Abstract

The *Quality of Life in China Study* is an annual tracking survey launched by Horizon Research Group in 1993. The data for this year showed that the overall satisfaction with the quality of life of urban and rural residents in 2008 saw a small increase over that for 2007. The further improvements to, or high level stability of, social security, public order, national pride, and confidence in government management were positive factors which promoted the increase in the overall satisfaction with the quality of life. However, economic indexes such as personal finances, the national finances, ability to withstand price fluctuations, and customer confidence all saw a general declining trend, leading to a drop in expectations with regard to future social competitive power as well as in confidence in future improvements to the living standard, while rural residents were also constrained by the continuing issue of limited entertainment activities, all of which restricted the further improvement in the overall satisfaction with the quality of life. Of these, the personal finance satisfaction degree index once again became the primary factor influencing urban and rural residents' overall satisfaction with the quality of life.1

Keywords: quality of life; satisfaction with the quality of life; pressure from CPI increase

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1 The analysis data in this report is taken from research interviews performed in September 2008 in 7 cities, 7 small towns and their peripheral rural areas. The subject cities were Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu, Shenyang and Xi'an, with a successful sample size for every city of no less than 200. The subject small towns were Zhuji, Shaoxing city in Zhejiang; Dengta, Liaoang city, Liaoning; Linxiang, Yueyang city, Hunan; Pengzhou, Chengdu city, Sichuan; Xingping, Xianyang city, Shanxi; Changle, Fuzhou city, Fujian; and Xinji, Shijiazhuzhang city, Hebei; the successful sample size for each small town was no less than 150. An administrative village was then selected in the 7 small town areas mentioned above, and the successful sample size for each administrative village was no less than 150. The study was performed using the multi-stage random sampling method, thus obtaining a total of 3802 successful samples, including 2668 urban residents and 1134 rural residents aged between 16–60 years of age. The data results were weighted according to the
Urban and rural residents’ overall degree of satisfaction with the quality of life increased over that for 2007; social security, social order, national pride, and confidence in government management etc. were the primary factors boosting the degree of satisfaction. Economic indices including the degree of satisfaction with economic position, consumption opportunity identity, and the ability to withstand price fluctuations all recorded a generally declining trend, leading to a drop in consumer confidence, in future social competitiveness confidence and in expectations with regard to future improvements in the living standard. The satisfaction factors related to personal economic position once again became the primary factor influencing overall life standard sentiment.

A mean value was obtained using a 1–5 score evaluation method. The mean value of urban and rural residents’ overall satisfaction with the quality of life was 3.58 points in 2008, and has seen a small increase over three consecutive years. In comparison with the findings of the studies on overall satisfaction with the quality of life in all previous years, we found that, from 2000 to 2008, rural residents’ overall satisfaction with the quality of life was higher than that of urban residents except for 2006, where urban residents’ overall satisfaction with the quality of life was higher (see Figure 4.1).

By comparing urban and rural residents’ appraisals of various indices, we discovered the following characteristics (see the data in the first 6 lines of Table 4.1):

First, urban and rural residents’ sense of safety in terms of social order saw a comprehensive increase (from 3.31 to 3.66 points), and especially in rural areas (the level for urban residents rose from 3.48 to 3.53 points, while that for rural residents rose from 3.21 to 3.76 points).

Second, urban and rural residents’ national pride was further strengthened (from 3.81 to 3.90 points), and the high level to confidence in the government’s management of economic and international affairs