

# **SWOT Analysis of Boarding School Junior High Education in Ethnic Minority Regions**

## **—A case study of nine-year coherent school in Zhenjiang Songpan county**

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**Keywords:** SWOT theory, ethnic minority regions, boarding school junior high education.

**Abstract:** For a long time, low enrollment rate and weak basic knowledge accomplishment of junior high education in Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County are the outstanding problems of the local education development. In order to solve this problem, the SWOT method is used to analyze it, and the results show that there are obvious internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats. The paper suggests the solution strategies such as: Setting students' safety in the first position, and strengthening the teachers' training; cultivating students' independence; Cultivating students' interest in learning; Establishment rules and regulations and improving the management system; Setting up the concept of education "people-oriented and learners as the main body"; Actively promoting the benefits of reading to create a teaching team with solid professional knowledge and profound feelings of loving-teaching.

### **1. Introduction**

Since the reform and opening up, the state continues to pay more attention to boarding school education in ethnic minority regions, and introduces a series of policies: the State Council issued the "State Council Decision on Basic Education Reform and Development " in 2001, it first proposes reasonable planning and adjustment of the school layout according to the principle " junior high school relatively concentrated to optimize the educational resources allocation ". The boarding school can be set up if it has a requirement and has the ability [1]. Article 27 chapter 9 of "The National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" issued during the same period again clearly points out: Support the school standardization construction for compulsory education school of poor counties in ethnic autonomous regions, strengthen the construction of boarding schools in ethnic minority regions [2], which provides a clear guidance on the boarding education in ethnic minority regions. Most foreign researches on education policy in ethnic minority regions are "affirmative Action" bill, which proposes: It aims to promote and ensure that any one who receives the education from the Federal Government and the contracted agency related with the Federal Government gets equal opportunities regardless of race, religion, color and national origin [3]. However, most of the domestic researches on the boarding school education in ethnic minority regions are in the common ethnic minority areas, there are no in-depth researches on the boarding school education in the specific ethnic minority regions. This paper mainly analyzes the boarding junior high education of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County to find suitable development strategies for it, which makes the junior high education better develop in ethnic minority regions.

### **2. General situation of junior high education in the boarding school in ethnic minority regions and Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan county**

#### **2.1 The education connotation of boarding school in ethnic minority regions**

The boarding school education in ethnic minority regions is a special teaching and education mode

that the state allocates funds to ensure the completion of compulsory education for the youth, according to the disperse residence, poor economic development and unbalanced resources allocation in ethnic minority regions, and in order to adapt to the disperse residence characteristics of population in ethnic minorities regions, the party and the state solve the students' difficulties of long-distance from school and poor economic situation, optimize the educational resources allocation, realize educational equity. Boarding schools in ethnic minority regions should not only undertake the education and teaching functions of boarding students, but also provide students with the needs of eating, lodging and personal safety, which combine the learning with their livings. Schools are the main place for students to study, live and exercise [4].

## 2.2 The basic situation of junior high education of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County

Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County located in nine circular line Zhenjiang township, Songpan County Aba prefecture Sichuan province, which assembles the regional educational resources and makes students in the county enjoy the compulsory education in this school. The main task of the junior high education is to cultivate all-round development of junior high students and ensure that students in ethnic minority regions enjoy equal educational resources. At present, the school has 246 minority students of different peoples such as Tibetan, Qiang and Hui etc. In 2016 the total number of students is 246 including 200 boarding students, and the number of boarding students accounts for 81.3% of the total number of students at school <sup>[1]</sup>. There are two classes in each grade, the number of students in each class is about 40, totally 80. The situation of total students, boarding students and teachers etc. of junior high education of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school is shown in the following figures:

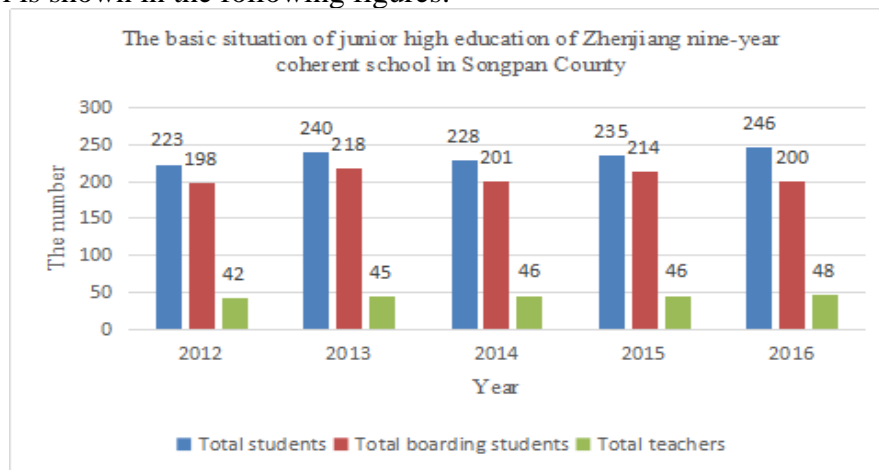


Fig.1 The basic situation of junior high education of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County

Figure 1 shows the teacher-student ratio in the whole school, look at the following table:

Table 1 The situation of teacher-student ratio of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school junior high education in Songpan County

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Teacher-student ratio	1: 18.8	1:18.7	1:20.2	1:19.6	1:19.5

<sup>[1]</sup> Data comes from the research on Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County.

**Table 2 The number of students**

	Total number of graduate students	The student number of senior high school	Percentage of total population	The number of Vocational High School	Percentage of total population	The number of completing the education	Percentage of total population
2011	76	33	43.4%	26	34.2%	17	22.4%
2012	80	36	45%	29	36.2%	15	18.8%
2013	81	37	45.7%	30	37%	14	17.3%
2014	84	37	44%	35	41.7%	12	14.3%
2015	86	40	46.5%	36	41.9%	10	11.6%

Data comes from the research on Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County

### **3. Introduction of SWOT theory and its application in this paper**

SWOT theory was established in 1971, after the publication of “the Concept of Corporate Strategy” by K.J.Andrews from Harvard Business School [5]. SWOT theory has been widely used in case analysis of marketing and strategy, which can effectively analyze enterprises’ internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats, to help enterprises to focus on strengthening the strengths and opportunities and overcome the weakness and threats [6]. Nowadays, SWOT theory has been widely used in various fields. SWOT theory is composed four capital initials of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, S is the enterprise internal strengths; W is the enterprise internal weaknesses; O is the enterprise external opportunities; T is the enterprise external threats [7]. This paper separately defines them as internal strengths and internal weaknesses, external opportunities and external threats of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high education system in Songpan County. SWOT of Zhenjiang nine-years junior high education system is as follows:

#### **3.1 The internal strengths of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high education system in Songpan county (S)**

##### **3.1.1 The school provides students with essential conditions such as accommodation and life which guarantees students' personal safety**

In response to the policy “The Implementation Opinion on Basic Popularization of Nine-year Compulsory Education and Basic Elimination of Illiteracy in 90s” issued by the former State Education Commission in September 1994, the students at the stage of compulsory education must attend the school. Before boarding schools are founded, not every village has a school for students to learn, and students living in remote regions have to go a long way to the school in another village. Usually they have to walk to school before dawn every day to avoid being late for class. In remote regions, some wild animals often attack the human, if the companion is less, the probability of danger on the road will increase, personal safety can not be guaranteed. Because of setting up of the boarding school, students just need to go back to school on every Sunday afternoon and go home from school on Friday, which gets rid of the disadvantages that students get up early to go to school every day and make students feel more at ease to learn, what’s more, the parents do not have to worry about the dangerous events of the child's safety and reduce the concerns.

##### **3.1.2 The introduction of talents and organizing young teachers’ training improve the quality of education and teaching**

Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high school in Songpan County has introduced outstanding graduates from normal colleges to teach at the school for recent five years, and pays attention to the cultivation and development of teachers’ professional accomplishment, organizes the training of young teachers. Under the condition of the rapid development of modern information technology, it is necessary to organize the young teachers to participate in the training, so that the teachers can update their ideas in time and realize the educational concept of modernization development. It has a positive effect on the improvement of teachers' professional and teaching quality, and the educational resources are reasonably utilized, which realizes the optimization of education and teaching resources.

It is easy to cultivate the young teachers team who are good at many things and expert in one, and start the teacher's education activities.

### **3.1.3 Students' independence has been further improved**

The age of junior high students is between 12-17 years old, which belongs to the adolescent period, they leave home to school to learn, accommodate and live in school away from the close supervision of their parents, most of the time is spent here, so they have enough independent space. At the same time, students need to take care of their daily lives and deal with their own matters. Of course, they can also ask the teacher or other students for advice, however, once they make a decision, they need to bear the consequences by themselves, which helps them to develop a good habit of taking responsibility and pave the way for their future.

## **3.2 The internal weaknesses of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high education system in Songpan county (W)**

### **3.2.1 Students basic knowledge is poor and the learning atmosphere is not strong**

The whole atmosphere of the school is filled with students' communication about life and game, the number of the students in the library is very few until the examination almost comes; If it's not the class time, the number of students in the classroom is few. Entering the school, a group of students talk cheerfully and humorously, however, most of them talk about life, anecdote and starchaser, the communication about between learning and academic exchanges is few. What's more, due to the students' weak basic knowledge and poor self-control, even if they have a desire to learn, it is difficult to get out of the mud.

### **3.2.2 Low enrollment rate is the bottleneck of improving the quality of education and teaching**

From table 2, we know the education scale of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high school in Songpan county is small, but school enrollment rate is not high, the number of senior high school is only a little more than that of vocational high school, and the dropout number is large, which results in the low teaching quality for evaluation, not only the reputation of the school and teachers is not good, the school popularity is not high. Due to the evaluation pressure of enrollment rate from the outside world, only after the enrollment rate is improved, more students can be enrolled to get the higher degree of social recognition for the school. In this respect, low enrollment rate is the performance of poor education and teaching quality of the school. We can see teachers' pressure is huge, and they are often worried about improving the enrollment rate, and they also organize teachers to explore how to improve the enrollment rate each other, but the effect is not significant.

### **3.2.3 Teachers workload is heavy and work intensity is high, the school management is poor**

With the national emphasis on boarding school education, the requirements for the teachers increase significantly who ensure the safety of students, and also pay attention to students' living and learning situation at any time, in short, every aspect of students should be noticed, which not only increases the workload and the work intensity of the teachers, but also brings difficulties for the school management [8]. The teachers complete the regular teaching task, also bear the responsibilities of students' extracurricular learning and daily upbringing, in fact they also bear the responsibility of the student guardian under the juvenile legal recognition. In this case, it not only increases the workload and work intensity of teachers, the teachers are forced to bear legal responsibility while there is an accident. In addition, the students tend to be arbitrary and think that the study is only to complete the task of learning, so they don't take care about the school learning serious. The school system isn't further readjusted in advance and in prediction, the relative specific details of the rules and regulations are not made according to the actual situation in many aspects.

## **3.3 The external opportunities of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high education system in Songpan County (O)**

### **3.3.1 The state attaches importance to the boarding school education in ethnic minority regions**

For quite a long time, the national attention for the boarding education in ethnic minority regions is increasing, since the reform and opening up, a series of policies have been implemented mainly as follows: In October 20, 1992 the State Education Commission and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission issued "Opinion on Issues of Strengthening Ethnic Education Work" which puts forward: Form of running schools in ethnic minority regions should meet the actual local needs and

keep flexible. For under-population and disperse residence places, the school layout will be relatively concentrated and a boarding school should be hosted from a certain grade <sup>[1]</sup>. In July 27, 2002 the State Council issued "Decision on Deepening the Reform and Accelerating the Development of Ethnic Education", it suggests the rural compulsory education management system should be "based on the county and under the leadership of the State Council, the local government is responsible for classification management, "and should be seriously implemented to improve the boarding school education and the living conditions"<sup>[2]</sup>. In February 14, 2004 Ministry of Education, National Development and Reform Commission and Ministry of Finance issued "Notice on the Implementation Plan of Rural Boarding School Construction Project", it points out: From 2004, it take 4 years to build, rebuild and expand a number of boarding schools mainly based on rural junior high school; At the same time, in the premise of rational distribution and scientific planning, the pace of renovation and expansion for the poor-condition and the necessary boarding schools without conditions should be accelerated, to ensure the boarding students are allowed to the boarding school with basic conditions<sup>[3]</sup>. In April 25, 2005 Ministry of Education and State Ethnic Affairs Commission issued "Opinions on Issues of Further Strengthening the Boarding Primary and High School Management in Ethnic Minority Regions", it points out: Clear the responsibilities of boarding primary and high school management in ethnic minority regions, regulate the layout structure of primary and high boarding schools, strengthen education and teaching management, strengthen the daily life management of primary and high boarding schools in ethnic minority regions <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **3.3.2 The expansion of college enrollment provides an opportunity for students for further studies**

Based on the problem of the economy and employment, the college enrollment of colleges and universities continues to expand, in 1999 Ministry of Education issued " Education Revitalization Action Plan for the Twenty-first Century ", it mentions : by 2010, the gross enrollment rate of higher education reach 15% of the school-age youth. Until now, colleges and universities are still recruiting a large number of students, which provides further learning opportunities for the students including both Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County and other regions.

### **3.3.3 The local economic development drives education development**

Economic development more or less has a certain effect on education, so does junior high education of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County. With the rapid development of economy, the state puts forward a lot of preferential policies for junior high education of Zhenjiang nine-year school in Songpan County, for example, the implementation of "two exemptions and one subsidy", which provides students with subsidy policies such as additional transportation charge etc., it has a positive effect on accelerating the education development. The local education needs the projects such as building roads and railways etc.,which provides employment opportunities for the local residents to increase economic income and promote the education development.

## **3.4 The external threats of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high education system in Songpan (T).**

### **3.4.1 National funds invested in Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school Songpan County is still limited**

In recent years, although the economy in Zhenjiang Township Songpan County develops continuously, and people's living standard continues to improve and the state allocates more funds to the school, there is still a great gap compared with the developed non-ethnic regions due to the

[1] "Opinion on Issues of Strengthening Ethnic Education Work " issued by State Education Commission and State Ethnic Affairs Commission.

[2] "Decision on Deepening the Reform and Accelerating the Development of Ethnic Education"issued by The Ministry of Education People's Republic of China [2002] No. 14.

[3] "Notice on the Implementation Plan of Rural Boarding School Construction Project" issued by Ministry of Education, National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance.

[4] "Opinions on Issues of Further Strengthening the Boarding Primary and High School Management in Ethnic Minority Regions" issued by Ministry of Education and State Ethnic Affairs Commission [2005]NO.4.



restriction of the natural environment, school conditions, faculties and weak school infrastructure. Because of these objective conditions, the state still needs to increase the funds for the school, and the school should make a reasonable plan for the national allocation funds, which will be used to really solve the education problem.

### **3.4.2 The parents do not attach great importance to the educational atmosphere in Zhenjiang township, Songpan county[9]**

The parents do not attach importance to the education, and that's popular, if children want to learn, they will be allow, but if they do not want to learn, the parents will take them out for work or leave them alone. This idea is like an infectious disease in the local, and the students have no pressure and no motivation to learn. They do not think that the education can distinguish themselves and succeed, but the study is only to complete nine-year compulsory education required by the state. In addition, people in Zhenjiang do not attach great importance to the education atmosphere, because they think that education is a consumer investment rather than productive investment [10]. An indifferent attitude for education is one of the reasons which causes the low enrollment rate and the poor learning atmosphere.

### **3.4.3 Harsh geographical environment inhibits the education development**

The terrain characteristics of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan county is the plateau and mountains with poor land, less green vegetation and serious desertification. This unfavorable geographical location not only brings disadvantages factors to the local economic development, but also poses a threat to the education development. Because more mountains and less land as well as the inconvenient traffic reduce the interaction of education and teaching between the teachers and the outside world, which results in the derailment of the local education quality and the external education quality as well as difficulties of the education information communication and the modern teaching methods application. In addition, the special bad weather also affects the teaching. As a result, the harsh geographical environment seriously inhibits the education development.

## **4. The strategy analysis of improving the junior high school enrollment rate of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan county**

Table 3 SWOT strategy analysis of improving the junior high enrollment rate of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan County

Strengths and weaknesses	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Strategic choice  Opportunities and threats	1.The school provides the basic conditions for accommodation and life, and ensures the safety of the students. 2.Introduce talents and organize the training of young teachers to achieve the effective use of educational resources. 3.Students` independence has been further improved.	1.Students' basic knowledge quality is not high and students learning atmosphere is not strong. 2.Low enrollment rate is the bottleneck of improving the quality of education and teaching. 3.Teachers workload is heavy, work intensity is huge,the school management system.is poor.
Opportunities (O)	SO strategy	WO strategy
1.The state attaches importance to the boarding school education in ethnic minority regions. 2.The enrollment expansion of colleges and universities provides students with an opportunity for further study. 3.The local economic development drives education development.	School should put the students' life safety first; Strengthen teachers' training and ensure the management level;Clearly position the roles of teachers; Actively use the incentive mechanism of appraisal; Cultivate the students' independence;Take advantage of all external opportunities for the education and development.	School and family should cultivate students' interest of learning since childhood; Encourage students to read more books and read good books;Overcome some bad habits; Establish rules and regulations of the school and improve the management system as soon as possible, and improve the management level.
Threats (T)	ST strategy	WO strategy
1.The funds invested by the state of Zhenjiang nine-year coherent school in Songpan county is limited. 2.The parents in Zhenjiang, Songpan County do not attach great importance to the education atmosphere. 3.The harsh geographical environment inhibits the education development.	School should establish the education concept"people-oriented, learner as the main body" ; Actively promote the benefits of reading; Create a teacher team with high-quality and professional knowledge and cultivate good teaching style [11]; Increase the school popularity and cultivate alumni friendship for multi-channel sources of funds.	School and family should cultivate students' interest in reading; Strengthen implementing the responsibility and improving the responsibility system. That is to say, clear the responsible people for the management of the education boarding, set up the organization and management institutions, implement the management objectives and responsibilities of the relative teachers, clarify the responsibility of the parents;Promote the benefits of reading.

## 5. Conclusion

The low enrollment rate is the bottleneck of improving the quality of education and teaching as well as social public opinion pressure in Zhenjiang nine-year coherent junior high school in Songpan county . After SWOT theory systematically classifies and analyzes it , the corresponding strategies are put forward according to its own special internal and external strengths and weaknesses. These strategies are feasible, but the education is an important event, which needs the attention and support of the boarding school education from many aspects such as the society, the state, the education department, the family etc. Above all, the school education will become better.

## 6.Acknowledgments

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