

# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis and Countermeasures on the Cultivation of Preschool Teachers in Sichuan Province

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**Abstract:** Training of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province brings advantages in increasing government support for the preschool education industry. The society attaches an important role to the preschool education industry as well as the rapid development of preschool education in Sichuan Province. However, problem exists in large flows of preschool teachers and imbalanced gender ratios. By viewing from the new situation, the comprehensive liberalization of the second-child policy and the development of educational informatization as well as the implementation of the one belt and one road strategy have created great opportunities in training of preschool teachers. At the same time, the increase in external impact of high-quality graduates in the east also poses a great threat to the development of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province. Through the strategic combination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis, the paper explores effective countermeasure ways to improve the quality of training of the preschool teachers in Sichuan Province and the construction of an excellent team of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province.

**Keywords:** *early childhood education; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis; teacher training*

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## 0 Introduction

The training condition of preschool teachers directly affects the long-term development of preschool education in Sichuan Province. Through the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) method, this paper analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province at present as well as the existing opportunities and potential threats. Through the structural and systematic characteristics of SWOT analysis, it analyzes the training of kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province. This field will be a comprehensive and targeted research. Finally, by combining the actual situation of Sichuan and the needs of social development, the corresponding countermeasures are proposed.

Xia Jing and Pang Lijuan discussed the characteristics and contradictions of training Chinese kindergarten teachers by setting forward relevant suggestions to improve the training system<sup>[1]</sup>. Yan Jing researched on the professional identity of kindergarten teachers and given reasonable suggestions for the training of kindergarten teachers<sup>[2]</sup>. Besides, Zhang Jia studied to find an excellent training mode for kindergarten teachers in kindergarten and discussed the contents of the training in details as well as provided methods and basis to achieve excellent kindergarten teachers training system<sup>[3]</sup>. Moreover, Zhou Hong started a "Three-Year Action Plan for Kindergarten Education in Sichuan Province" and predicted demands of kindergarten teachers in the current situation and the scale of development during the "Twelfth Five-Year

Plan" period in Sichuan Province. It provided a comprehensive and professional level of preschool teachers with specific recommendations<sup>[4]</sup>. Based on SWOT model, Liang xiaoli analyzed the quality assurance mechanism of rural preschool teachers and proposed four strategic combinations to optimize the quality of rural preschool teachers<sup>[5]</sup>. In the context of the new curriculum reform, Li Min conducted a SWOT strategy analysis on the professionalization of preschool teachers as well as a deeper discussion on the professionalization of preschool teachers<sup>[6]</sup>. Lastly, there are many existing studies in the present without a systematic analysis of the training of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province. Therefore, this paper focuses on using SWOT analysis and optimized combination strategy to explore the training of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province.

## **1 The SWOT analysis of training preschool teachers in Sichuan Province**

### **1.1 S: Strength**

#### ***1.1.1 Government's support in the preschool education industry***

Article 5, the third chapter of the National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020) clearly stated that, active development of kindergarten education, popularizing kindergarten education by 2020 and for 3 years in conditional areas under the guidance of national policy guidelines, the education departments of all localities will improve the educational environment of preschools and provide favorable conditions for the development of the comprehensive quality preschool teachers. In 2012, the Sichuan Provincial Department of Education launched the "3-Year Action Plan for Kindergarten Education" to increase capital investment and plans to expand and construct 400 public preschools and 500 private preschools. Then, they researched and formulated "Sichuan Provincial Kindergarten Classification and Classification Management Measures" and "Policy documents such as the "Standards for Kindergartens in Sichuan Province" and vigorously develop early childhood education.

#### ***1.1.2 The importance of society to the preschool education industry***

The provision of quality preschool education has also reached a consensus in society with the development

of Sichuan's economy. Enterprises, institutions, social organizations, other social organizations, and citizens can set up preschool institutions when they meet the requirement. Some kindergartens can apply for policy concessions which made up some public welfare kindergartens in Sichuan Province. The newly built residential areas in the city need to allocate supporting preschool education facilities. Society's thoughts have also changed with the development of social economy. Parents paid more attention to the education of young children. The improvement of parents' cultural level and the application of technology products have enabled kindergarten teachers to communicate with parents in a timely and effective manner. Therefore, preschool teachers establish long-term career planning and development and parents' opinions and suggestions are also self-reflective content of preschool teachers, which is conducive to the growth and development of preschool teachers.

#### ***1.1.3 Development of early childhood education in Sichuan Province***

In 2011, there were 10,162 kindergartens in sichuan province, which increased to 10,794 in 2012, 11,795 in 2013, 12,111 in 2014, 12,365 in 2015 and 12,903 in 2016<sup>[7]</sup>. In the past 5 years, the number of kindergartens has increased year by year. The newly added parks include public parks, government-subsidized public welfare kindergartens, and private kindergartens have also eventually increased along. Therefore, more professional kindergarten teachers with higher professional quality are required to participate in the kindergarten construction. In the 2016 Sichuan Provincial Government Work Report, it is emphasized that in the future, an inclusive kindergarten that is qualified and accessible to the public should be comprehensively added. In 2017, Sichuan Province will also implement the construction of public parks and strive to expand the resources of public preschool education. Kindergartens in ethnic areas will also be gradually be added and they should be included in the action plan of the bilingual kindergarten project in the farming and pastoral areas planned by the 13<sup>th</sup> 5-Year Plan. According to the actual conditions of ethnic areas and local conditions, the construction of village-level preschool education points takes the form of "one village, one young, one village, many villages, and one child." The number of kindergartens in Sichuan Province has continued to increase steadily, therefore,

meeting the needs of preschool education in Sichuan Province<sup>[8]</sup>.

## **1.2 W: Weakness**

### ***1.2.1 Large flows of kindergarten teachers***

Parents' acceptance of preschool teachers is generally low, the general belief of most parents toward preschool teachers is that they act more as nanny roles to help children instead of teachers. Therefore, Sichuan Province preschool teachers' wages are generally lower than local per capita income. The salary of young children's teachers can be able to maintain their basic life. Plus, unreasonable recruitment system and unreasonable work arrangements have also caused the stability of kindergarten teachers poor. The professional restrictions on the recruitment of kindergarten teachers are not strict, some private parks are considered for cost control. Some non-professionals are often hired as preschool teachers, and private kindergartens often do not recruit enough teachers to meet the "Three Religions and One Guarantee" or "Two Religions and One Guarantee" prescribed by the state. Therefore, workload and working time increase<sup>[9]</sup>. To sum up, the phenomenon of kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province is more severe to other industries and other regions.

### ***1.2.2 Gender ratio imbalance among preschool teachers***

According to the 2015 national education statistics briefing, women accounted for 97.8% of the preschool teachers while male teachers accounted for only 2.2%. The gender ratio of preschool teachers in Sichuan Province is also the same as that in the country. The gender ratio of preschool teachers is severely out of ratio balance. The gender structure is extremely unbalanced and men become scarce in kindergartens. The preschool education industry is dominated by women and is not conducive to the overall development of young children as well as children with sound personality, which is not conducive to the development of children's mental health, emotional development, and personality. Therefore, it is crucial to build a team of preschool male and female teachers with morality, professionalism, and love for children. The reason of low number of male kindergarten teachers is generally due to low social recognition, lack of clear career development path, and low pay as well as benefits.

However, even when some professionally born male and female teachers chose the early childhood education industry for employment, they do eventually change careers.

## **1.3 O: Opportunity**

### ***1.3.1 The full liberalization of the second-child policy***

In October 2015, the Communiqué of the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China pointed out that, "adhere to the basic national policy of family planning, actively carrying out the action against population aging and implement a comprehensive two-child policy." The launch of a comprehensive second-child policy will greatly benefit the alleviation of the aging population as well as helps the social economy to develop steadily and healthily. The increase of children is also an opportunity for the development of preschool education. It is necessary to steadily establish more kindergartens to meet the social needs. As a result, the number of kindergarten teachers will increase, providing more preschool teachers in the development of kindergartens. Finally, the mechanism and the career development prospects of preschool teachers will also receive great beneficial effects<sup>[10]</sup>.

### ***1.3.2 Development of educational information***

Ever since the "National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)" puts forward the development strategy of "accelerating the process of education informatization," domestic education informatization has entered a new stage. After the official publication of the "10 Years of Education Informatization Development Plan (2011–2020)" and the "National Education Informatization Work Conference," China's education on informatization entered the fast lane, with the "three links and two platforms" as the main signs. Besides, breakthrough progress has been made in all aspects of the work. In the 13<sup>th</sup> 5-Year Plan of China in 2016, all work will proceed to a new step. Never the less, to promote the "three links and two platforms," Sichuan Province has also seized this opportunity by promoting education informatization as the basic education, vocational education, and higher education, which will steadily realize the educational information school, school class, human communication, management informatization, and educational information system mechanism.

### ***1.3.3 One belt and one road to promote the internationalization of education***

The “Belt and Road” provided an opportunity for Sichuan Province to strengthen in their cultural and educational exchanges. On October 28, 2017, the Asian Education Forum Annual Meeting was held in Chengdu, the theme of this annual conference is “Education connects the world, innovation leads the future.” They focused on the “One Belt, One Road” scientific popularization, university’s think tank cooperation, youth creative invention, international education, “internet + education,” and other demanded issues, attracting >600 people. Ambassadors from China, government officials, experts, and scholars from 29 countries and regions participated in the conference on how to fully utilize the “One Belt, One Road” college think tank resources in the context of globalization as well as to realize the interconnection of academic research and talent exchange among universities along the line. During the meeting, intercommunication is carried out. As a conclusion from the meeting, participants believe that actively promoting education cooperation between countries and regions along the “Belt and Road” can aid in building a new platform for international cooperation. Adding, it also prompts to increase the synergy for new development and cultivate outstanding talents with a higher level of internationalization. Finally, it provides favorable conditions for the internationalization of child care in Sichuan Province.

### **1.4 T: Threats**

#### ***1.4.1 Advanced educational philosophy of infiltration***

The implication of the exchanges and cooperation between Sichuan Province and developed regions, its advanced concept of running a school has also infiltrated. However, the problem faced today is the traditional idea of running a school is deeply rooted and the new one is beginning to sprout. In this crossroad, educators do not know how to decide. On the one hand, it is a concept that has been handed down from generation to generation as well as the impact of new ideas and the viewpoints of different schools are different. Therefore, the current training of kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province is still in an exploring stage of progress while yet formed a complete and unified system.

#### ***1.4.2 Increase of quality graduates in the east***

The eastern region has developed a public economy. Its education investment and technology level are

often high; it can reach newer courses and obtain the opportunity to participate in more practices due to the increase of universities in the east. Moreover, it has a long history of development and the geographical advantage of the eastern region allows more exposure with overseas. However, in the western region, the Sichuan Province region is relatively backward. Many colleges and universities are not modernized and there are fewer projects for professional and international cooperation. As a result, students chose to exchange abroad and the opportunities and practices of studying foreign education are fewer compared with those in the east. Therefore, the increase in high-quality graduates in the east poses a great threat to the development of kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province.

## **2 The SWOT strategic combination analysis of the training of kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province**

### **2.1 SO: Strength to take advantage of opportunities**

#### ***2.1.1 Increase the comprehensive quality of preschool teachers***

The number of preschool teachers at the higher education level has along with the number of preschool education programs in Sichuan Province. Schools are encouraged to focus on improving the overall quality of preschool teachers, cultivating the self-learning ability of preschool teachers, professionalism, and communication skills as well as to the teacher’s curriculum. In addition, with the knowledge acquired, it is crucial to train students the necessary educational skills and related theoretical basics. Finally, in the teaching practice, students should be given more opportunities to improve their teaching and organizational skills and improve the classroom atmosphere.

#### ***2.1.2 Government’s cooperation in increasing investment and control over kindergarten teachers’ education***

On the one hand, the sichuan provincial government should increase the investment in the training of preschool education teachers, so that preschool teachers have enough learning resources and a good learning environment. Then, this can lead to create more learning opportunities for kindergarten teachers and, on the other hand, able to increase the number of preschool children.



The cultivation of the education stage makes the work of the kindergarten teachers more secure, thereby reducing the wastage rate of the kindergarten teachers as well as enhancing the stability of the kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province<sup>[11]</sup>.

### ***2.1.3 Actively carrying out foreign cooperation and cultivate international talents***

Schools are encouraged to take advantage of the Belt and Road initiative to strengthen cooperation with foreign institutions, cooperation between schools and schools, cooperation between teachers and teachers, and cooperation between students and students to create more exposure for local students. In addition, it has an international perspective and combines the requirements of the times to establish the concept of international education. Therefore, this can result in an increased cooperation, discussed innovation, exchanges, mutual improvement, mutual benefits, and win-win. Finally, this makes that the preschool teachers at this stage have a more international vision as well as provide a stronger international kindergarten education concept to be used by preschool teachers in Sichuan Province.

## **2.2 WO: Overcoming weakness by taking advantage of opportunities**

### ***2.2.1 Increase the vocational planning education for preschool teachers and balance the proportion of male and female teachers***

It is crucial for tutors to guide students in their families, personality, preferences, and various aspects of students' career planning during their initial school stage. In view of the gender imbalance ratio of students, schools can cooperate with government agencies to increase the policy inclination of male preschool students. For example, the implementation of free teacher training system for boys in preschool education, therefore, attracting more male students to engage in early childhood education as well as guiding them to gain interest in the early childhood education industry. Besides that, with regard to the traditional concept of the educational that could lead to a premature teacher's male-female ratio seriously imbalanced, it is encouraged to use the opportunity of the "Belt and Road" to conduct more international exchanges and discuss a concept of early childhood education that is suitable for all countries and has an internationalization and modernization.

### ***2.2.2 Develop educational technology to promote sharing of educational resources***

Preschool education in Sichuan Province should seize the opportunity of the Belt and Road to establish a platform for preschool education development in the eastern coastal areas and overseas by aiming at promoting a smooth flow of preschool education information, obtaining rich learning materials and advanced international educational concepts, and achieving a practice of "internet + preschool education." Besides, it is also encouraged to upgrade the preschool education service function and develop an education informalization in Sichuan Province. In addition to training experts in Sichuan Province, preschool teachers in Sichuan Province can also be exposed the most advanced preschool education results through accessing the Internet. Finally, a timely update on the education method as well as a slow approach the education concept of the eastern and developed countries from the ideological level are also as important.

## **2.3 ST: Use of strengths to avoid threats**

### ***2.3.1 Improve the quality of personnel training***

Faced with the uneven quality of kindergarten teachers in Sichuan Province, it is possible to set up a standardized scientific assessment. However, it is not encouraged to set a high level of academic qualifications nor to set a high level of qualifications and comprehensive system assessment to avoid teachers with high academic qualifications but weak teaching practices. In addition, it is encouraged to enhance the improvement of teaching skills, led by highly skilled teacher training and give full practical opportunities to promote the lack of skills. Plus, for teachers with rich experience but lower academic qualifications, there will be a lack of scientific and theoretical knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct reeducation such as correspondence, possess professional theoretical knowledge, and strengthen their own scientific research capabilities. Finally, timely compensation for shortcomings can promote the overall quality development of the overall preschool teachers in Sichuan Province.

### ***2.3.2 Explore the training mode of kindergarten teacher in Sichuan Province***

Along with the development of the western region, Sichuan Province's economy has been given priority

in development. In the new stage, new goals should be set up to enhance the cultural attractiveness of Sichuan Province to attract long-term or short-term educational exchanges between the eastern elite kindergarten teachers. Besides, it also provides opportunities for preschool teachers in Sichuan Province. This could provide Sichuan preschool teachers to have the opportunity to enter eastern development areas to practice learning. In addition, this can also develop a deep understanding of educational concepts and learning education as well as teaching experience. Finally, with these advantages, it can narrow down the preschool education differences between Sichuan and the eastern coastal areas.

## 2.4 WT: Minimize weakness and avoid threats

### 2.4.1 Increase industry appeal and retain talent

Sichuan Province should establish a long-term growth mechanism for preschool education teachers to attract excellent preschool teachers to take root in kindergartens. This is to protect the rights and interests of preschool teachers as well as to enhance the well-being of preschool teachers. Besides, vigorously training male kindergarten teachers could lead to the proportion of kindergarten teachers. Plus, a long-term and sound salary increase mechanism can reduce the loss of workforce in kindergartens and promote the sustainable and stable development of kindergartens. Preschool teachers are first satisfied at the material level; then, they will be devoted to teaching and research. This will carry out a long-term planning and development in the preschool education profession.

### 2.4.2 Enhance the concept of running a school

Most kindergarten directors in Sichuan Province are falling behind in the overall concept of running a school. Therefore, it is crucial for them to carry out subregional management. Second, for areas with serious backward concepts, it is necessary for them to be rectified immediately. While some relatively backward

local environment under the guidance of the concept to prevent specifically distorted ideas in practice. Besides, for the new parks with new ideas, it is demanded to innovate and try specific practical guidance brought by the new ideas and bear the corresponding social responsibilities such as be responsible to the children, be responsible to the parents, and pass on new ideas to the parents in a timely manner. Finally, it is recommended to hold responsible for helping the backward concept director to enhance the educational concept by introducing new ideas and establish new systems.

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