

# The Volcanic Tourism Development Research Based on the SWOT Analysis, in Northeastern Inner Mongolia, China

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**Abstract:** The northeastern volcanic area in Inner Mongolia, relies on its unique tourism resources, tourism is booming, and has established geo-parks. On the basis of the research, this paper makes a SWOT analysis to volcanic tourism development in the region, and our study indicates that the development of deep-seated cultural factors and volcanic culture in the area, is a unique and broad prospect for the development direction, and suggests that the area united declare Global Geo-park in order to spur the development of local tourism.

**Keywords:** SWOT, Volcanic Tourism, Northeastern Inner Mongolia, Arxan, Zalantun, Oroqen

## 1. Introduction to Northeastern Inner Mongolia Volcanic Area

Volcanic area of northeastern Inner Mongolia mainly includes Oroqen Autonomous Banner, Zalantun City in Hulunbeir League and Arxan City in Xing'an League [1], located at 119°28' to 126°10' East longitude and 46°39' to 51°25' North latitude, with a total area of 8.41km<sup>2</sup>, is situated at the junction of Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang Province. The volcanic tourism zone belongs to cold temperate continental climate, annual average temperature is -3.1-0.8 °C with an annual average precipitation of 459.3-493.4mm. The area is rich in water resources with a large number of surface flow.

This area located in the east part of Tianshan-Xing'an fold system and have complex geological structure and evolution history. The Mesozoic setting belong to the Pacific tectonic domain, active zone of the continental margin and interior of the continental plate active margin[2], and Cenozoic setting mainly inherit basement fault activities which control the distribution of the Tertiary volcanos[3].The terrane of this region mainly compose of Jurassic volcanic series and Cenozoic strata.

## 2. The Current Situation of the Study Area

This area has the specific volcano-forest view and long profound culture. The beauty of hills, springs, lakes, rivers, forests and culture are sparkling here, making this area has the highest environment quality and the most appropriate place to enjoy volcano and vocation[4].

Among the development of tourism in this area, Arxan started first and built the national geo-park in 2004, and Oroqen and Zalantun started build autonomous province geo-park in 2010.

In 2012, Arxan attracted 1103.5 thousand visitors with year-on-year growth of 31.4%, and produced tourism income 1.3 billion with year-on-year growth of 33.9%. Tourism directly employed 11.056 thousand and indirectly employed 33.976 thousand. The structure of tourism products became more optimal. Based on the rich resource of volcanic springs, drinking natural mineral water are produced here and expanded its marketing in Beijing.

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In 2012, tourism in Zalantun increased stably and attracted 1938 thousand visitors and produced tourism income 1.29 billion with year-on-year growth of 12% and 25%. Overnight visitors were more than 600 thousand, tourism festival activities were brilliant, promotions were effective and tourism planning and development were carried forcefully. There are some events such as Zalantun Jinlong Mountain Skiing Festival, Yalu River Rafting Festival and the National Veneer U-Shaped Venue Championships was awarded as the classic projects of China sports tourism in 2012 by State General Administration of sports and National Tourism Administration.

Table 1: Statistics of Oroqen Autonomous Banner tourism data

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TourismVisitors (10 thousand)	4.12	5.88	6.55	7.63	10.72	13.23	16.32	18.75	21.4
Tourism Income (10 thousand Chinese Yuan)	224.7	289.2	296.3	349.4	516.59	801	1001	1156.2	2504

Note: the data is provided by Oroqen Autonomous Banner Tourism Administration

Table 1 is about the statistics of Oroqen Autonomous Banner tourism data in recent years. According to the statistics, it's not difficult to tell that since 2003 the whole banner's tourism visitors and tourism income have increased year by year, and visitors in 2011 were 27% more than in 2010 and tourist business total income increased by 38.4%. Visitors and tourism income of geo-park increased, but the increase was not so significant, which shows that the market for geo-park should be explored even deeper and more powerful and the geo-park should make its best quality tourism strategy.

Analyses above show that as the establishment of geo-park the tourism in this three areas has got a great development but not enough, especially the tourism in Oroqen, which started later. Therefore, conducting a SWOT analysis for tourism in this volcanic tourism area can provide a reference for its tourism development.

SWOT analysis is a relatively common strategic analysis and evaluation method, it's concluded through comprehensive assessment and analysis on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Threats and Challenges facing of things being analyzed. Strengths and Weaknesses are internal factors, Opportunities and Threats are external factors[5]. The important contribution of SWOT is that we could match the independent factors with the systemic thought to carry out a comprehensive analysis, making a more scientific and comprehensive plan for the corporate development.

In the international tourism research, Kerry Godfrey and Jackie Clarke made earlier SWOT analysis applications in tourism planning. Since 2002, the SWOT analysis is widely used in tourism research in China. And all those show the SWOT analysis is an effective method in tourism study.

### 3. Swot Analysis of Volcanic Tourism in Northeastern Inner Mongolia

#### 3.1. Strengths

##### 3.1.1. Rich tourism resources

There are number of natural landscapes and cultural landscapes which can not be copied here(Table 2, Table 3). The area located in the eastern section of the Tianshan Mountains to Xing'an fold system, the active area of the new tectonic movements, which are the foundation of the natural landscape in the area such as rich volcanic landscapes, granite landscapes, rivers, wetland landscapes. Volcanoes, hot springs, volcanic lake, virgin forest and the natural resources of snow and ice, are the area's preponderant tourism resources. Cultural landscape resources in the area are unique, mainly distribute "The Three Northern Less Nation": Oroqen, Daur, Ewenki, the TuoBaXianBei Cultural Sites, the Relics of the Great Wall, the construction of the facility and other sites during the Japanese invasion of China. National culture and modern civilization are in harmony, to form a strong ethnic flavor and unique folk culture, magnificent colors don modern tourism, which are all its precious tourism resources.

Table 2: Scenic spots statistics of northeastern Inner Mongolia volcanic area

Area Number	Arxan	Zalantun	Oroqen
Natural spots	24	28	32
Cultural spots	9	9	10

Table 3: Statistics of volcanic geological relics in eastern Inner Mongolia volcanic area

Area	Formative period	Volcano eruption way	Volcanic landform types(kind)	Area /km <sup>2</sup>
Zalantun	Mesozoic, Middle Pleistocene, and Late Pleistocene and Holocene	Stromboli, fissure, Maar and Plinian	14	1200
Arxan	Late Pleistocene and Holocene	Strombo, Hawaiian, Subplinian and Maar	14	800
Oroqen	Late Pleistocene and Holocene	Strombo, Hawaiian, Subplinian and Maar	11	820

### 3.1.2. Superior geographical position

There is a obvious advantageous location, a good environment for the local development. The area is situated at the junction of Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang Province, bordering north with Russia, and west with the Mongolia. Arxan is an important port city in China, located in the interchange of United Nations planning Aer and Mongolia Choibalsan railway, at the confluence of the proposed Iran-Iraq railway, and is a shortcut linking Europe and Northeast Asia.

### 3.1.3. Suitable natural environment

This area is in cold temperate continental climate zone with an average temperature 18-20 °C from July to September, where is a summer resort with abundant surface flow. Located in the mountain forests, sparsely populated, remains the original natural state. In the tourist area of northeast volcano region, is the highest environmental quality area, plus high value convalescence spa, is a leisure natural paradise with no doubt.

### 3.1.4. Broad tourist market

The Oroqen, Zalantun, Arxan, Inner Mongolia, the three northeastern provinces(Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning), and the Bohai Economic Circle are regarded as a direct source market, while taking Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan as potential markets. The number of visitors in recent years from European and Northeast Asian countries present an upward trend, the tourist market source is open.

## 3.2. Weaknesses

The tourism started late and less well-known. The three city only Arxan's tourism developed earlier, established municipal geo-park in 2002 and set out to develop the tourism industry, and established the strategy taking tourism as the leading industry. The area fell far short of its popularity with neighboring Wudalianchi Geo-park. The tourism development is still in its infancy lacking a clear-cut image on the market.

The tourism infrastructure is weak. The infrastructure can't meet the needs of tourists in the tourist season. Such as the train from Beijing to Oroqen only one column line, and there is no air route. Scenic road accessibility is not enough with low carrying capacity. Capacity is limited at all levels of hotels, which become the bottleneck restricting the development of tourism in the area, such as the Chaihe volcanic area in Zalantun, there is only one star hotel.

Tourism practitioners are not enough with lower level of professionalism. Volcanic tourism in the area is its features and classic, but there is an insufficient number of local tourism professionals, or without a tour guide. The related scenic managers don't have the specialized knowledge, when explain to tourists just with a story, it's difficult to reach the purpose of teaching within the tour.

### 3.3. Opportunity

Policy support. “Large-scale Development of the Western Region” and “Northeast Revitalization Strategy” in China, decided to increase efforts to develop the western region, focusing on the development of ethnic minority areas, and further improve infrastructure, optimize the industrial structure. Sixteenth National Congress of Communist Party of China clearly presented “develop tourism vigorously, research the northeast regional tourism development plan to strengthen the construction of tourism infrastructure, to develop a number of distinctive features and attractive tourist destination, to improve the level of management services, to establish a large northeastern barrier-free tourism zone”. Four eastern Union City in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region are included in the “Plan to Reinvigorate Northeast China”, which provided policy and fund support for northeastern Inner Mongolia integrating into the entire Northeast Region in China.

Tourism changes in consumer attitudes. With the improvement of people's living standards and increased leisure time, people saw a lot of the city's downtown, go to the virgin forest to enjoy the natural Spa, the perfect combination of today's tourism development new darling of the “sun, air, green "here, all these will undoubtedly attract tourists on different consumption levels. Therefore, the volcanic tourist area of northeastern Inner Mongolia has a higher potential market value.

### 3.4. Threats

#### 3.4.1. External competition

The development of the tourism industry has entered an era full of competition and challenges in the 21st century[6]. The continuous development of the scenic spots throughout Hulunbeier League and Xing'an League, is bound to bring a certain degree of competitive pressure. While the external competition from homogenization tourist areas such as Wudalianchi and Longgang in Jilin Province is to be a challenge.

#### 3.4.2. Internal suffering

In addition to the external pressure, there are problems inside the tourist area. The tourism is led by the government, resulted in a series of mechanism and management problems, resulted in the insufficient tourism infrastructure and capital investment, inadequate marketing campaign. The tourism development lags, severely affecting the advantage of its tourism resources into full play, can not form a good external competitive advantage.

### 3.5. SWOT matrix

Table 4: SWOT matrix

<p>External factors</p>	<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich tourism resources</li> <li>Superior geographical position</li> <li>Suitable natural environment</li> <li>Broad tourist market</li> </ul>	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not high profile</li> <li>Weak tourism infrastructure</li> <li>Insufficient tourism practitioners, lack of professionalism</li> </ul>
<p>Strategy Internal O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy support</li> <li>Tourism changes in consumer attitudes</li> </ul>	<p>SO</p> <p>Since consumers enjoy the spirit of travel, make full use of resource advantage</p>	<p>WO</p> <p>Taking boutique tourism route, improve the tourism influence</p>
<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External homogenization competition</li> <li>Tourism development mechanism problems within the tourist area</li> </ul>	<p>ST</p> <p>Develop potential markets and resources, using a variety of advantages to improve competitiveness</p>	<p>WT</p> <p>Improve infrastructure, the professional level, and enhance the competitiveness</p>

## 4. Discussion

The tourism products are to continue to provide services as time goes on, can be stored for many years in people's memories, to elevate the spirit of space with the imagination of people and meet individual needs[7]. Tourism as a new type of high-level form of social consumption, often combines the consumption of material life and cultural life organically, is an important part of the cultural industry as a green industry that

people don't have to have it but you can get this kind of cultural enjoyment. Therefore, guiding the tourism traditional model development with the development concept of the culture industry is undoubtedly a useful inspiration.

Tourism is an important branch of the cultural industry, nowadays tourism development is still at the stage simply relying on the development of natural landscapes and folk customs, develop the deep level of cultural and give its value, which are lacking in today's tourism. Enhance the development of the tourism industry to the height of the cultural industry, focusing on the enrichment and development of the "content industry", to play the engine role of cultural industry[8], and drive tourism industry positive and healthy development.

## 5. Conclusion

On the basic analysis to the northeastern Inner Mongolia volcanic tourism development, it is believed that the development of the deep-seated cultural factors and volcanic culture in the area, is a promising development direction in the long term. In addition, the area is the important distribution zone of the Quaternary volcano, which is important to research neotectonic in eastern China. In conclusion, it's necessary to take the competitive advantage to raise reputation, and to declare Global Geo-park in order to spur the development of local tourism in the whole area.

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