The 2024 Annual Conference of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) in Malaysia showcased a diverse array of research and discussions focused on enhancing global well-being. About 220 participants from around the world presented over 300 papers reflecting the multidimensional nature of quality-of-life studies, including: happiness economics, work and wellbeing, subjective well-being and happiness, social Indicators and measurement, policy and interventions, family and child wellbeing, health and well-being, sustainability and environment, and wellbeing amongst various cultures. These themes underscored the interdisciplinary nature of the conference, emphasizing research, policy implications, and practical applications in the field of quality-of-life studies. Special sessions highlighted innovative methodologies and case studies aimed at addressing contemporary challenges affecting quality of life worldwide. The conference also provided a platform for networking among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, fostering collaborations aimed at translating research into actionable strategies for improving quality of life across different contexts. Overall, ISQOLS 2024 in Malaysia facilitated a rich exchange of knowledge and ideas, emphasizing the importance of multidisciplinary approaches in advancing the field of quality-of-life studies globally.
The 2024 ISQOLS 22nd Annual Conference was dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Eckermann, whose visionary spirit and fervent pursuit of quality of life research left an indelible mark on the field. Elizabeth's proposal for the ISQOLS conference in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia in 2018 was a testament to her profound commitment to supporting her colleagues at the University of Malaysia, as well as fostering global dialogue and collaboration in the study of quality of life in the Oceania and Asian regions.

Though she tragically passed away before the conference could come to fruition in 2024, Elizabeth's legacy continues to resonate deeply within the ISQOLS community and beyond. Her enthusiasm, intellectual rigor, and unwavering belief in the transformative power of research to improve lives inspired countless colleagues and scholars around the world.

In honoring Elizabeth Eckermann, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing the field she cherished. Her endowed track, "The Elizabeth Eckermann Endowed Track on Gender and Quality of Life" remains a constant staple in our ISQOLS conferences.

Elizabeth Eckermann's contributions extend far beyond her academic achievements; they reflect a deep-seated passion for making a meaningful difference in the world. As we reflect on her life and work, we celebrate not only her professional accomplishments but also the warmth, kindness, and generosity she extended to all who knew her.

Learn more about the Elizabeth Eckermann Endowed Track Gender and Quality of Life
Pre-Conference Excursion to Kiulu, Lingga Eco Tourism, Tamparuli, Malaysia
On June 24th, ISQOLS participants enjoyed an enriching pre-conference excursion to Lingga Eco-Tourism in Kiulu, engaging in diverse activities that showcased the region’s cultural and natural wealth. Known as the Kadazan-Dusun people, locals warmly welcomed visitors, offering insights into their traditions. Participants experienced river fishing, gaining firsthand knowledge of local fishing techniques. They also immersed themselves in the culinary arts, preparing and tasting local delicacies such as hinava (a traditional fish dish) and sampling tuak (rice wine), a staple in Kadazan-Dusun celebrations. The cultural exchange continued with lively sessions where participants learned and tried out traditional dance moves, accompanied by the melodious sounds of gongs and drums, instruments deeply rooted in Kadazan-Dusun heritage. This immersive experience not only highlighted the community’s rich cultural tapestry but also underscored their commitment to preserving their environment and traditions. Overall, the excursion provided a memorable blend of cultural immersion and ecological awareness, setting a vibrant tone for the upcoming ISQOLS conference.

Pre-Conference Workshops
The pre-conference workshop on “A Crash Course on Personal Wellbeing Interventions and Life Coaching” held on 25th June 2024 saw a houseful of enthusiastic and engaging participants. This workshop was designed to provide participants with an overview of different evidence-based techniques and interventions to enhance personal well-being and help them learn how to select and apply appropriate interventions based on individual needs and preferences. The crash course covered the essence of different modules the actual course will offer: Introduction to Personal Well-Being and Diagnostics, Mindfulness-Based Interventions, Positive Psychology Interventions, Behaviour-Based Interventions, Personal Growth Strategies (Inter-Domain, Intra-Domain, and Balance), and Coaching as a Powerful Intervention.

Joe Sirgy held a workshop (A Crash Course in the Psychology of Wellbeing) at the 2024 ISQOLS Conference in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia on June 25th, 2024. The workshop was well-attended by a handful of participants who were highly engaged with the instructor and one another. The workshop served to introduce many QOL researchers to the burgeoning research on the psychology of well-being to help them ease into this stream of research with some confidence. As such, the workshop provided an overview of the following areas of research on the psychology of well-being and quality of life:

- Philosophical Foundations, Definitions, and Measures
- Consequences of Happiness
- Objective Reality and Its Effects on Happiness
- Subjective Reality and Its Effects on Happiness
- Life Domains and Their Effects on Happiness
- Population Segments and Happiness

The workshop was based on the following book: Sirgy, M. Joseph (2020). The Psychology of Quality of Life: Wellbeing and positive Mental Health. 3rd edition. Cham: Springer Nature.

The instructor (Prof. Dr. M. Joseph (Joe) Sirgy) is a management psychologist (Ph.D., U/Massachusetts, 1979) and the Virginia Tech Real Estate Professor Emeritus of Marketing at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (USA) and Extraordinary Professor at the WorkWell Research Unit at North West University – Potchefstroom Campus (South Africa).
The ISQOLS 2024 Annual Conference program featured a comprehensive schedule of events designed to explore and advance research in quality-of-life studies. The keynote lectures provided deep insights into diverse perspectives on quality of life, ranging from health assessments and economic influences on happiness to Indigenous principles and cultural roots of wellbeing.

**Conference Keynotes:**

**Alex C. Michalos Lecture: Simon Eckermann**
"Health in the 21st century with the human functioning revolution: Moving beyond QALYs to allow for bio-psycho-social lived health experience in communities and reflect their values"

**Edward F. Diener Lecture: Andrew Clark**
"The Easterlin Paradox at 50*"

**General Keynote Lecture: Jannie Lasimbang**
"Indigenous Peoples’ principles and practices on community wellbeing"

**Richard J. Estes Lecture: Mohsen Joshanloo**
"The Quest for Authenticity: Uncovering the Cultural Roots of Modern Well-Being"

Email office@isqols.org to request Keynote presentations.

**Access 2024 Conference Abstract Book**
Conference Reflections

As a PhD student, I’m super happy and grateful to have taken part in the annual ISQOLS conference. This was my second time attending, after last year in Rotterdam, but my first time presenting, with both a poster and an oral presentation. The ISQOLS conference is always an awesome chance to connect with other researchers. On one hand, learning from well-known experts and receiving their feedback is incredibly valuable. On the other, understanding the goals and experiences of fellow new researchers makes you feel like you’re all part of a shared journey. Chatting with people and attending the sessions provided me with new insights and tools to apply in my research. The atmosphere is multicultural and friendly, offering an unbeatable opportunity to enjoy and learn at the same time. The multidisciplinary nature of the conference is really valuable, as it lets us learn from different perspectives while sharing the same goal of understanding how to improve people’s lives. This year’s conference was in Malaysia, a country with an amazing culture and beautiful landscapes, making the ISQOLS experience even better. The local hospitality was incredible, and I had the chance to explore some awesome sites during my days there, including the preconference excursion to Kiulu. I’m already looking forward to next year’s edition in Luxembourg. It’s going to be great reconnecting with everyone. See you there!” - Eric Barberà Mas (Spain)

On the 28th of July, I had the amazing opportunity to infiltrate the International Society for Quality of Life Studies Conference (ISQOLS) 2024 alongside my teacher, Mary McPherson and my friend Reine Lim. Thanks to Dr Alan Piper and Ms Jill Johnson, the three of us could attend the last day of the conference (we wandered around looking quite out of place but nevertheless very excited). As someone who was born in beautiful Kota Kinabalu, I’ve never seen any major international conferences here due to the state being small and more of a holiday destination so this truly was the opportunity of a lifetime! Being two excited psychology students and one extra-excited psychology teacher, we had a keen interest in the world of research. Using knowledge from our psychology classes, we tried our best to understand the research presented to us (which we did quite successfully I would say!). We attended presentations about the latest studies in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for Alcohol Use Disorder Patients as well as ACT for Perinatal Health, and although I had little to no knowledge about these topics, it got me thinking about the applications of these therapies in other fields, and gave me useful knowledge for my future learning. I learnt so much and had so much fun so this was a highlight of my year! Thank you again to Dr Piper and Ms Johnson for giving us this opportunity!
Written by Trinity Hwong, Proofread and Edited by Reine Lim (Malaysia)
Conference Reflections

“When we won the 22nd ISQOLS conference bid in what seemed to be 2017, I had not even completed my postgraduate training yet - fast forward 2019 and I was roped into the 2nd borneo Quality of Life conference organising committee in the very last month. Turns out there was some implicit motive behind that invitation...but it was the best invitation i have ever received in my whole life. Fast forward 5 years and we were suddenly busy organising the International Society conference, two years later after COVID had taken away our 2022 conference. Things I will particularly remember from this conference - the beautiful friendships we made, the drinking suggestions I was busy sending on the conference whatsapp channel informally established by the Luxembourg contingent, the sheer fear on everyone’s faces as they crossed the hanging bridge to the pre-conference excursions, the number of emails I replied asking me how conservative Malaysia was and whether we had to dress or behave in any way (I can assure you that after the conference dinner everything was answered!), the joy at finding out we had got 200-odd traditional bead conference tags sponsored by the Sabah Tourism Board, and honestly, the look on the participants’ faces as the Bornean warriors rushed into the hall and did their mindblowing performance.

The research networks that we in Sabah have made after ISQOLS have been staggering and we are still reeling from the large number of Zoom meetings we are now in after making these networks begin! It was an absolutely fantastic conference and we hope that Borneo has not failed to disappoint. From the bottom of our hearts, we wish you TERIMA KASIH and hope that we will be able to see you in Luxembourg next year, with multisectorial, multidisciplinary, cross-cultural research that are the flowers of the seeds we sowed in Borneo 2024.” - Nicholas Pang Tze Ping (Malaysia Local Conference Organizer)

ISQOLS 2024 Annual Conference Reflections

“At the end of June, I went to Sabah, Malaysia for the annual ISQOLS conference. The journey in ISQOLS 2024 means a lot to my academic development. This was my first time to attend ISQOLS conference. It was also my first time to give oral presentation at international conference. I really appreciate the conference committee offer me such a great opportunity to communicate with global scholars. They have considered every detail relevant to the trip and reminded me via the timely email. Knowing that I’m a PhD student in need of financial support, they generously provided me an education grant on the conference. I want to say thanks to all of you. Particularly, special thanks to the Executive Director, Jill, for reminding me the updated information and getting all the things prepared. Before the conference, I was hesitating how to handle with my trip because I would attend my first conference by myself. The conference arrangements made me feel secured.

Overall, I had a fruitful experience during the conference! The pre-conference workshop I attended provided rich information on psychosocial intervention and life coaching. Regarding the presentation, I was assigned at the Session 12D (Consumer Finance and Well-Being). The presentations at this session were all closely related to my research interests. Particularly, I had frequently read the presenters’ papers even before I notice ISQOLS 2024. The presenters’ ideas had provided me insights to my research. It is my great pleasure to have this opportunity to meet these experts and professors and share my research with them. We had a lot of discussions about our similar research interests. I also learnt a lot regarding my presentation and research from comments and suggestions put forward by presenters and the audience during my session.

Additionally, I really like a special session, Editors’ perspective! I heard that not many conferences had this session. I think this is a representation of the high quality of ISQOLS conference. I communicated with some editors, particularly Prof Xiao from the Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning and Prof Yao from the Journal of Consumer Affairs. As a research student in social welfare, financial capability, and quality-of-life, I have closely followed these two journals and also the other ones, Applied Research in Quality of Life (Prof Shek), Social Indicators Research (Prof Botha), and Journal of Happiness Studies (Prof Rossouw). In this session, the editors gave us useful information regarding manuscript preparation and submission. I want to great thanks to these editors and the conference committee for arranging this session.

Finally, I think my first time with ISQOLS conference was quite good. After experiencing this trip in Malaysia, I decide to follow ISQOLS continuously. I’m looking forward to the next annual conference and other membership activities. Wishing more future connections with all of you. Thanks!”

Zewei Liu, ISQOLS 2024 Conference Education Grant Recipient
Conference Reflections

Summary of My Experience at the ISQOLS Conference as a Developing Country Fellow

In April 2024, I was selected as the Developing country fellow which meant I could travel for the ISQOLS at Kota Kinabalu. I believe many may think of the term “Quality of life” (QOL) as something that is straightforward to understand, but to me, it was incredibly complex and was something often overlooked. In the context of my background, in Uganda my childhood was vibrant and usually filled with laughter, games, and the pure joy of being alive and our playgrounds were the open fields, our toys crafted from banana Kibres or whatever we could find. However, as I grew older, the realities of life in Uganda began to reveal themselves. The carefree days of childhood slowly gave way to an awareness of the world around me and this country with a happy childhood was in reality a nation where over 20% of the population lived on less than a dollar per day. In the reality I saw around me the idea of a QOL was a distant idea over the horizon, as many in my country are just focusing on where their next meal would come from. Like in many Sub-Saharan African countries, there are many serious demanding challenges like recurring infectious diseases such as Malaria, HIV/AIDS, emerging diseases like Ebola, poor maternal outcomes and noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, among others. These harsh realities mean a lower priority is given to research on QoL and wellbeing. Researching on QoL in Sub-Saharan Africa seems a far off and arguably an abstract idea, far removed from the urgent public health issues and needs that clamour to be dealt with. Even though there is a dearth of literature coming out of the continent, we know that QOL remains a distant dream and what research there is is often unfocused and uncontextualized. But should this be?? Attending the ISQOLS 2024 conference showed me there could be ways to change this narrative, to make QOL a higher priority in Africa. The ISQOLS conference was a profoundly enriching experience and clearly demonstrated an important principles contained in the presentations and research I listened to, that QOL deeply transcended every aspect of public health. This was a revelation and confirmed that every person has the right to be given opportunity to live a fulfilling and dignified life. The conference was a remarkable platform that showcased a real smorgasbord of ideas and research on quality-of-life, well-being, and happiness, the application of research methods. A unique experience was the opportunity to engage with policymakers and leaders from various sectors. One of the highlights of the conference for me was the stellar cast of keynote speakers Simon Eckermann, Andrew Clark presentation on Easterlin Paradox at 50 and Mohsen Joshanloo – Quest for Authenticity: uncovering the cultural roots of modern wellbeing opened my eyes to new values and ways of approaching QoL research. The Elizabeth Eckermann Endowed Track on Gender and Quality of Life provided me an opportunity to understand how gender roles impact well-being. I learnt from this track about successful policies, interventions and recommendations that have the potential to improve gender equality and quality of life, and although these were conducted outside Africa (Norway, India and Taiwan), they were relatable and could be adapted. Of particular importance to me was the Valerie Moller Endowed Track for the Advancement of QoL and Wellbeing in Sub-Saharan Africa. Except for one paper on Northern Kenya, all the others focused on South Africa. This highlighted a notable lack of representation from across Africa. It was an invaluable opportunity for me to meet and network from various scholars from around the world, each with different methodological and theoretical perspectives. It reinforced the importance of generating research-based knowledge to contribute to the well-being of societies globally. A particularly memorable moment was a discussion with a fellow participant – Dr. Anita Mortlock who shared her work about children, which inspired me to apply some of these concepts such as using the experiences of the children in the design of interventions being implemented in the research I am doing in Uganda about children of addicted parents. In conclusion, the ISQOLS conference was a transformative experience. I left the conference with renewed energy and a clearer vision for the future, committed to applying the insights gained to enhance the well-being of communities in Uganda and beyond. The experience also reinforced the importance of advocating for greater representation and inclusion of African voices in such global forums. A real benefit of this conference was how it brought together at the same time, in one place a group of extraordinary people who relished sharing their ideas and knowledge with others.

Claire Biribawa, ISQOLS 2024 Valerie Moller Fellow
Conference Reflections

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was my first time attending a non-virtual international conference. As usual, the ISQOLS 2024 conference was a remarkable gathering that successfully brought together a diverse group of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from around the world. Held in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, a city surrounded by the ocean and famous for its stunning sunsets, the event was well-organized and provided an engaging platform for discussing advancements in quality of life studies. The welcoming dinner was particularly unforgettable; though heavy rain prevented us from enjoying the outdoor breeze, the meal was wonderful, and we had a great time together.

One of the most commendable aspects of the conference was its comprehensive and diverse program. The sessions covered a wide range of topics, including but not limited to, health and well-being, environmental sustainability, socio-economic inequalities, and policy impacts on quality of life. Each session was well-curated, featuring a mix of established experts and emerging voices in the field, which facilitated a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives.

The keynote speakers were particularly impressive, delivering insightful presentations that set the tone for the conference. Their ability to synthesize complex information and present it in an accessible manner was greatly appreciated by attendees. Additionally, the panel discussions were lively and interactive, encouraging active participation among attendees.

Networking opportunities were plentiful, facilitated by well-timed breaks and social events. The conference organizers did an excellent job of creating a welcoming atmosphere that fostered connections. The poster sessions provided a valuable opportunity for researchers. I am honored that my poster titled "Nurturing Well-being: Unraveling Perspectives of Children from Diverse Backgrounds in Taiwan" was selected by a panel of voters to receive the 2nd Place Poster Award.

Overall, ISQOLS 2024 was a successful conference that advanced the field of quality of life studies and fostered meaningful exchanges among participants. I look forward to attending the next one in 2025.

Yu-Wen Chen (Taiwan)

Social Night Dinner Party at the Shang Ri La Tanjung Aru

The ISQOLS Social Night Dinner Party at the Shangri-La Tanjung Aru on June 27 was a delightful evening. Despite the unexpected downpour, the spirit of the evening remained upbeat and festive. The ISQOLS Social Night Dinner Party provided a memorable blend of culinary delights, cultural exchange, and networking, reaffirming the sense of community and collaboration that defines ISQOLS conferences.
ISQOLS 2024 Awards

ISQOLS 2024 Best Dissertation Awards
1st prize: Fabio Battaglia, To GDP or not to GDP Identifying the factors promoting and inhibiting the use and impact of well-being metrics in Scotland and Italy

2nd prize: Catherine Tullock, Collateral Damage Assessing the Impact of Gambling Problems on the Health and Wellbeing of Concerned Significant Others

3rd prize (jointly):
Giulia Slater, Essays on Social Capital and Wellbeing
George Ward, Happiness at Work. Essays on subjective wellbeing in the workplace and labor market

ISQOLS 2024 Best Poster Awards
1st Place: Financial Well-being of Filipino Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Carlo Kristopher Trinidad and Consuelo Chua)

2nd Place: Nurturing Well-being: Unraveling Perspectives of Children from Diverse Backgrounds in Taiwan (Yu-Wen Chen and Shin-Yin Liu)

3rd Place: Sample Size Determination for the Mean of the Exponential Distribution: Considering Hypothesis Testing, Confidence Intervals, Prediction Intervals, and Cost Constraints (Wei-Ming Luh and Jiin-Huarng Guo)


Access ISQOLS Awards Ceremony Presentation to learn more about the recipients.
Thank You!

Scientific Committee: Martijn Burger (ISQOLS), Helen Benedict Lasimbang (UMS), Nicholas Pang (UMS), Francesco Sarracino (ISQOLS Board), Stephanie Rossouw (ISQOLS Board), Pauline Yong (UMS)

Local Organizing Committee: Dr. Thong, Dr. Petrina, Nor Anggeriani, Apriline, Colette, Joanne, Dakir, Andrea Wong, Nicholas Pang Tze Ping, Helen Benedict Lasimbang

ISQOLS Conference Organizers: Martijn Burger (ISQOLS President) and Jill Johnson (ISQOLS Executive Director)

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