



## How to Measure Quality of Life in Diverse Populations:

Proceedings of the Fourth Conference of the International Society of Quality-of-Life Studies

Volume 4

Edited by

Harlan E. Spotts  
H. Lee Meadow  
Stephan Grzeskowiak

Co-Sponsored by

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Pamplin College of Business, Department of Marketing  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University



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International Society For Quality-Of-Life Studies  
Central Office

International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University  
Marketing Department  
Pamplin College of Business  
2025 Pamplin Hall  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0236, USA

(540) 231-5110 (office)  
(540) 231-3076 (fax)

[isqols@vt.edu](mailto:isqols@vt.edu) (e-mail)

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## Conference Program

### Conference Objectives

The purpose of this international conference is to increase the knowledge base of quality-of-life (QOL) studies. QOL studies are broadly defined to involve issues related to subjective and/or objective well-being of individuals, groups, communities, and/or society. Specifically, the focus is on the concept of QUALITY OF LIFE - its conceptualization, its measurement, and predicting its antecedents and consequences in relation to a specific population in a specific setting guided by specific policy goals. This conference is designed to involve social/behavioral science researchers from a variety of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics, management, marketing, urban planning, public administration, educational administration, family and child development, travel and tourism, leisure and recreation studies, technology management, law, mass media/journalism, environmental sciences, public health, and medical sciences.

### Program Topic Areas

This conference covers many topics in quality-of-life (QOL) research. The conference is divided in sets of tracks.

- The first set of track deals with QOL studies in relation to different UNITS OF ANALYSIS. There are tracks dealing with QOL studies of individuals, families, cities, and countries.
- The second set of tracks deals with QOL studies in relation to SPECIFIC LIFE DOMAINS. For example, there are tracks dealing with environmental well-being, economic well-being, work well-being, health well-being, housing and neighborhood well-being, consumer well-being, and financial well-being.
- The third set of tracks deals with QOL studies in relation to SPECIFIC POPULATIONS, e.g., women, children, adolescents, the disabled, and the elderly.
- The fourth set of tracks deals with COUNTRY-SPECIFIC QOL STUDIES. Here we have tracks focusing on QOL studies targeting Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, South America, Australia/New Zealand, Asia Pacific, and Africa.
- The fifth set of tracks deals with QOL studies in relation to SPECIFIC SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS such as education, business, media, tourism, public health, and labor.
- The last set of tracks deals with METHODOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES IN QOL RESEARCH. Examples include problems and solutions in the measurement of subjective well being, qualitative research and QOL studies, and QOL research and ethics.

### Conference Theme

How to Measure Quality of Life of Diverse Population.

### Conference Date

Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001.

### Conference Location

Wyndham Washington D.C. Hotel (downtown Washington, DC)  
1400 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005; USA  
Tel. 202-429-1700.

## Organizing Committee

### Conference Program Co-Chairs

- M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Tech, VA, USA; [Sirgy@vt.edu](mailto:Sirgy@vt.edu)
- Don R. Rahtz, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA, USA; [don.rahtz@business.wm.edu](mailto:don.rahtz@business.wm.edu)
- A. Coskun Samli, University of North Florida, USA; [jsamli@gw.nf.edu](mailto:jsamli@gw.nf.edu)

### Conference Proceedings Editors

- Harlan Spotts, Western New England College, USA; [hspotts@wmec.edu](mailto:hspotts@wmec.edu)
- H. Lee Meadow, Salem State College, USA; [cfhlm@salemstate.edu](mailto:cfhlm@salemstate.edu)
- Stephan Grzeskowiak, Virginia Tech, USA; [sgrzesko@vt.edu](mailto:sgrzesko@vt.edu)

### Conference Local Arrangements Chair

- Roa S. Pippalla, Florida A & M University, USA; [rao7gol@aol.com](mailto:rao7gol@aol.com)

## Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to the success of the conference. We wish to extend our gratitude to all the track chairs and co-chairs for their hard work in publicizing the conference, reviewing submissions, and developing the conference program. Their names and their organizational affiliations are listed on page v. We would also like to express our gratitude to Roa Pippalla (local arrangements chair) and the proceeding co-editors Harlan Spotts, H. Lee Meadow, and Stephan Grzeskowiak for doing an outstanding job with the conference logistics. Stephan Grzeskowiak and Danielle Sirgy also helped with additional conference logistics.

Our final thanks go to those institutions that provided support for the conference. These are:

- Office of Quality-of-Life Management at Virginia Tech
- School of Business of the College of William and Mary
- School of Pharmacy of Florida A&M University
- Social Systems Research Institute
- Kluwer Academic Publisher

### Program Chairs

M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Tech  
Don R. Rahtz, College of William and Mary  
A. Coskun Samli, University of North Florida

## Scientific Committee

Is composed of co-chairs of all conference sections/ tracks.

### Conference sections (tracks) co-chairs

#### Countries and quality of life

- *Michael Hagerty*, University of California-Davis (USA); [mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu)

#### Cities and quality of life

- *Robin Widgery*, Social Systems Research (USA); [widgeryr@prodiqy.net](mailto:widgeryr@prodiqy.net)

#### Families and quality of life

- *Ferran Casas*, University of Girona (Spain); [facasas@aliques.udg.es](mailto:facasas@aliques.udg.es)
- *Marta Sadurni*, University of Girona (Spain); [msadurni@zeus.udg.es](mailto:msadurni@zeus.udg.es)

#### Individuals and quality of life

- *Ruut Veenhoven*, Erasmus University of Rotterdam (Netherlands); [veenhoven@fsw.eur.nl](mailto:veenhoven@fsw.eur.nl)
- *Robert Cummins*, Deakin University of Australia (Australia); [cummins@deakin.edu.au](mailto:cummins@deakin.edu.au)

#### Environmental well-being

- *Michael Jay Polansky*, University of Newcastle, (Australia); [mgmjp@cc.newcastle.edu.au](mailto:mgmjp@cc.newcastle.edu.au)

#### Leisure well-being

- *Muzaffer Uysal*, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (USA); [samil@vt.edu](mailto:samil@vt.edu)
- *Said Ladki*, Lebanese American University (Lebanon); [sladki@beirut.lau.edu.lb](mailto:sladki@beirut.lau.edu.lb)

#### Economic well-being

- *Andrew Sharpe*, Centre for the Study of Living Standards (Canada); [osberg@is.dal.ca](mailto:osberg@is.dal.ca)
- *Peggy Schyns*, Erasmus University of Rotterdam (Netherlands); [schyns@fsw.eur.nl](mailto:schyns@fsw.eur.nl)

#### Work well-being

- *Andrew Clark*, Delta (France); [andrew.clark@ems.fr](mailto:andrew.clark@ems.fr)
- *Eoghan O'Grady*, Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland); [eoghan.ogrady@dit.ie](mailto:eoghan.ogrady@dit.ie)
- *Linda Duxbury*, Carleton University (Canada); [linda\\_duxbury@carleton.ca](mailto:linda_duxbury@carleton.ca)

#### Health-related quality of life in health care

- *Rao S. Pippalla*, Florida A & M University (USA); [rao7qol@aol.com](mailto:rao7qol@aol.com)

#### Housing & neighborhood well-being

- *Rasvan Lahu*, Gerontological Economic Research Organization (Switzerland); [admin@gero.org](mailto:admin@gero.org)

#### Consumer well being

- *Aaron Ahuvia*, University of Michigan-Dearborn (USA); [ahuvia@umich.edu](mailto:ahuvia@umich.edu)
- *Gopal Iyer*, Florida Atlantic University (USA); [giyer@fau.edu](mailto:giyer@fau.edu)

#### Financial well being

- *Flora William*, Purdue University (USA); [floraw@cfs.purdue.edu](mailto:floraw@cfs.purdue.edu)
- *Lauren Leach*, Northwest Missouri State University (USA); [lleach@mail.nwmissouri.edu](mailto:lleach@mail.nwmissouri.edu)

#### Woman and quality of life

- *Mary Joyce*, Emerson College (USA); [mjoyce@emerson.edu](mailto:mjoyce@emerson.edu)
- *Anne Balazs*, Mississippi University for Women (USA); [abalazs@muw.edu](mailto:abalazs@muw.edu)

Poor and quality of life

- *Anne Dannerbeck*, University of Missouri (USA); [dannerbeckA@missouri.edu](mailto:dannerbeckA@missouri.edu)

Children & adolescents and quality of life

- *Graciela Tonon*, Universidad Nacional de La Matanza & Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora (Argentina); [edelvais@arnet.com.ar](mailto:edelvais@arnet.com.ar)
- *Richard Gilman*, Georgia State University (USA); [cpsrcg@longate.gsu.edu](mailto:cpsrcg@longate.gsu.edu)
- *Deborah J. Thomason*, Clemson University (USA); [dthmsn@clemson.edu](mailto:dthmsn@clemson.edu)

Quality of life of the disabled

- *Ralph Kober*, University of Western Australia (Australia); [Ralph.Kober@uwa.edu.au](mailto:Ralph.Kober@uwa.edu.au)

Quality of life of disease-specific patients

- *Carme Saurina*, University of Girona (Spain); [carme.saurina@udg.es](mailto:carme.saurina@udg.es)

College students and quality of life

- *Silvana Schifini D'Andrea*, University of Firenze (Italy); [schifini@ds.unifi.it](mailto:schifini@ds.unifi.it)

Quality of life of the elderly

- *Paul Bramston*, University of Southern Queensland (Australia); [bramston@usq.edu.au](mailto:bramston@usq.edu.au)
- *Elaine Sherman*, Hofstra University (USA); [mktezs@hofstra.edu](mailto:mktezs@hofstra.edu) or [ees1234@aol.com](mailto:ees1234@aol.com)
- *Leon Schiffman*, St. John University (USA); [schiffmanl@aol.com](mailto:schiffmanl@aol.com)

Models of welfare production in Western Europe and quality of life

- *Heinz-Herbert Noll*, Centre for Survey Research and Methodology-ZUMA (Germany); [noll@zuma-mannheim.de](mailto:noll@zuma-mannheim.de)
- *Joachim Vogel*, University of Umea and Statistics Sweden (Sweden); [joachim.vogel@scb.se](mailto:joachim.vogel@scb.se)

Eastern European countries and quality of life

- *Wolfgang Glatzer*, J.W. Goethe-Universitdt (Germany); [glatzer@soz.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:glatzer@soz.uni-frankfurt.de)
- *Nicolai Genov*, Bulgarian Academy of Science (Bulgaria); [nbgen.most.risk@datacom.bg](mailto:nbgen.most.risk@datacom.bg)

North American countries quality of life

- *Alex Michalos*, University of Northern British Columbia (Canada); [michalos@unbc.ca](mailto:michalos@unbc.ca)
- *Abott Ferris*, Emory University (USA); [aferris@emory.edu](mailto:aferris@emory.edu)

Quality of life of Australia & New Zealand

- *RoseAnne Misajon*, Deakin University (Australia); [misajon@deakin.edu.au](mailto:misajon@deakin.edu.au) or [rosemis@yahoo.com](mailto:rosemis@yahoo.com)

African countries and quality of life

- *Valerie Moller*, Rhodes University (South Africa); [v.moller@ru.ac.za](mailto:v.moller@ru.ac.za)

Quality of life of the Far East countries

- *Mahar Mangahas*, Social Weather Station (Phillipines); [mangahas@mozcom.com](mailto:mangahas@mozcom.com)

Media and quality of life

- *Laura Lee Carman*, Pacific University (USA); [lauralee@teleport.com](mailto:lauralee@teleport.com)

Business and quality of life

- *C.B. Claiborne*, James Madison University (USA); [claibocb@jmu.edu](mailto:claibocb@jmu.edu)

Labor and quality of life

- *Pierre McDonagh*, Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland); [pierre.mcdonagh@dit.ie](mailto:pierre.mcdonagh@dit.ie)

#### Tourism and quality of life

- *Janet Neal*, University of North Carolina - Greensboro (USA); [jdneal@uncg.edu](mailto:jdneal@uncg.edu)

#### Public health and QOL (community indicators of health and well-being)

- *David Moriarty*, Center for Disease Control (USA); [dgm1@cdc.gov](mailto:dgm1@cdc.gov)
- *Larry W. Chambers*, McMaster University (Canada); [chambers@mcmaster.ca](mailto:chambers@mcmaster.ca)

#### Science/Technology and quality of life

- *John O'Malley*, University of North Carolina - Charlotte (USA); [jromalley@pop.abs.adelphia.net](mailto:jromalley@pop.abs.adelphia.net)
- *Don Lloyd Cook*, Georgia State University (USA); [mktclc@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:mktclc@langate.gsu.edu)
- *Jeong-Ro Yoon*, Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (Korea); [jryoon@kaist.ac.kr](mailto:jryoon@kaist.ac.kr)

#### New and nontraditional measures and methods of quality of life

- *Bruno Zumbo*, University of British Columbia (Canada); [bruno.zumbo@ubc.ca](mailto:bruno.zumbo@ubc.ca)

#### Problems & solutions in relation to objective quality of life indicators

- *Patrice Flynn*, Flynn Research (USA); [Higging@Flynnresearch.com](mailto:Higging@Flynnresearch.com)
- *Mark Peterson*, University of Texas - Arlington (USA); [markpete@uta.edu](mailto:markpete@uta.edu)

#### Problems & solutions in relation to subjective quality of life indicators

- *Ed Diener*, University of Illinois - Urbana (USA); [ediener@s.psych.uiuc.edu](mailto:ediener@s.psych.uiuc.edu)
- *Joar Vitterso*, University of Tromso (Norway); [joarv@psyk.uio.no](mailto:joarv@psyk.uio.no)

#### Postmodern theories and approaches to the study of quality of life

- *Wendy Stainton-Rogers*, Open University (UK); [w.stainton-rogers@open.ac.uk](mailto:w.stainton-rogers@open.ac.uk)

#### Ethical philosophies and the study of quality of life

- *Anusorn Singhapakdi*, Old Dominion University (USA); [asinghap@odu.edu](mailto:asinghap@odu.edu)
- *Scott Vitell*, University of Mississippi (USA); [vitell@bus.olemiss.edu](mailto:vitell@bus.olemiss.edu)

## Official Language

English



## Table of Contents

### **QOL Indicators & Models of Children & Adolescents (I)**

Quality of Life Among Rio Grande, Argentina's Young People: Their Problems, Expectations, and Dreams  
*German Sarlangue*, Argentine Catholic U ..... 1

Self Esteem Increased Through Positive Peer And Teacher Interactions  
*Paul Smiley*, U Illinois  
*Carol Diener*, U Illinois ..... 1

### **Comparative Studies**

Trends in World Social Development: Development Challenges of the New Century  
*Richard J. Estes*, U Pennsylvania..... 2

The European Social Indicators Information System: A New Tool for Monitoring the Quality of Life  
*Heinz-Herbert Noll*, ZUMA ..... 2

### **Families and Quality of Life**

The Curse of Collaboration: The Role of Expertise and Partnership in Parents Stories About Their Children's Alternative Education  
*Katherine Goddard*, U Illinois  
*Carol Diener*, U Illinois ..... 3

Creating a Balanced Life: Focusing on the Challenges Faced by Parents of Children with Disabilities  
*Karen J. Crooker*, U Wisconsin-Parkside ..... 3

Examining Global Life Satisfaction of Married Males Using an Economic Approach  
*Sandra J. Huston*, U Missouri-Columbia..... 3

### **Indicators and Models of Work Well-being (I)**

Empowerment as a Moderator of the Relationship between Work Stress and Psychosomatic Symptoms  
*P.T. Srinivasan*, U Madras  
*P. David Jawahar*, Regional Engineering College..... 4

Attitudes towards Work and Time in Cross-National Perspective  
*Tom Smith*, U Chicago..... 5

Dying to Work? An investigation into work-related stress, quitting intentions and absenteeism  
*Rannia Leontaridi*, U Stirling  
*Melanie Ward*, IZA ..... 5

**Indicators & Models of Financial Well-being (I)**

Effects of Welfare Reform on the Well Being of Low- Income Rural Minority Children  
*Karen P. Varcoe*, U California-Riverside  
*Nancy B. Lees*, U California-Riverside  
*Martha L. Lopez*, U California-Davis ..... 6

Financial Wellness and Quality of Life of Low-Income Rural Indiana Families  
*Flora Williams*, Purdue U  
*Elizabeth Kiss*, Purdue U ..... 7

Financial Wellness of College Students  
*Flora Williams*, Purdue U  
*Eunyoung Baek*, Purdue U ..... 7

**QOL Indicators & Models of Children & Adolescents (II)**

Empathy: An Extensive Study of Children with Behavior Disorders  
*Jessica Snowden*, U Illinois-Urbana/Champaign  
*Carol Diener*, U Illinois-Urbana/Champaign ..... 8

The Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Violent Behaviors among American High School Adolescents  
*Keith J. Zullig*, U South Carolina  
*Robert F. Valois*, U South Carolina  
*E. Scott Huebner*, U South Carolina  
*Wanzer Drane*, U South Carolina ..... 8

Assessment of the Quality of Life among Children Diagnosed with Hearing Loss or Attention Deficit Disorders  
*Rich Gilman*, Georgia State U  
*Susan Easterbrooks*, Georgia State U  
*Michele Frey*, Georgia State U ..... 9

**National Studies**

Socioeconomic Development and Quality of Life in Italy  
*Giampaolo Nuvolati*, U Milano Bicocca ..... 9

Subjective Well-being in the European Union During the 1990s  
*Bernhard Christoph*, ZUMA ..... 10

Quality of Life in Northern Ireland  
*José Luis Iparraguirre D'Elia*, Northern Ireland Economic Council ..... 10

Who is Benefiting the Most from NAFTA? An Intervention Time Series Analysis  
*Rock-Antoine Mehanna*, Wartburg College ..... 11

**Measuring the Quality of Life of Individuals**

Hedonism and Happiness  
*Ruut Veenhoven, Erasmus U-Rotterdam* ..... 11

Subjective Quantitative Studies of Empowerment  
*Sabina Alkire, The World Bank* ..... 11

Is Happiness Constructed ? Towards a Social Constructionist Approach to the Understanding of Subjective Quality of Life  
*Sergiu Baltatescu, U Oradea* ..... 12

Senior Corps Volunteer Participation: Its Contribution to Life Satisfaction and Improved Quality of Life  
*Caroline E. Crocoll, Virginia Commonwealth U*  
*Peter J. Gartland, Glenwood Research* ..... 12

**Indicators and Models of Work Well-being (II)**

The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Primary and Secondary Control Strategies for Employees with Low/High Instrumental Job Control  
*Elise Catherine Maher, Deakin U* ..... 13

Internal Branding: Does It Improve Employees' Quality Of Life?  
*Danielle Blumenthal, Institute for Brand Leadership* ..... 14

**QOL Indicators & Models of Children & Adolescents (III)**

Cross-cultural and developmental issues of Life Satisfaction Reports among Children and Adolescents: Future Research Implications  
*Nan-Sook Park, U Rhode Island*  
*E. Scott Huebner, U South Carolina* ..... 14

No Place Called Home: Life Quality and Purpose of Homeless Youths  
*Robert A. Cummins, Deakin U*  
*Kate Bearsley, Deakin U* ..... 15

Adolescent Life Satisfaction: A Cognitive Mediator between Parenting Styles and Adolescent Mental Health  
*Shannon Suldo, U South Carolina*  
*E. Scott Huebner, U South Carolina* ..... 15

Trends in Levels and Disparities in Well-being for Black, Hispanic, and White Children and Youths in the United States, 1985-1999: Some Findings from a New Index  
*Kenneth C. Land, Duke U*  
*Vicki L. Lamb, Duke U*  
*Sarah Kahler Mustillo, Duke U* ..... 15

**Focus Studies**

Quality of Life and Development Opportunities for Youth in Grahamstown East, South Africa  
*Valerie Møller, Rhodes U* ..... 16

<u>The Transition to Adulthood: QOL and Family Formation in the European Union</u> <i>Joachim Vogel, U Umeå</i> .....	17
--	----

<u>Select Findings from East London's (South Africa) First Baseline Quality of Life Survey</u> <i>Robin Richards, Rhodes U</i> .....	17
---	----

**Indicators & Models of Housing & Neighborhood Well-being (I)**

<u>The Physical Environment and QoL in the Inner-city</u> <i>William Kruidenier, U Illinois-Urbana</i> <i>Frances E. Kuo, U Illinois-Urbana</i> <i>William C. Sullivan, U Illinois-Urbana</i> .....	18
--	----

<u>Behavior Intention Models and Multiattribute Attitude Models for Measuring Housing Satisfaction: Comparative Analysis and Methodological Implications</u> <i>Lubomir Popov, Bowling Green State U</i> .....	19
---	----

<u>Can Gardening Influence Quality of Life Perceptions?</u> <i>T.M. Waliczek, Illinois State U</i> <i>R.D. Lineberger, Texas A&amp;M U</i> <i>J.M. Zajicek, Texas A&amp;M U</i> .....	19
--	----

<u>Measurement of Housing Well-being with the 4Ps Model</u> <i>Stephan Grzeskowiak, Virginia Tech</i> <i>M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Tech</i> .....	20
---	----

**QOL Indicators & Models of Disease-specific Patients (I)**

<u>Health-related Quality of Life Outcomes within a Demographically-diverse Population from Southern Alberta, Canada</u> <i>Hartmut Krentz, Southern Alberta Clinic for HIV/AIDS, University of Calgary</i> <i>M.J. Gill, Southern Alberta Clinic for HIV/AIDS</i> <i>C.V. Henry, U Calgary</i> .....	21
--	----

<u>The Comparative Responsiveness of a Global vs. Specific HR-QoL Measure to One Year Symptom Changes Among Persons With Schizophrenia: Findings from the Canadian National Outcomes Measurement Study on Schizophrenia (CNOMSS)</u> <i>Mark Atkinson, U Calgary</i> <i>Geoff Smith, U British Columbia</i> <i>Ashok Malla, U Western Ontario</i> <i>Kostas Trakas, Janssen Ortho Inc</i> <i>Rob Balshaw, Simon Fraser U</i> .....	22
---	----

<u>Prevalence and Impact of Pain in Psychiatric Inpatients</u> <i>Martin M. Evers, Mount Sinai School of Medicine</i> <i>Jeremy Burd, Mount Sinai School of Medicine</i> <i>Deborah B. Marin, Mount Sinai School of Medicine</i> .....	23
---	----

**Predictors of Women's QOL and the Influence of QOL Imagery on Consumer Behavior**

<u>Good Life Images as a Motivation for Consumer Behavior: Gender and Generational Differences</u> <i>George M. Zinkhan, U Georgia</i> .....	24
---	----

<u>Assessment of Quality of Life in Women Receiving Outpatient Mental Health Services</u> <i>Marion Becker</i> , U South Florida.....	24
<i>Lee Martin</i> , U South Florida	
<i>David Thornton</i> , U South Florida	

**QOL Indicators & Models of Children & Adolescents (IV)**

<u>Exploring Effective Methods for Studying School-related Stresses among Young Children</u> <i>Doris Martin</i> , James Madison U <i>Lou Ann Lovin</i> , James Madison U <i>Holly Pence</i> , James Madison U.....	25
--	----

<u>Building Family Strengths for Children, Youth and Families at Risk</u> <i>Deborah J. Thomason</i> , Clemson U <i>Brenda J. Thames</i> , Clemson University <i>Barbara Brown</i> , Clemson University.....	26
---	----

<u>How to Measure Quality of Life in Young Couples: an Italian Study on Well-Being among Young People</u> <i>Enrica Aureli</i> , U Rome "La Sapienza" <i>Barbara Baldazzi</i> , ISTAT - Italian National Statistical Institute.....	26
---	----

**Concepts and Methods (Part 1)**

<u>Concepts and Perceptions of Development: Some Evidence from the Western Cape, South Africa</u> <i>David A. Clark</i> , U Cambridge.....	27
---	----

<u>Climate as a Component of Country Quality of Life</u> <i>Mark Peterson</i> , U Texas-Arlington.....	27
---	----

<u>Mobility as a Key Factor to Reach Sustainable Quality of Life</u> <i>Thomas Macoun</i> , Technical U Vienna.....	27
--	----

**Developing Indexes of Economic Well-being**

<u>Determining the Weights in Measures of Economic Well-being</u> <i>Michael Burns</i> , U South Australia <i>Pauline Halchuk</i> , Dalhousie U.....	28
--	----

<u>An Index of Labor Market Well-being</u> <i>Andrew Sharpe</i> , Centre for the Study of Living Standards <i>Lars Osberg</i> , Dalhousie U.....	28
--	----

<u>So You Are (Un)happy, Now What Do You Mean? An Explanation of the Weak Relationship between Income and Happiness</u> <i>Mariano Rojas</i> , U de las Americas-Puebla.....	29
---	----

**Indicators & Models of Housing & Neighborhood Well-being (II)**

Residents' Perceptions of Quality of Life: A Comparative Study  
*James Potter*, U Nebraska  
*Rodrigo Cantarero*, U Nebraska, USA  
*Blanca Ramirez*, U Nebraska  
*Steve Larrick*, U Nebraska..... 30

The Impact of Rural-Urban Migration upon People's Health and Well-being: A Turkish Example  
*James J. Potter*, U Nebraska..... 31

Developing and Using Quality of Life Indicators for the Delivery of Services in South African Cities  
*Robin Richards*, Rhodes University  
*Brian O'Leary*, Urban Strategy Corporate Services..... 31

**Quality of Life for Children, Adolescents & Youth with Developmental Disabilities**

Quality of Life for Children with Developmental Disabilities: Development of a New Instrument  
*Rebecca Renwick*, U Toronto  
*Buga Zekovic*, U Toronto  
*Ann Fudge-Schormans*, U Toronto..... 32

Quality of Life for Children and Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities: Conceptual and Methodological Issues Relevant to Public Policy  
*Rebecca Renwick*, U Toronto  
*Buga Zekovic*, U Toronto..... 32

Quality of Work Life for Transition Aged Youth with Developmental Disabilities  
*Ivan Brown*, U Toronto  
*Bob Ferguson*, Toronto Association for Community Living ..... 33

**New and Nontraditional Measures and Methods of QOL**

Poverty and Inequality of Standard of Living and Quality of Life in Great Britain  
*Joseph Deutsch*, Bar-Ilan U  
*Xavier Ramos*, Bar-Ilan U  
*Jacques Silber*, Bar-Ilan U ..... 34

Specialist Physician Communication Impact on Cancer Patient's Quality of Life  
*S. Conradt*, U de Liège  
*Yves Libert*, U Catholique de Louvain  
*Anne-Marie Etienne*, U de Liège  
*Darius Razavi*, U Libre de Bruxelles  
*Gilles Dupuis*, U Quebec-Montreal ..... 34

How System Control Analysis Helps To Solve Some Of The Theoretical Problems Of The Qol Field And What Are The Psychometric Characteristics Of The Quality Of Life Systemic Inventory (QLSI) Based On Such An Approach  
*Gilles Dupuis*, U Quebec- Montreal  
*Marie Christine Taillefer*, U Quebec-Montreal  
*Jean Pierre Martel*, U Quebec-Montreal  
*Marie Josée Rivard*, U Quebec-Montreal  
*Marie Anne Roberge*, U Quebec-Montreal  
*Karine St. Jean*, U Quebec-Montreal..... 35

**Concepts and Methods (Part 2)**

Two Approaches for Deriving Weights for Objective QOL Dimensions  
*Mark Peterson, U Texas-Arlington*..... 36

South African Cross-cultural Findings on the Satisfaction with Life Scale  
*Margaret S. Westaway, Health and Development*  
*Chantelle Maritz, U Pretoria*  
*Nurse J. Golele, Health and Development* ..... 36

Residential Quality of Life and Needs Assessment Research in Durban, South Africa  
*Brian O'Leary, Urban Strategy Department*..... 37

**The Evaluation and Measurement of Economic Well-being**

Using Expenditures to Measure the Standards of Living in the United States: Does it Make a Difference  
*David S. Johnson, Bureau of Labor Statistics* ..... 37

The Impact of Television Viewership on Consumers' Materialism and Quality of Life Perceptions: An Examination in the Islamic Culture  
*Jamal Al-Khatib, James Madison U*  
*Angela D'Auria Stanton, James Madison U*  
*C.B. Claiborne, James Madison U*..... 38

**QOL Indicators & Models of Disease-specific Patients (II)**

Subjective Quality of Life among People with Arthritis  
*Rose Anne Misajon, Deakin U*  
*R.A. Cummins, Deakin U*..... 38

The Impact of Drug Court Programs on the Quality of Life of Substance Abusers  
*Anne Dannerbeck, U Missouri* ..... 39

Survey and Determine a Model to Describe the Effective Factors on Quality of life in Diabetic Patient Abusers  
*Atefeh Ghanbari Khangha, Gilan U*  
*Parsa Yekta, Tehran U of Nursing and Midwifery*  
*Atrkar Roushan, Gilan U*..... 39

**Quality of Life for Families Who Have a Child with a Developmental Disability**

Abuse and Neglect: It's Place in Studying the Quality of Life of Children and Families  
*Ivan Brown, U Toronto* ..... 40

Quality of Life and Stress in the Parents of People with Intellectual Disabilities  
*Annapia Verri, Mondino Neurological Institute*  
*D. Kaltcheva, Mondino Neurological Institute*  
*E. Vallero, Mondino Neurological Institute*  
*A. Ramponi, Mondino Neurological Institute*  
*A. Cevini, Mondino Neurological Institute*  
*R. A. Cummins, Deakin University*..... 41

**Indicators & Models of Financial Well-being (II)**

Framing the Issue of Financial Wellness and Quality of Life of Low-Income: What's Known and How to Measure to Capture the Diversity  
*Jean W. Bauer*, U Minnesota  
*Bonnie Braun*, U Maryland..... 41

Making Ends Meet for Low-Income Rural Families: How Do They Do It and How It Influences Financial Well-being  
*Bonnie Braun*, U Maryland  
*Patricia Hyjer Dyk*, U Kentucky..... 42

With a little Support from Our Friends: The Role of Family and Community Support in Financial Well-being of Rural Low-income Families  
*Sharon B. Seiling*, Ohio State U  
*Jean W. Bauer*, U Minnesota  
*Patricia Hyjer Dyk*, U Kentucky..... 43

Caregiver Connections  
*Connie McKenna*, INTERgeneration LINKS  
*Elsie Fetterman*, INTERgeneration LINKS, U Massachusetts ..... 44

**QOL Indicators & Models of the Elderly (I)**

General Social Reporting of the Elderly: Assessment of Recent and Future Research in Sweden  
*Joachim Vogel*, U Umea ..... 44

QOL Indicators for Chinese Elderly Stroke Survivors  
*Anna Lau*, Hong Kong Polytechnic U ..... 45

Can a Stress-coping Model Explain Ethno-racial Differences in Affective Suffering?  
*Cecile N. Yancu*, Columbia U ..... 46

**Setting and Achieving Goals with Indicators of Health and Child Well-being**

Setting and Achieving Goals for Healthy Cities Programs, U.S.  
*Miryam C. Granthon*, Healthy Cities Consortium..... 46

**Family Quality of Life for Families That Include a Child With Disability**

Family Quality of Life for Families That Include a Child With Disability  
*Ann Turnbull*, Beach Center on Disability  
*JiYeon Park*, Beach Center on Disability  
*Denise Poston*, Beach Center on Disability..... 47

**QOL Indicators & Models of the Poor**

Developing Consumer Cultures in Emerging Capitalist Markets  
*A. Coskun Samli*, U North Florida..... 47



<u>Social supportive behaviors of Moroccan immigrants in Spain and Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants in Argentina</u> <i>Isidro Maya Jariego</i> , U Seville <i>Graciela Tonon</i> , National U Lomas de Zamora.....	48
<u>Slum Sweet Slum?</u> <i>Anita Singh</i> <i>Trevor N Jacobie</i> .....	48
<b>QOL Indicators &amp; Models of Australia &amp; New Zealand</b>	
<u>Violent Scatterings and Quality of Life</u> <i>Liz Eckermann</i> , Deakin U .....	49
<b>QOL Indicators &amp; Models of the Elderly (II)</b>	
<u>Framework For Foodservice Delivery and Quality of Life in Long-Term Care Facilities</u> <i>C. Lengyel</i> , U North Carolina-Greensboro <i>S.J. Whiting</i> , U Saskatchewan <i>G. A. Zello</i> , U Saskatchewan.....	49
<u>Assessing Subjective QOL: Individual vs. Community Dimensions</u> <i>O. P. Bramston</i> , U Southern Queensland.....	50
<u>Social Indicators Research and Health-Related Quality of Life Research</u> <i>Alex C. Michalos</i> , U Northern British Columbia.....	50
<b>Life Satisfaction as Quality of Life in Mental Health and General Medicine</b>	
<u>Psychiatry, Quality of Life, and the Short Form of the Quality of Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction Questionnaire (QLESQ-SF)</u> <i>Jean Endicott</i> , Columbia U .....	51
<u>Quality of Life Index for Assessment in General Medical Conditions</u> <i>Carol Estwing Ferrans</i> , U Illinois-Chicago .....	51
<u>Quality of life Assessment in Children and Adolescents: The Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)</u> <i>Scott Huebner</i> , U South Carolina <i>Richard J. Nagle</i> , U South Carolina <i>Shannon Suldo</i> , U South Carolina.....	52
<u>Predictive and Treatment Validity of the Quality of Life Inventory in Managed Care, Substance Abuse, Community Mental Health, and Counseling Center Samples</u> <i>Michael B. Frisch</i> , Baylor U <i>Michelle P. Clark</i> , Iowa State U <i>Steven V. Rouse</i> , Pepperdine U <i>M. David Rudd</i> , Baylor U <i>Jennifer Paweleck</i> , Baylor U <i>Andrew Greenstone</i> , Baylor U <i>David Kopplin</i> , Baylor U.....	52

## Measuring QOL for People with Disabilities

<u>Measuring Quality of Life of Color-deficient Consumers</u> <i>Carol Kaufman-Scarborough, Rutgers U-Camden</i> .....	53
<u>Measuring Quality of Life with Person Centered Outcomes</u> <i>James Gardner, The Council on Quality and Leadership</i> .....	53
<u>QOL: Are We Getting What We Measure?</u> <i>Ralph Kober, U Western Australia</i> .....	54

## QOL Indicators & Models of the Far East Countries

<u>Disparities of Quality of Life</u> <i>Zhifang Peng, Eastern Illinois U</i> .....	55
<u>Class Differences in Filipino Quality of Life, 1996 and 2001</u> <i>Gerardo A. Sandoval, Social Weather Stations</i> <i>Linda Luz B. Guerrero, Social Weather Stations</i> .....	55
<u>Filipino Report Card on Pro-poor Services</u> <i>Bhuvan Bhatnagar, World Bank</i> .....	55

## Tourism Development and Quality of Life

<u>Meaningful Boundaries: Rights and Responsibilities in Tourism Development</u> <i>Mike Robinson, Sheffield Hallam U</i> .....	56
<u>An Examination of Tourism Development and Quality of Life in Virginia</u> <i>Sandro Formica, ESSEC Business School</i> .....	56
<i>Muzaffer Uysal, Virginia Tech</i>	
<u>An Examination of How Age Impacts the Effects of Tourism Services on the Travelers' Quality of Life</u> <i>Janet D. Neal, U North Carolina</i> <i>Dogan Gursoy, Washington State U</i> .....	57

## Business/Labor and QOL (I)

<u>Measuring Quality of Life of Apparel Workers in Mumbai, India, Part I: Qualitative and Quantitative Data</u> <i>Marsha A. Dickson, Kansas State U</i> <i>Mary A. Littrell, Iowa State U</i> .....	58
<u>Measuring Quality of Life of Apparel Workers in Mumbai, India, Part II: Photo-elicitation</u> <i>Mary A. Littrell, Iowa State U</i> <i>Marsha A. Dickson, Kansas State U</i> .....	59
<u>Child labor sweat shops: globalization and QoL</u> by <i>Coskun Samli, U North Florida, USA</i> <i>Ronald Adams, U North Florida</i> .....	60
<u>Measuring Development: A Case Study in Guatemala and in Native American Villages in the United States</u> <i>Bruce Clemens, James Madison U</i> .....	60

## **Quality of Life and Mental Health and General Medicine**

### Quality of Life in Individuals with Social Anxiety and Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Winnie Eng*, Temple U  
*Meredith E. Coles*, Temple U  
*Cynthia L. Turk*, Temple U  
*Richard G. Heimberg*, Temple U  
*Steven A. Safren*, Harvard Medical School ..... 61

### Quality of Life Assessment: A Perspective from the Pharmaceutical Industry

- Steve J. Niemcryk*, Bayer Pharmaceutical Division ..... 61

### Quality of Life of Medically Frail Rural Elders: Measurement and Intervention in the NIA-funded PEARL Study

- Allan V. Kaufman*, U Alabama  
*Forrest Scogin*, U Alabama  
*Louis Burgio*, U Alabama ..... 62

### Assessment of the "Good Life" of Patients in Three Health States: Diabetes Mellitus, Spinal Cord Injury and Schizophrenia

- Yasmin Maor*, The Gertner Institute  
*Benjamin Mozes*, The Gertner Institute ..... 63

### The World Health Organization's Quality-of-Life scale (WHOQOL-100): An Evaluation

- Robert A. Cummins*, Deakin U  
*Michael B. Frisch*, Baylor U ..... 63

## **Information Technology and Quality of Life**

### Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Implementation and Quality of Life

- Mike (Tae-In) Eom*, State U New York-Binghamton  
*Kyung W. Kang*, Samsung  
*Dong-Jin Lee*, State U New York-Binghamton ..... 64

### Quality of Life Issues for the Elderly: The Role of Perceived Risk in Explaining and Addressing Internet Adoption by Older Consumers

- Constance Elise Porter*, Georgia State U ..... 64

## **QOL for People with Disabilities: Where to Now?**

### Three Decades of Quality of Life

- Ralph Kober*, U Western Australia  
*Robert L. Schalock*, U Western Australia ..... 65

## **The Effects of Tourism on Community Quality of Life**

### Considering Montana Residents' Perceptions of Quality of Life: Making Responsible Tourism Development Decisions

- Thale Dillon*, U Montana ..... 66

## **QOL Indicators & Models of College Students**

### All Work, No Study? Factors Affecting Student Experience at a UK University

<i>S.E.Farron</i> , U Central Lancashire	
<i>P.I.Houghton</i> , U Central Lancashire	
<i>M.Whittaker</i> , U Central Lancashire	
<i>C.H.Worthington</i> , U Central Lancashire .....	67

### Different Scales for Different Survey Methods: Validation in Measuring Quality of University Life

<i>Silvana Schifini D'Andrea</i> , U Florence	
<i>Filomena Maggino</i> , U Florence.....	67

### Measuring the Quality of University Student Life: The Development of an Instrument

<i>Lance W. Roberts</i> , U Manitoba	
<i>Rodney A. Clifton</i> , U Manitoba	
<i>Susanne von Below</i> , U Frankfurt	
<i>Mathias Boes</i> , U Heidelberg .....	68

## **Problems & Solutions in Relation to Subjective QOL Indicators**

### Self-esteem, Control and Optimism: What is Their Relationship?

<i>C. Croft</i> , Deakin U	
<i>Robert Cummins</i> , Deakin U .....	70

### Forced versus Chosen Ethnic Identity Labels: Implications for the Generalization of Research Findings

<i>William B. Disch</i> , Institute for Community Research	
<i>Kathleen Cady-Webster</i> , U Rhode Island.....	70

### Perceived QOL of Individuals—An Indian Perspective

<i>Sriya Majumdar</i> , U Calcutta	
<i>Snehanshu DasGupta</i> , U Calcutta.....	70

### Do people Believe that Life Was Better in the "Good Old Days"?

<i>Michael Hagerty</i> , U of California-Davis .....	71
--	----

## **Community Indicators of Health and Well-being (I)**

### Community Health Indicators for the Washington Metropolitan Region

<i>Michael A. Stoto</i> , George Washington U	
<i>Jane S. Durch</i> , George Washington U .....	71

### Satisfaction with Personal and Environmental Quality of Life: A Black South African Perspective

<i>Margaret S. Westaway</i> , Medical Research Council .....	72
--	----

## **Tourism Management and Quality of Life**

### The Impact of Strategic Alliances on the Hospitality and Travel Industry Stakeholders' Quality of Life

<i>Said M. Ladki</i> , Lebanese American U	
<i>Mohammad A. Shatila</i> , Lebanese American University .....	73

### Benchmarking Indicator-Systems and their Potential for Tourism Sustainability and Quality of Life

<i>Matthias Fuchs</i> , U Innsbruck .....	73
---	----

<u>The Under Appreciated Link Between Tourism and Quality of Life in Host Communities</u> by <i>Robert R. Robert F. Nelson</i> , U Delaware.....	73
--	----

**Business/Labor and QOL (II)**

<u>Meeting The Challenge of Making Life More Satisfying For Food Service Managers</u> <i>Richard F. Ghiselli</i> , Purdue U <i>Joseph M. LaLopa</i> , Purdue U <i>Billy Bai</i> , Purdue U .....	74
---	----

**Comparative QOL Issues and the Measurement of QOL**

<u>QOL and Political Trust in the Context of the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election: A Comparison of Younger and Older Voters</u> <i>Elaine Sherman</i> , Hofstra U <i>Leon Schiffman</i> , St. John's U <i>Nicole Kirpalani</i> , Baruch College-CUNY .....	75
--	----

<u>The Relationship between Multiple Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life in Older Adults in Japan and the United States: A Comparative Analysis</u> <i>Kristen M. Suthers</i> , U Southern California <i>Eileen Crimmins</i> , U Southern California <i>Yasuhiko Saito</i> , Nihon U .....	76
---	----

**Problems & Solutions in Relation to Subjective QOL Indicators**

<u>Personal Income and Beliefs Affecting Happiness</u> <i>C. Manolis</i> , Quinnipiac U <i>Melvin Prince</i> , Southern Connecticut State U .....	76
---	----

<u>Measuring Subjective Well-being Reliably: An Empirical Comparison of Single-item and Multi-item Inventories</u> <i>Joar Vittersø</i> , U Tromsø <i>E. Røysamb</i> , National Institute of Public Health .....	76
--	----

<u>Identity Consistency, Culture, and Subjective Well-Being</u> <i>Eunkook M. Suh</i> , U Illinois, Urbana-Champaign .....	77
---	----

**Community Indicators of Health and Well-being (II)**

<u>Profile of Gastroduodenal Disease in Brazil X Quality of Life</u> <i>Suzana Tyrrasch de Almeida</i> , UFPE <i>José Lurilmar Lucena</i> , Brejo da Madre de Deus <i>Maria Julião</i> , Brejo da Madre de Deus <i>Ana Paula Tyrrasch de Almeida</i> , Brejo da Madre de Deus <i>Bruno Coelho</i> , Brejo da Madre de Deus <i>Lourdinha Florêncio</i> , Brejo da Madre de Deus <i>Edson de Souza, Rosa Carneiro</i> , Brejo da Madre de Deus .....	77
---	----

<u>Validity of the HRQOL in Two Canadian Samples</u> <i>Stephanie Ounpuu</i> , McMaster U <i>Larry Chambers</i> , U Ottawa .....	78
--	----

Adult Health-related Quality of Life: Why Did Some States Improve While Most Declined, United States, 1993-2000?

*David G. Moriarty*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
*Mathew Zack*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention..... 79

**Tourism Marketing and Quality of Life**

Tourist Craft Marketing's Impact on Rural Thailand's Quality of Life

*Rosalind C. Paige*, U Tennessee-Knoxville  
*Warunee Thanapase*, Kasetsart U ..... 79

The Effects of Different Aspects of Tourism Services on Travelers' QOL

*Janet Davis Neal*, U of North Carolina..... 80

Revitalization of Cumalikizik, Turkey: The Oldest Turkish Village

*Ulker Oren*, U Istanbul  
*Turgut Var*, Texas A&M U  
*Jinhyung Chon*, Texas A & M U..... 81

**Quality of Life and Cities (I)**

Urban QOL: The State of the City

*Mohammad Taghi Shekhi*, Al-Zarhra U ..... 81

The State of the City: Living Conditions in Amsterdam

*Peggy Schyns*, Amsterdam Bureau of Research and Statistics  
*Jeroen Boelhouwer*, Social and Cultural Planning Office..... 82

A Socioeconomic, Community Based Approach for Developing Integrated Mass Transit Systems as Applied to the City of Baltimore

*Claudia Phillips*, Morgan State U ..... 83

**Consumer Well-being**

Volunteering, Corporate Sponsorship, and the Quality of Life in the United States

*Laura R. Oswald*, Marketing Semiotics, Inc..... 83

"Money Worlds" and Consumer Well-Being: An Integration of Money Dispositions, Materialism and Spending

*Miriam Tatzel*, Empire State College ..... 84

**QOL Indicators & Models of Eastern European Countries**

The Prospects for Catching up. Lessons for the Accession Countries to the European Union from Previous Enlargements

*Jan Delhey*, Social Science Research Center Berlin..... 85

Explaining Life Expectancy during the Transition: Do Income Inequality and Public Health Spending Matter?

*Alexei Ivaschenko*, Gothenburg U ..... 85

**Quality of Life and Cities (II)**

Sound Environment of the Urban Public Spaces: Representations and Indicators in Rio de Janeiro City  
*Jules Ghislain Slama, Federal U Rio de Janeiro*  
*Mauricio Pereira, Ecole d'Architecture de Toulouse* ..... 86

How Architecture is a Measure of QOL in Diverse Populations  
*Albrecht Herholdt, U Port Elizabeth* ..... 86

An Interactive Multi-criteria Decision Modeling Tool Using Analytic Hierarchy Process Methodology  
*John B. Lee, U British Columbia* ..... 87

**Indicators & Models of Financial Well-being (III)**

The Impact of Student Debt on Quality of Life: A Longitudinal Study of New Zealand Students  
*John J. Watson, U Canterbury* ..... 87

What Do Families Do When Money Runs Out? Financial Management and Coping Strategies of Young Mothers on TANF  
*Sheila Mammen, U Massachusetts*  
*Michael Meade, U Hampshire* ..... 88

Financial Hardship and Food Insecurity among Rural Low-income Families  
*Sheila Mammen, U Massachusetts*  
*Gretchen May, U Massachusetts*  
*Shirley Mietlicki, U Massachusetts*  
*Michael Meade, U Hampshire* ..... 88

Economic Well-Being: How Families Define the Term  
*Glenn Muske, Oklahoma State U* ..... 89

**Indicators & Models of Financial Well-being (IIV)**

Meeting the Challenge of Making Life More Satisfying for Food Service Managers  
*Richard Ghiselli, Purdue U*  
*Joseph LaLopa, Purdue U*  
*Billy Bai* ..... 90

**All Work, No Study? Factors Affecting Student Experience at a UK University**

S.E.Farron  
P.I.Houghton  
M.Whittaker  
C.H.Worthington  
*University of Central Lancashire*

Funding arrangements for university studies in the UK have changed in recent years. Formerly most students received non-repayable grants. Now they must pay fees and meet their living expenses themselves. This they do through parental support, securing loans which have to be repaid, working, or more commonly a combination of these. As a consequence, students find that they are having to fit paid employment in with their studies. At the same time many universities are experiencing a fall in student retention rates. There is thought to be a connection between low retention rates, personal funding difficulties and student satisfaction. Are students' academic achievement and enjoyment of university life affected by their need to finance their studies?

The University of Central Lancashire recognises the importance of student satisfaction, evidenced by their biennial administration of a questionnaire to all students. However, quality of University life is only partially monitored by this Student Satisfaction Survey; it does not explore well-being or personal motivation.

In order to produce a wider understanding of students and their University experience, this study draws on research undertaken by the University of Florence, presented in July 2000. The instrument developed and validated in that study has been partially adopted and replicated; additionally, similar analytical methods have been applied. This has provided the means to measure students' evaluation of and satisfaction with the quality of life at the University of Central Lancashire. It has also enabled extracted dimensions underlying students' responses to be compared with those reported through the University of Florence study.

The principal research question, pursuing hypothesised connections between the number of hours in employment and a student's perceived quality of life, has required corresponding variables to be included.

A sample of 336 students from the University of Central Lancashire completed the questionnaire. A quota sample design across Faculties enabled a good representation of the student body.

This paper discusses factors found to have a bearing on the extent to which students are able and motivated to study, the degree to which paid work affects the quantity and quality of their student life and the aspects of University experience which contribute significantly to their perception of satisfaction and well-being.

**Different Scales for Different Survey Methods: Validation in Measuring Quality of University Life**

Silvana Schifini D'Andrea  
Filomena Maggino  
*University of Florence*

In our opinion measurement and assessment of subjective perception of Quality of Life need a special attention not only in variables' definition and items' selection but also in the identification of the more suitable scales in measuring agreement levels, satisfaction levels, and so on.



The problem of variables' definition and items' selection becomes complicated because of questionnaire form and leading survey type (paper questionnaire, presence of interviewers or not, CATI, Web interviewing, and so on).

In Girona conference, we presented the outcomes yielded from our survey about Quality of University Life at the University of Florence on a sample of 300 students. The main goal of that survey was the validation of Subjective Instruments in University context.

The paper-questionnaire, applied in that survey, took time for administration and required employment of interviewers. The necessity and the importance to have up-to-date data in evaluation of different aspects of university life, persuaded us to verify a different survey technique (CATI) that could yield immediate outcomes.

This allowed us to prove the validity and effectiveness of CATI procedure, which we applied in other areas, in studying a particular area of Quality of Life. The application of CATI procedure was possible since the situation allowed easy contacts with students, thanks to availability of University archives. The sample was drawn out from student population of the Faculty of Economics of University of Florence. The survey involved 1015 students in the last week of May 2001.

This new survey required a new questionnaire formulation of both conceptual model redefinition and individual item construction. Some problems rose concerning item scale definition, actually in the course of questionnaire adaptation - from paper form to CATI. Particularly, the adaptation problem concerned former items that presented a) graphical scales (Face Scale, Self Anchoring Ladder Scale, Semantic Differential Scales), b) labeled scores. In order to apply those items in telephonic interviews, we turned those scales in different types of rating scales. In order to verify the hypothesis of different discriminant capabilities for different rating scales, we defined different rating scales for the same items.

Therefore, we defined a new CATI-questionnaire in which some items had two different rating scales. For instance, in the preceding questionnaire, students could evaluate their student life by Ladder Scale (Cantril), in graphical form. In CATI-questionnaire we adopted a different approach: students had to refer their agreement regarding an assertion about their student condition, by a 10-points or by a 7-points rating scale.

The difficulty in adapting Semantic Differential Scales, usually in graphical form, in a form fitting telephonic interviews, has been overcome submitting two different adjective groups: positive adjectives and negative adjectives. This procedure allowed us to verify the real polarity of adjectives.

The survey required a particular software procedure in order to draw two samples (of, respectively, 498 and 517 students) to which we submitted the two questionnaire forms. The goals of this study are a) validation of different questionnaire forms (paper and CATI), b) check of different scale techniques, in order to optimize items for CATI-questionnaire, c) evaluation of the influence of different scaling techniques on the constructions of Quality of University Life indicators, d) comparison of satisfaction and evaluation levels observed in this survey with those we observed in the previous one. In this paper, we present only the early outcomes of data analysis.

#### **Measuring the Quality of University Student Life: The Development of an Instrument**

Lance W. Roberts  
Rodney A. Clifton  
*University of Manitoba*  
Susanne von Below, *University of Frankfurt*  
Mathias Boes, *University of Heidelberg*

For various reasons, there is growing pressure on universities to become more accountable for their performance. An important dimension of the institutional life of universities centres on the experience of students. Accordingly, there is a need to construct a theoretically informed, psychometrically defensible instrument for measuring the quality of life of university students. This paper recounts the development an instrument that fills this need.