities for education and internships abroad | 0.76 | 0.06 | 6.29 | 11 |
| | | 5. Provide opportunities for rapid and accurate curriculum reforms | 0.99 | 0.08 | 8.18 | 6 |
| | | 6. Provide opportunities for changes in all elements of the curriculum | 0.91 | 0.08 | 7.53 | 10 |
| | | 7. Create opportunities to utilize existing capacities in developing student-teachers' theoretical and practical skills | 0.98 | 0.08 | 8.13 | 8 |
| | | 8. Develop interdisciplinary and integrative sciences | 1.13 | 0.09 | 9.35 | 1 |
| | | 9. Create opportunities to align with global scientific changes and developments | 1.05 | 0.09 | 8.70 | 5 |
| | | 10. Focus on the interests and concerns of stakeholders in the educational system | 1.12 | 0.09 | 9.30 | 3 |
| | | 11. Expand scientific activities with other universities and higher education institutions in the country | 0.98 | 0.08 | 8.10 | 9 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Provide opportunities and grounds for decentralization in other levels of the educational system, including pre-university education | 1.12 | 0.09 | 9.31 | 2 |
| Total | --- | 1.00 | 100.00 | --- |

Based on Table 10, it can be seen that the item "Develop interdisciplinary and integrative sciences" (o8) with a geometric mean of 1.13 and a normalized weight percentage of 9.35 ranks first; the item "Provide opportunities and grounds for decentralization in other levels of the educational system, including pre-university education" (o12) with a geometric mean of 1.12 and a normalized weight percentage of 9.31 ranks second; and the item "Focus on the interests and concerns of stakeholders in the educational system" (o10) with a geometric mean of 1.12 and a normalized weight

percentage of 9.30 ranks third among the opportunities of liberalizing the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors.

Question 4: What are the threats of the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

To answer this research question, the SWOT method (examining threats) and the method of Hosseini et al. (2014) (to determine the normalized weight of each item) were used.

| Table 11: Mean and Relative Mean Related to the Threat Component from the Perspective of Professors | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Item** | Mean | Relative Mean (with respect to the previous item) |
| **t1** | 2.00 | - |
| **t2** | 3.50 | 1.75 |
| **t3** | 2.50 | 0.71 |
| **t4** | 3.00 | 1.20 |
| **t5** | 2.75 | 0.92 |
| **t6** | 3.00 | 1.09 |
| **t7** | 3.75 | 1.25 |
| **t8** | 3.75 | 1.00 |
| **t9** | 2.50 | 0.67 |
| **t10** | 3.00 | 1.20 |
| **t11** | 4.25 | 1.42 |
| **t12** | 4.00 | 0.94 |
| **t13** | 3.00 | 0.75 |
| **t14** | 3.00 | 1.00 |
| **t15** | 4.00 | 1.33 |
| **t16** | 4.00 | 1.00 |
| **t17** | 3.00 | 0.75 |

| Table 12: Pairwise Comparison Matrix of the Threats of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | t1 | t2 | t3 | t4 | t5 | t6 | t7 | t8 | t9 | t10 | t11 | t12 | t13 | t14 | t15 | t16 | t17 |
| **t1** | 1.00 | 0.57 | 0.80 | 0.67 | 0.73 | 0.67 | 0.54 | 0.54 | 0.80 | 0.67 | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.67 |
| **t2** | 1.75 | 1.00 | 1.41 | 1.17 | 1.28 | 1.17 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 1.40 | 1.16 | 0.82 | 0.87 | 1.16 | 1.16 | 0.87 | 0.87 | 1.17 |
| **t3** | 1.24 | 0.71 | 1.00 | 0.83 | 0.91 | 0.83 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.99 | 0.83 | 0.58 | 0.62 | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 0.83 |
| **t4** | 1.49 | 0.85 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.00 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 1.19 | 0.99 | 0.70 | 0.74 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.99 |
| **t5** | 1.37 | 0.78 | 1.10 | 0.92 | 1.00 | 0.92 | 0.73 | 0.73 | 1.10 | 0.91 | 0.64 | 0.68 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.69 | 0.69 | 0.91 |
| **t6** | 1.50 | 0.85 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.00 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 1.19 | 1.00 | 0.70 | 0.75 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 1.00 |
| **t7** | 1.87 | 1.07 | 1.50 | 1.25 | 1.36 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.49 | 1.24 | 0.88 | 0.93 | 1.24 | 1.24 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 1.25 |
| **t8** | 1.87 | 1.07 | 1.50 | 1.25 | 1.36 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.49 | 1.24 | 0.88 | 0.93 | 1.24 | 1.24 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 1.25 |
| **t9** | 1.25 | 0.72 | 1.01 | 0.84 | 0.91 | 0.84 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 1.00 | 0.83 | 0.59 | 0.62 | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.83 |
| **t10** | 1.50 | 0.86 | 1.21 | 1.01 | 1.10 | 1.01 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.70 | 0.75 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 1.00 |
| **t11** | 2.13 | 1.22 | 1.72 | 1.43 | 1.56 | 1.43 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.70 | 1.42 | 1.00 | 1.06 | 1.42 | 1.42 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.42 |
| **t12** | 2.01 | 1.15 | 1.61 | 1.35 | 1.46 | 1.34 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.60 | 1.33 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.33 | 1.33 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.34 |
| **t13** | 1.50 | 0.86 | 1.21 | 1.01 | 1.10 | 1.01 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.71 | 0.75 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 1.00 |
| **t14** | 1.50 | 0.86 | 1.21 | 1.01 | 1.10 | 1.01 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.71 | 0.75 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 1.00 |
| **t15** | 2.00 | 1.14 | 1.61 | 1.34 | 1.46 | 1.34 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.60 | 1.33 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.33 | 1.33 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.33 |
| **t16** | 2.00 | 1.14 | 1.61 | 1.34 | 1.46 | 1.34 | 1.07 | 1.07 | 1.60 | 1.33 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.33 | 1.33 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.33 |
| **t17** | 1.50 | 0.86 | 1.21 | 1.01 | 1.09 | 1.00 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 1.20 | 1.00 | 0.70 | 0.75 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 1.00 |

After drawing the pairwise comparison matrix, the geometric mean, normalized weight, percentage of normalized weight, and finally, the final rank of each item based on the normalized weight and percentage of normalized weight were obtained.

| Component | Overall Percentage | Item | Geometric Mean | Normalized Weight | Percentage of Normalized Weight | Final Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Table 13: Geometric Mean, Normalized Weight, Percentage of Normalized Weight, and Final Rank of the Threats of Liberalizing the Elementary Education Curriculum at Farhangian University from the Perspective of Professors** |||||||
| **Threat** | 100 | 1. Transfer of students from Farhangian University to other universities | 0.63 | 0.00 | 3.6 | 9 |
| | | 2. Need for continuous curriculum change in the face of rapid changes in technology and society | 1.10 | 0.09 | 6.4 | 4 |
| | | 3. Decline in educational quality due to changes in policies and educational system | 0.78 | 0.00 | 4.5 | 8 |
| | | 4. Potential increase in neglect and lack of commitment by professors | 0.94 | 0.10 | 5.5 | 6 |
| | | 5. Decreased focus on practical and theoretical teaching skills in elementary education | 0.86 | 0.00 | 5.0 | 7 |
| | | 6. Decreased importance of teaching some basic and specialized common subjects | 0.94 | 0.10 | 5.5 | 6 |
| | | 7. Potential imbalance in content distribution | 1.18 | 0.10 | 6.8 | 3 |
| | | 8. Decreased horizontal or vertical alignment between courses | 1.18 | 0.10 | 6.8 | 3 |
| | | 9. Teaching quality not taken seriously by professors and learning not taken seriously by student-teachers | 0.79 | 0.00 | 4.6 | 12 |
| | | 10. Inability of professors to design, develop, implement, and evaluate the decentralized curriculum properly | 0.95 | 0.10 | 5.5 | 5 |
| | | 11. Ambiguity in the concept of curriculum liberalization and selection of the wrong path for liberalization | 1.35 | 0.10 | 7.8 | 1 |
| | | 12. Potential managerial problems due to high diversity of courses and content and inability to provide resources | 1.26 | 0.10 | 7.3 | 2 |
| | | 13. Lack of coordination between schools and university | 0.95 | 0.10 | 5.5 | 5 |
| | | 14. Imbalance in content and educational skills | 0.95 | 0.10 | 5.5 | 5 |
| | | 15. Potential ideological and political conflicts or monopolization of decision-making power by specific groups | 1.26 | 0.10 | 7.3 | 2 |
| | | 16. Liberalization being promotional and lack of proper needs assessment of stakeholders and related educational factors | 1.26 | 0.10 | 7.3 | 2 |
| | | 17. Increased stress and psychological pressure on student-teachers and professors | 0.95 | 0.10 | 5.5 | 5 |
| | | Total | --- | 1.00 | 100.00 | --- |

Based on Table 12, it can be seen that the item "Ambiguity in the concept of curriculum liberalization and selection of the wrong path for liberalization" (t11) with a geometric mean of 1.35 and a normalized weight percentage of 7.8 ranks first; the items "Potential managerial problems due to high diversity of courses and content and inability to provide resources" (t12), "Potential ideological and political conflicts or monopolization of decision-making power by specific groups" (t15), and "Liberalization being promotional and lack of proper needs assessment of stakeholders and related educational factors" (t16) with a geometric

mean of 1.26 and a normalized weight percentage of 7.3 rank second; and the items "Potential imbalance in content distribution" (t7) and "Decreased horizontal or vertical alignment between courses" (t8) with a geometric mean of 1.18 and a normalized weight percentage of 6.8 rank third among the threats of liberalizing the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors.

## Conclusion

Question 1: What are the strengths of the liberalization of the elementary education

curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

The results showed that from the perspective of professors, the possibility of selecting content that meets local needs and learners' requirements, increasing attention to the personal preferences and needs of student-teachers and local needs, developing learners' knowledge and experiences in fields such as art, history, philosophy, local geography, and the potential to foster high cultural acceptance among all educational factors are the top three strengths. From the perspective of students, the flexibility in teaching time according to needs, facilitating the connection between student-teachers and educational and executive factors of the educational system, the possibility of creating a sense of responsibility and higher executive commitment and self-confidence in student-teachers, fostering a sense of independence and counteracting inactivity in student-teachers, and the possibility of countering resistance to change and implementing the curriculum, raising awareness and motivating greater participation among educational factors, and increasing the possibility of gaining practical and in-depth local experiences from various courses, and enhancing individual skills, communication skills, leadership skills, and critical thinking skills in students are the top three strengths of the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum. Consistent with the results of this study, Karimi et al. (2023) concluded that identifying local capabilities, needs, and limitations is one of the strengths of decentralization in the educational system. In explaining this finding, it can be said that paying attention to local and regional requirements is one of the central elements in curriculum liberalization. If the elementary education curriculum is liberalized, the content of this curriculum in different provinces will change according to the spatial, temporal, and geographical conditions of that province, which can maximize the use of local experiences in the curriculum. On the other hand, it also creates a sense of responsibility and independence. Additionally, it can increase the self-confidence of curriculum implementers and developers. As the level of decentralization in the curriculum increases, the awareness and motivation of individuals to participate in educational matters increase because this makes educational stakeholders value the curriculum, culture, language, etc.

Question 2: What are the weaknesses of the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

The results showed that from the perspective of professors, the potential imbalance between the designed curriculum and the national curriculum and higher-level documents, the creation of incompatibility between various courses within a province and neighboring provinces, and the potential disharmony between various curriculum elements are the top three weaknesses. From the perspective of students, the inability to cover some specialized courses with the respective fields and professors, the potential difficulty in identifying student-teachers' learning priorities, the potential inefficient performance of some professors in implementing the curriculum, and the creation of incompatibility between various courses within a province and neighboring provinces are the top three weaknesses of the liberalization of the curriculum. Consistent with the results of this study, Karimi et al. (2023) found that the lack of necessary skills in decentralization implementers is one of the weaknesses of decentralization. Dadkani et al. (2021) concluded that reforming the educational system is inevitable because every educational system needs flexible approaches tailored to the prevailing conditions in society to improve itself. In explaining this finding, it can be said that if the curriculum is entirely decentralized, the educational content may be limited to a specific topic, reducing the diversity and depth of content. This issue can reduce students' ability to analyze and think critically in various fields and create an imbalance and mismatch between the designed curriculum and the national curriculum. On the other hand, when the curriculum is highly centralized, the flexibility in the number and type of courses and educational activities may decrease. This issue may lead to neglecting the different needs and preferences of students. Furthermore, excessive centralization in the curriculum may reduce the possibility of selecting content and students' participation in the educational process, leading to decreased motivation and commitment to

learning, making it difficult for them to choose their priorities easily. Additionally, if the curriculum is entirely decentralized, personal needs and preferences of students may not be considered, potentially reducing effective interaction and communication between students and the educational environment.

Question 3: What are the opportunities for the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

The results showed that from the perspective of professors, the possibility of developing interdisciplinary and integrative sciences, providing opportunities and grounds for decentralization in other levels of the educational system, including pre-university education, and focusing on the interests and concerns of educational stakeholders are the top three opportunities. From the perspective of students, the increased opportunity for collaboration with industry and related organizations, providing opportunities and grounds for decentralization in other levels of the educational system, including pre-university education, creating opportunities for education and internships abroad, and providing opportunities for rapid and precise curriculum reforms are the top three opportunities for curriculum liberalization. Consistent with the results of this study, Karimi et al. (2023) found that the presence of local participatory capacities is one of the opportunities for decentralization. In explaining this finding, it can be said that paying attention to curriculum liberalization can provide a suitable context for developing interdisciplinary sciences. Using decentralization, courses can be designed that combine concepts and topics from different fields. These interdisciplinary courses allow students to view a topic from various perspectives and strengthen interdisciplinary connections. Additionally, paying attention to decentralization in one field can pave the way for changes and decentralization in other fields. On the other hand, since different regions differ in terms of facilities, culture, language, and other elements, they do not have the same concerns. The only way to address these concerns and interests is to utilize curriculum liberalization. Furthermore, curriculum

liberalization can provide a broad connection with other professions and jobs.

Question 4: What are the threats of the liberalization of the elementary education curriculum at Farhangian University from the perspective of professors and students?

The results showed that from the perspective of professors, the ambiguity in the concept of curriculum liberalization and the selection of the wrong path for liberalization, the potential managerial problems due to the high diversity of courses and content and the inability to provide resources, the potential ideological and political conflicts or the monopolization of decision-making power by specific groups, the promotional nature of liberalization and the lack of proper needs assessment of stakeholders and related educational factors, the potential imbalance in content distribution, and the reduction of horizontal or vertical alignment between courses are the top three threats. From the perspective of students, the ambiguity in the concept of curriculum liberalization and the selection of the wrong path for liberalization, the potential managerial problems due to the high diversity of courses and content and the inability to provide resources, the potential ideological and political conflicts or the monopolization of decision-making power by specific groups, and the promotional nature of liberalization and the lack of proper needs assessment of stakeholders and related educational factors are the top three threats of curriculum liberalization. Consistent with the results of this study, Karimi et al. (2023) found that the potential for political disruption is one of the threats of decentralization. In explaining this finding, it can be said that decentralization, despite its numerous advantages, can lead to ideological conflicts between individuals, groups, parties, ethnicities, and languages. Incorrect liberalization of the curriculum is another threat that can severely impact the curriculum because liberalization must be accompanied by proper planning, alignment with the national curriculum, and balancing different contents. On the other hand, the promotional nature of curriculum liberalization can deviate the educational system from its real goals because maximum attention is required to achieve the goals. In promotional liberalization,

the goals are sacrificed for the sake of promotion.

Given that the SWOT method was used in this study, the suggestions are also provided based on this method.

Defensive Strategies (WT): It is suggested that the approved objectives of the national curriculum be central in the liberalized curriculum. Specialized professors in local curriculum should be used.

Review or Adaptive Strategies (WO): Flexibility in the elementary education curriculum should be considered so that necessary changes can be made to the curriculum according to regional requirements.

Contingency or Diversification Strategies (ST): Diverse and elective content should be used in the curriculum so that professors and students can choose and teach or learn the curriculum content suitable for themselves from the available content.

Competitive/Aggressive Strategies (SO): The possibility of full participation of all stakeholders and immediate reforms in the curriculum should be provided.

## Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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