

## Research Article

### A SWOT Analysis of Development Strategies for Film Tourism

<sup>1,2</sup>Zi Tang

<sup>1</sup>School of Tourism and Cuisine, Harbin University of Commerce, Harbin 150076, P.R. China

<sup>2</sup>School of Environment, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, 100875, P.R. China

**Abstract:** Film tourism is a kind of tourist product combining film industry with tourism industry. Film tourism has emerged as a major research field in tourism and it is widely recognized as a driver of tourism development for many tourist destinations. This study attempted to comprehensively analyze the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats of film tourism development by SWOT analysis, aims to help understand the development status of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province of northeast China. The results open a window through which major stakeholders involved can perceive the internal and external conditions of film tourism development in Heilongjiang Province. Nine critical strategies, which are presented according to the combinations of SWOT matrix analysis, could be useful for Heilongjiang Province to promote its future development of film tourism at the strategic level.

**Keywords:** Film tourism, strategies, SWOT analysis

## INTRODUCTION

As tourism attractions, film sites, onscreen locations and scenes in film or television dramas have drawn many tourists. Film's influence on tourism has been noticeable which play an important role in shaping tourist motivations and affecting destination image and tourist visitation modes (Kim, 2012). Film tourism is often referred to as film-induced tourism (Beeton, 2005), or the so-called movie-induced tourism (Riley *et al.*, 1998), TV-induced tourism (Su *et al.*, 2011), screen-tourism (Connell and Meyer, 2009) and media-related tourism (Busby and Klug, 2001), which can be defined as "visitation to sites where movies or TV programs have been filmed as well as to tours to production studios, including film-related theme parks" (Beeton, 2005). The scope of film tourism comprises a number of different tourist forms and activities (Connell, 2012). For example, visitation to locations where filming is taking place, e.g., the 1999 filming of Notting Hill on London; visitation to special film/TV theme parks, e.g., Dae Jang Geum Theme Park in Korea and Hengdian Film Industry Park in Zhejiang Province, China; visitation to studio sites, e.g., the set of Coronation Street; visitation to film festivals, e.g., Cannes in France and Oscar Academy Awards in US.

Academic consideration of close relationships between film and tourism has been widely studied in tourism literatures. The major research themes in film tourism includes film tourism destination impacts, such as the implications of filming and film tourism activity for communities (Mordue, 2009) and local economic (Croy, 2011); tourist demand and motivation, such as

recognized the potential marketing power of film tourism (Riley and Van Doren, 1992) and motivation for film tourism (Kim and Richardson, 2003); the cultural construction of film tourism, such as cultural appropriation (Durmaz *et al.*, 2010), interplay between fictional and authentic locations in film (Butler, 2011); the film tourist experience, such as greater levels of involvement tend to create greater visitor satisfaction (Carl *et al.*, 2007), tourist performance and re-enactments through experiencing film destination (Frost, 2010); and destination image, such as perception of destination image, the role of image in decision-making through film and these impact on images and marketability of destinations (Kim and Richardson, 2003). The prospects for film tourism research can be methodological issues and legitimacy in film tourism (Connell, 2012).

During the last decades, film tourism in China has attracted scholars' attention, thus resulting in a number of research findings published in various academic journals. For example, Chen (1997) explored the relation between TV, film, film sites and tourism industry. Liu and Liu (2004) summarized the development stage and features of movie and TV tourism in China. Zhang (2006) discussed Korean tourism stimulated by Korean teleplays and gave some suggestions on the exploitation of Chinese tourism stimulated by movie and television. Wu and Song (2011) explored the development of movie-induced tourism from the perspective of industrial merging. Sun *et al.* (2012) analyzed the relationship between the movie and TV tourism motives of Tianjin residents and their travel intentions and focused on the differences of

the motives for movie and TV travels among various different demographic variables. Although the existing literature covers a wide range of film tourism, there is limited research that can be used to assist in strategically planning of film tourism in a given region.

Generally, strategic analysis and planning at the regional level can contribute to film tourism practices in three major dimensions. Firstly, it allows the government and tourist industry to understand the current situation of film tourism in the region. Secondly, it can identify main problems and provide effective measures for improvements of film tourism. Finally, the analytic results can be useful information to lead the development of film tourism in both the short-term and long-term. Therefore, this study aims at analyzing film tourism at the regional level in China. A SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis approach is applied to achieve above purposes. This study finally draws a series of strategies and responses of film tourism development in the near future with the principle of exerting strengths, avoiding weaknesses, utilizing opportunities and defusing threats. The results can provide references for the formulation of the supportive policies for film tourism development. The analysis is based on an empirical investigation of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province of northeast China.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study area:** Heilongjiang Province is located in northeast China, the location at 43°25'N to 53°33'N, 121°11'E to 135°05'E, with the total land area of 473000 km<sup>2</sup>. In 2012, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Heilongjiang Province was about 1369.16 billion Yuan with the value of the tourism industry accounting for 130.03 billion Yuan or 9.5% of that value. The number of tourism scenic spots of state A-level reached 232 which have already attracted over 253.82 million domestic and foreign tourists in 2012. Some natural and human landscapes, such as ice-snow, forests, wetlands, folk customs and European-style architecture, are increasingly appearing in the film and television programs, which not only attract many film crews' eyes, but also attract a large number of tourists. Abound natural and human tourism resources in Heilongjiang Province provide a big space for improving film tourism development.

**SWOT analysis method:** SWOT analysis method is an effective tool for investigating problems from a strategic perspective, largely used for strategic analysis process (Yuan, 2013). It was addressed for the first time in 1950 and achieved the greatest success in the early 1980s by Wehrich *et al.* (2008), a professor of management in the University of San Francisco, in order to use it for studying the competitiveness and strategies of enterprises (Sharifi, 2012; Zhao *et al.*, 2013). SWOT is the abbreviation for the capital word of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat, in which

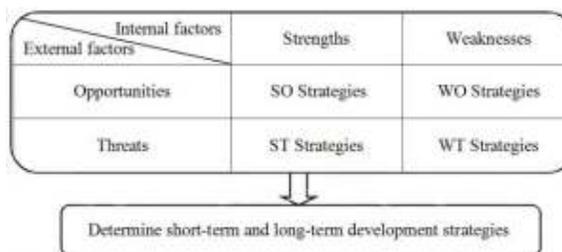


Fig. 1: The matrix of SWOT analytical frameworks

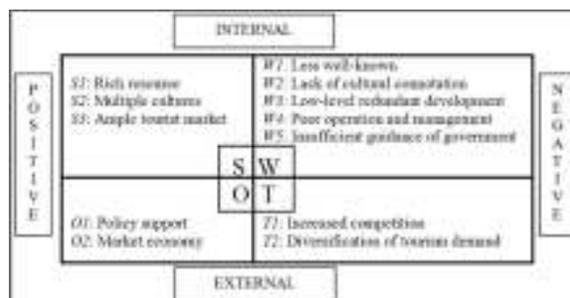


Fig. 2: Factors distribution map for film tourism development in Heilongjiang province

strength and weakness are internal factors while opportunity and threat are external factors (Wehrich *et al.*, 2008). This method is often conducted through the following steps. Firstly, the internal factors are analyzed which contain a discussion on strengths and weaknesses according to the aims of the SWOT. Secondly, the external factors are analyzed which contain a discussion on relevant opportunities and threats (Reihanian *et al.*, 2012). Finally, strategic decisions are taken for harmonizing the internal strengths with the external opportunities. Then the matrix of SWOT analysis can be constructed and is instrumental in formulation and selection of a strategy (Sun *et al.*, 2012; Sharifi, 2012) (Fig. 1).

In this study, the SOWT method was conducted to analyze the development status quo of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province. The internal conditions of the film tourism were classified as Strengths (S) or Weaknesses (W) and the external were classified as Opportunities (O) or Threats (T) (Reihanian *et al.*, 2012). Accordingly, a series of Ss and Ws and a series of Os and Ts were identified in Fig. 2.

### SWOT ANALYSIS OF FILM TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

#### Strengths:

**S1: Rich resource:** As the highest latitudes and northernmost location in China, the “north pole” and “east pole” of China are respectively in Mohe County and FuYuan County in Heilongjiang Province. “Great forest, great wetlands, great lakes, great plains, great

boundary rivers, great ice-snows, great farms, great lavas and great oil fields” are unique natural scenery of Heilongjiang Province. Due to adjacent to Russia, there are the Sino-Russian border tourism in Suifenhe City, Heihe City, Dongning County, Tongjiang City and FuYuan County. In addition, Hezhe minority, Ewenki minority, Oroqen minority and Xibo minority are the unique ethnic minorities in Heilongjiang Province. Some tourism festivals, such as Harbin International Ice-snow Festival, Harbin International Beer Festival and Mohe Aurora Polaris Festival, have the well-known popularity in international. As the representatives of folk performing arts of northeast China, Errenzhuan (a song-and-dance duet) and Yangko (a folk dance) are very popular in Heilongjiang Province. Rich resources have attracted increasing tourists and film crews for sightseeing and filming in Heilongjiang Province.

**S2: Multiple cultures:** In the process of historical development, Heilongjiang Province has formed the multicultural fusion of various cultural elements. For example, Heilongjiang River Basin and Songhua River Basin are the cradles of Sushen, Bohai and Jin Origin culture. In addition, there are “Exiled culture” since the Western Han Dynasty, “Stage culture” and “Beijing Bannermen culture” in the Qing Dynasty, “Brave the journey to the Northeast culture” created by immigrants from Shandong, Henan and Hebei Province in modern history, “European Style culture” from emigrants consisting of 33 nations in the first half of the twentieth century, “Revolution culture” represented by “Red channel” and “Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Forces”, “Reclamation culture” represented by “Northern Great Wilderness” and “Iron-man culture” in Daqing oil field. Those cultural resources provide the rich materials for the creation of film and television programs.

**S3: Ample tourist market:** Film tourism in Heilongjiang Province is in the initial stage and the tourists mainly come from the Heilongjiang Province. It has been proved by the development experience of the international leisure and tourism industry when the per capita GDP of one country or area exceeds 3000 dollars, the tourism consumption of the public will enter into a fast growth stage; when it is close to or more than 5000 dollars, the tourism consumption of the public will appear “blowout” and travel activities will be the period of transition and transformation from sightseeing to culture and leisure tourism. In 2012, GDP and per capita GDP respectively reached 1369 billion Yuan and 5657 dollars in Heilongjiang Province, which means that the public will have more disposable funds for cultural tourism. Moreover, as one of famous tourist destinations in China, Heilongjiang Province has ample tourist market. With natural, human and cultural advantages as the foundation, the attractions of film

tourism in Heilongjiang Province will greatly be enhanced through publicity once more by the films and televisions.

**Weaknesses:**

**W1: Less well-known:** Heilongjiang Province has many famous tourist scenic spots, yet, in which a few is known for film and television attractions. For instance, Weihushan Film and Television Base in Mudanjiang City is famous for “Hero in Immense Forest”, Jinhe Farm Film and Television Base in Heihe City is famous for “Brave the Journey to the Northeast” and “Educated Youths” and Wudaohuoluo Film and Television City is famous for “Heilongjiang Trilogy”. Besides, there are many minor and obscure film tourism attractions, even local tourists in Heilongjiang Province rarely known them. The smaller scale of film tourism scenic spots and the deficiency in powerful propaganda result in lack of influential brand of film tourism of Heilongjiang Province.

**W2: Lack of cultural connotation:** The product development of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province is in the low level and still remains in the traditional sightseeing level, lacking of deep excavation of the cultural connotation. The filming sites opened as tourist attractions by uncomplicated packaging design. The tourists only can skim some filming spots and view some simple performances rather than participate and experience in filming items, which reduce the attraction of film tourism. For example, Chinese Baroque District of Harbin City is famous for 100-year street, in which has filmed more than 10 film and television dramas. The development and promotion of film tourism ignore the exploration of cultural connotation, which affect the enthusiasm of tourists’ participation.

**W3: Low-level redundant development:** Construction of film tourism sites is guaranteed with the amount of funds and its overall layout should be “fewer but larger” due to the high risk in the process of operation. However, the attractions of film tourism belong to artificial landscapes with strong imitability. Therefore, some film tourism sites blindly follow the trend and lack distinguishing feature driven by short-term economic interests. For example, with the broadcast of “Brave the Journey to the Northeast II”, some locations, such as Qiqihar City, Mudanjiang City, Jiamusi City and Greater Khingan Area, built tourism attractions presented in TV drama which have stylistic similarities. Therefore, some film tourism attractions are similar in style and lack of own characteristics, which result in the problem of low-level redundant development.

**W4: Poor operation and management:** Deficiency in excellent masterminds and managers is the main reason for the slow development of film tourism in

Heilongjiang Province. Facing insufficient funds and aged equipment, management and service level of film tourism is relatively low. After completion of film tourism attractions, business managers will be confronted with many problems, such as developing characteristic tourism products, effective propaganda and improving the operation of industrial chain. Meanwhile, film tourism aims to attract tourists to purchase tourism products of sight-seeing, entertainment, shopping, catering and accommodation by means of films and television programs. However, a variety of product development of film tourism in Heilongjiang province has not been paid enough attention, the cooperation among the related departments is not fully established, which cause lack of the subsequent development of film tourism.

**W5: Insufficient guidance of government:** The film and television programs in Heilongjiang Province are relatively immature in creation and distribution system compared with other provinces. For example, the production of film and television of Hunan Province is a combination of group management and stock financing, that of Liaoning Province takes the private capital as the main body led by Zhao Benshan and those of Shandong Province and Jilin Province mainly rely on the integration of government departments. As the “pacesetter” of culture industry guiding with “Culture Development and Prosperity”, film and television industry of Heilongjiang Province should integrate excellent film talent and creative resources and focus on filming the competitive products by the government departments or enterprises, which form the resultant of film tourism development.

#### **Opportunities:**

**O1: Policy support:** In November 16, 2011, the National Tourism Bureau issued “Guidance suggestion on further accelerating the development of the tourism industry to promote the development and prosperity of socialist culture”, which emphasizes that tourism industry should has clear responsibility and play an important role in promoting the development and prosperity of socialist culture. In order to fully implement the deepening the reform of the cultural system and promote the strategic plan of cultural development and prosperity, Heilongjiang Province implemented the strategies of “Culture Flourishing Province” and “Building Province of Frontier Culture” and strived to create the competitive products of “Made in Heilongjiang” focusing on supporting cultural tourism, film and television dramas, news media, publishing and delivering, animation and game, network information and other relevant cultural industries. Heilongjiang Province actively attract the nationwide cultural institutions, writers and artists to carry out artistic creation and investment business,

cultivate the cultural fruits of movie and television, in order to achieve the purpose of promoting regional culture characteristics and create special culture brand of Heilongjiang, which can promote the development and prosperity of culture industry.

**O2: Market economy:** Film and television drama is the static tourism and tourism is the dynamic film and television programs. The good film and television programs has obvious the advertising effect which can improve a region’s popularity and influence. A region can spur the development of local economy by constructing theme tourism scenic spot according to the literatures or film and television works, e.g., the novel “Immense Forest and Snow Field” for Hailin City in Mudanjiang City, “Harbin against the Evening Sky” for Harbin City. Moreover, the exterior filming of a film crew can give impetus to local economy because there are catering, lodging and expenses ranging from dozens of people to many hundreds of people in the location. When gone out on television, film and television programs can drive up the tourism development of the location from the side by the propaganda of local natural scenery and local conditions and customs. Some provinces and cities have taken advantage of the influence of film and television dramas to drive the development of local economy. Heilongjiang Province should further enrich tourism products and seize the market opportunities for the development of film tourism.

#### **Threats:**

**T1: Increased competition:** At present, some cities have built famous cities or bases of film and television, such as Hengdian Film and Television City in Zhejiang Province, Zhenbeipu Film and Television City in Yinchuan City in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Taihu Film and Television City in Wuxi City in Jiangsu Province. Meanwhile, some regions have gained the benefits from film tourism. For example, the TV play series of “High Hanging of Bright Red Lanterns” and “Grand Courtyard of Qiao Family” have driven the “Grand Courtyard” tourism in Shanxi Province, “Lakeside of Holy Water Lake” has driven the tourism in Chagan Lake in Jilin Province and the series of “Liu Laogen” and “Rural Love Stories” have driven the tourism in Tieling City in Liaoning Province. Therefore, there are actual or potential competitors for the film tourism development in Heilongjiang Province whether through the film and television base or depending on the propaganda of film and television programs.

**T2: Diversification of tourism demand:** With the development of social economy and the improvement of people’s living standards, China has entered the era of leisure tourism of the masses. With the enrichment of tourism experience, tourists’ consumption demand is

gradually becoming diversity, tourists' consumption sense is gradually becoming maturity and tourists' consumption decision is gradually becoming rationalization. Meanwhile, the types of tourism products in Heilongjiang Province are increasing so that tourists' choice range is gradually expanding. The ice-snow tourism, wetland tourism, forest tourism, agriculture tourism and folk tourism have strongly competitive market compared with film tourism. Therefore, film tourism product in Heilongjiang Province is faced with a lot of alternation pressure.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES OF FILM TOURISM IN HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

Based on the above SWOTs analysis process, nine critical strategies for film tourism development in Heilongjiang Province can be proposed according to the basic principle of "maximizing strengths and opportunities, transforming weaknesses to strengths and minimizing threats", which is exhibited in Table 1. The following is a detailed analysis of the critical strategies and corresponding contents.

#### So strategies:

**DS1: Policy support of government:** The government of Heilongjiang Province should help the film tourism development with policy guide, development planning and industry support. Tourism Bureau of Heilongjiang Province and Culture Department of Heilongjiang Province should jointly issue the guiding opinions and formulate some policies and regulations for film tourism development, such as "Regulation of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province", "Regulation of development and admittance of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province" and so on. Meanwhile, related departments should support the development of film tourism enterprises through relaxing restrictions on the business permission and encouraging the enterprises to open up new business areas (Wu and Song, 2011).

**DS2: Creating film dramas of Heilongjiang theme:** The film tourism development of Heilongjiang Province should create film and televisions dramas of Heilongjiang theme. Jilin Province and Liaoning Province attach great importance to film and televisions dramas of rural theme, for example, TV play series of

"Lakeside of Holy Water Lake", "Field Trilogy", "Liu Laogen" and "Rural Love" has yield good economic and social returns. Abundant natural and human resources provide the rich source material of film dramas of Heilongjiang theme, such as rich ice-snow resource, unique minority nationality, strong flavors of Northeast China, European-style buildings and so on. Heilongjiang Province can invite local writers and screenwriters, well-known writers, directors, screenwriters and planning staff to here for artistic creation and stimulate their enthusiasm of creativity and filming to draw out or adapt the screenplay suit for local characteristic, which is important in giving publicity to local tourism image and promoting the film tourism development of Heilongjiang Province.

#### St strategies:

**DS3: Improving support system of human resources:** Each link in the film tourism development needs the support of human resources. Various types of talents can be introduced in the process of film tourism development using the method of the open recruitment. The relevant personnel should be regularly organized to the successful area of film tourism development to study, investigation and exchange of experience. The employees' remuneration, incentive and safeguard mechanism should be established and improved in order to stabilize the talent team of film tourism. Meanwhile, the tourism enterprise can cultivate a group of creative talents that deep love and grasp the cultural essence and connotation with characteristics of Heilongjiang Province, pay attention to attracting and fostering the cross-sectors talents of research and development and enhance the soft power of film tourism industry in Heilongjiang Province.

**DS4: Utilizing new media and high technology:** In November 2011, the series of tourism programs of "Distant Home: Travel along Frontier" on the international channel (CCTV4) of China Central Television, showed the unique natural scenery and folk customs of frontier town in Heilongjiang Province, such as Mohe County, Tongjiang City, Suifenhe City and so on. In addition, some well-known tourism programs, such as "Go as far as possible" and "Pedestrian" of Tourism TV, "Taiwanese Travel in China" and "Story

Table 1: Development strategies of film tourism in Heilongjiang province

| Internal          |                                                                   |                                                              |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| External          | S (strengths)                                                     | W (weaknesses)                                               |
| O (opportunities) | SO strategies                                                     | WO strategies                                                |
|                   | DS1: policy support of government (S1, S2, S3, O1)                | DS5: enhancing cultural connotation of film tourism (W2, O2) |
|                   | DS2: creating film dramas of Heilongjiang theme (S1, S2, O2)      | DS6: cooperation of departments (W4, O1)                     |
| T (threats)       | ST strategies                                                     | DS7: funds support of government (W5, O1)                    |
|                   | DS3: improving support system of human resources (S1, S2, S3, T1) | WT strategies                                                |
|                   | DS4: utilizing new media and high technology (S1, S2, S3, T2)     | DS8: carrying out effective promotion (W1, T1)               |
|                   |                                                                   | DS9: constructing industrial chain of film tourism (W3, T2)  |

in China” of Zhongtian TV in Taiwan and “Invite Mr. Wright” of Discovery channel in the United States, introduced and described the scenic spots of Heilongjiang Province and showed a unique tourist attraction in Heilongjiang province. In 2007, cooperated with Phoenix Satellite Television in Hongkong, Harbin TV carefully created the series of overseas publicity program of “Harbin Impression” that has aroused strong repercussions in the audience in Hongkong and Europe and the United states. Other cities, counties, villages and towns of Heilongjiang Province can also launch the similar Promo or travel programs in order to promote the development of local tourism. Moreover, with the rise of new media and the use of high technology, the creation of film and television programs is becoming more and more exquisite, which provides a new opportunity for the development of film tourism. The film enterprises should grasp the technical trend and pay attention to the content of tourism experience, such as independent film, scene experience, virtual tourism, special effects production and so on, which can enhance the tourists’ participation and then promote the film tourism development of Heilongjiang province (Wu and Song, 2011).

#### **WO strategies:**

**DS5: Enhancing cultural connotation of film tourism:** Core competence of film tourism is the cultural connotation of film and television programs. When the situation of film and television programs integrates into the location, tourism destination can form a very unique tourism theme and brand. In a deeper view, film tourism destination should analyze the tourist’s psychology from the cultural perspective, enhance film tourism into cultural height and make tourists feel heavy cultural foundation. For example, Jinhe Farm Film and Television Base give more prominence to the culture of “Brave the Journey to the Northeast”, gold washing, reclaiming wasteland and educated youths. When the TV play series of “Annual Ring”, “Brave the Journey to the Northeast” and “Educated Youths” filmed in Jinhe Farm Film and Television Base went out on television at prime time, the tourists from all over the country have be attracted to here, which effectively promote the development of local tourism industry. Therefore, other film tourism scenic spots of Heilongjiang Province should learn from the successful experience of Jinhe Farm Film and Television Base and form own unique cultural brand of film tourism.

**DS6: Cooperation of departments:** Many departments are involved in the film tourism development. The government should break the industry and regional boundaries and combine the related departments to build a development mode of film tourism of government guiding, multiple-aspect participation and

market operation. For instance, the government should promote the mutual connection and cooperation between Tourism Bureau of Heilongjiang Province, Broadcast and Television Bureau of Heilongjiang Province, Culture Department of Heilongjiang Province and departments of industry and commerce, prices, transportation, polices, health and so on. A friendly market environment can be formed by coordination and mutual help between departments, which can guarantee the healthy development of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province.

**DS7: Funds support of government:** The government of Heilongjiang Province should give certain funds support to film tourism development, such as preferential loans, tax relief and so on; on the other hand, lay down a series of favorable measures to attract outside investment and capital market intervention, which can make the social capital of finance and enterprise to flow into the cultural industry and then form a virtuous cycle. Guided by the government’s policy, some measures of attract investments, such as festival merchants, entrusted merchants, investment by friends, investment by merchants, can form a friendly investment environment of overweighting merchants, benefiting merchants and favoring merchants, so that the film tourism development in Heilongjiang Province can receive sufficient financial support.

#### **WT strategies:**

**DS8: Carrying out effective promotion:** Tourism destination should have the initiative to amplify promotion by the movie, television, radio, newspapers, books and other channels in the process of the best timing of filming and broadcasting of film and television programs and propagate and promote. For example, Zhangjiajie Scenic Area has gain good marketing effect by the film of “Avatar” (Yao and Zhou, 2012); Educated Youth Film and Television city in Jinhe Farm has received a total of nearly ten thousand tourists by TV play series of “Educated Youths” since opening in May 1, 2011. Meanwhile, tourism destination should give full play to the role of network media, establish professional website of film tourism or set up the film tourism column in Heilongjiang Tourism Information Network to introduce scenic spots of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province, recent preferential policies and the latest shooting of film and television works. Tourism destination can establish a strategic alliance with the travel agency and launch real experience version of the film tourism through the travel route design.

**DS9: Constructing industrial chain of film tourism:** In the horizontal aspect, the management department of film tourism, the producing department of film and television, government departments and other relevant

enterprises should cooperate mutually to forming a coordinated development of film tourism chain. In the vertical aspect, the film tourism functions can be extended to the upstream research and development of product and to downstream market operation and the different development strategies can be formulated in different stages for film tourism. Besides focusing on the core theme of film and television works, tourism enterprise should deep develop the “off-film products” of related derivative industries of film tourism, develop various items related to film tourism and systematically integrate them together to form a cross-sectors and compound industry chain of film tourism.

### CONCLUSION

Through carrying out a thorough SWOT analysis, the internal and external factors of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province of northeast China were clearly presented. With the rich resource, multiple cultures and ample tourist market, film tourism of Heilongjiang Province has a bright future for development. However, as it is still in the initial stage, there are many weaknesses in film tourism development, such as less well-known, lack of cultural connotation, low-level redundant development, poor operation and management and insufficient guidance of government. These weaknesses would largely hinder its future film tourism development. In the meanwhile, the national policy support and market economy provide the good opportunities for film tourism development Heilongjiang Province. Nevertheless, threats to successful film tourism are also considerable, which mainly involve increased competition and diversification of tourism demand.

Based on the combination of SWOT matrix analysis, this study proposed nine critical strategies for film tourism development in Heilongjiang Province: Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategy, Strength-Threat (ST) strategy, Weakness-Opportunity (WO) strategy and Weakness-Threat (WT) strategy. These development strategies include: DS1-policy support of government, DS2-creating film dramas of Heilongjiang theme, DS3-improving support system of human resources, DS4-utilizing new media and high technology, DS5-enhancing cultural connotation of film tourism, DS6-cooperation of departments, DS7-funds support of government, DS8-carrying out effective promotion and DS9-constructing industrial chain of film tourism. The identified SWOTs are critical in contributing to rapid and healthy development of film tourism in Heilongjiang Province. The proposed strategies could be utilized by decision-makers in Heilongjiang Province to plan its future film tourism development. Thereby it can provide be useful references for other Chinese regions which intend to develop the film tourism.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study is funded by the National Social Science Foundation of China (13BJY144) and the project of humanities and social sciences of Chinese Ministry of Education (12YJCZH295) and project of philosophy and social sciences for research and planning of Heilongjiang Province (12D051, 13D028, 13E027).

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