

# Research on the Associated Mechanism between the Development Level of Leisure Economy and Quality of Urbanization: Based on Analysis Data of the China's 31 Provinces (Cities) by SEM Model

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**Keywords:** the development level of leisure economy, urbanization quality, structural equation model, interactive coordination

**Abstract:** Based on the content, features and relevant theory research of the leisure economy system and urbanization quality system, building a conceptual model to reflect the relationship between the development level of leisure economy and the quality of urbanization of Chinese provinces, and using the exploratory factor analysis and structural equation model analysis to validate both intrinsic correlation mechanism and fitting. Studies have shown that: it is existed a synergistic and mutual promotion relationship between the development level of leisure economy and the quality of urbanization, and the influence of two systems is not balanced and effects of the various elements have differences, the elements among the system of the development level of leisure economy have relatively obvious positive correlation, and the influential effect for urbanization quality is outstanding; The internal influence of elements in urbanization quality system is relatively large, at the same time, in addition to the factor of economic urbanization quality, other factors have comparatively weak influence on leisure economy. This paper provides theoretical basis and decision reference for promoting the coupling and coordinated development between the leisure economy and new urbanization.

## 1. Introduction

Leisure economy is the product of highly developed industrial society. China leisure economy presents sustained and rapid growth with the advent of the era of leisure in the 21st century and the comprehensive transformation development of economy and society under new era background in China, and it gradually becomes momentum to promote regional economic and social transformation and upgrading. Leisure industry based on leisure tourism, culture, entertainment, sports, health and other industry gradually becomes urban functional industry. Its economic, social, ecological, culture, organization, and other functions became apparent. Meanwhile, the urbanization level plays a decisive role in the sustainable and efficient development of leisure economy as the geographical range and space carrier for leisure economy activities and the supply of leisure industry elements. However, China urbanization level still lags behind the economy development level at the current stage [1]. There are big differences and arguments about the stage, scale structure, health status, development trend, etc. of the urbanization process. Relevant scholars started from the dimensions of own development quality of urbanization, the degree of the coordinated development among elements and sustainable development level, etc. They proposed the comprehensive concept of urbanization quality to reflect urbanization advantages and disadvantages [2-4]. Theoretical support is provided in order to promote the development of China urbanization from epitaxial type to intrinsic type. Therefore, the fitting verification and mechanism analysis are carried out on the incidence relation between the regional leisure economy development level and the urbanization quality. It plays an important role in promoting the benign development of urban and rural economy and society as well as scientifically and rationally guiding the quality-oriented comprehensive and healthy development.

Many foreign scholars have made comprehensive and in-depth studies on incidence relation of leisure economy and urban development in recent years. It is mainly manifested as analysis on urban

leisure and tourism relationship, research on the significance of leisure value to urban sustainable development, relationship between the development of urban leisure service industry and urbanization construction, the synergy between urban public service management level and the quality of urban resident leisure life, etc. Gladstone systematically analyzes incidence relation of leisure and tourism in American leisure and tourism metropolis from the perspective of leisure industry development and urbanization relation based on the relationship between leisure industry development and urbanization. T Lasanta et al. made a quantitative analysis on the skiing entertainment and sports industry to further explore the positive driving effect of the leisure and entertainment industry development on the urbanization construction [5]. AF Kohler took Manchester in the UK as an example, and he proposed that the government has positive impact and comprehensive driving effect on the development of urban leisure industry by improving the urban public service management system and optimizing the public service policy of tourism, leisure and entertainment [6]. Los Angeles was adopted as an example, Gase LN et al. believed that urban residents strongly supported the construction of diversified leisure places conducive to physical and mental health. They proposed that the planning and construction of urban leisure basic environment should be reasonably and effectively integrated into the daily life of residents [7]. Qin Qianlong, Liu Jianping and Cao Xuewen respectively made a systematic analysis on the interactive relation between development process of urbanization and leisure service industry [8] and leisure recreation industry [9] in terms of the discussion on leisure economy development and urban construction incidence relation in China. Ren Yun et al. made comparative analysis and research on the development path of leisure industry in five major cities of Hangzhou, Chengdu, etc. from the perspective of leisure studies. Guo Junhua believes that leisure economy is an important link to achieve the integration of urban and rural development [10]. Zhang Guanghai et al. believe that urban leisure development level is affected by economic foundation, industrial ability, traffic location, resource conditions, policy support, residents' consumption level and other factors [11]. Lou Jiajun et al. constructed the evaluation index system of urban leisure from the four aspects of urban public foundation, industrial ability, residents' consumption ability and urban characteristic resources. They further analyzed the driving factors of the level change of urban leisure by using the methods of factor contribution rate and contribution elasticity [12].

In conclusion, domestic and foreign researches mainly focus on the promotion role of urban construction by a single factor in the development of leisure economy and the construction of urban leisure system. However, they are relatively lack of correlation verification and internal mechanism analysis of various elements between leisure economy system and urban development system. There are few empirical studies. On the basis, the structural equation model is applied in the paper to verify and measure the internal correlation mechanism between leisure economy development level and urbanization quality in 31 provinces and cities of China. Therefore, some decision-making reference can be provided for fully exerting correlation driving effect of regional leisure industry, and realizing coordinated development of leisure industry and the novel urbanization under the new situation.

## **2. Research hypothesis and conceptual model**

### **2.1 Research hypothesis**

A leisure economy system is constructed from four aspects of economic social and environmental condition, leisure resource facility development potential, resident leisure consumption demand and leisure industry service ability according to leisure economy connotation and functional characteristics, wherein economic social and environmental condition provides leisure economy development with economic foundation, social public service and ecological environmental guarantee ; leisure resource facility development potential emphasizes satisfaction of leisure consumption demand of local resident and foreign tourists and supply of leisure products, service facility, resource condition and development potential of space places. Leisure industry service ability provides leisure economy development with industry support, thereby driving organic

integration of leisure production and leisure consumption activity; resident leisure consumption demand reflects resident leisure consumption concept and will as well as resident actual consumption ability to leisure product service.

Urbanization quality refers to comprehensive level of urbanization development. Novel urbanization construction goals and requirements are coordinated to construct urbanization quality system reflecting urbanization development quality, urban and rural overall development development coordination degree and urbanization sustainable development level according to urbanization quality connotation. Wherein urbanization development quality reflect economic foundation, industry structure, technology innovation ability, resident life level, social culture level, population development level and public service perfection degree in regional urbanization development through economy development quality and social development quality; urban and rural overall development quality reflects coordinated development degree of all elements in urbanization; sustainability of urbanization development is the future development direction of urbanization quality system, sustainable development level of regional urbanization is manifested with space urbanization quality, including urban production space, life space and ecospace quality.

There is significant incidence relation between leisure economy development and urbanization quality, namely interaction nonlinearity and complexity between two systems. Meanwhile, the influence and feedback of all factors in the system are also closed connected. Firstly, leisure economy development relies on constant enhancement of multi-industry market integration of leisure industry, correlation driving development among industries, spatial agglomeration and industry service ability. Scientific and effective supply of leisure resource, service facility and leisure space is regarded as the basis for meeting leisure consumption demand of local residents and foreign tourists, and inspiring leisure consumption potential of local residents and foreign tourists as the core. Economic social and environmental condition is regarded as the necessary guarantee for leisure activities. Sustainable and rapid development of leisure economy is beneficial for improving production efficiency of all elements in the city, driving regional industry structure optimal adjustment and transformation upgrading. It has strong driving role to improvement of urbanization quality and novel urbanization construction. In addition, 'quality' and 'quantity' overall coordination is regarded as the final goal during novel urbanization development, economy development quality is the material basis and core power for urbanization development quality improvement and urban-village overall coordination development, social development quality is the result embodiment focusing on human orientation and balanced sustainable development of all elements in urbanization process, urban and rural overall coordinated development is the final goal to realize urban-rural integration, completely eliminate China urban-rural dual structure and actually realize human urbanization development [22]. However, urbanization sustainable development ability is beneficial for driving healthy, comprehensive and suitably sustained development of urbanization development quality. Meanwhile, urbanization quality improvement is beneficial for leisure infrastructure improvement and public service management system perfection, thereby providing chances for social interaction and sharing of culture value. Therefore, the following assumption is provided by combining the above related theory study in order to recognize and validate the mutual promotion synergic relationship and internal correlation mechanism between leisure economy development level and urbanization quality:

H1: Leisure resource and facility development potential has significant positive effect to resident leisure consumption demand, leisure industry service ability and sustainable development quality;

H2: Resident leisure consumption demand has significant positive effect to leisure industry service ability;

H3: Leisure economy social and environmental condition has significant positive effect to resident leisure consumption demand and leisure industry service ability;

H4: Leisure industry service ability has significant positive effect to economy development quality;

H5: economy development quality has significant positive effect to social development quality, urban and rural overall development quality and leisure economy social and environmental condition;

H6: Urban and rural overall development quality has significant positive effect to social

development quality and leisure economy social and environmental condition;

H7: Sustainable development quality has significant positive effect to economy development quality and social development quality.

## 2.2 Conceptual model

Structural equation model basic theory is adopted as the reference according to the above assumption, the inherent incidence relation conceptual model reflecting regional leisure economy development level and urbanization quality is constructed as shown in figure 1. Wherein, leisure economy development level system is composed of 4 latent variables, namely economic social and environmental condition, leisure resource and facility development potential, resident leisure consumption demand, leisure industry service ability. Urbanization quality system is composed of 4 latent variables, namely economy development quality, social development quality, sustainable development quality, urban and rural overall development quality; leisure resource facility development potential belongs to exogenous latent variables in the whole conceptual model, and the remaining variables belong to endogenous latent variables.

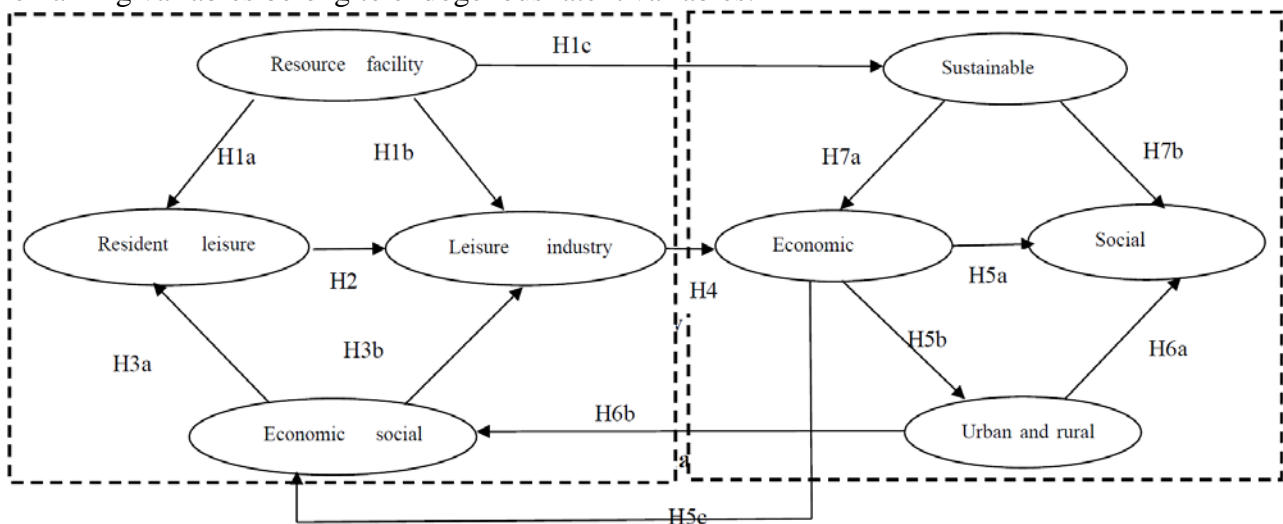


Figure 1 Internal correlation mechanism conceptual model of leisure economy development level and urbanization quality

## 3. Study sample and data analysis

### 3.1 Selection of sample and observational variable

31 Chinese provinces and cities (excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) are adopted as study samples in the paper. The relevant data reflecting leisure economy development level and urbanization quality from 2005 to 2015 is analyzed. The inherent incidences relation is determined in accordance with the principles of system, hierarchy, comparability and data availability, etc. in order to reveal the inherent incidence relation between regional leisure economy development and urbanization quality by referring to expert opinions and carrying out exploratory factor analysis. 25 observational variables are selected on the basis of 8 latent variables in leisure economy development level and the urbanization quality as shown in table 1.

### 3.2 Data source and treatment

Original data of all observational variables in leisure economy development level system and urbanization quality system are obtained from 2005-2015 China Statistical Yearbook, China Regional Economic Statistical Yearbook, China Tourism Statistical Yearbook, China Cultural Relics Statistical Yearbook, China Environmental Statistical Yearbook and statistical bulletins on national economy and social development in all provinces.

It is necessary to conduct standardization processing of the raw data of all variables in order to

eliminate the influence of observational variable order of magnitude and the dimensional difference influence on fitting analysis results, and to make it comparable with consistency. Extremum method is adopted to conduct standardized processing on the original data here. Wherein, the normalized formula for the "beneficial" (positive) variable index is shown as follows:

$Z_{ij} = (x_{ij} - x_{jmin}) / (x_{jmax} - x_{jmin})$ , normalization formula of 'cost' (negative) variable indicator is shown as follows:  $Z_{ij} = (x_{jmax} - x_{ij}) / (x_{jmax} - x_{jmin})$ . In the formula,  $x_{ij}$  is the original data of the indicator,  $x_{jmin}$  and  $x_{jmax}$  are respectively the minimum value and maximum value of the same indicator.  $i$  is sample quantity, and  $j$  is indicator quantity.

### 3.3 Reliability and validity analysis

Reliability test: the reliability analysis and validity analysis are conducted on variable data before the fitting test of incidence relation structure model between the leisure economy development level and the urbanization quality, namely the reliability and stability of the obtained data and the consistency between the measurement results and the measured content are ensured. The exploratory factor analysis in SPSS19.0 software is used for testing the reliability of the data. Cronbach 's a coefficient of 8 latent variables is between 0.742 and 0.919 in the model according to the results, which is greater than 0.7 standard (see table 1). It suggests that the observational variables in the structural model have good internal consistency, which is suitable for further verification the analysis.

Validity test: validity test is conducted on the measured content through confirmatory factor analysis. Data in table 1 shows that the factor load of all observational variables is higher than critical standard value 0.5 except leisure industry scale advantage degree (0.491) and per capita built-up area (0.458). The error variation of observational variable reaches significant level. The corresponding latent variables have strong explanation ability. The combined reliability (CR) is between 0.725 and 0.965, which is greater than the minimum standard of 0.6. The scale has good internal consistency. Average variance extraction (AVE) is between 0.475 and 0.901, which is greater than or close to (urban and rural overall development quality 0.475) 0.5, and the latent variables in the model have good convergent validity.

## 4. Model test and result analysis

### 4.1 model fitting test

The maximum likelihood method is used for estimating the parameters of variable data in the paper, and Amos 19.0 is used for path coefficient regression analysis of the model and the model fitting test. The results show that  $X^2/df=4.137$  in the absolute fitness index (belonging to the normal range between 2 and 5) <sup>[13]</sup>, GFI=0.849, which conforms to the study on its value range by Hair et al. <sup>[14]</sup>, RMR=0.02 (the fitness standard <0.05); NFI= 0.916, IFI= 0.935, CFI= 0.934 in the value-added fitness index, and all values are close to or greater than 0.900. PGFI= 0.607, PCFI= 0.566 and PNFI=0.555 in the simple fitting index, all values are greater than 0.500, and it indicates that the overall fitting result of the model is better, which can be used for testing the model hypothesis.

### 4.2 Analysis of model fitting result and intrinsic relevance

The relationship among all latent variables in the research model is basically consistent with the model assumption condition according to the assumption inspection result (see table 2) (except the influence of leisure resource and facility on space urbanization quality and the influence of space urbanization quality on social urbanization quality as negative support). Model has strong explanatory ability:

1) H1a=0.572, H1b=0.596, inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. Leisure resource is abundant and diverse, leisure space and facility are complete, which is conducive to meeting the leisure and entertainment experience demand of local residents and foreign tourists. It can better promote the deep integration and development of leisure industry and its related industries;

H1c= -0.184, inspection result is contrary to the hypothesis, which reflects that China urbanization level is relatively low and the urban leisure development is still in the initial stage at present, thereby inhibiting the realization of urban leisure ecological function. The enhancement of leisure resource and space facility development potential has no obvious driving effect on improving the comfort level of living space, improving the quality of ecological environment and promoting the improvement of urban sustainable development quality.

2) H2=0.275. Inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It is obvious that there is a certain positive correlation between resident leisure consumption demand and leisure industry ability. However, its positive correlation coefficient is not high. It reflects that the development of leisure tourism, culture, entertainment, sports and other industries and related service supporting industries is driven with the increase of China resident leisure time, leisure consumption will strengthen, increasingly strong leisure demand. However, current Chinese resident leisure consumption structure is still dominated by extensive structure. Entertainment, recreational and non-autonomous leisure consumption is emphasized. Development, intelligence and autonomous leisure consumption are ignored, thereby driving further improvement of optimal optimization role of leisure industry structure.

3) H3a=0.710, H3b=0.381. Inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It reflects the improvement of regional economic and social development level, which can promote the release of resident leisure consumption ability. The improvement of leisure consumption ability and the reasonable adjustment of leisure demand structure will further guide the optimization and upgrading of leisure products structure and leisure industry structure as well as the rapid improvement of leisure industry ability.

4) H4=0.795. Inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It indicates that leisure industry ability has a significant positive correlation with economic urbanization quality, and leisure industry development has a good guiding effect on national economic growth, especially the comprehensive deepening reform of tourism, culture, leisure education, sports fitness, media advertising, entertainment and other industries in recent years. The whole region tourism, tourism poverty alleviation, tourism and cultural integration development and other policies are proposed and effectively guided, which is more conducive to transformation and upgrading of China economic structure, thereby improving the novel urbanization economy development level.

5) H5a=0.793, H5b=0.822. Inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It reflects that social public service quality can be better optimized when urban economy development quality is gradually improved, the economic structure and industry structure become more and more rational, thereby providing good material guarantee and environmental support for the improvement of urban and rural leisure public service ability and the diversified development of operation and management modes. H5c=0.383, inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It reflects that leisure economy is the product of industrialization and leisure economy social development is the advanced model of social economy development during the urbanization process.

6) H6a=0.581, H6b=0.692. Inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It reflects that there is a relatively obvious positive correlation between urban rural overall development quality, social urbanization quality and leisure economy social environment. It reflects that major measures of 'improvement of urbanization quality, promotion of the economic structure strategic adjustment based on urbanization and urban development integrated construction' are emphasized since the 18th national congress of our country. The implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, rural targeted poverty alleviation and other measures effectively promote the process of China's urbanization and the integration of urban and rural development. Therefore, urban and rural overall development quality can be improved continuously and rapidly, thereby effectively feeding the optimization of social urbanization quality, and stimulating the continuous improvement of urban and rural leisure supply conditions.

7) H7a=0.264. Inspection result is qualified, which is consistent with the hypothesis. It indicates that there is a certain positive correlation between sustainable development quality and economic

urbanization quality. However, the positive correlation coefficient is not high;  $H7b = -0.07$ . Inspection result is qualified, which is contrary to the hypothesis. It indicates that there is a certain negative correlation between sustainable development quality and social urbanization quality. It reflects that more attention has been paid to the sustainable development ability of the urbanization in recent years. It is emphasized that the urban production space is intensive and efficient, the space is livable and comfortable, and ecospace is beautiful. The urbanization economy development quality is further optimized and improved as a result. However, it still lags behind in improving social development quality and expanding social functions of urban and rural leisure industry.

Table 2 Structure model path coefficient inspection result

Regression path	Standard deviation	Critical value	P value	Standardization coefficient	Inspection result
Resident leisure demand <--- leisure resource and facility H1a	0.082	4.007	***	0.572	Support
Leisure industry ability <--- leisure resource and facility H1b	0.104	5.799	***	0.596	Support
Sustainable development quality <--- leisure resource and facility H1c	0.173	-2.813	**	-0.184	Reverse support
Leisure industry ability <---resident leisure demand H2	0.252	3.899	***	0.275	Support
Resident leisure demand <--- leisure economy social base H3a	0.029	9.790	***	0.710	Support
Leisure industry ability <--- leisure economy social base H3b	0.032	5.480	***	0.381	Support
Economic urbanization quality <--- leisure industry ability H4	0.115	6.540	***	0.795	Support
Social urbanization quality <--- economic urbanization quality H5a	0.128	13.511	***	0.793	Support
Urban and rural overall development quality <--- economic urbanization quality H5b	0.053	10.550	***	0.822	Support
leisure economy social base <--- economic urbanization quality H5c	0.075	6.962	***	0.383	Support
Social urbanization quality <--- urban and rural overall development quality H6a	0.067	8.959	***	0.581	Support
leisure economy social base <--- urban and rural overall development quality H6b	0.116	11.998	***	0.692	Support
economic urbanization quality <--- sustainable development quality H7a	0.030	6.699	***	0.264	Support
Social urbanization quality <--- sustainable development quality H7b	0.009	-4.157	***	-0.070	Reverse support

Note:\*\*\* represents  $P < 0.001$ , \*\* represents  $P < 0.01$

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

The structural equation model is applied in the paper on the basis of trying to build leisure economy development level and urbanization quality internal relationship model. The incidence relation between them and relation and correlation mechanism among all internal factors are verified and analyzed. The conclusions are shown as follows: Firstly, leisure economy refers to a perfect compound system of urbanization quality, which is respectively composed of leisure resource facility development potential, leisure industry service ability, resident leisure consumption demand. Leisure economy social and environmental condition and economic urbanization quality, social urbanization quality, urban and rural overall development quality and sustainable development quality. All internal factors of the two systems and the systems are mutually promoted and affected, and they are manifested as significant incidence relation. Secondly, the influence coefficient between leisure economy development level and urbanization quality systems, and the coefficient among all internal factors of the systems are not balanced with certain difference. Wherein, there is a relatively obvious positive correlation between various elements in leisure economy development level system. Its elements have a prominent influential effect on the urbanization quality system, while the influence coefficient among various factors within the urbanization quality system varies greatly. Meanwhile,



economic urbanization quality has prominent and significant influential effect on leisure economy development in urbanization quality system, other factors have relatively weak influence on leisure economy development level system, thereby restricting the benign interaction and coordinated development of elements between the two systems. It shows that leisure industry service capability is strengthened continuously with the advance of comprehensively deepening reform and transformation and development of China economy and society in the new era on the one hand. China current urbanization development is still in the initial stage, so the novel urbanization development strategy should be promoted more actively and steadily on the other hand, and the transformation of China urbanization from epitaxial type to intrinsic type and the healthy, comprehensive and rapid development of the urbanization should be accelerated. Meanwhile, leisure industry correlation driving effect will be given full play to expand the optimization space of the urbanization quality, and the coupling effect will be better played through the coordinated development thereof so as to achieve the coordinated and unified construction of the leisure economy and the novel urbanization in China provincial regions as well as low-carbon, circular and sustainable development.

### **Acknowledgments**

This work was financially supported by Shandong social science planning research project “The research on the rural tourism development of intangible cultural heritage of the inheritance and protection in shandong peninsula urban agglomerations”

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Table 1 Analysis results of model variable, reliability and validity

System	Latent variables	Observational variable	Standardized load	Cronbach's a coefficient	Average variance extract content (AVE)	Combination reliability (CR)
Leisure economy Development level (L)	Economic social and environmental condition (L1)	Per capita GDP (L11)	0.978***	0.919	0.901	0.965
		Internet users per ten thousand people (L12)	0.925***			
		Per capita environmental pollution improvement investment (L13)	0.945***			
	Resource facility development potential (L2)	Leisure resource and facility richness (L21)	0.531***	0.710	0.535	0.768
		Leisure resource and facility aggregation degree (L22)	0.911***			
		Leisure resource and facility attraction (L23)	0.703***			
	Resident leisure consumption demand (L3)	Resident leisure consumption potential (L31)	0.957***	0.739	0.538	0.767
		Resident leisure consumption will (L32)	0.575***			
		Resident leisure consumption level (L33)	0.606***			
	Leisure industry service ability (L4)	Leisure industry performance (L41)	0.792***	0.786	0.587	0.780
		leisure industry scale advantage (L42)	0.491***			
		Interaction of leisure industry and economic growth (L43)	0.944***			
Urbanization quality (U)	Economy development quality (U1)	Proportion of non-agricultural industry added value in GDP (U11)	0.720***	0.778	0.606	0.821
		Proportion of R&D appropriation expenditure in GDP (U12)	0.872***			
		Proportion of local financial revenue in GDP (U13)	0.734***			
	Social development quality (U2)	Urbanization rate (U21)	0.902***	0.850	0.620	0.862
		Public traffic quantity per ten thousand people (U22)	0.575***			
		Library book quantity per ten thousand people (U23)	0.641***			
		Per capita social consumables retail sales (U24)	0.961***			
	Urban and rural overall development quality (U3)	Urban and rural resident per capita disposable income ratio (U31)	0.766***	0.776	0.475	0.725
		Urban and rural resident per capita consumption expenditure ratio (U32)	0.751***			
		Urban and rural resident thousand-people doctor ratio (U33)	0.523***			
	Sustainable development quality (U4)	Per capita public road area (U41)	0.871***	0.742	0.512	0.748
		Per capita built-up area (U42)	0.458***			
Per capita park green area (U43)		0.754***				

Note: \*\*\* represents  $P < 0.001$