

CUHK
Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

The Centre for Quality of Life

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Centre for Quality of Life of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is the first centre specializing in quality of life research in Hong Kong and in different Chinese communities. One of our goals is to monitor and promote quality of life in Hong Kong through cross-disciplinary research, academic exchange activities, and cross-institutional collaboration.
- 1.2 Hong Kong undergoes drastic changes in political, economic, cultural and environmental aspects in the 21st century, and the quality of life of citizens in Hong Kong is being affected. It is timely to compile a composite index to monitor the quality of life in Hong Kong.
- 1.3 The **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** was designed in 2003 to serve as an objective and analytic tool to examine the quality of life in Hong Kong. The Index is released annually.

2 Objectives

It is the intention of the Centre is to use this composite index to:

- measure and keep track of Hong Kong's quality of life in the 21st century;
- engage relevant parties in promoting and advocating quality of life in Hong Kong;
- provide policy makers and the community with a useful reference tool; and
- advocate for the promotion of quality of life in Hong Kong and draw public attention to the issue of quality of life.

3 Composition of CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

- 3.1 The **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** is a composite index. It consists of 21 indicators that are grouped into three sub-indices, viz. **social**, **economic** and **environmental** (Appendices 1 & 2).
- 3.2 The indicators are selected according to the coverage, measurability, representativeness, and importance to the quality of life in Hong Kong. Among the 21 indicators, six are compiled by the Centre, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the University. These indicators are stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions (Appendix 1).
- 3.3 2002 was the base year of the study, and the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** for that year was set at 100 (Appendix 3). If the Index of a subsequent year is above 100, it means that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is better than that of 2002. If the index is below 100, it reveals that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is worse than that of 2002. If the Index is 100, it indicates that the Hong Kong quality of life in that year is the same as that of 2002.

4 Major Findings of the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index 2009

4.1 According to the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index of 2009**, the overall score in 2009 fell to 102.19, a drop of 2.64 points from 2008 (104.83), and was lower than those of 2007 (108.78), 2006 (108.93), 2005 (108.34), 2004 (105.78), and 2003 (104.20), indicating that the quality of life in Hong Kong has continued to decline in the last two years (Appendix 3).

4.2 Comparing with the 2008 scores, the economic and environmental sub-indices slightly improved in 2009, while the social sub-index has significantly declined (Appendix 3).

4.3 As compared with the 2008 figures, 5 out of the 21 indicators worsened in 2009 (Appendix 4). They are:

- i) Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases;
- ii) Press criticism index;
- iii) Housing affordability ratio;
- iv) Unemployment rate; and
- v) Real wage index.

The most noticeable being the higher rate of reported infectious diseases. The index plunge (from 6.48 to 0.74) was attributed to the outbreak of the Human Swine Influenza pandemic in 2009. Under the economic sub-index, the most noticeable drop is found in the housing affordability ratio (from 1.72 to 1.18), meaning that housing has become less affordable in 2009.

4.4 Compared with the previous year, 14 indicators improved in 2009 (see Appendix 5):

- i) Standardized mortality rate;
- ii) Life expectancy at birth;
- iii) Public expenditure on health as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product;
- iv) Stress index;
- v) General life satisfaction index;
- vi) Government performance index;
- vii) Overall crime rate;
- viii) Real rental index;
- ix) Index of current economic conditions;
- x) Public expenditure on education as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product; and
- xi) Air index;
- xii) Water index;
- xiii) Noise index; and
- xiv) Recycle rate of municipal solid waste.

The most notable being the public expenditure on health, the public expenditure on education and

the real rental index. All four indicators under the environmental sub-index went up, indicating that the air quality, water quality, noise pollution and the recycle rate of solid waste had improved. Besides, the press freedom index and the age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities remained unchanged (Appendix 3).

- 4.5 For more information on the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**, please visit The Centre for Quality of Life website: www2.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol

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Appendix 1: Composition of and Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

SOCIAL SUB-INDEX

1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)⁽¹⁾ refers to the number of deaths per 1000 standard population.
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years) refers to the life expectancy at birth for males and females.
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population) refers to the number of notified infectious diseases per 1000 population.
5. Stress index refers to the stress that the Hong Kong people are facing (base rate = 100).
6. General life satisfaction index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with their current lives (base rate = 100).
7. Press freedom index refers to the degree of press freedom in Hong Kong (base rate = 100).
8. Press criticism index refers to the frequency of criticisms by the press of the Hong Kong Corporation, the Hong Kong SAR Government, and the People's Republic of China Government (base rate = 100).
9. Government performance index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with the performance of Hong Kong SAR Government (base rate = 100).
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population) refers to the total number of violent and non-violent crimes reported per 1000 population.

ECONOMIC SUB-INDEX

11. Housing affordability ratio refers to the annual average of affordable property price (i.e. average property price times 39.9 sq. feet, divided by monthly medium income times 12).
12. Real rental index refers to the real rental index for the Hong Kong property market.
13. Unemployment rate refers to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (in percent).
14. Index of current economic conditions refers to the public attitude towards economic conditions in Hong Kong.
15. Real wage index⁽²⁾ refers to the real wages for employees up to supervisory level (excluding managerial and professional employees) in all selected industry sectors.
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-INDEX

18. Air index refers to the daily air pollution index.
19. Water index refers to the percentage of rivers in Hong Kong categorized as 'good' and 'excellent' by the monitoring station.
20. Noise index (per 1000 population) refers to the number of noise complaints received by the Environmental Protection Department and the Police per 1000 population.
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste refers to the recycle rate (in percent) of solid waste from households and from commercial and industrial sources.

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Standardized mortality rate is compiled based on the world standard population published in the 1997-1999 *World Health Statistics Annual*.

⁽²⁾ As from 2001, the real wage index is derived by deflating the nominal wage indices by the 1999/2000-based CPI(A).

Sources:

Stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions are compiled by the Faculty of Social Science of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions.

Appendix 2: Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Social sub-index								
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40#
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years)	F : 84.5 M : 78.6	F : 84.3 M : 78.5	F : 84.7 M : 79	F: 84.6 M: 78.8	F: 85.5 M: 79.4	F: 85.5 M: 79.4	F: 85.5 M:79.3	F: 86.1# M: 79.8#
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.30	2.10	2.20	2.00	2.30
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	3.73	2.33	2.89	2.91	3.27	3.65	2.38	6.88
5. Stress index	100.00	88.75	79.51	72.95	74.42	72.91	80.36	80.00
6. General life satisfaction index	100.00	100.68	105.62	109.94	112.47	110.22	107.57	111.66
7. Press freedom index	100.00	101.22	100.26	101.43	101.55	103.92	103.64	103.54
8. Press criticism index	100.00	103.75	91.02	78.82	77.25	81.86	83.65	79.15
9. Government performance index	100.00	103.23	132.23	169.79	176.29	183.48	130.48	145.10
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	11.18	12.99	11.81	11.37	11.83	11.67	11.25	11.08
Economic sub-index								
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.68	4.49	5.31	6.22	5.88	6.82	7.67	8.20
12. Real rental index	87.97	79.67	84.55	93.11	96.68	105.27	107.67	91.70
13. Unemployment rate	7.34	7.93	6.76	5.55	4.69	3.92	3.68	5.17
14. Index of current economic conditions	76.55	81.32	99.95	109.75	109.48	116.70	81.55	83.40
15. Real wage index	117.53	117.70	116.35	115.78	115.48	116.08	116.68	116.30
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.10	4.40	4.40	4.00	3.80	3.50	3.40	4.50
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	17.04	17.70	17.50	17.60	18.50	18.70	18.50	18.50
Environmental sub-index								
18. Air index	46.90	49.93	49.32	45.10	45.68	45.77	44.83	42.26
19. Water index	74.40	75.60	78.30	80.80	80.80	80.70	81.70	85.03*
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	1.84	1.43	1.63	1.24	1.28	1.15	1.07	1.02
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	36.30	40.82	40.35	43.09	45.59	44.96	47.58	49.67*

* Forecasted figure

Provisional figure

■ Revised figure

Appendix 3: CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	2002 (Base year)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2009 compared w/ 2008
Social sub-index									
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	4.76	4.63	4.63	4.76	5.02	5.02	5.02	5.15#	Better
2. Life expectancy at birth (in year)	4.76	4.75	4.78	4.77	4.81	4.81	4.81	4.84#	Better
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.76	4.76	4.05	3.70	3.88	3.53	4.05	Better
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	4.76	6.55	5.83	5.81	5.35	4.86	6.48	0.74	Worse
5. Stress index	4.76	5.30	5.74	6.05	5.98	6.05	5.69	5.71	Better
6. General life satisfaction index	4.76	4.79	5.03	5.23	5.35	5.25	5.12	5.31	Better
7. Press freedom index	4.76	4.82	4.77	4.83	4.83	4.95	4.93	4.93	Same
8. Press criticism index	4.76	4.94	4.33	3.75	3.68	3.90	3.98	3.77	Worse
9. Government performance index	4.76	4.91	6.29	8.08	8.39	8.73	6.21	6.91	Better
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	4.76	3.99	4.49	4.68	4.48	4.55	4.73	4.80	Better
Social sub-index	47.62	49.44	50.65	52.01	51.59	52.00	50.50	46.21	Worse
Economic sub-index									
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.76	4.95	4.12	3.19	3.54	2.58	1.72	1.18	Worse
12. Real rental index	4.76	5.21	4.95	4.20	4.00	3.51	3.38	4.29	Better
13. Unemployment rate	4.76	4.38	5.14	5.92	6.48	6.98	7.13	6.17	Worse
14. Index of current economic conditions	4.76	5.06	6.22	6.82	6.81	7.26	5.07	5.19	Better
15. Real wage index	4.76	4.77	4.71	4.69	4.68	4.70	4.73	4.71	Worse
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.99	4.99	4.53	4.41	4.06	3.95	5.22	Better
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	4.76	4.94	4.89	4.92	5.17	5.22	5.17	5.17	Same
Economic sub-index	33.32	34.30	35.02	34.27	35.09	34.31	31.15	31.93	Better
Environmental sub-index									
18. Air index	4.76	4.45	4.51	4.94	4.88	4.87	4.97	5.23	Better
19. Water index	4.76	4.84	5.01	5.16	5.17	5.16	5.23	5.44*	Better
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	4.76	5.82	5.30	6.31	6.22	6.54	6.74	6.87	Better
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	4.76	5.35	5.29	5.65	5.98	5.90	6.24	6.51*	Better
Environmental sub-index	19.04	20.46	20.11	22.06	22.25	22.47	23.18	24.05	Better
Quality of Life index	100.00	104.20	105.78	108.34	108.93	108.78	104.83	102.19	Worse

[remarks] The higher the score, the better the performance of the indicator.

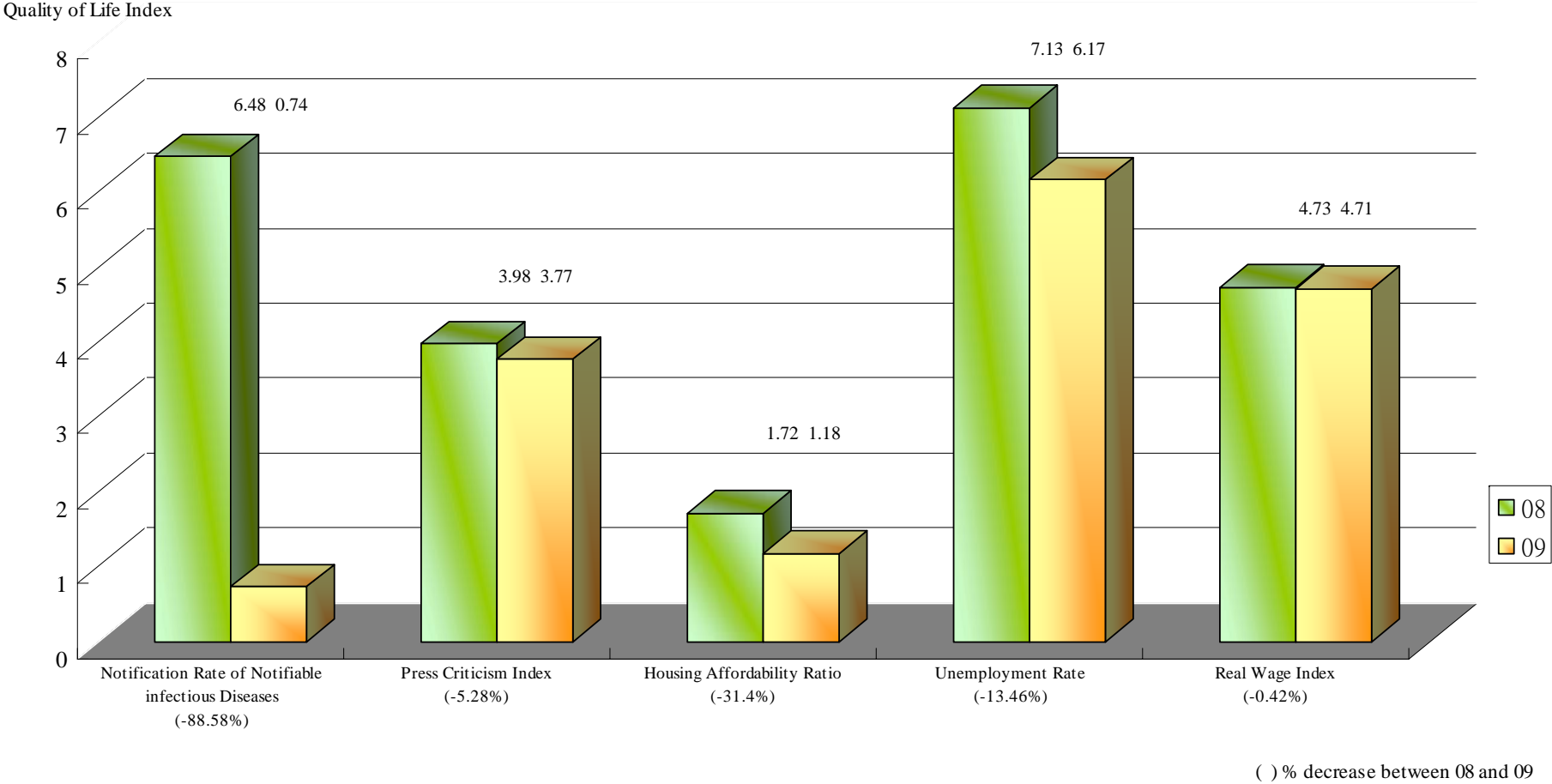
* Forecasted figure

Provisional figure

■ Revised figure

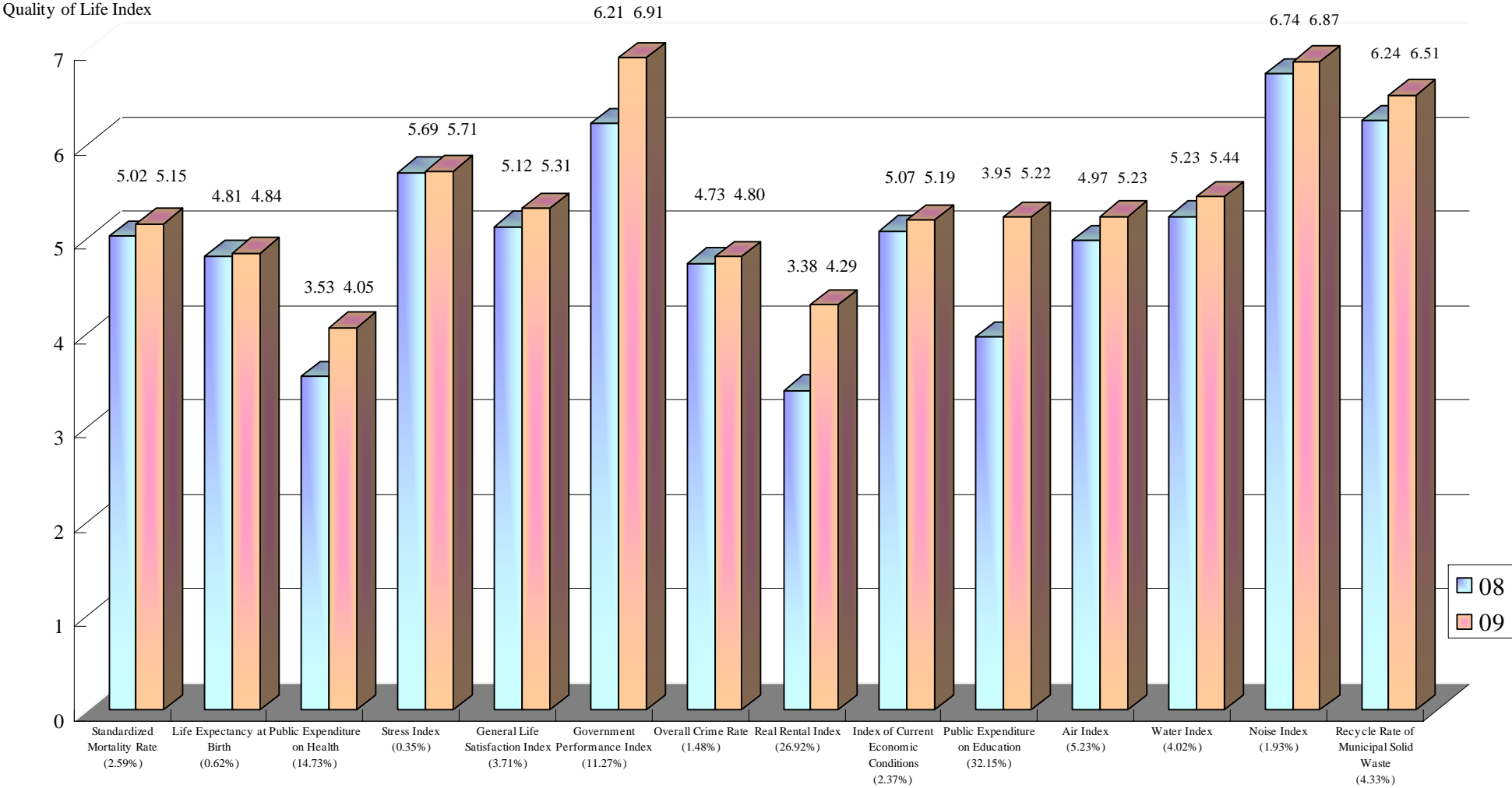
Appendix 4

2008-2009 Quality of Life Indices
Worse Indices



Appendix 5

2008-2009 Quality of Life Indices
Better Indices



() % increase between 08 and 09