sustainability

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The Economic Governance Capability of the Government and High-Quality Development of China's Tourism Industry

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Abstract: The economic governance capacity of local government in China is instrumental in fostering tourism development quality and sustainability from the aspects of leading resource allocation, maintaining market fairness, and promoting enterprise innovation, yet this important aspect has received limited attention in present research. China's tourism development quality is evaluated in five dimensions in this study: innovation, greenness, coordination, openness, and sharing. Employing a fixed-effects model with data from 2000 to 2019 for 30 Chinese provinces, the paper empirically tests the influence of government economic governance capacity on the tourism development quality. Our findings reveal several key insights: (1) The economic governance capacity of the government significantly contributes to enhancing the tourism development quality. (2) It is shown in the regression results of the sub-indexes of the government's economic governance capacity and tourism development quality that the innovative development and green development of the tourism industry can be accelerated strongly by the government's economic governance capacity, while tourism development quality can be improved significantly by the development of non-state-owned economy, the development of factor market, the development of market intermediary organizations, and the legal system. (3) It is shown in mechanism analysis that the government's economic governance capacity can stipulate regional competition, industrial structure upgrading, improve the level of informatization, and eventually improve tourism development quality. This comprehensive analysis sheds light on the intricate relationship between local government economic governance capacity and tourism development quality, offering a novel research perspective and valuable reference points for policymakers and scholars engaged in the analysis and construction of sustainable tourism development strategies.

Keywords: economic governance; high-quality development; tourism industry; innovative development; green development

Citation: Zhang, H.; Xia, Z.; Zeng, Z. The Economic Governance Capability of the Government and High-Quality Development of China's Tourism Industry. *Sustainability* **2024**, *16*, 7370. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16177370

Academic Editor: Seul Ki Lee

Received: 8 July 2024
Revised: 23 August 2024
Accepted: 24 August 2024
Published: 27 August 2024

1. Introduction

China's tourism industry has gone through a booming period and has become a new engine for China's sustainable economic growth. The latest statistics released by the National Tourism Administration (NTA) in 2022 indicate that the number of domestic tourists in China reached 5.597 billion, generating a substantial total revenue of RMB 6.63 trillion yuan. This monumental achievement contributes a significant 11% to China's GDP and fosters over 12% of the nation's employment, underscoring its pivotal role in the economy. China's tourism industry is about to enter a new period of prosperity with the combined development of smart tourism and scientific and technological innovation. Nevertheless, amidst this rapid progression, lingering challenges persist, including the uneven development of regional tourism economies, the sluggish transformation of industrial structures, and the inefficiency of resource utilization. These issues have emerged as paramount barriers impeding the tourism sector's transition towards high-quality development [1–4].

The issue has reached a critical point and requires urgent resolution on how to solve the above problems and promote the expansion of tourism from quantity to quality effectively.

The economic governance capacity of the government is mainly embodied in creating an environment conducive to economic development in order to more effectively utilize the pivotal function of the market in the distribution of resources [5,6].According to the theory of national competitive advantage [7] the enhancement of the economic governance capacity of the government constitutes a pivotal factor in the advancement of industrial development. On one hand, through implementing active and effective industrial policies, the government creates a market environment conducive to fair competition for firms, improves problems of misallocation and price distortion that arise from market failure, and provides policy guarantees for industrial development. On the other hand, the improvement on the economic governance capacity of the government helps to allow the market to play a dominant role in the allocation of resources and promotes the transformation of the industry from extensive to intensive, thus realizing the optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure [8].

What role does the government's economic governance capacity play in tourism development quality? This study employs provincial data from 2000 to 2019 for an empirical test. First of all, in light of the existing literature, the paper constructs the provincial-level evaluation index system for the high-quality development of tourism and the marketization index, which are used to measure the tourism development quality and the government's economic governance capacity of each province, respectively. The empirical evidence indicates that the economic governance capacity of the government is instrumental in the advancement of high-quality tourism development. The results are still robust when the measurement model is changed, the control variables are added, and the instrumental variable is used. Secondly, the economic governance capacity of the government mainly affects the quality of tourism development through three mechanisms: strengthening regional competition, upgrading industrial structures, and improving the level of informatization. Finally, heterogeneity analysis shows that the economic governance capacity of the government has differentiated effects on tourism development quality due to different regions, digital development levels, and tourism resource endowments. Through rigorous empirical research, the paper aims to provide a scientific basis and reference for the quality development of China's tourism industry from the perspective of government economic governance.

The marginal contributions of this paper are as follows. First, it enriches the literature on the influencing factors of high-quality development of tourism. Most of the existing literature tests its impact on the tourism development quality from the perspectives of institutional quality, tourism resource endowment, cultural and tourism integration, and urban–rural integration, while this paper innovatively examines its impact from the perspective of the government's economic governance capacity. Second, it enriches the literature on the measurement of high-quality tourism development indicators. On the premise of grasping the connotation of high-quality development, the paper integrates the availability, rationality, and representativeness of statistical measurement and builds on existing research to construct an evaluation system with the new development concepts of innovation, coordination, green, openness, and sharing.

2. Literature Review

This paper is directly related to the following two parts. The first part of the literature review summarizes the basic connotation of economic governance capacity and discusses its impact on economic development; the second part studies the influencing factors of the high-quality development of tourism.

Williamson believed that different types of organizations should choose different contract structures and corresponding governance mechanisms [9], and his theory has also become one of the theoretical sources of governance theory. The rule of law is closely related to the national governance system and governance capacity, and the rule of law

is the basic form of national governance [10]. The modernization of national governance should at least reform the relationship among the government, society, and citizens on both ideas and behaviors [11] Government governance is different from specific government behaviors such as government policies and revenue and expenditure as operational results, and it is more inclined to refer to the process, method, and system of government power operation [12]. As an important aspect of institutions, the process and method of government governance have certain path-dependent characteristics [13]. Different from other aspects of governance, economic governance emphasizes the application of economic theory in the governance process [5]. As an important part of national governance capacity, economic governance capacity is usually summarized as the ability of the government and the market to regulate economic subjects [14]. The government's economic governance capacity is mainly reflected in creating an environment conducive to economic development so as to better play the decisive role of the market in allocating resources [6].

Economic governance capacity plays an important role in improving the quality of economic development. Fang and Ma [15] pointed out that there were obvious inter-provincial differences in high-quality development and advocated that regions should follow the path of distinctive economic governance according to their own economic realities. Kraay and Kaufmann [16] emphasized that higher economic output does not mean that the level of governance will be naturally improved, and on the contrary, the improvement of governance capacity has a more significant positive effect on economic development. Zhang and Wang [13] constructed a governance index to study the relationship between governance capacity and output and found that the impact of governance capacity on economic output varied significantly in different income stages, with the high-income stage roughly twice that of the low-income stage.

It is found in the literature review that significant research has been made on the influencing factors of tourism development quality in depth. First, the institution. Zhang indicated that there are a series of practical problems, such as imperfect systems and mechanisms and poor tourism experiences, in the high-quality development of China's tourism industry and argued that institutional design is vital to the governance of tourism in its high-quality development [17]. Liu and Han saw the institutional environment as a guarantee factor for the high-quality development of the tourism economy, and the quality of the institution is not only closely linked to the level of quality and efficiency of the tourism industry but also has a significant influence on the effectiveness and sustainability of the changes in the factor structure [1]. Second, the endowment of tourism resources. Tan and Sun studied the cross-section data of 38 countries in the world, 31 provinces and regions in China, and 14 regions in Xinjiang and found out that tourism development is positively linked with the abundance of tourism resources, which can promote tourism development quality [18]. Li et al. found that resource endowment is a crucial basic condition for the high-quality development of the tourism economy through their study of the spatial distribution characteristics of high-quality tourist attractions in the Yellow River Basin [19]. Third, the integration of culture and tourism. Liu analyzed the current situation of the development of cultural industry and tourism and found that there is a strong interdependence between culture and tourism, and cultural and tourism integration represents a significant avenue for the attainment of superior standards of tourism development and proposes to improve the integration of culture and tourism [20]. Xu et al. also believed that the integration of culture and tourism has become a significant factor in the advancement of cultural tourism. The extent of integration is a key element in the promotion of high-quality global tourism development [21]. Fourth, urban–rural integration. A study conducted by Wang et al. utilizing data from China's provincial panels over the past decade revealed that urban–rural integration has a positive impact on the high-quality development of the entire tourism economy [22].

To sum up, detailed analysis on the influencing factors of tourism development quality is conducted from various aspects in the existing literature, yet few studies have focused on the impact of the economic governance capacity of the government. In addition,

the existing literature mainly studies from the standpoint of institutions, resources, and culture, but few have focused on the market's role in improving tourism development quality. In light of the present research literature, the paper systematically tests the causal relationship of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality and its mechanism by constructing an evaluation index system for high-quality tourism development. This study not only helps to enrich the literature in the field of tourism development quality but also supports promoting a better combination of effective government and efficient markets.

3. Variable Selection and Data Description

3.1. Model Setting

We use Equation (1) to test the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on the quality of tourism development:

$$TQ_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 GC_{it} + \alpha_2 X_{it} + \mu_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

In the equation, the explained variable TQ_{it} represents tourism development quality in province i in year t. The explanatory variable GC_{it} is the proxy index of the government's economic governance capacity. α_1 is the coefficient value that we focus on, representing the degree of influence of the economic governance capacity of the government on tourism development quality. X_{it} represents a number of control variables, including the level of economic development, R&D density, the degree of openness to the outside world, the level of transport infrastructure, and the degree of government intervention. These control variables are related to independent variables and dependent variables, but there is no causal relationship with the explanatory variable of the government's economic governance capacity. Therefore, we select the above five indicators as control variables. μ_i is the provincial fixed effect, and ε_{it} is the random disturbance term.

3.2. Variable Selection and Measurement

3.2.1. Explained Variable

Quality of tourism development (TQ). To comprehensively build a modern socialist country, China's primary goal is to achieve high-quality development. Tourism is a strategic pillar of the national economy, exhibiting characteristics of high correlation, extensive coverage, and considerable pull. The relationship between tourism and social and economic development is reciprocal [23], and promoting sustainable tourism development requires a combination of political culture, infrastructure, environment, and other multiple factors [24]. The advancement of tourism to a superior standard is of paramount importance in meeting the evolving expectations of the public for an enhanced quality of life and in stimulating the driving force of domestic demand [25]. Simultaneously, high-quality development is the development that reflects the new development concept, which includes innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development. Tourism has a high level of marketization, few internal constraints, and a high level of integration with other industrial sectors, which has the endogenous characteristics of implementing the new development concept [26]. On the premise of grasping the connotation of high-quality development, we integrate the availability, rationality, and representativeness of statistical measurement and, in light of the extant research, construct an evaluation system aiming at the new philosophy of innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development. The specific content is shown in Table 1.

In order to measure the score of tourism development quality, it is essential to empower each indicator, and different weights will directly affect the measurement results. Weighting methods can be classified into two categories: subjective weighting method and objective weighting method. Given the potential for measurement bias in subjective weighting methods due to human factors, this paper employs the objective weighting method, specifically the entropy method, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the weighting

process. Once the index weights have been obtained, this paper employs the topsis method to evaluate the quality of tourism development in each province [4], and the entropy-topsis method results are the quality of tourism development in each province from 2000 to 2019.

Table 1. The evaluation index system of high-quality development of tourism.

System Layer	Subsystem Layer	Indicator Layer (Nagative/Positive)
Innovative development	**Innovation driving capability**	Total factor productivity (+)
		Tourism patents (+)
	Digital capability	Internet penetration rate (+)
		Mobile phone penetration rate (+)
Coordinated development	**Within the tourism industry**	Rationalization of the structure (−)
		Upgrading of the structure (+)
	Tourism industry and external environment	Tourism-economic density (+)
Green development	**Ecological environment**	Proportion of nature reserves (+)
		Domestic wastewater treatment rate (+)
		Solid waste treatment rate (+)
	Low-carbon development	Tourism industry CO_2 emission (−)
Open development	**Inbound tourism development**	Share of foreign tourist flow (+)
		Tourism-earning foreign exchange (+)
Shared development	**Shared resources**	Number of parks (+)
		Number of museums (+)
		Number of art performance venues (+)
	Shared outcomes	Per-capita tourism income (+)

("+" means higher values indicate better tourism quality; "−" means higher values indicate worse tourism quality).

3.2.2. Explanatory Variable

Government economic governance capacity (GC). Since the economic governance capacity of local governments is usually reflected in the degree of marketization, the paper uses the marketization index constructed by Fan et al. [27] to measure the government's economic governance capacity. The marketization index includes five aspects, namely, the relationship between government and market, the development of non-state-owned economy, the development degree of the product market, the development degree of factor market, the development of market intermediary organization, and the legal system [27].

For the calculation of the marketization index, this paper defines the maximum and minimum values of the positive indicators in the base period as 10 and 0 points, respectively (the negative indicators are 0 and 10 points, respectively), and determines the scores according to the relative position of the index values and the maximum and minimum index values of the base period in each province, so as to form the corresponding basic index. Several basic indexes are synthesized into the upper-level sub-index or aspect index, and five aspect indexes are synthesized into the overall marketization index. The marketization index thus formed reflects the relative marketization process of different provinces, with the base year as the standard.

3.2.3. Control Variables

Referring to the research of Zhang and Xing [28] and Wu et al. [29], the set of control variables X_{it} includes the following variables (Table 2): (1) Economic development level (economic development), which is expressed as the logarithm of GDP per capita. The improvement of the economic level can promote infrastructure construction, attract the aggregation of capital, technology, and labor factors, and contribute to tourism development quality [30]. (2) The intensity of research and development (R&D intensity), which is expressed as the ratio between internal R&D expenditure and GDP. R&D and innovation contribute to tourism service facilitation, smart tourism management, and diversified tourism formats, thus promoting tourism development quality [31]. (3) The degree of openness to the outside world (opening), which is expressed as the ratio of the product

of the total volume of imports and exports of goods and the exchange rate of the dollar against the RMB to GDP. The improvement of openness helps to absorb foreign capital and advanced technology, as well as introduce management experience, thus promoting the upgrading of tourism structures [32]. (4) The level of transport infrastructure (transport infrastructure), which is expressed by the logarithm of road mileage. The improvement of transportation facilities can make scenic spots more accessible, improve tourists' travel experiences, reduce travel costs, bring a wider source of tourists and more efficient operation efficiency for tourism, effectively expand the tourism market, and thus promote the sustainable and healthy development of tourism [33]. (5) The degree of government intervention (government intervention), represented by government spending as a percentage of GDP. Government financial support is conducive to increasing tourism publicity in scenic spots, improving the service level of scenic spots, and promoting the development of tourism in a more sustainable direction.

Table 2. Main variables and definitions.

	Variables	Definitions
Explained variable	TQ	The evaluation index system of high-quality development of tourism, see Table 1
Explanatory variable	GC	Index of marketization
Control variables	Economic development	Ln (GDP per capita)
	R&D intensity	Internal R&D expenditure/GDP
	Opening	(Total import and export volume of goods × the exchange rate of the dollar against the RMB)/GDP
	Transport infrastructure	Ln (road mileage)
	Government intervention	Fiscal expenditure/GDP

3.3. Data Source and Processing

This paper employs a sample comprising data from 30 provinces (with the exception of Xizang, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan) collected between 2000 and 2019. Since the tourism industry in 2020–2021 is greatly affected by COVID-19 prevention and control, the data from 2020 to 2021 are not used in this paper. The data sources employed in this study are classified into three principal categories: statistical yearbooks, databases, and web pages. The statistical yearbooks mainly include China Statistical Yearbook, China Tourism Statistical Yearbook, China Cultural Relics and Tourism Statistical Yearbook, China Environment Statistical Yearbook, and China Regional Economy Statistical Yearbook. The main databases are the EPS database, China Economic Network, and incoPat database. The webpage collects relevant public information from authoritative departments and local governments.

3.4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are conducted on explained variables, explanatory variables, and control variables. Table 3 illustrates that the mean value of the government's economic governance capacity is 6.9015, and the median is 6.9370. This suggests that the level of marketization across all provinces is moderate. The mean of tourism development quality is 0.0956, and the median is 0.0850. This suggests that tourism development quality is satisfactory. In addition, the distribution of the mean and median is not obviously unreasonable.

Table 4 describes the time trend of the mean and median of the government's economic governance capacity and tourism development quality from 2000 to 2019. Based on this, we can preliminarily speculate that there is a positive correlation between the government's economic governance capacity and tourism development quality.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of variables.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Observation
TQ	0.0956	0.4440	0.0355	0.0850	0.2443	600
GC	6.9015	2.0628	2.5145	6.9370	11.1085	600
Economic Development	9.1691	0.5199	8.1068	9.1039	10.5778	600
R&D intensity	0.0134	0.0106	0.0020	0.0104	0.0595	600
Opening	0.3036	0.3719	0.0348	0.1309	1.6151	600
Transport Infrastructure	11.3405	0.9025	9.0499	11.5961	12.6305	600
Government Intervention	0.2041	0.0937	0.0805	0.1844	0.5811	600

Table 4. The mean and median of the economic governance capacity of the government and the high-quality development of tourism.

Year	GC Mean	GC Median	TQ Mean	TQ Median
2000	4.3591	4.2465	0.0611	0.0520
2001	4.6026	4.2355	0.0615	0.0548
2002	4.9889	4.5150	0.0697	0.0558
2003	5.4770	4.9075	0.1123	0.1104
2004	6.0426	5.5385	0.0649	0.0483
2005	6.5924	6.4175	0.1636	0.1573
2006	6.9747	7.0060	0.0737	0.0585
2007	7.1833	7.0810	0.0691	0.0529
2008	6.9638	6.7220	0.0788	0.0647
2009	7.0788	6.9190	0.0745	0.0601
2010	7.0871	7.1865	0.0850	0.0688
2011	7.0488	7.0985	0.0862	0.0694
2012	7.2331	7.1205	0.1374	0.1278
2013	7.6416	7.6985	0.0957	0.0840
2014	7.8973	8.0500	0.0930	0.0782
2015	8.0381	8.3455	0.1006	0.0844
2016	7.8463	8.1570	0.1062	0.0931
2017	8.2148	8.4395	0.1103	0.0938
2018	8.4060	8.6490	0.1167	0.1031
2019	8.3533	8.6785	0.1518	0.1414

Figures 1 and 2, respectively, depict the mean values of tourism development quality and marketization index in all provinces of China (with the exceptions of Xizang, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan). Figure 1 illustrates that the six provinces with the highest quality of tourism development are Guangdong, Shanghai, Beijing, Hainan, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu, while there is little difference in tourism development quality in other provinces. Figure 2 illustrates the considerable variation in the degree of marketization across Chinese provinces, among which the six provinces with the highest marketization degree are Shanghai, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Fujian, and Tianjin. Combining Figures 1 and 2, we find that the provinces with a higher quality of tourism development and a higher degree of marketization are all in the eastern region of China.

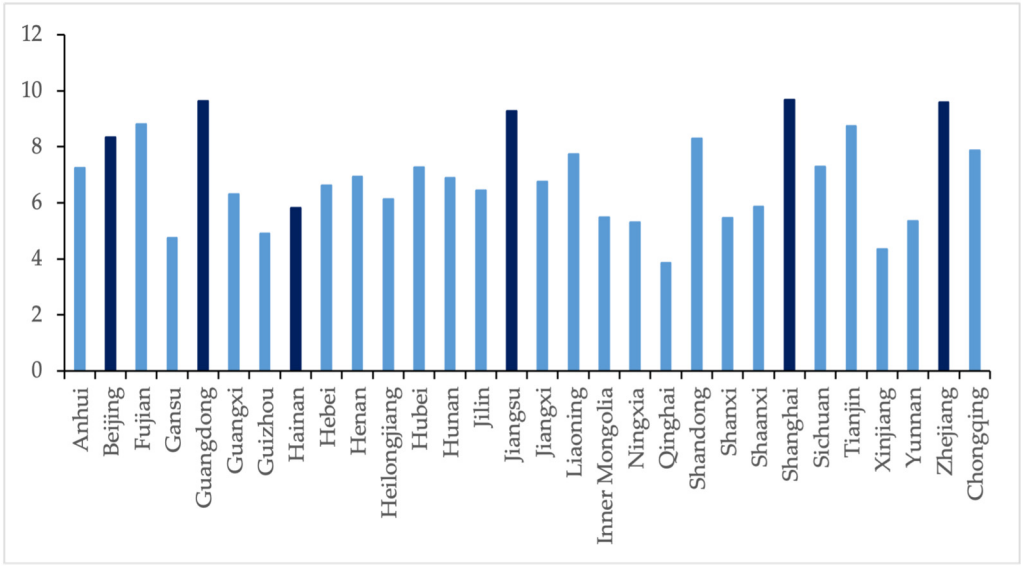

Figure 1. Mean value of tourism development quality.

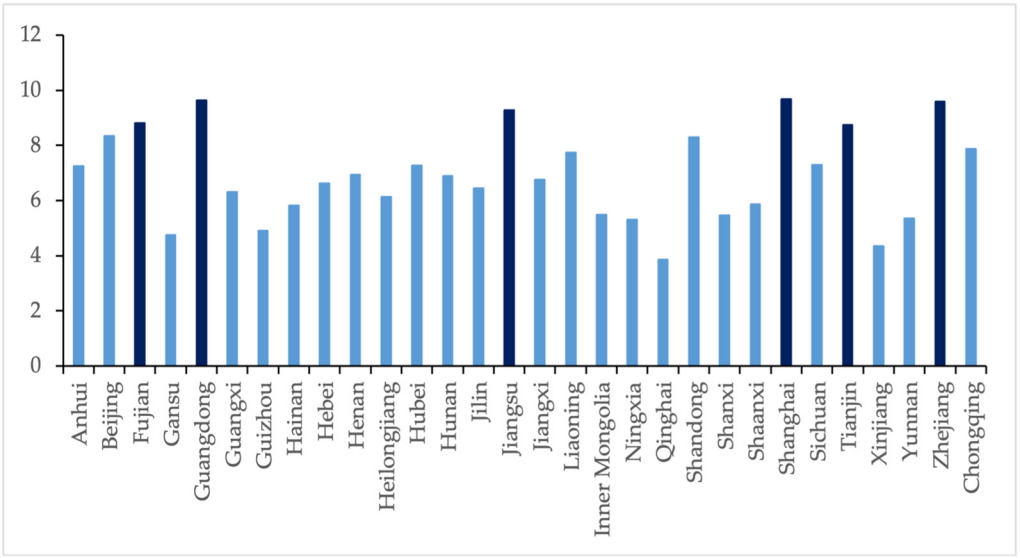

Figure 2. Mean value of marketization index.

4. Results

4.1. Basic Regression Results

We employ Equation (1) to assess the influence of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality. The findings are presented in Table 5. In the regression process, this paper gradually controls the control variables and fixed effects. Column (1) shows the regression results for the evaluation system indicators of high-quality tourism industry development as the explained variable, without adding control variables and provincial fixed effects. The result shows that the estimated coefficient of GC is significantly positive at the 1% level, indicating that there is a significant incentive effect of government economic governance capacity on the quality of tourism development. In this paper, provincial fixed effects and control variables are gradually added to columns (2) and (3), and it can be found that the regression coefficients of explanatory variable GC are 0.0105 and 0.0107, respectively, both of which are significant at the level of 1%. The economic meaning of the GC regression coefficient in column (3) is that for each standard deviation increase in the economic governance capacity of the government, the quality of

tourism development will increase by 4.97%. This means that the stronger the government's economic governance, the better the quality of tourism development.

Table 5. Impact of the economic governance capacity of the government on the quality of tourism development.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)
	TQ	TQ	TQ
GC	0.0110 ***	0.0105 ***	0.0107 ***
	(13.30)	(9.62)	(5.09)
Controls	No	No	Yes
Province FE	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	600	600	600
Adjusted R^2	0.2649	0.5505	0.6019

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level.

We argue that the economic governance capacity of the government can achieve sustainable development of China's tourism primarily through rationally guiding resource allocation, maintaining fair market competition, and promoting innovation in tourism enterprises. On one hand, with the enhanced synergy between an efficacious market and an active government caused by the enhancement of the government's economic governance capacity, the tourism industry can rationally allocate resources in the market by developing new tourist attractions, improving tourism infrastructure, and providing tourism-related services, thus realizing sustainable tourism development. On the other hand, the improvement of the government's economic governance capacity can effectively reduce the extent of government involvement in economic activities and ensure free and fair market competition. In a competitive environment, tourism enterprises will continue to perform process innovation and product innovation, in turn promoting the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Next, we further provide a more detailed examination of the impact of the economic governance capacity of the government on the sub-indicators of tourism development quality, namely, innovation, coordination, green, openness, and sharing, and the impact of the five secondary indicators under the marketization index on tourism development. In Table 6, the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on innovation and green is significantly positive at the level of 1%, while the impact on coordination, openness, and sharing is not significant. The reasons why the government's economic governance capacity can significantly promote innovation and green development are as follows: Firstly, the improvement of the economic governance capacity of the government represents the improvement of marketization and the improvement of market competition environment, and in a healthy market environment, the tourism sector will increase innovation and research and development and promote tourism development quality through the introduction of new technologies, new patterns, new services, and new products [34]. Secondly, the improvement of the government's economic governance capacity is conducive to promoting the deepening reform of the tourism industry in order to realize the green development of the tourism industry. In addition, the reason why the economic governance capacity of the government is negatively correlated with openness is that openness focuses on solving the internal and external linkage problems of development, while the government's economic governance capacity is usually reflected in the degree of marketization, so it is difficult to have a positive and significant impact on openness. In Table 7, the estimated coefficient of the development of non-state-owned economy is 0.0061, the estimated coefficient of the development degree of factor market is 0.0060, and the estimated coefficient of the development of market intermediary organizations and legal system is 0.0067, all of which are significantly positive at the level of 1%. The above results show that the better the development of non-state-owned economy, the higher the

development degree of factor market, the better the development of market intermediary organizations and the legal system are, and the higher the quality of tourism development will be.

Table 6. Impact of the government's economic governance capacity on the sub-indicators of tourism development quality.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Innovation	Coordination	Green	Openness	Sharing
GC	0.0289 ***	0.0028	0.0074 ***	0.0016	0.0056
	(5.49)	(1.56)	(3.72)	(0.41)	(1.00)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	600	600	600	600	600
AdjustedR^2	0.2696	0.2991	0.9838	0.9171	0.6635

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level.

Table 7. Impact of sub-indicators of the government's economic governance capacity on the quality of tourism development.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)
	TQ	TQ	TQ
Development of non-state-owned economy	0.0061 ***		
	(4.50)		
Development degree of factor market		0.0060 ***	
		(5.80)	
Development of market intermediary			0.0067 ***
Organizations and the legal system			(9.27)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	600	600	600
AdjustedR^2	0.5946	0.6131	0.6194

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level.

4.2. Robustness Test

In order to guarantee the reliability of the empirical findings, we employ the following methods for a robustness test.

First, change the measurement model. Considering that there may be spatial effects on the high-quality development of tourism, we use the spatial Durbin model (SDM) for regression estimation. The specific model is as follows:

$$TQ_{it} = \rho WTQ_{it} + \beta_1 GC_{it} + \beta_2 WGC_{it} + \beta_3 X_{it} + \mu_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

where TQ_{it} is the tourism development quality of province i in year t. ρ represents the spatial lag coefficient. W is the spatial weight matrix. GC_{it} is the economic governance capacity of the government of province i in year t. β_1 is the coefficient value that we focus on, which represents the degree of influence of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality. The remaining variables are in alignment with the preceding ones. The results presented in column (1) of Table 8 demonstrate that the coefficient of the explanatory variable GC is significantly positive, thereby confirming the robustness of the basic regression results.

Table 8. Robustness test results.

Variables	(1)	(2)
	TQ	TQ
GC	0.0022 **	0.0053 ***
	(2.18)	(3.60)
Controls	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	600	600
AdjustedR^2	0.3359	0.6213

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** and ** represent the significance level of 1% and 5%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level.

Second, add control variables. On the basis of the basic regression model, this paper further controls the social consumption level (social consumption), urbanization level (urbanization), and human capital level (human capital) for robustness analysis. The result in column (2) shows that the direction and significance of the coefficient of explanatory variable GC remain consistent with those of the basic regression, even with the addition of new control variables.

4.3. Endogeneity Problem and Treatment

The relationship between the economic governance capacity of the government and tourism development quality may have a problem of reverse causality; that is, the economic governance capacity of the government is both a cause and an influence on tourism development quality. In order to alleviate the regression bias caused by this reverse causality, we use instrumental variables to estimate parameters. We select the one-period-lagged government economic governance capacity as an instrumental variable to examine the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality. Table 9 reports the instrumental variable regression results. The first-stage regression results of the instrumental variable test show that the estimated coefficient of the instrumental variable GC_lag is statistically significant, which satisfies the correlation condition of the instrumental variable. The regression results of the second stage show that the estimated coefficient of GC is significantly positive, that is, the government's economic governance capacity significantly promotes the quality of tourism development, which fully demonstrates the robustness of the conclusion of this paper.

Table 9. Regression results of instrumental variable.

Variables	(1)	(2)
	The First Stage	The Second Stage
GC		0.0095 ***
		(2.89)
GC_lag	0.7992 ***	
	(28.92)	
The first stage F value	836.62 ***	
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	20.304 ***	
Cragg–Donald Wald F statistic	972.219 ***	
Controls	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	600	600

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level.

4.4. Mechanism Test

We examine the effect mechanism of the economic governance capacity of government on the quality of tourism development from three paths: strengthening regional competition, upgrading industrial structure, and improving the level of informatization.

4.4.1. Strengthening Regional Competition

The government's economic governance capacity depends on the correct handling of the relationship between the government and the market. In the early stages of reform and opening up, government regulation was dominant, market regulation played little role, and economic governance was nested in government governance. With the further development of reform and opening up, the relationship between the government and the market has gradually become clear. Nowadays, the economic governance model of giving full play to the decisive role of the market in resource allocation marks the modernization of the government's economic governance capacity [14]. An enhanced government capacity for economic governance will facilitate greater marketization, which can effectively mitigate local protectionism and enhance regional competition. The intensification of regional competition is conducive to the improvement of resource allocation efficiency and the optimization of industrial structure, which greatly releases the vitality of factors, stimulates the potential of industrial development, and provides an important driving role for tourism development quality [35]. In order to ascertain whether the government's economic governance capacity will facilitate the high-quality development of tourism by strengthening regional competition, that is, reducing the degree of regional administrative monopoly, we measure the level of regional administrative monopoly with the index of regional administrative monopoly and express it with the variable Monopoly. The result is shown in column (1) of Table 10. The coefficient of explanatory variable GC in column (1) is −0.0223, which is saliently negative at the 1% level, showing that the government's economic governance capacity will improve the development quality of tourism by strengthening regional competition.

4.4.2. Upgrading Industrial Structure

Given that the government's economic governance capacity is primarily manifested in the creation of an environment conducive to economic development, it is essential to enhance the role of the market in resource allocation [20]. Therefore, deepening the market-oriented reform of the tourism industry is helpful to promoting the highly intensive development of the tourism industry and realizing the optimization and upgrading of tourism industry structure so as to better improve the quality of tourism development. From the standpoint of supply, the profit-seeking of the market drives the flow of various factor resources to regions with a higher economic level and greater development space. The process of optimizing and adjusting the industrial structure can scientifically allocate production factors according to the existing demand structure and technology level, make the internal factors of the tourism industry reasonably adjust, and promote tourism development quality [36]. From the standpoint of demand, the adjustment of industrial structure helps to tap more consumer groups and areas, thus improving the economic effect of tourism [22]. Based on the above analysis, we continue to verify whether the economic governance capacity of the government will improve the quality of tourism development by adjusting the industrial structure, which is measured by the industrial structure advancement index and represented by the variable Industrial Structure. The result is shown in column (2) of Table 10, and the estimated coefficient of explanatory variable GC is significantly positive, which indicates that the government's economic governance capacity can promote the optimization and adjustment of industrial structure, thus realizing the high-quality development of tourism.

4.4.3. Improve the Level of Informatization

With the wide popularization and application of the Internet, the improvement of the economic governance capacity of the government requires the continuous strengthening of information disclosure and supervision of tourism so as to promote tourism development quality. On the one hand, by improving the transparency and credibility of tourism information and reducing the false publicity in the tourism market, thus improving the quality of tourism products and services. On the other hand, by strengthening the regulation of the online tourism market and establishing a feedback and monitoring mechanism between the market, tourists, and the government, which will help the tourism industry improve and optimize according to the feedback [37]. Column (3) of Table 10 tests the influence mechanism of the informatization level, which is measured by the ratio of the number of Internet broadband users to the number of permanent residents at the end of the year and represented by the variable Informatization. It can be seen that the government's economic governance capacity significantly improves the level of informatization, which means that improving the level of informatization is the channel through which the government's economic governance capacity affects the quality of tourism development.

Table 10. Mechanism test results.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Monopoly	**Industrial Structure**	**Informatization**
GC	−0.0223 ***	0.0825 **	0.0350 ***
	(−3.85)	(2.55)	(4.43)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	600	600	600
AdjustedR^2	0.9315	0.8569	0.8854

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** and ** represent the significance level of 1% and 5%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level.

4.5. Heterogeneity Analysis

It has been proven in the previous section that the government's economic governance capacity is instrumental in promoting the quality of tourism development. We further examine the relationship between the economic governance capacity of the government and tourism development quality based on the heterogeneity perspective.

4.5.1. Heterogeneity of Regional

Given the considerable disparities in economic advancement, natural environment, and local institutional context across regions, we classify the total sample into three regions: eastern, central, and western. This allows for an investigation of the influence of governments' economic governance capacity in different regions on tourism development quality. Considering that the northeast region only includes Liaoning Province, Jilin Province, and Heilongjiang Province, the results are likely to be insignificant due to the small sample size in the econometric analysis. Due to its location, Liaoning is usually considered in the eastern region of China in many authoritative studies, such as the article published by Wang et al. [38] in the Journal of Geography. Jilin and Heilongjiang are classified in the central part of China by analogy with Central China. Based on these, the eastern region includes Beijing, Tianjin, Liaoning, Hebei, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong, and Hainan; the central region comprises Shanxi, Anhui, Jiangxi, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jilin, and Heilongjiang; and the western region includes Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang. Table 11 shows the results. The statistical results of columns (1)–(3) show that the economic governance capacity of the government can significantly promote tourism development quality in the central and western regions. Further analysis shows that the

effect of the government's economic governance capacity is the largest in central China, followed by western China, and the lowest in eastern China. The reason is that the market mechanism has been gradually improved in the central and western regions, coupled with the positive spillover effect in the eastern region, which makes the positive impact of the economic governance capacity of the government on the quality of tourism development more significant.

Table 11. Regional heterogeneity results.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Eastern	Central	Western
GC	0.0071	0.0195 ***	0.0119 ***
	(1.60)	(9.87)	(5.70)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	220	160	220
Adjusted R^2	0.7355	0.2533	0.1862
p values	0.003	0.002	

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level. The *p* values of the test of the difference between groups of the coefficient of heterogeneity analysis is obtained by the Fisher test (sampling 1000 times).

4.5.2. Heterogeneity of the Development Level of Digital Economy

The digital economy is helpful to promote consumption, drive growth, and create employment [39]. As regards tourism development, the digital economy is gradually stimulating new driving forces to develop tourism [40]. The digital economy can break the space-time barriers of tourism development and promote tourism development quality by virtue of its network effect [29,41]. Therefore, we employ the mean value of the comprehensive digital economy development index to categorize the total sample into regions exhibiting high and low digital economy development and explore whether the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality will be different due to the different levels of digital economy development. Columns (1) and (2) of Table 12 show that in areas with low digital economic development, the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality is significant, while in areas with high digital economic development, the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality is not significant. The reason is that the digital economy can effectively promote local tourism development, so areas with low digital economy development need the government's economic governance capacity to promote local tourism development quality.

Table 12. Results of heterogeneity in the level of digital economy development.

Variables	(1)	(2)
	High Digital Economy Development Region	Low Digital Economy Development Region
GC	0.0086	0.0115 ***
	(1.62)	(4.74)
Controls	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	217	383
Adjusted R^2	0.6919	0.5420
p values	0.042	

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level. The *p* values of the test of the difference between groups of the coefficient of heterogeneity analysis is obtained by the Fisher test (sampling 1000 times).

4.5.3. Heterogeneity of Tourism Resource Endowment

Tourism resource endowment is the foundation of tourism industry development, and it is conducive to promoting the high-quality development of the tourism industry to strengthen the characteristic advantages based on resource endowment [42]. According to the important role of tourism resources in tourism development, we divide the total samples into regions with high and low tourism resource endowment according to the total number of 5A-level scenic spots owned by each province and explore whether the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on the quality of tourism development will be different due to the difference in tourism resource endowment. As shown in Table 13, the government's economic governance capacity can significantly promote tourism development quality in both high and low tourism resource endowment regions. In regions with a high endowment of tourism resources, the government's economic governance capacity is more likely to affect tourism development quality. The reason for this is that in regions with high tourism resource endowment, rich tourism resources and diverse industrial formats provide external conditions for tourism development quality [29]. Concurrently, regions with high resource endowments are more likely to realize the transformation and upgrading of tourism and promote tourism development quality by exerting the government's economic governance capacity.

Table 13. Results of heterogeneity in tourism resource endowments.

Variables	(1)	(2)
	High Tourism Resource Endowment Region	**Low Tourism Resource Endowment Region**
GC	0.0125 ***	0.0091 ***
	(5.24)	(3.66)
Controls	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	300	300
Adjusted R^2	0.6665	0.5576
p values	0.060	

Note: t value is in parentheses; *** represents the significance level of 1%; standard errors are clustered at the provincial level. The *p* values of the test of the difference between groups of the coefficient of heterogeneity analysis is obtained by the Fisher test (sampling 1000 times).

5. Conclusions and Discussion

5.1. Conclusions

Present research on the relationship between the economic governance capacity of the government and tourism development quality remains in the realm of theoretical and empirical deliberation. Using provincial data from 2000 to 2019, this paper empirically tests the impact of the economic governance capacity of the government on tourism development quality and further discusses its mechanism and heterogeneity. Conclusions are, firstly, in terms of time series, upward trends are shown both in the changes in government's economic governance capacity and tourism development quality; Spatially, regions with high levels of government economic governance capacity are mainly concentrated in the eastern region of China, while regions with high quality of tourism development are mainly located in the eastern regions, which have higher levels of economic development and rich tourism resources. Secondly, the basic regression results show that the government's economic governance capacity has a significant promoting effect on tourism development quality. In the sub-index results, it is shown that innovation and green development and the development of non-state-owned economy can be better enhanced by governments with higher economic governance capacity, while the quality of tourism development can be greatly stimulated by the development degree of factor market, the development of market intermediary organizations, and the legal system. The results stay robust after we change the measurement model, add control variables, and introduce instrumental

variables. Thirdly, mechanism analysis shows that tourism development quality can be greatly improved by the government's economic governance capacity through three mechanisms: strengthening regional competition, upgrading industrial structure, and improving the level of informatization. The heterogeneity results show that the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on the quality of tourism development may vary in different regions with different levels of digital economy development and the endowment of tourism resources.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

Theoretical contributions are: First, it enriches the literature on the influencing factors of high-quality development of tourism. Most of the existing literature tests its impact on the tourism development quality from the perspectives of institutional quality, tourism resource endowment, cultural and tourism integration, and urban–rural integration [17–22], while this paper innovatively examines its impact from the perspective of the government's economic governance capacity. Second, it enriches the literature on the measurement of high-quality tourism development indicators. On the premise of grasping the connotation of high-quality development, the paper integrates the availability, rationality, and representativeness of statistical measurement and builds on existing research to construct an evaluation system with the new development concepts of innovation, coordination, green, openness, and sharing.

5.3. Policy Implications

Based on the above conclusions, key policy implications can be drawn as follow:

Firstly, we need to improve the degree of marketization in all regions and deepen the market-oriented reform of tourism. According to the basic regression results, the government's economic governance capacity has a positive effect on the improvement of the quality of tourism development. Therefore, making rational use of government and market forces to promote the market-oriented reform of tourism is the key to achieving high-quality development of tourism. On the one hand, we should strengthen legal governance, establish and improve the legal system related to tourism governance, and ensure the standardized and orderly development of the tourism market. On the other hand, we should further leverage the decisive role of the market in resource allocation, build a modern tourism market governance system, and create a more conducive business environment for the high-quality development of the tourism industry.

Secondly, attention should be given to the influence mechanism of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality. The first is to improve the competitiveness of regional tourism for its sustainable development in tourism. Specifically, tourism destinations need to build a unique tourism product system and improve their competitiveness by making full use of their brands, resources, services, and products. The second is to accelerate the optimization of the tourism industry structure, extend the tourism industry chain, promote the integration of tourism resources and the tourism industry chain, provide diversified products and services, and achieve the development of comprehensive tourism. The third is to improve the information disclosure system for the tourism industry, increase information disclosure and publicity, while encouraging self-discipline in the tourism industry and increasing the spontaneity of information disclosure.

Thirdly, fully consider the heterogeneous impact of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality and promote the coordinated development of tourism in different types of provinces. Promote cross-regional tourism cooperation in the eastern, central, and western regions, make use of the spillover effect of advanced regions, compensate for the development disadvantage of backward regions, and achieve high-quality coordinated development of tourism in all regions. Actively guide the combination of tourism and digital technology in all regions, realize the effective penetration of the digital economy in tourism, and innovate the supply of tourism products and services. Further leverage the benefits of improving the economic governance capacity of govern-

ments in regions with high tourism resource endowments and promote the growth in scale and innovative development of tourism.

5.4. Limitations

The paper quantitatively evaluates the impact of the government's economic governance capacity on tourism development quality, which provides a useful reference for promoting the subsequent better shift from quantitative expansion to qualitative improvement of tourism. However, due to the limitations of objective conditions such as poor data availability and non-uniform criteria for indicator construction, this paper fails to explore deeper research topics. Therefore, the improvement direction of future research mainly includes the following points: first, to build a more comprehensive index to measure the economic governance capacity of the government; second, based on this study, we further identify whether there is a spillover effect.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, H.Z. and Z.X.; methodology, H.Z. and Z.Z.; formal analysis, Z.Z.; investigation, Z.X.; resources, H.Z.; data curation, Z.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, H.Z. and Z.Z.; writing—review and editing, H.Z. and Z.X.; visualization, Z.Z.; project administration, H.Z.; funding acquisition, H.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Social Science Foundation of Hunan Province (21JD053).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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