

## The Development of Eco-Tourism in Northeast China

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### Abstract

There are rich natural eco-tourism resources, which provide reliable material foundation for the eco-tourism. Eco-tourism resources are of great significance in promoting the economic development in Northeast China. Based on the present situation of the eco-tourism resources in Northeast China, SWOT analysis is applied to analyze the advantages of current resources, region and development in Northeast China, the disadvantages of the lack of depth, protection consciousness, propaganda and cooperative efforts as well as the lag of the basic infrastructure, the opportunities of great politics, marketing and those brought by the form of the transportation hub, and the threats brought by the rapid development of surrounding areas, environment with seasonality and the low-level and out-of-order development. For this result, we came up with a stable strategy and a growth strategy, providing a useful theoretical basis for the development of eco-tourism resources in Northeast China, and promote the sustainable development of that.

**Key words:** Northeast region; Eco-tourism; SWOT analysis

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### INTRODUCTION

With four distinct seasons, Northeast China has the largest plain in China-Northeast Plain. It is a region with abundant resources and thriving culture, and is also an ethnic region where multi-ethnic groups with Han nationality the largest nationality are deeply integrated. It is a unique region for the eco-tourism resources.

### 1. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECO-TOURISM IN NORTHEAST CHINA

Northeast China consists of Heilongjiang Province, Jilin Province and Liaoning Province. The experts of World Tourism Organization make the orientation of Heilongjiang tourism as: Heilongjiang—Chinese COOL tourism province. This is the high generalization of cool and pleasant climate of Heilongjiang, the unique and fantastic eco-tourism resources, the fashionable and romantic tourism product and the human landscape with unique regional ethnic characteristics. Jilin province is actively exploring the sustainable development path of province-level administrative region, regarding the construction of ecologic province as a carrier. Through 30-year hard efforts, it is endeavoring to build the system of ecologic and circular economy with sustainable development, in order to make it an ecologic province with well-developed economy, a civilized society, an excellent environment and with never-ending resources (Ji, Chen, & Wang, 2014). Liaoning province has a beautiful natural scenery, a long continental coastline and a relatively good spatial organization. There are many cultural monuments in Liaoning Province, which are widely distributed with all varieties and high taste. In addition, Liaoning province is a multi-ethnic province; its unique folk customs and national culture attract a lot of tourists. It has advantages and potentiality for deep development. Meanwhile, it is better for the cooperation between the natural tourism resources and the humane tourism resources of Liaoning Province (Xu, 2014).

In recent years, the eco-tourism of the three northeastern provinces makes a certain achievement, but problems also exist, such as multiple management, destruction of environment and resource, disappointed ecological compatibility of the infrastructure construction of tourism, unfulfilled execution of related environmental protection laws and regulations and the measures of environmental management, as well as tourists' weak environmental awareness. The world-known tourist attractions in Northeast China are still concentrated in a few areas, such as Harbin Ice & Snow World, Yabuli Ski Resort, Dalian Laohutan and the Changbai Mountain in Jilin Province. The scenery of other areas also has remarkable ornamental and scientific value, and the natural and cultural landscape resources are of good ecological potential; but other scenic spots are not well-known for the short of facilities and talents, relatively outdated management level, inconvenient traffic and the lack of publicity efforts, which has cultivated consumer market of good ecological tourism. Meanwhile, the development and utilization of ecotourism resources still remain at surface, which is between sightseeing tourism and eco-tourism. The staying time of tourists is short and their participation is not good. The less tourism revenue and worse economic benefits cannot effectively guarantee the increasing interests of the local community residents to promote the harmonious development of the community. Therefore, the eco-tourism resources in Northeast China must be integrated with many approaches to strengthen the eco-tourism management and make healthy and sustainable development of the eco-tourism resources in Northeast China achieve the "win-win" goal of the tourism development and environmental protection, and the harmony between humans and the nature.

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## 2. THE SWOT ANALYSIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECO-TOURISM IN NORTHEAST CHINA

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### 2.1 Strength Factors Analysis

#### 2.1.1 Abundant Eco-Tourism Resources

Northeast China tourism resource is rich, with both the beautiful natural landscape and gorgeous human landscape. Beautiful mountains and rivers, as well as scenic spots and historic sites can be seen everywhere. Ice-snow tourism is with unique characteristics, and the border tourism is exotic. Eco-tourism and special tourism have different interests. Ethnic culture tourism blossoms in radiant splendor. Nature landscape mainly has the world-famous Changbai Mountain Tianchi, the Songhua Lake, Jingpo Lake, and the Five-linked-great-pool Lake; there are also the Chessboard Mountain, Beacon Hill, Qianshan Mountains, and Lantau Peak; There are Benxi Stalactite Grotto, Jinzhou Guanyin Cave, Dalian Tiger Beach Ocean Park, Sunasia Ocean World, Anbo Hot

Spring, Golden Pebble Beach, the botanical garden and the weird slop in Shenyang, and the famous mountains and lakes like Buddha Court in Anshan. Ecotourism includes mainly forest viewing, wetland sightseeing, border water sightseeing and customs experience, etc..

#### 2.1.2 Excellent Ecotourism Environment

The uniqueness of Northeast China tourism resources reflects the particularity of regional geographical conditions and the typicality of resources, which are scare or even hard to see in other regions. Tourism is based on such resource foundation is more monopolized and competitive, and will be difficult to be replaced by other regions. Distribution of ancient relic plants and special natural landscape. For example, the tundra zone of Changbai Mountain has brilliant landscape. On the earth, for the eastern coast of temperate continent and China, there is only one landscape, and is the remain under high mountains from the Quaternary Ice Age. The Northeast area is an ethnic region of Han nationality as the main body. There are also 10 minorities who always live here, Hezhe, Siberia, Mongolian, Korean, Oroqen, Dahaner, Manchu, Hui, Kirgiz, etc..

#### 2.1.3 High Eco-Tourism Development

There are seaside cities with beautiful scenery such as Dalian, Yingkou, Dandong, and Xingcheng in the Northeast region; Harbin, a national historical and cultural city, attracts a lot of tourists at home and abroad for its peculiar urban cultural architectures; Chinese famous "the City of Oil", Daqing city, becomes the major tourist city of Northeast China for its special wetland landscape of oil city. Jilin City has the landscapes of mountains, water and trees, which are mainly composed of Songhua Lake, Jilin Meteor Shower, Winter Sports Base and Songhua Lake etc.. The arisen border tourism resources in recent years are: the ports of Suifen River, Black River, Dongning, Fuyuan and Dandong etc.. Jilin Province has a national forest tourism area, and the reconstruction of the hot spring in Changbai Mountain, the development of the Grand Canyon in Changbai Mountain, the exploitation and protection project of Baicheng Xianghai Nature Reserve, and the Tourism infrastructure construction project of Jingyuetan in Changchun have been listed in the provincial and national key tourism projects (Zhang, Lu, & Zhang, 2012).

### 2.2 Weakness Factor Analysis

#### 2.2.1 The Lag of Infrastructure Construction of Eco-Tourism Resources

Three provinces in Northeast China are all old industrial bases, enjoying only a fresh tourism industry. And eco-tourism is newly born all over the world. For the development and utilization of eco-tourism resources, to make these three provinces eco-tourism areas attract a large number of tourists, we have to continuously improve infrastructure construction, in order to satisfy all levels of tourists. For the cities of the three Northeastern provinces,

the infrastructure construction of tourism such as the roads leading to scenic spots, hotels and restaurants, electricity and water, tourism toilets and tourist information service center within scenic area have generally been lagged behind, restricting the development of tourism.

### **2.2.2 The Regional Cooperation of the Infrastructure Construction Is Not Enough**

The tourism industry is a comprehensive industry which is trans-regional, trans-department and cross-industry; therefore it is necessary to enhance the coordination among departments and regions for the development of the tourism industry to realize its own development in the joint creation of the overall advantages. As a part of the tourism development, ecological tourism resources should also form the overall characteristic when developing. The three provinces in Northeastern China are a whole region, but they lack cooperation between regions (Ye, 2012) on the aspect of the development and employment of eco-tourism resources.

### **2.2.3 The Superficial Degree of Exploitation on the Infrastructure Construction**

For consuming activities about eco-travel resources, tourists to the three northeastern provinces mainly choose to go sightseeing in the scenic zone, and there are few recreation projects with local characteristics provided for tourists, and a few spots for shopping and catering. The infrastructure construction is not enough. Thus, tourists' consumption activities in the travel are too dull, which cannot enrich tourists' experience or make them happier, and will make them spend less time on sightseeing in scenic zones, and then, development of tourism economy in the three provinces of Northeast China is restricted.

### **2.2.4 For the Infrastructure Construction, Efforts on Protection Are Not Intensified**

In the three provinces of Northeast China, resources of wildlife animals and natural forests are very abundant, and they are also important ecological tourism resources. Over the past two decades, wildlife and natural forest resources in the three Northeast provinces are declining constantly. Faced with the prosperous development of eco-tourism, eco-tourism resources, the foundation of eco-tourism, are suffering from serious damages. Developers are damaging the environment while exploiting resources in order to obtain huge economic interests, and meanwhile, as the supervising institution, the government does not promptly discover and correct such phenomena, so these resources are on the edge of dying out.

### **2.2.5 The Insufficient Promotion of the Infrastructure Construction**

In the development and utilization of eco-tourism resources, propaganda is an indispensable element. To make the development and utilization of eco-tourism resources gain scale, it's a necessity to make great efforts

to improve the awareness of eco-tourism programs, continuously expand the customer market, as well as work on for sufficient customers. Eco-travel resources cannot be moved, products and the market are separated, and service cannot be stored, which make it necessary for us to propagate it.

## **2.3 Opportunity Factor Analysis**

### **2.3.1 Policies Opportunities**

To implement "The State Council's Opinion on Accelerating the Development of Tourism Industry", the country has carried out "The Recovery Planning in the Northeast Area" and "The Development Planning of the Tourism Industry in the Northeast Area", and "The Planning Outline of the Regional Collaborative Development in Tumen River Region in China—Taking Changchun-Jilin-Tumen as the Forerunner Zone of Development and Opening" has risen into the national strategy, all of which will have positively promoted the development of tourism industry in the Northeast area. These schemes are sure to accelerate the exploitation and utilization of Northeast China tourism resources, and increase the quality of exploitation on tourism resources.

### **2.3.2 Market Opportunities**

Once the concept of eco-travel was proposed, it has instantly attracted public concern and acceptance that eco-travel has become the most impressive and driving form of travel so far. The eco-tourism has played a positive role on some aspects such as protecting the natural environment, promoting the harmonious coexistence between man and nature and establishing new tourism models. As an advanced civilization tourism, the eco-tourism has received more and more attention from various countries and it has gradually become a new tourism industry and a fashion of people's leisure entertainment.

### **2.3.3 A Center for Tourism and Transportation Hub Has Been Formed**

The Harbin-Dalian high-speed railway is the passenger railway line of Harbin-Dalian railway, running through the northeast of China. Harbin-Dalian passenger railway line (high-speed railway) is the "one vertical" of "four vertical and four horizontal" high-speed railway network of mid-long term railway planning in China. It is an important part of Beijing-Harbin high-speed railway. After it is opened to traffic, it will become the first operational speed-high railway to run through the cold area in the world. It brings much convenience of getting in and out to tourists in the northeast and chances of developing tourism.

## **2.4 Analysis of Threats Factors**

### **2.4.1 The Influence of the Fast Development of Tourism in Surrounding Areas**

Nowadays, products of tourism industry in the Northeast China are almost of the same sort, mainly in the form of

visiting. In recent years, as the whole country is emphasizing on tourism, various regions are discovering and exploiting some new sightseeing products, which make important influence on tourism in Northeast China. Especially, new appearances and variations for sightseeing products of the same type all provide the tourism industry in the Northeast China with new challenges. In addition, in foreign countries, Russia and Northeast China are all cold and snowy places, but Russia is listed as the world natural heritage, and is known as "Icy and Snowy Russia". And for neighboring countries, Korea and Japan are adopting more open tourism policies, which has strong attraction for international tourists. Therefore, tourism industry in the Northeast China is facing great competition in overseas market.

#### **2.4.2 The Ecological Environment of Northeast China Has Seasonality**

The most primary tourism products of Northeast China are ice-and-snow tourism, grass-and-forest ecological tourism and heat-beating holiday tourism, which all have serious problems of seasonality, thus peak seasons of tourism only last 2 to 3 months. The scale of tourism economy in Northeast China is restricted largely because of strong seasonality. It is impossible to thoroughly solve this problem, but our primary issue is whether the problem can be alleviated or not. For instance, whether we may change skiing ground into a sightseeing or a summer heat prevention site in summer, and whether we may find some activities about ice and snow on the grasslands and forests in winter, etc.. We should consider how to compensate for the disadvantages, or even change disadvantages into advantages.

#### **2.4.3 Harm Due to Exploitation at Low Level and With Disorder**

Developing tourism without formulating the overall tourism development plan or implementing the plan will make the development present a disordered state, become casual and disorganized, and lack plans and consciousness, which fails to exert the maximum value of tourism resource, makes each part of tourism development unable to develop harmoniously in proportion and poses many obstacles to the future tourism development.

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### **3. THE COUNTERMEASURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL TOURISM IN NORTHEAST CHINA**

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Based on the above cognition, the Northeast region should first take S-T strategy and W-O steady strategy, and then take the growth strategy to develop the ecological tourism in Northeast China when developing a certain period.

#### **3.1 Stabilize Strategic Countermeasures**

Developing the steady strategy can prevent from the drawbacks caused by the excessively fast development,

which can keep the arrangement of personnel relatively steady, make full use of talents in different aspects and develop ecological tourism resources reasonably. It will be conducive to developing the ecological tourism in Northeast China more healthily and steadily.

#### **3.1.1 W-O Strategy**

Using favorable external opportunities and overcoming own weaknesses to better develop the ecological tourism in Northeast China.

##### **3.1.1.1 Strengthen Infrastructure Construction**

Reasonable layout and perfect hardware facilities are the key conditions for developing ecological tourism resources to make it become a scenic spot. They are also the premise and foundation to make the tourists have fun and play at ease. All kinds of facilities like various identification systems, barrier-free structures, road signs, ecological parking lots, Tourist Service Centers, etc. are all serving to rich tourism resources connotation, improve the grade, solicit and serve tourists better.

##### **3.1.1.2 Reinforce Regional Cooperation**

The three provinces in northeast China are important heavy industry bases. Most cities are lacking in the cross-region tourism entire planning and the cooperation among areas are far from enough. The ecological tourism of three provinces of Northeast China needs to solve the problem of regional collaboration. On the one hand, we need to solve cooperation between each province, and let the whole province's tourism resource become an organic integrity. On the other hand, the problem of cooperation between our province and other provinces and cities should be well resolved so as to complement each other's advantages of tourism resources and jointly form a varied ecological tourism circle. To form an ecological circle of tourism, the most important is to solve various contradictions in the development process, which the government must step in, such as repetitive construction, traffic problems, and make plans of integrating the highlights of each region's resources together to feature the three provinces of Northeast China as a whole.

##### **3.1.1.3 Strengthen the Deep Digging of Ecological Tourism Resources**

The existing resources have to be further extended by the three provinces of Northeast China. The resource characteristics of the destination should be combined from the perspective of diversity when developing ecological tourism resources. We should have the spirit of innovation in developing ecological tourism resources and can't be restricted in the traditional track. We need a large breakthrough. It should be combined with the local natural environment and not destroy the ecological environment. Further develop ecological tourism resources through adjusting measures to the local conditions and taking full advantage of the local advantages and unique conditions.

#### **3.1.1.4 Strengthen the Protection Efforts of Ecological Tourism Resources**

Current development and management of ecological tourism resources of the three provinces of Northeast China mostly depend on the governments and their tourism administrative departments. What degree ecological tourism resources will be developed to on earth mainly depends on whether the administrators and operators can manage them scientifically and operate them well or not. The ecological tourism resources are non-renewable resources. The development will cause ecological damage inevitably. The government should make corresponding regulations and have supervision and punishment for the behavior of destroying ecological tourism resources to reduce the damage level of ecological tourism resources to the minimum and make the sustainable development of ecological tourism resources possible.

#### **3.1.1.5 Strengthen Propaganda Force**

Tourism resource is only the basic condition of developing tourism products, and they must be exploited and utilized by people to become real tourism products. Expanding propaganda is an important way to pack tourism resources and increase the popularity. Various media and exhibitions should be fully utilized to promote the ecological tourism of three northeastern provinces strongly. Meanwhile, we should promote ecological tourism resources of the three provinces in northeast China out by holding activities with the characteristic of ecological tourism resources this area, and try best to enlarge the propaganda and increase advertising surrounding the topics of ecological tourism.

### **3.1.2 S-T Strategy**

Northeast Region should take advantage of its geography to develop new ecological tourism with characteristics.

#### **3.1.2.1 Coordinating Tourism Resource and Excavating Characteristic Tourism Culture**

Northeast China should absorb the successful experience of domestic and foreign countries, form a large tourism industry pattern, make overall plans for the province's tourism scenic regions, scenic spots, manage as a whole the hotels, transportation and other facilities, develop tourism souvenirs and other downstream market, manage all tourist practitioners, form a tourism industry chain, so as to truly build a bigger and stronger ecological tourism industry, making tourism popular in the off seasons, thus maintaining sustainable development.

#### **3.1.2.2 Cultivate Tourism Talents and Build Ecological Tourism Brands**

Although the exploiting efforts which are usually based on various workshops and training classes have been strengthened in Northeast China in recent years, the practitioners who have received normal junior and regular undergraduate training are rare. The northeast is supposed to strengthen the connection and cooperation with the

colleges both in and out of the provinces and the institutions of scientific research to focus more efforts on cultivating tourism talents, to speed up the pace of transformation of travel developing mode from depending mainly on resources to technology and talents. Ecological tourism helps tourists to establish right ecological views and moral values. In this respect, we can learn from Thailand's experience in the sustainable development of tourism to cultivate professional personnel in tourism, putting learning of traditional culture and ecological culture in tourism.

#### **3.1.2.3 Attach Great Importance to the Reception of Individual Tourists, Realize Intensive Development**

With the improvement of people's living standards and the enhancement of their self-consciousness, many tourists, especially young tourists prefer to independent travel or choose hotels and scenic spots by themselves. They do not like to travel with the crowd to give a hurried and cursory glance at the scenic spots, nor do they like to be hastened by tour guides. In some relatively mature tourist attractions of Thailand, individual tourists reception has formed a relatively systematic and perfect mechanism. Travel agencies, hotels, dining places, scenic spots and means of transportation make labor division and cooperation. One tour guide or a driver can offer services for several different groups of individual tourists within a day according to tourists' requirements. Moreover, their work efficiency is high, service attitude is good and the number of people they receive is high. At the same time, the individual guests' scenery visiting, arrangement of the journey, board etc. could be adjusted appropriately according to their economic condition, which are more flexible, and get more profits.

### **3.2 Growth Strategy Countermeasures**

The ecological tourism in Northeast China should "promote stability with stability" and "have progressed in stability" on the basis of "stability first", so as to boost its sustainable development. The ecological tourism in Northeast China should bring its superiority into full play, especially its unique geographical location and abundant ice-snow resources. It should also continue seizing and making use of the development of our country's important period of strategic opportunities and consolidate its surrounding environment, so as to develop the glory of the tourism industry in the Northeast China and make the ecological tourism in Northeast China turn into an authentic sunrise industry of the tourism industry in the Northeast China. Moreover, with a full knowledge of the role of the brand and a deep understanding of the connotation of the brand, carry out brand management, establish brand image, implement famous brand strategy, build a special brand of eco-tourism, enhance the popularity of eco-tourism products, increase credibility,

create core competitiveness, reinforce eco-tourism strength.

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## CONCLUSION

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Developing ecological tourism is crucial for improving the speed of economic development and promoting economic development in Northeast China, and related researches have important theoretical and practical significance. The ecological tourism resources in Northeast China are rich, and the tourism income increases. However, the tourism products are not widely recognized, and the entertainment facilities are not perfect. In view of the SOWT analysis on the ecological tourism in Northeast China, northeast area should play its advantages of abundant resources, beautiful environment, and convenient transportation; Overcome the disadvantages of depth's insufficient, of propaganda's inadequate strength, of cooperation power's scarcity, of infrastructure construction's delay, and of protection sense's lack and so on; take advantage of good political and economic opportunities, market opportunities and the center of traffic intersections; Avoid the around threat of the fast ecological tourism development, the ecological

environment with seasonality and disorder development of low level have made the ecological tourism in Northeast China grow stronger. The W-O strategy and the S-T strategy should be first taken in ecological tourism of Northeast China. After a certain period of development, growing strategic countermeasures should be taken.

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