

Flourishing in the Philippines: Country-specific insights from the Global Flourishing Study

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Abstract: Existing research on well-being has predominantly focused on relatively individualistic Western societies, with limited attention to developing and more collectivistic countries like the Philippines. This study contributes to addressing this gap by examining multidimensional well-being in a nationally representative sample of Filipinos ($n = 5,292$) from the first wave of the Global Flourishing Study. Specifically, differences in (1) life satisfaction and happiness, (2) physical and mental health, (3) meaning and purpose, (4) character and virtue, (5) social connectedness, and (6) financial and material stability were analyzed based on participants' sociodemographic characteristics. The results provided evidence of variation in flourishing indicators across gender, age, marital status, employment status, educational attainment, and religious service attendance, though most differences were modest in size. Some sociodemographic characteristics showed small associations with select indicators such as character-related outcomes by gender, physical and psychological well-being across age groups, and material stability across education levels. Religious attendance was more consistently associated with higher flourishing across several dimensions. These findings provide valuable insights into the multidimensional nature of flourishing and potential sociodemographic disparities in flourishing within a developing, collectivistic Southeast Asian context.

Keywords: Filipinos; flourishing; religiosity, sociodemographics; well-being

1. Introduction

Flourishing is a multidimensional lens for reflecting on the notion of complete human well-being and is a concept that has gained significant traction in global research (VanderWeele & Johnson, 2025b). However, its cultural manifestations remain unexplored in under-represented contexts such as the Philippines. VanderWeele's (2017a) flourishing framework, which includes domains such as happiness, meaning, character, and social connectedness, underscores the need for a more holistic and nuanced understanding of well-being. While existing literature highlights key predictors of flourishing, cross-cultural variations reveal that conceptualizations of well-being differ across contexts (Kitayama et al., 2010; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). In particular, indigenous Filipino psychology emphasizes the centrality of social harmony, shared identity, and collective well-being as core components of well-being (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Enriquez, 1992).

The Philippines' socio-historical background, influenced by its colonial past, current socio-economic disparities, and strong religious influences, further shapes potential pathways to flourishing, warranting the need for culturally grounded research. Despite this, much of the existing scholarship on flourishing is Western-centric (Lomas, 2022), often overlooking indigenous perspectives that integrate relational and spiritual dimensions into well-being (Church & Katigbak, 2002; Wong & Cowden, 2022). Addressing these gaps is crucial for developing a more contextually relevant understanding of flourishing in the Philippines, particularly as the nation navigates significant economic shifts, persistent social inequalities, and the impacts of globalization on traditional cultural values and practices (Diacio, 2021; Mendoza, 2024). In the present study, we take a stride toward addressing some of these gaps by providing a country-specific analysis of flourishing dimensions using a nationally representative sample in the Philippines. This study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of flourishing by offering culturally and traditionally grounded insights, which could inform future policies and interventions to foster holistic well-being in the Philippines.

1.1 Conceptualizing flourishing and its global significance

Flourishing is described as “a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good” (VanderWeele, 2017a, p. 8149), encompassing both subjective and objective aspects of well-being while considering an individual’s surrounding context (Lomas et al., 2023). Within the philosophical tradition, Aristotle’s (1934) work is foundational for the understanding of flourishing (*eudaimonia*), which is not to be understood as momentary happiness or pleasure but as something that concerns “life as a whole” (1098a 16). VanderWeele (2017a) introduced a framework of flourishing that identifies six broad domains: (1) happiness and life satisfaction, (2) physical and mental health, (3) meaning and purpose, (4) character and virtue, (5) social connectedness, and (6) financial and material stability. Distinct from measures of quality of life or single constructs such as life satisfaction, flourishing underscores the dynamic interplay of personal, interpersonal, and societal factors in shaping an individual’s overall well-being. These domains are understood as nearly universally desirable and intrinsically valuable outcomes across cultures, although they are not assumed to be fully exhaustive of flourishing in different cultures.

Research suggests that flourishing may also take on culturally specific nuances, shaped by unique sociodemographic and cultural contexts (Höltge et al., 2023; Kiknadze & Fowers, 2023; Uchida et al., 2004, 2008; Węziak-Białowolska et al., 2019). For instance, while Western nations tend to emphasize autonomy, self-actualization, and personal achievements, more collectivistic cultures – such as those in East and Southeast Asia – place greater importance on social harmony, family interdependence, and communal well-being (Cowden, 2024; Kitayama et al., 2010; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). Despite the growing body of research on flourishing, gaps remain in understanding well-being in collectivistic, developing nations, such as the Philippines. Most existing studies have been conducted in relatively individualistic Western cultural contexts (Lomas, 2022; Wong et al., 2022), overlooking indigenous conceptions of well-being that emphasize relational and spiritual dimensions (Church & Katigbak, 2002). Addressing this gap is crucial for developing culturally relevant frameworks that reflect the lived experiences and values of individuals of diverse traditions and contexts.

1.2 Well-being and flourishing in the Philippines

1.2.1 Socio-historical and cultural context of the Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelagic nation in Southeast Asia, consisting of 7,641 islands and a population of 112.73 million people in 2024 (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2025b). Its geography has contributed to significant ethno-linguistic diversity. While Filipino is the official language and English is widely used, regional languages such as Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Ilocano, and Cebuano remain widely spoken (PSA, 2023b). As of 2020, approximately 80% of the population identifies as Roman Catholic, and Islam is the next most reported religious affiliation, at around 6%, with a predominant presence in Mindanao (PSA, 2023a). The basic literacy rate among individuals aged five and above stands at 90.0%, with minimal differences between males (89.0%) and females (90.9%) (PSA, 2025a). However, the country's development is uneven, with economic growth concentrated in Metro Manila and its surrounding regions. In 2024, the Philippines' GDP reached PHP 22.24 trillion, with the top five provinces and top five highly urbanized cities contributing around 40% of this figure (PSA, 2025c; 2025d). Despite steady economic growth post-pandemic, 10.9% of Filipino families remain below the poverty line, with the highest incidences in Mindanao regions such as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Zamboanga Peninsula (PSA, 2024). Employment trends indicate high labor force participation, with 96.2% of the 50.8 million Filipinos in the labor force employed as of 2024. However, underemployment remains a concern, affecting 11.9% of employed individuals who seek additional work hours or jobs (PSA, 2025e). Such socio-economic conditions reflect the Philippines' status as a developing nation.

The country's social, cultural, and political landscape has been deeply influenced by its colonial past. In fact, the notion of a "Philippines" as a unified entity did not exist before the 16th century, when the first Spanish explorers baptized the geographic area after Philip II, the reigning Spanish king (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005). Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the islands were inhabited by various tribes and chiefdoms, structured as *barangays* comprising approximately 30-100 families, each led by a *datu* who acted as a political executive with judicial and military roles as well (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005). It is to such tribalism and kin-based community forms that the family-oriented and collectivist nature of contemporary Philippine culture can be traced (Reyes, 2015b).

Spanish colonization (1565–1898) left an enduring religious legacy, with Roman Catholicism as the dominant religion. According to Torralba et al. (2007), at least during the Habsburg era, the sole reason for Spanish presence in the islands was to aid evangelization efforts. Missionaries founded towns and established parish schools across the archipelago. Torralba et al. (2007) partly attribute the Christian culture that continues to distinguish the Philippines to this far-reaching religious education. Further education was accessible only to Spanish Filipinos and wealthy natives, resulting in the elite class dominating economic and political leadership (Tan, 1986). While there is evidence to show that pre-colonial societies have always been stratified and even included a system of slavery, the colonial political landscape created the conditions for the rise of a new elite class often described as the "Chinese mestizo" and from which came the "Ilustrados," revolutionaries that began the uprising against Spain and which was crucial in the formation of a Filipino nation (Tan, 1986). The elite status of this class, which emerged during the colonial period, carried over into the post-colonial context, with influence and power remaining in the hands of wealthy and landed families. Unlike countries in Latin America that were former Spanish colonies, Spanish was not adopted as a *lingua franca* in Philippine society, despite it being the official language. Education, which focused on instruction in the Catholic faith, was in the

vernacular as the religious who settled in the Philippines opted to learn the native languages, which led to their preservation (Ventura, 2021). Furthermore, with no gold or spice to attract Spaniards, fewer Spanish settlements were established in the Philippines, making language instruction to the natives difficult (Reyes, 2015b). In this sense, the cultural relevance of Spain in the Philippines took on radically different nuances compared to countries in Latin America.

American colonization (1898–1946) introduced public education to the masses, with the aim of ‘civilizing’ and preparing Filipinos for self-governance (Torralba et al., 2007). English was imposed as the medium of instruction, as the Americans regarded the diversity of Philippine languages as a sign of backwardness and, thus, unsuitable for self-rule (Azada-Palacios, 2024). While acknowledging the benefits gained from American education, Constantino (1970) decried it as a form of miseducation, in that Filipinos learned from American textbooks “a new way of life alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model” (p. 24). Democracy and its institutions were transplanted to the Philippines without consideration for the country’s sociocultural and historical context. Rather than being governed by merit, democratic institutions are dominated by family connections, reflecting the centrality of the family in the Philippines, and resulting in dynasty-based patronage politics (Kreuzer, 2020; Teehankee & Calimbahin, 2022). While the network of familial ties serves as a support group for most Filipinos in moments of difficulty, the emphasis on kinship hinders the creation of a sense of national identity that transcends familial ties, something essential for a functioning democracy.

These colonial legacies continue to shape governance, economic policies, and social structures. Given this dynamic mixture of cultural elements, the question of a “Filipino identity” remains a subject of significant debate – a factor that must be considered when we begin to think about flourishing in this context. Zialcita (2005) challenges monolithic notions of “nation” and “culture,” arguing that these concepts take on unique nuances when applied to the specific circumstances of a country. This is particularly true for the Philippines, whose post-colonial identity makes it difficult to categorize it as “Asian” or “Western.” It is frequently described as “a Latin American country stuck in Asia” or as a country that has spent “300 years in the convent and 50 years in Hollywood,” with the “convent” referring to the Spanish colonial past and “Hollywood” signifying American occupation. Given these complexities, the sense of a unified Filipino identity remains, for many scholars, an ongoing process. Salazar (2004), through a school of historiography called *Pantayong Pananaw* (indigenous perspective), speaks of the processual and dynamic nature of Filipino identity formation, which Joaquin (2004) compares to a chemical reaction where new elements completely transform the original mixture. Similarly, Reyes (2015b) views Filipino identity as a hybrid of traditions still in the process of synthesis, noting that the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition, Spanish Catholic tradition, and American modern traditions are all formative of Philippine culture and identity.

1.2.2 Indigenous Filipino perspectives on flourishing

Understanding well-being in the Filipino context requires an appreciation of indigenous perspectives that emphasize interconnectedness, resilience, and shared responsibility within communities. An indigenous psychological framework called *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP) or Filipino Psychology offers valuable insights into Filipino well-being. Developed by Virgilio G. Enriquez, SP seeks an understanding of Philippine realities “derived from the experience, ideas, and cultural orientation of the Filipinos” (Yacat, 2013, p. 1). SP emphasizes the relational nature of Filipino identity, encapsulated in the core value of *kapwa*, which refers to the unity of the self

and others (Enriquez, 1992). Filipinos value social connectedness, with “healthy *kapwa* relationships [considered] ends in themselves and sources of happiness” (Reyes, 2015a, p. 161).

Another key indigenous concept, *bayanihan* (communal unity), reflects the Filipino tradition of collective action and mutual assistance, which has historically played a crucial role in disaster resilience, economic survival, and social cohesion (Bankoff, 2020). Similarly, *utang-na-loób* (debt of gratitude) strengthens interpersonal bonds by reinforcing reciprocity and moral obligation within families and communities (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000), contributing to meaning and purpose in Filipino lives. Meanwhile, *lakas ng loób* (inner strength) and the associated cultural expression *bahala na* – often thought to embody fatalism, but is, in fact, a courageous response to uncertainty (Reyes, 2015b) – is associated with courage for the sake of the *kapwa* and can be understood as an adaptive coping mechanism that fosters resilience and trust in a higher power (i.e., God), allowing individuals to move forward despite difficulties (Menguito & Teng-Calleja, 2010).

Filipino notions of well-being also reveal a holistic perspective that integrates physical, emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions. In their grounded theory study, Samaco-Zamora and Fernandez (2016) found that Filipinos perceive *kaginhawaan* (wellness) as encompassing financial security, peace of mind, occupational satisfaction, religiosity, and harmonious relationships. While Filipinos’ understanding of wellness broadly aligns with Western conceptions, they found that for Filipinos, family was not subsumed under the social dimension, but rather regarded as “the cornerstone of *kaginhawaan*” (p. 285). In the Philippines, close family ties and extended kinship networks are highly valued, and people often prioritize their family’s needs over their own. For instance, it is considered an important obligation for older siblings to help their younger siblings complete their education (Miralao, 1997; Torralba et al., 2007). Furthermore, the family provides meaning and purpose, making such sacrifices worthwhile (Samaco-Zamora & Fernandez, 2016). For example, while the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) phenomenon is essentially a migration trend that is present across different cultures, in the case of the Philippines, the motive is inseparable from a “culture of relatedness” (Aguilar, 2009). Filipinos who leave the country to work abroad often do so to support their families at home, and oftentimes, most of what they earn is sent to their families in the Philippines. OFW remittances are an important pillar in sustaining the Philippine economy, and for this reason, OFWs have been referred to as the *bagong bayani* (new heroes) of the country (Franco, 2015). As such, individual well-being in the Philippines is closely tied to family wellness, underscoring the deeply ingrained cultural view that flourishing is a shared, rather than individual, experience.

1.2.3 Past empirical studies on flourishing in the Philippines

Past research on flourishing and related constructs, such as happiness (Datu & Valdez, 2012), life satisfaction (Datu & Mateo, 2015), and subjective well-being (Datu et al., 2017), has provided valuable insights into the psychological functioning of Filipinos. These investigations have found that Filipinos demonstrate a complex and multifaceted pattern of well-being, with distinct strengths and vulnerabilities influencing various dimensions of flourishing. While Filipinos generally report high levels of life satisfaction and happiness, these outcomes are shaped by a unique interplay of cultural values, social relationships, and individual characteristics (Church et al., 2013; Datu & Valdez, 2016). Empirical evidence suggests that Filipinos’ subjective well-being is heavily influenced by cultural values like *kapwa*, which may promote interpersonal harmony and collective resilience (Jabar & Regadio, 2019). Moreover, past studies have highlighted that psychological well-being is significantly influenced by familial and communal

relationships, with strong family support serving as a buffer against stress and adversity (Buenconsejo et al., 2022; Javier et al., 2018; Samaco-Zamora & Fernandez, 2016).

There are studies that report gender differences in different aspects of psychological well-being (Perez, 2012; Periyakoil et al., 2023). Filipino women were found to experience greater stress, possibly due to professional and caregiving responsibilities and gendered social expectations (Periyakoil et al., 2023). Regarding age-related trends, younger Filipinos tend to emphasize personal aspirations and social connectedness in their well-being (Buenconsejo et al., 2022; Carandang et al., 2020), while older individuals tend to prioritize spirituality, acceptance, and family bonds (Javier et al., 2018). Socio-economic disparities further influence well-being, with individuals from lower-income backgrounds facing higher stress levels yet demonstrating resilience through collectivist coping strategies (Aruta, 2021; Siok Kuan & Jiuan, 2011). Additionally, educational attainment has been linked to life satisfaction among Filipinos, likely because it provides access to resources and higher-wage employment opportunities (Bandoles, 2022).

Religiosity and spirituality have emerged as key factors influencing meaning-making and life satisfaction among Filipinos (Asiones, 2024; Buenconsejo & Datu, 2023; Sanchez & Gaw, 2007). Studies have found that religious involvement is positively associated with psychological well-being, as faith provides a sense of purpose, hope, and social belonging (Buenconsejo, 2018b; Buenconsejo & Datu, 2023). Furthermore, spirituality, even beyond organized religion, has been linked to psychological resilience and enhanced life satisfaction (Burgonio-Watson, 1997; del Castillo et al., 2023). Despite these advancements in the literature, existing research often focuses on isolated aspects of flourishing (e.g., life satisfaction) rather than adopting a comprehensive, multidimensional perspective (VanderWeele, 2017a; VanderWeele & Johnson, 2025a). Additionally, there is limited empirical work that integrates indigenous Filipino concepts of well-being within established psychological frameworks. While this study does not fully address this gap, it does aim to contextualize its findings by examining the data on flourishing in the Philippines considering cultural values and socio-contextual factors that shape well-being in the local setting.

1.3 *The current study*

Although flourishing has gained increasing attention in global well-being research, large-scale and nationally representative studies on this construct remain scarce, particularly in the context of the Philippines. Existing research has primarily focused on isolated dimensions of well-being, such as happiness, life satisfaction, and mental health, often relying on small or non-representative undergraduate samples. Moreover, while studies have explored sociocultural influences on well-being, there remains a need for empirical research that integrates multiple dimensions of flourishing within the unique socio-historical and cultural landscape of the Philippines. This includes the integration of Filipino indigenous psychology, which offers valuable perspectives on holistic well-being rooted in the country's collectivistic values and traditions. The country's collectivistic orientation, deeply embedded religious and spiritual traditions, and persistent socio-economic inequalities were considered when interpreting data on flourishing in the Philippines.

The present study seeks to build on the existing literature by exploring flourishing using a nationally representative sample of Filipinos, examining differences across six key dimensions: (1) life satisfaction and happiness, (2) physical and mental health, (3) meaning and purpose, (4) character and virtue, (5) social connectedness, and (6) financial and material stability. By

comparing mean well-being levels across various flourishing dimensions in the Philippines with the pooled average across all Global Flourishing Study (GFS) countries, and by analyzing variations in these dimensions by sociodemographic characteristics, this research provides insight into areas of relative strength and weakness in well-being levels in the Philippines compared to other GFS countries, as well as differences in well-being across various demographic groups within the Philippine society.

Additionally, this study contributes to the Global Flourishing Study's broader research by providing a culturally grounded, in-depth examination of well-being among Filipinos. In doing so, this research aims to contribute to both local and international discussions on well-being that could inform policies, interventions, and future research on flourishing in collectivistic, religious, and developing contexts.

2. Methods

The description of the methods below has been adapted from VanderWeele et al. (2025). Further methodological detail is available elsewhere, including: an overview of the GFS as a whole (Johnson et al., 2024) and its general methodology (Ritter et al., 2024); an initial questionnaire development report (Crabtree et al., 2021), as well as an updated account of the questionnaire development process (Lomas, Bradshaw, et al., 2025), of which one aspect was a process piloting the items through cognitive interviewing (Cowden, Skinstad et al., 2025); the Wave 1 codebook (Markham et al., 2024); the survey sampling design for Wave 1 (Padgett, Cowden, et al., 2025); the statistical analyses code (Padgett et al., 2024); the analytic methodology for demographic variation analyses for wave 1 (Padgett, Bradshaw et al., 2025). The current paper, which focuses specifically on the Philippines, was preregistered as part of a coordinated set of studies focusing on country-specific variation in flourishing. These coordinated analyses were preregistered on October 15th, 2024 (Lomas et al., 2024; <https://doi.org/10.17605/osf.io/trcf3>) for a special issue of papers each focusing on one of 22 countries included in the GFS (Lomas, Padgett, et al., 2025).

2.1 Participants

The study included 5,292 Filipino participants with a balanced gender distribution of 50% male ($n = 2,625$) and 50% female ($n = 2,643$), and a small proportion identifying as other gender ($n = 13$, 0.2%). The age distribution showed that more than half of the participants were under 40 years old, with 20% aged 18-24 ($n = 1,073$), 13% aged 25-29 ($n = 695$), and 22% aged 30-39 ($n = 1,160$). Middle-aged adults comprised a substantial portion of the sample, with 18% aged 40-49 ($n = 972$) and 14% aged 50-59 ($n = 732$). Older adults represented smaller proportions, with 9.4% aged 60-69 ($n = 495$), 2.7% aged 70-79 ($n = 143$), and 0.4% aged 80 or older ($n = 23$). Regarding marital status, married individuals constituted the largest group at 45% ($n = 2,385$), followed by single, never married participants at 23% ($n = 1,206$), and those in domestic partnerships at 22% ($n = 1,152$). The remaining participants were widowed (5.2%, $n = 274$), separated (4.7%, $n = 249$), or divorced (0.2%, $n = 9$). This distribution reflects the Filipino context where marriage remains a significant social institution, while divorce is not legally recognized in the Philippines, explaining the minimal number of divorced individuals in the sample. The rest of the sociodemographic information is presented in Table 1 and Supplementary Table S1.

Table 1. Nationally representative descriptive statistics for sociodemographic characteristics in the Philippines

Characteristic	N = 5,292 ¹
Age group	
18-24	1,073 (20%)
25-29	695 (13%)
30-39	1,160 (22%)
40-49	972 (18%)
50-59	732 (14%)
60-69	495 (9.4%)
70-79	143 (2.7%)
80 or older	23 (0.4%)
(Missing)	0 (0%)
Gender	
Male	2,625 (50%)
Female	2,643 (50%)
Other	13 (0.2%)
(Missing)	11 (0.2%)
Marital status	
Married	2,385 (45%)
Separated	249 (4.7%)
Divorced/ Annulled	9 (0.2%)
Widowed	274 (5.2%)
Single, never married	1,206 (23%)
Domestic Partner	1,152 (22%)
(Missing)	16 (0.3%)
Employment	
Employed for an employer	1,350 (26%)
Self-employed	1,379 (26%)
Retired	158 (3.0%)
Student	585 (11%)
Homemaker	1,049 (20%)
Unemployed and looking for a job	658 (12%)
None of these/Other	113 (2.1%)
(Missing)	0 (0%)
Religious service attendance	
More than 1/week	844 (16%)
1/week	1,929 (36%)
1-3/month	1,374 (26%)
A few times a year	929 (18%)
Never	210 (4.0%)
(Missing)	6 (0.1%)
Education	
Up to 8 years	1,188 (22%)
9-15 years	3,722 (70%)
16+ years	381 (7.2%)
(Missing)	1 (<0.1%)
Immigration	
Born in this country	5,284 (100%)
Born in another country	8 (0.1%)

Characteristic	N = 5,292 ¹
(Missing)	0 (0%)
Religious affiliation	
Christianity	4,914 (93%)
Islam	297 (5.6%)
Hinduism	0 (0%)
Buddhism	4 (<0.1%)
Judaism	4 (<0.1%)
Sikhism	0 (0%)
Baha'i	1 (<0.1%)
Jainism	0 (0%)
Shinto	0 (0%)
Taoism	0 (0%)
Confucianism	0 (0%)
Primal, Animist, or Folk religion	5 (<0.1%)
Spiritism	0 (0%)
Umbanda, Candomble, and other African-derived religions	0 (0%)
Chinese folk/traditional religion	0 (0%)
Some other religion	35 (0.7%)
No religion/Atheist/Agnostic	23 (0.4%)
(Missing)	9 (0.2%)

¹n (%)

2.2 Data

Wave 1 of the GFS included nationally representative samples of adults from 22 geographically and culturally diverse countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China), India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States ($N = 202,898$). The countries were selected to (a) maximize coverage of the world's population, (b) ensure geographic, cultural, and religious diversity, and (c) prioritize feasibility and existing data collection infrastructure. Data collection was carried out by Gallup. Data for Wave 1 were collected principally during 2023, with some countries beginning data collection in 2022, and exact dates varying by country (Ritter et al., 2024). There are plans to collect four additional waves of panel data on the participants annually from 2024-2027. The precise sampling design to ensure nationally representative samples varied by country and further details are available elsewhere (Ritter et al., 2024). Survey items included aspects of flourishing such as, besides subjective well-being, health, meaning, character, relationships, and financial stability (VanderWeele, 2017a), plus other demographic, social, economic, political, religious, personality, childhood, community, health, and well-being variables. These data are publicly available through the Center for Open Science (<https://www.cos.io/gfs>). During the translation process, Gallup adhered to the TRAPD model (translation, review, adjudication, pretesting, and documentation) for cross-cultural survey research (Case et al., 2025); for additional details, see the questionnaire development process report (Lomas, Bradshaw, et al., 2025).

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Outcome variables

There were 69 specific outcomes, which can be organized into various dimensions of flourishing. For this paper, we mainly followed VanderWeele et al. (2025) in selecting the variables to focus

on. Like VanderWeele et al. (2025), we sought to achieve conceptual breadth across the various domains of the flourishing index (Domain 1: Life Satisfaction, Happiness; Domain 2: Mental Health, Physical Health; Domain 3: Meaning, Purpose; Domain 4: Promoting Good, Delayed Gratification; Domain 5: Social Connectedness; Domain 6: Financial Security, Material Security). We also included other variables of interest, considering the Philippines' largely Christian culture (i.e., Hope, Gratitude, Love, Forgiveness), as well as variables in which the Philippines scored significantly higher than global averages (i.e., Social Support, Government Approval). In total, 17 outcomes are presented and discussed in the main text, while the rest are reported in the Supplementary Material.

A summary of the items that were used to assess the outcomes, response options, recoding decisions, and which outcomes were modeled as binary vs. continuous variables is available at <https://osf.io/9kpd8> (see 'W1—country-specific analyses' worksheet). Additional details are also provided in the introduction to this Special Issue (Lomas, Padgett et al., 2025). Most outcomes have an associated preregistration that follows a similar analytic approach to this study, except that each of those focuses on a single outcome variable across all 22 countries included in Wave 1 of the GFS (see Supplemental Table S2).

2.3.2 Variables for demographic variation analyses

There were six demographic groups considered in the present study: age; gender; marital status; employment; education; and religious service attendance. Continuous age was classified as 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and 80 or older. Gender was assessed as male, female, or other. Marital status was assessed as single/never married, married, separated, divorced (annulled), widowed, and domestic partner. Employment was assessed as employed, self-employed, retired, student, homemaker, unemployed and searching for jobs, and other. Education was assessed as up to 8 years, 9-15 years, and 16+ years. Religious service attendance was assessed as more than once/week, once/week, one to three times/month, a few times/year, or never. Religious tradition/affiliation included the following categories: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Baha'i, Jainism, Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, Primal/Animist/Folk religion, Spiritism, African-Derived, some other religion, and no religion/atheist/agnostic (Johnson et al., 2024). For additional details on the assessments, see the Center for Open Science GFS codebook (Markham et al., 2024) and Crabtree et al. (2021).

2.4 Analyses

2.4.1 Statistical models

Analyses were performed using R 4.4.1 (R Core Team, 2025). Descriptive statistics were estimated for each of the sociodemographic variables using the observed sample. Nationally representative means/proportions (accompanied by complex survey adjusted standard errors and 95% confidence intervals [CIs]) for the Philippines were estimated for each outcome. We contextualized these results by pooling nationally representative means/proportions for the same set of outcomes across the entire set of 22 GFS countries, as per the analyses described in the linked preregistrations mentioned above.

We then estimated variation in means/proportions for the outcomes across sociodemographic categories for the Philippines. A global p -value from a test of differences in means/proportions across categories of each sociodemographic characteristic was provided for each outcome, and the reported p -values are a Wald-type test for complex surveys (Lumley & Scott, 2014; Rao & Scott, 1984). The 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were used to compare categories within each

demographic factor. Non-overlapping CIs were interpreted as evidence of a significant difference, whereas overlapping CIs indicated no clear evidence of a significant difference. However, caution should be exercised when making such comparisons, particularly when one of the groups has a small sample size.

2.4.2 Inference criteria

For tests of differences in means/proportions across sociodemographic categories, we present exact p-values (two-tailed test) and 95% CIs.

2.4.3 Missing data and multiple imputation

Missing data on all sociodemographic and outcome variables in the Philippines sample were imputed using multivariate imputation by chained equations, with five imputed datasets produced (Sterne et al., 2009; van Buuren, 2018). The imputation model incorporated the sociodemographic characteristics, outcomes, and sampling weights. Including sampling weights in the multiple imputation procedure allowed specific-variable missingness to be related to the probability of inclusion in the study.

2.4.4 Accounting for complex sampling design

All analyses accounted for the complex survey design components by including weights, primary sampling units, and strata. Additional methodological detail, including accounting for the complex sampling design, is provided elsewhere (Padgett, Bradshaw, et al., 2025; Padgett, Cowden, et al., 2025).

3. Results

3.1 Comparing the levels of flourishing in the Philippines vs. the pooled cross-national estimates across 22 Global Flourishing Study countries

The estimates for the flourishing indicators highlighted in this study were compared with the pooled results across all 22 GFS countries for the 17 well-being indicators discussed in the text (Table 2). The full pooled cross-country estimates for all outcomes are provided in Supplementary Table S3. Results showed that the country's mean scores for key character strengths/virtues, namely, delayed gratification, hope, gratitude, and love, were significantly higher than the GFS cross-country averages. The Philippines ranked among the top five countries out of 22 in these areas, taking the top spot in delayed gratification and love (Lee et al., 2025), fourth in hope (Counted et al., 2025), third in gratitude (Okuzono et al., 2025), and fifth in promoting good (Chen et al., 2025). In addition, the Philippines scored higher in purpose, social connectedness, life satisfaction, physical health, meaning, and social support.

3.2 Variations in levels of flourishing by demographic factors in the Philippines

Analysis of gender differences in the selected flourishing indicators revealed several significant patterns based on the 95% CIs (Table 3, Supplementary Table S5). While most dimensions including life satisfaction, happiness, physical and mental health, meaning, purpose, and social connectedness showed little evidence of differences across gender groups, notable differences emerged in gratitude and financial and material security. Females reported higher levels of gratitude compared to males. In contrast, males reported the highest levels of financial and material security compared to females and those with other gender identities. Material security

Table 2. Estimated means and proportions across outcome variables in the Philippines and across all the 22 countries in Wave 1 of the Global Flourishing Study

Outcome	Philippines					All 22 GFS Countries			
	Mean	Proportion	SE	95% CI	Standard Deviation	Mean/ proportion	SE	95% CI	Heterogeneity (tau)
Life Satisfaction	7.50		0.04	(7.41, 7.59)	2.43	6.85	0.16	(6.54,7.16)	0.74
Happiness	7.33		0.04	(7.24, 7.41)	2.33	7.00	0.12	(6.76,7.25)	0.58
Physical Health	7.69		0.04	(7.62, 7.76)	2.14	7.21	0.14	(6.93,7.49)	0.67
Mental Health	8.05		0.03	(7.99, 8.11)	2.02	7.71	0.17	(7.36,8.05)	0.82
Meaning	8.02		0.04	(7.94, 8.10)	2.33	7.39	0.14	(7.12,7.66)	0.65
Purpose	8.45		0.03	(8.38, 8.51)	2.02	7.65	0.17	(7.32,7.98)	0.79
Promoting Good	8.54		0.03	(8.48, 8.60)	1.96	8.01	0.12	(7.77,8.25)	0.57
Delayed Gratification	8.42		0.03	(8.36, 8.49)	1.97	7.45	0.16	(7.14,7.75)	0.74
Hope	8.92		0.03	(8.85, 8.99)	1.82	8.13	0.16	(7.81,8.45)	0.76
Gratitude	8.64		0.04	(8.57, 8.71)	2.00	7.84	0.15	(7.54,8.14)	0.71
Love	9.05		0.03	(8.99, 9.10)	1.71	8.19	0.15	(7.90,8.49)	0.71
Forgiveness		0.74	0.01	(0.73, 0.76)	-	0.75	0.02	(0.70,0.80)	0.11
Social Connectedness	8.56		0.03	(8.49, 8.62)	1.83	7.55	0.12	(7.30,7.79)	0.58
Social Support	8.12		0.04	(8.04, 8.20)	2.31	7.40	0.19	(7.02,7.78)	0.90
Government Approval		0.70	0.01	(0.68, 0.71)	-	0.43	0.04	(0.35,0.51)	0.19
Financial Security	5.38		0.06	(5.26, 5.49)	3.30	5.59	0.22	(5.16,6.02)	1.03
Material Security	6.01		0.06	(5.89, 6.13)	3.27	5.89	0.25	(5.41,6.38)	1.16

Note. The heterogeneity (tau) is the standard deviation of the distribution of means across countries/territories, an indicator of cross-national heterogeneity

Table 3. Gender variation across flourishing outcomes in the Philippines

Outcome	Male	Female	Other	Global p-value
	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	
Life satisfaction	7.46 (7.32,7.60)	7.55 (7.45,7.64)	6.43 (5.17,7.70)	0.086
Happiness	7.30 (7.16,7.44)	7.36 (7.27,7.44)	6.52 (5.14,7.89)	0.302
Physical health	7.67 (7.55,7.79)	7.71 (7.63,7.79)	7.56 (6.31,8.81)	0.823
Mental health	8.02 (7.91,8.13)	8.08 (8.01,8.15)	7.74 (6.34,9.13)	0.554
Meaning	8.04 (7.91,8.16)	8.00 (7.91,8.10)	7.34 (6.20,8.48)	0.352
Purpose	8.43 (8.32,8.53)	8.47 (8.39,8.55)	7.68 (6.54,8.82)	0.218
Promoting Good	8.50 (8.40,8.61)	8.58 (8.50,8.66)	7.70 (6.73,8.67)	0.064
Delayed gratification	8.35 (8.25,8.46)	8.50 (8.42,8.58)	7.21 (5.60,8.82)	0.017
Hope	8.88 (8.77,8.98)	8.97 (8.89,9.04)	8.41 (7.27,9.56)	0.182
Gratitude	8.46 (8.35,8.58)	8.81 (8.74,8.88)	7.77 (6.05,9.48)	< .001
Love	8.98 (8.88,9.08)	9.11 (9.05,9.18)	8.08 (7.08,9.08)	0.005
Forgiveness	0.75 (0.73,0.78)	0.73 (0.72,0.75)	0.58 (0.27,0.88)	0.180
Social connectedness	8.56 (8.46,8.67)	8.56 (8.49,8.63)	7.43 (6.08,8.77)	0.143
Social support	8.13 (8.01,8.26)	8.10 (8.01,8.20)	7.03 (5.36,8.70)	0.307
Government approval	0.71 (0.68,0.73)	0.69 (0.67,0.71)	0.64 (0.35,0.93)	0.441
Financial security	5.67 (5.48,5.85)	5.10 (4.97,5.22)	3.16 (1.07,5.25)	< .001
Material security	6.18 (5.99,6.37)	5.84 (5.71,5.97)	4.20 (2.73,5.67)	< .001

Table 4. Age variation across flourishing outcomes in the Philippines

	18-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	
Outcome	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Global p-value
Life satisfaction	7.72 (7.55,7.89)	7.74 (7.51,7.97)	7.62 (7.47,7.77)	7.33 (7.15,7.50)	7.28 (7.03,7.52)	7.13 (6.76,7.50)	7.55 (6.88,8.21)	6.21 (4.23,8.18)	0.002
Happiness	7.39 (7.23,7.55)	7.48 (7.23,7.74)	7.36 (7.21,7.51)	7.18 (7.02,7.34)	7.20 (6.98,7.42)	7.32 (6.99,7.64)	7.37 (6.91,7.82)	8.13 (6.88,9.38)	0.245
Physical health	7.92 (7.78,8.06)	7.88 (7.66,8.10)	7.83 (7.71,7.94)	7.54 (7.40,7.69)	7.48 (7.28,7.68)	7.36 (7.04,7.68)	7.34 (6.90,7.78)	6.56 (5.06,8.06)	< .001
Mental health	8.03 (7.88,8.18)	8.11 (7.87,8.34)	8.16 (8.04,8.28)	8.01 (7.86,8.15)	7.97 (7.79,8.16)	7.97 (7.70,8.24)	8.10 (7.71,8.48)	7.60 (6.46,8.74)	0.556
Meaning	7.96 (7.79,8.13)	8.11 (7.88,8.34)	8.15 (8.00,8.31)	7.97 (7.80,8.14)	7.94 (7.73,8.15)	8.02 (7.76,8.29)	7.70 (7.23,8.18)	6.98 (5.88,8.09)	0.224
Purpose	8.33 (8.18,8.49)	8.56 (8.38,8.74)	8.64 (8.52,8.75)	8.43 (8.27,8.59)	8.27 (8.04,8.49)	8.52 (8.30,8.74)	7.99 (7.52,8.46)	8.22 (6.94,9.49)	0.007
Promoting Good	8.39 (8.24,8.55)	8.75 (8.58,8.93)	8.65 (8.54,8.77)	8.49 (8.34,8.65)	8.47 (8.27,8.67)	8.55 (8.29,8.80)	8.44 (8.00,8.88)	7.68 (6.25,9.10)	0.011
Delayed gratification	8.48 (8.34,8.62)	8.60 (8.43,8.77)	8.59 (8.47,8.72)	8.39 (8.25,8.53)	8.22 (8.02,8.42)	8.19 (7.93,8.45)	7.96 (7.47,8.44)	7.62 (6.37,8.88)	< .001
Hope	8.85 (8.71,8.99)	9.13 (8.95,9.31)	9.09 (8.99,9.20)	8.98 (8.86,9.11)	8.79 (8.60,8.98)	8.61 (8.35,8.87)	8.34 (7.91,8.77)	8.99 (8.03,9.94)	< .001
Gratitude	8.75 (8.62,8.88)	8.87 (8.67,9.07)	8.86 (8.74,8.98)	8.41 (8.25,8.57)	8.53 (8.36,8.71)	8.26 (7.95,8.57)	8.24 (7.84,8.63)	8.47 (7.58,9.37)	< .001
Love	8.93 (8.79,9.06)	9.17 (9.03,9.32)	9.16 (9.07,9.25)	9.08 (8.96,9.20)	8.94 (8.78,9.11)	9.12 (8.93,9.31)	8.48 (7.90,9.06)	8.64 (7.57,9.72)	0.017
Forgiveness	0.72 (0.68,0.76)	0.79 (0.76,0.83)	0.74 (0.72,0.77)	0.76 (0.73,0.79)	0.71 (0.67,0.76)	0.76 (0.71,0.80)	0.68 (0.58,0.78)	0.77 (0.53,1.01)	0.065
Social connectedness	8.59 (8.46,8.73)	8.49 (8.29,8.70)	8.74 (8.64,8.84)	8.53 (8.40,8.66)	8.41 (8.24,8.58)	8.49 (8.28,8.70)	8.32 (7.90,8.74)	8.28 (7.51,9.05)	0.013
Social support	8.26 (8.10,8.42)	8.14 (7.89,8.38)	8.03 (7.88,8.17)	7.94 (7.77,8.12)	8.16 (7.96,8.37)	8.24 (7.96,8.52)	8.22 (7.81,8.63)	8.05 (6.65,9.45)	0.223
Government approval	0.74 (0.71,0.77)	0.74 (0.70,0.78)	0.70 (0.67,0.73)	0.68 (0.65,0.72)	0.66 (0.62,0.70)	0.66 (0.60,0.71)	0.61 (0.52,0.70)	0.78 (0.58,0.99)	0.004
Financial security	5.14 (4.90,5.38)	5.06 (4.72,5.40)	5.30 (5.09,5.52)	5.45 (5.22,5.68)	5.46 (5.16,5.75)	5.89 (5.48,6.30)	6.20 (5.41,6.99)	7.53 (6.06,9.00)	< .001
Material security	5.77 (5.54,6.01)	5.86 (5.50,6.22)	5.93 (5.72,6.15)	6.05 (5.83,6.28)	6.15 (5.87,6.43)	6.33 (5.93,6.74)	6.65 (5.98,7.33)	7.59 (6.10,9.08)	0.003

for females was also higher compared to those with other gender identities. No gender differences were observed for forgiveness, hope, social support, or government approval.

Age-related differences were observed across multiple flourishing indicators (Table 4, Supplementary Table S6). Younger Filipino adults (25 to 29 years) reported the highest levels of life satisfaction with notable differences compared to the 40-49 and 60-69 age group based on their 95% CIs. Self-rated physical health was highest for the 18-24 age group, compared to those belonging to the 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69 age group. While those aged 80 and above reported the lowest scores in these domains. However, the small sample size for this group limits the reliability of this finding. The 25- to 29-year-old age group also demonstrated the highest means/proportions on promoting good and delayed gratification, although the magnitude of these differences varied across the different age groups. Life purpose was highest among those aged 30 to 39 and lowest in the 70 to 79 age group. Social connectedness was highest in the 30- to 39-year-old age group and lowest among those aged 80 years and above. Financial and material security were highest among the oldest age group (80+), while young adults (18 to 29) reported the lowest mean level of financial security. No significant age differences were observed in happiness, mental health, meaning, forgiveness, or social support.

The means and proportions on the flourishing indicators showed some variation by marital status, although the observed differences were generally small (Table 5, Supplementary Table S7). Single/never-married individuals tended to report slightly higher scores on life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning, promoting good, delayed gratification, love, gratitude, and social connectedness, but these values were often very similar to those of married individuals (e.g., life satisfaction: 7.60 vs. 7.52). Widowed participants showed relatively higher levels of social support and reported high levels of financial and material security, though here again the differences were modest. Individuals who reported being separated from their spouse showed somewhat lower scores on life purpose. They also reported lower scores on life satisfaction, mental health, and social connectedness compared to the single/never married, and married groups. No statistically significant differences were observed across marital status groups in happiness, forgiveness, or hope.

The means and proportions of flourishing indicators showed some variation by employment status, although most differences were minimal (Table 6, Supplementary Table S8). For example, students reported slightly higher physical health scores compared with other groups, but these differences were very small (e.g., a 0.01 difference compared to those employed for an employer). Retired individuals reported significantly higher levels of financial and material security compared to other groups. They also showed marginally higher levels of meaning and social support, though the magnitude of these differences was modest. Homemakers reported somewhat lower financial security, and those who were unemployed and looking for work tended to show lower levels of meaning and material security relative to other groups. No statistically significant differences were observed across employment groups in life satisfaction, happiness, mental health, life purpose, character strengths/virtues, relationship satisfaction, or government approval.

The means and proportions of flourishing indicators showed some variation across education levels, although many differences were small (Table 7, Supplementary Table S9). We did not observe clear evidence of disparities in life satisfaction, happiness, physical and mental health, life purpose, promoting good, delayed gratification, love, forgiveness, or social support. Some indicators, however, displayed modest differences across educational groups. Participants with 16 or more years of education reported slightly higher levels of meaning, gratitude, hope, and financial and material stability compared to the overall pattern seen in other groups, though these

Table 5. *Marital status variation across flourishing outcomes in the Philippines*

Outcome	Married Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Separated Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Divorced (Annulled) Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Widowed Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Domestic partner Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Single, never married Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Global p- value
Life satisfaction	7.52 (7.38,7.66)	6.83 (6.47,7.20)	6.45 (2.37,10.52)	7.42 (7.07,7.77)	7.54 (7.38,7.70)	7.60 (7.44,7.75)	0.002
Happiness	7.36 (7.24,7.48)	6.83 (6.48,7.18)	7.05 (2.82,11.29)	7.45 (7.11,7.78)	7.31 (7.15,7.47)	7.36 (7.20,7.52)	0.118
Physical health	7.69 (7.58,7.79)	7.28 (6.94,7.63)	6.05 (1.93,10.17)	7.68 (7.37,7.98)	7.69 (7.53,7.84)	7.80 (7.66,7.94)	0.029
Mental health	8.09 (7.99,8.19)	7.69 (7.40,7.97)	7.25 (4.14,10.37)	8.15 (7.92,8.38)	7.92 (7.78,8.07)	8.17 (8.04,8.29)	0.01
Meaning	8.01 (7.89,8.13)	7.72 (7.38,8.06)	6.65 (2.63,10.68)	8.11 (7.84,8.38)	7.85 (7.68,8.03)	8.26 (8.12,8.40)	0.003
Purpose	8.48 (8.38,8.58)	8.16 (7.82,8.50)	8.83 (6.85,10.81)	8.69 (8.46,8.91)	8.28 (8.13,8.43)	8.56 (8.44,8.68)	0.017
Promoting Good	8.63 (8.53,8.73)	8.30 (7.96,8.64)	8.06 (4.87,11.24)	8.43 (8.13,8.72)	8.32 (8.17,8.47)	8.67 (8.56,8.79)	< .001
Delayed gratification	8.39 (8.29,8.50)	8.31 (8.05,8.57)	7.18 (3.01,11.35)	8.14 (7.81,8.47)	8.38 (8.26,8.51)	8.62 (8.50,8.75)	0.004
Hope	8.94 (8.84,9.03)	8.70 (8.41,8.99)	8.49 (4.74,12.24)	8.85 (8.60,9.10)	8.81 (8.65,8.97)	9.06 (8.94,9.19)	0.062
Gratitude	8.60 (8.49,8.70)	8.33 (8.03,8.63)	7.59 (3.27,11.91)	8.49 (8.17,8.81)	8.58 (8.44,8.72)	8.88 (8.77,9.00)	< .001
Love	9.11 (9.01,9.20)	8.76 (8.52,9.00)	8.41 (5.93,10.90)	9.08 (8.84,9.32)	8.87 (8.74,8.99)	9.16 (9.05,9.28)	0.001
Forgiveness	0.75 (0.73,0.76)	0.74 (0.68,0.80)	0.60 (0.00,1.37)	0.72 (0.66,0.78)	0.73 (0.70,0.77)	0.76 (0.73,0.78)	0.765
Social connectedness	8.66 (8.56,8.75)	7.98 (7.73,8.22)	8.11 (4.87,11.35)	8.47 (8.24,8.70)	8.31 (8.16,8.47)	8.75 (8.64,8.87)	< .001
Social support	8.16 (8.05,8.28)	7.67 (7.34,8.00)	7.54 (3.58,11.50)	8.30 (8.03,8.57)	8.20 (8.04,8.36)	7.98 (7.82,8.15)	0.021
Government approval	0.68 (0.66,0.71)	0.68 (0.61,0.75)	0.65 (0.00,1.40)	0.64 (0.58,0.70)	0.73 (0.70,0.76)	0.72 (0.69,0.75)	0.053
Financial security	5.42 (5.26,5.58)	5.31 (4.84,5.77)	3.68 (0.00,7.60)	6.14 (5.67,6.62)	5.41 (5.16,5.65)	5.09 (4.87,5.32)	< .001
Material security	6.05 (5.90,6.21)	5.97 (5.50,6.44)	5.01 (0.34,9.67)	6.85 (6.47,7.23)	6.05 (5.83,6.27)	5.68 (5.47,5.90)	< .001

Table 6. Employment variation across flourishing outcomes in the Philippines

	Employed for an employer	Self-employed	Retired	Student	Homemaker	Unemployed and looking for a job	None of these/other	
Outcome	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Mean/ proportion (95% CI)	Global p-value
Life satisfaction	7.64 (7.48,7.80)	7.39 (7.21,7.57)	7.77 (7.22,8.32)	7.58 (7.38,7.77)	7.57 (7.41,7.72)	7.28 (7.00,7.55)	7.11 (6.63,7.59)	0.059
Happiness	7.38 (7.21,7.55)	7.35 (7.19,7.51)	7.51 (6.95,8.08)	7.31 (7.13,7.49)	7.35 (7.20,7.50)	7.20 (6.95,7.45)	6.81 (6.30,7.32)	0.354
Physical health	7.81 (7.66,7.95)	7.69 (7.55,7.83)	7.20 (6.68,7.72)	7.82 (7.65,8.00)	7.69 (7.55,7.84)	7.53 (7.28,7.78)	7.19 (6.74,7.64)	0.043
Mental health	8.20 (8.06,8.34)	7.99 (7.85,8.13)	8.12 (7.71,8.53)	7.93 (7.75,8.12)	8.08 (7.95,8.21)	7.95 (7.75,8.15)	7.80 (7.41,8.19)	0.169
Meaning	8.22 (8.07,8.37)	8.05 (7.90,8.21)	8.24 (7.86,8.61)	7.97 (7.78,8.16)	7.85 (7.69,8.01)	7.80 (7.56,8.05)	7.86 (7.47,8.25)	0.011
Purpose	8.54 (8.41,8.68)	8.50 (8.37,8.63)	8.62 (8.23,9.01)	8.25 (8.06,8.44)	8.37 (8.25,8.50)	8.43 (8.22,8.65)	8.14 (7.64,8.63)	0.111
Promoting Good	8.64 (8.51,8.77)	8.60 (8.47,8.72)	8.65 (8.28,9.02)	8.37 (8.22,8.53)	8.49 (8.35,8.63)	8.41 (8.19,8.63)	8.53 (8.10,8.95)	0.132
Delayed gratification	8.52 (8.38,8.65)	8.42 (8.29,8.56)	8.37 (7.94,8.80)	8.41 (8.24,8.57)	8.39 (8.25,8.53)	8.34 (8.14,8.54)	8.29 (7.84,8.73)	0.782
Hope	8.99 (8.88,9.10)	8.98 (8.86,9.11)	8.79 (8.44,9.15)	8.84 (8.70,8.97)	8.95 (8.82,9.07)	8.75 (8.52,8.98)	8.64 (8.22,9.05)	0.194
Gratitude	8.63 (8.48,8.78)	8.67 (8.55,8.80)	8.27 (7.80,8.74)	8.77 (8.60,8.93)	8.70 (8.57,8.83)	8.49 (8.24,8.74)	8.43 (7.97,8.89)	0.233
Love	9.05 (8.92,9.17)	9.06 (8.96,9.16)	9.12 (8.82,9.42)	8.93 (8.79,9.07)	9.07 (8.95,9.18)	9.08 (8.89,9.27)	8.97 (8.62,9.32)	0.724
Forgiveness	0.75 (0.72,0.78)	0.76 (0.74,0.79)	0.67 (0.57,0.78)	0.73 (0.68,0.78)	0.73 (0.71,0.76)	0.74 (0.69,0.78)	0.69 (0.59,0.80)	0.401
Social connectedness	8.59 (8.46,8.72)	8.65 (8.53,8.76)	8.70 (8.41,9.00)	8.53 (8.37,8.69)	8.50 (8.38,8.63)	8.43 (8.22,8.65)	8.15 (7.72,8.58)	0.154
Social support	8.10 (7.93,8.26)	8.14 (7.99,8.29)	8.52 (8.17,8.87)	8.37 (8.18,8.56)	8.02 (7.86,8.17)	7.98 (7.73,8.23)	7.88 (7.40,8.35)	0.02
Government approval	0.71 (0.68,0.75)	0.67 (0.64,0.71)	0.62 (0.52,0.73)	0.73 (0.69,0.78)	0.68 (0.66,0.71)	0.72 (0.67,0.76)	0.77 (0.67,0.88)	0.09
Financial security	5.68 (5.46,5.90)	5.75 (5.51,5.98)	6.78 (6.20,7.35)	4.98 (4.64,5.32)	4.87 (4.67,5.07)	4.93 (4.57,5.29)	4.60 (3.81,5.38)	< .001
Material security	6.24 (6.03,6.45)	6.34 (6.11,6.57)	7.29 (6.76,7.82)	5.68 (5.36,5.99)	5.62 (5.42,5.82)	5.51 (5.17,5.85)	5.57 (4.73,6.42)	< .001

Table 7. Education variation across flourishing outcomes in the Philippines

Outcome	Up to 8 years	9-15 years	16+ years	Global p-value
	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	
Life satisfaction	7.43 (7.22,7.65)	7.51 (7.42,7.60)	7.66 (7.40,7.92)	0.415
Happiness	7.31 (7.11,7.51)	7.32 (7.23,7.40)	7.48 (7.24,7.73)	0.42
Physical health	7.66 (7.47,7.85)	7.69 (7.62,7.77)	7.74 (7.49,8.00)	0.879
Mental health	7.99 (7.82,8.15)	8.07 (7.99,8.14)	8.10 (7.87,8.33)	0.659
Meaning	7.74 (7.53,7.95)	8.09 (8.00,8.18)	8.17 (7.95,8.40)	0.007
Purpose	8.33 (8.17,8.50)	8.46 (8.39,8.54)	8.63 (8.41,8.84)	0.098
Promoting Good	8.51 (8.35,8.67)	8.54 (8.46,8.61)	8.66 (8.47,8.86)	0.416
Delayed gratification	8.38 (8.23,8.54)	8.43 (8.35,8.50)	8.51 (8.30,8.71)	0.636
Hope	8.60 (8.43,8.78)	9.00 (8.92,9.07)	9.17 (9.02,9.32)	< .001
Gratitude	8.30 (8.10,8.50)	8.72 (8.65,8.79)	8.89 (8.69,9.09)	< .001
Love	9.05 (8.90,9.20)	9.05 (8.99,9.11)	8.98 (8.79,9.17)	0.77
Forgiveness	0.72 (0.69,0.75)	0.75 (0.73,0.77)	0.76 (0.71,0.81)	0.217
Social connectedness	8.40 (8.24,8.55)	8.61 (8.54,8.68)	8.53 (8.32,8.74)	0.033
Social support	8.02 (7.83,8.22)	8.14 (8.05,8.22)	8.21 (7.95,8.47)	0.475
Government approval	0.66 (0.63,0.70)	0.71 (0.69,0.73)	0.70 (0.65,0.75)	0.065
Financial security	5.27 (5.02,5.52)	5.34 (5.21,5.48)	6.05 (5.72,6.38)	< .001
Material security	5.71 (5.46,5.95)	6.04 (5.91,6.18)	6.58 (6.22,6.93)	< .001

differences were not large. Social connectedness showed a somewhat higher average among individuals with 9–15 years of education and lower scores among those with 8 or fewer years, but again the magnitude of these differences was limited. Overall, these descriptive patterns suggest that certain aspects of flourishing may vary by educational attainment, particularly meaning-making, character-related indicators, and financial/material security, though the differences observed here were often small and should be interpreted with caution.

Finally, the means/proportions on nearly all outcome indicators of flourishing varied by religious service attendance (Table 8, Supplementary Table S10). In this sample, Filipinos who attended religious services at least weekly reported consistently higher levels across multiple indicators of flourishing compared to those who never attended. Specifically, individuals attending more than once a week showed the highest levels of life satisfaction, meaning, purpose, promoting good, delayed gratification, forgiveness, social connectedness, and financial stability. Those attending once a week reported the highest levels of happiness, physical and mental health, love, gratitude, hope, and government approval. The "never attend" group consistently showed the lowest scores across most outcome indicators, including life satisfaction, happiness, physical and mental health, meaning, purpose, character strengths/ virtues, and social connectedness. Only the means of material security did not vary by frequency of service attendance.

Table 8. Religious service attendance variation across flourishing outcomes in the Philippines

	>1/week	1/week	1-3/month	A few times a year	Never	
Outcome	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Mean/proportion (95% CI)	Global p-value
Life satisfaction	7.75 (7.53,7.96)	7.68 (7.55,7.81)	7.49 (7.32,7.65)	7.13 (6.94,7.31)	6.61 (6.07,7.15)	< .001
Happiness	7.43 (7.21,7.64)	7.58 (7.45,7.70)	7.24 (7.09,7.39)	7.00 (6.82,7.18)	6.64 (6.10,7.17)	< .001
Physical health	7.77 (7.55,7.99)	7.86 (7.75,7.97)	7.66 (7.53,7.79)	7.48 (7.32,7.64)	6.92 (6.47,7.37)	< .001
Mental health	8.09 (7.90,8.27)	8.16 (8.05,8.27)	8.06 (7.95,8.17)	7.87 (7.73,8.02)	7.62 (7.20,8.04)	0.011
Meaning	8.15 (7.93,8.36)	8.06 (7.94,8.19)	8.07 (7.94,8.21)	7.92 (7.76,8.08)	7.15 (6.59,7.71)	0.009
Purpose	8.63 (8.47,8.80)	8.56 (8.46,8.66)	8.41 (8.28,8.54)	8.27 (8.11,8.43)	7.68 (7.13,8.23)	< .001
Promoting Good	8.72 (8.56,8.88)	8.61 (8.51,8.71)	8.58 (8.47,8.70)	8.35 (8.20,8.50)	7.70 (7.19,8.20)	< .001
Delayed gratification	8.62 (8.47,8.78)	8.50 (8.40,8.60)	8.38 (8.25,8.51)	8.34 (8.21,8.48)	7.56 (7.09,8.02)	< .001
Hope	8.95 (8.78,9.12)	9.01 (8.92,9.10)	8.92 (8.81,9.02)	8.82 (8.66,8.99)	8.41 (7.92,8.91)	0.048
Gratitude	8.64 (8.45,8.83)	8.75 (8.64,8.85)	8.56 (8.42,8.71)	8.65 (8.51,8.79)	8.06 (7.59,8.52)	0.037
Love	9.09 (8.93,9.25)	9.14 (9.05,9.23)	9.06 (8.95,9.17)	8.89 (8.76,9.03)	8.57 (8.16,8.97)	0.004
Forgiveness	0.79 (0.76,0.83)	0.75 (0.72,0.78)	0.75 (0.72,0.77)	0.71 (0.67,0.75)	0.62 (0.53,0.71)	< .001
Social connectedness	8.68 (8.52,8.84)	8.65 (8.55,8.75)	8.59 (8.49,8.70)	8.33 (8.17,8.48)	7.96 (7.53,8.39)	< .001
Social support	8.25 (8.04,8.46)	8.25 (8.13,8.37)	8.13 (7.98,8.28)	7.83 (7.65,8.01)	7.52 (7.00,8.03)	< .001
Government approval	0.71 (0.67,0.75)	0.73 (0.71,0.75)	0.69 (0.66,0.72)	0.66 (0.62,0.70)	0.58 (0.49,0.67)	0.002
Financial security	5.66 (5.36,5.96)	5.46 (5.29,5.63)	5.38 (5.17,5.58)	4.99 (4.74,5.24)	5.18 (4.58,5.78)	0.005
Material security	6.06 (5.78,6.35)	6.04 (5.86,6.22)	6.12 (5.91,6.33)	5.79 (5.55,6.03)	5.71 (5.11,6.32)	0.278

4. Discussion

Although research on the multidimensional nature of flourishing has expanded in Western and relatively individualistic contexts, studies examining these well-being dimensions in developing and collectivistic societies, such as the Philippines, remain limited. This study contributes to this growing body of work by describing patterns of flourishing across six key dimensions using a nationally representative sample of Filipino adults. Although the analyses are descriptive and do not signify causation, they provide an overview of how various sociodemographic groups vary on selected flourishing indicators. The interpretation of these findings is situated within the broader sociocultural landscape of the Philippines, which offers important context for understanding how flourishing may manifest in this setting. As we will see, among the key elements in the Philippine sociocultural context that may help in understanding the results are the centrality of relational ties, particularly the family, as a support system, particularly observed among OFWs, and the role played by religion and spirituality.

4.1 The Philippines compared to other Global Flourishing Study countries

On average, the Philippines showed moderately higher mean values on several character-related indicators – such as delayed gratification, hope, gratitude, love, and promoting good – relative to the pooled GFS sample. While the present analyses cannot establish the reasons for these patterns, they can be interpreted alongside broader sociocultural characteristics of the Philippines. For instance, the country's Christian-majority context and the cultural emphasis on *kapwa* (shared identity) may help contextualize why some individuals tended to report moderately higher scores on relational and virtue-oriented indicators. Longstanding traditions such as *bayanihan*, mutual aid and collective action during times of need (Bankoff, 2020), provide social frameworks that could contextually relate to expressions of gratitude, love, or promoting good. Additionally, religious teachings emphasizing compassion and prosocial behavior have historically interacted with indigenous communal values (Reyes, 2015a), which may offer one cultural lens through which to view these patterns. Christianity's teaching on the significance and meaning of suffering has enriched the Filipino virtue of *lakas-ng-loób* (inner strength) and the associated act of *bahala na* (a courageous response in uncertain circumstances), likely explaining Filipinos' high levels of hope amidst challenges and capacity to sacrifice for the greater good. These character-related indicators may reflect not individual optimism alone, but socially embedded orientations shaped by family obligation, religious socialization, and collective coping under conditions of structural precarity. The widespread phenomenon of OFWs, who often accept prolonged separation and personal hardship to support their families financially, offers a culturally salient example of delayed gratification oriented toward familial and collective well-being.

The Filipino sample also tended to report somewhat higher averages in life satisfaction and happiness compared to the overall GFS pooled mean. This pattern is broadly consistent with international assessments, such as the *World Happiness Report*, which has noted the importance of strong social support systems in shaping positive life evaluations in the Philippines (Helliwell, Layard, et al., 2024). At the same time, participants reported lower average levels of financial stability than the pooled cross-country sample, reflecting ongoing economic challenges that may shape perceptions of material well-being. Although this coexistence of relatively higher life satisfaction/happiness and financial insecurity may appear paradoxical, it is consistent with evidence suggesting that subjective well-being can be sustained through non-material sources, particularly in collectivistic contexts where relational ties and shared meaning play a central role.

In such settings, emotional support, family cohesion, and religious engagement may help buffer the psychological impact of economic strain, allowing individuals to maintain positive life evaluations despite material constraints (Tolentino & Dullas, 2015). These descriptive patterns suggest that flourishing in the Philippines may be less dependent on purely economic factors and characterized more by strong relational and virtue-oriented dimensions. This relates to the findings of one qualitative study exploring Filipino family well-being, which found that, beyond financial resources, harmonious and loving family relations tend to be more crucial to familial well-being (Chua et al., 2022). Overall, these patterns illustrate how hope, purpose, and virtue in everyday Filipino life may be grounded in shared sacrifice, collective responsibility, and resilience rather than individual achievement or material security alone.

4.2 Gender and age dynamics in flourishing within Filipino culture

Gender-related variations in flourishing showed that women tended to report slightly higher averages on character-related indicators – such as delayed gratification, love, and gratitude – than men, although it should be noted that these differences were generally small. These tendencies can be contextualized within Filipino cultural expectations, where women are often socialized into relational and nurturing roles aligned with *pakikiramdam* (empathy) and *kagandahang-loób* (generosity of spirit) (Enriquez, 1992). De Castro (2000) similarly described *kagandahang-loób* as resonant with care ethics, which may help contextualize why women reported marginally higher means on relational virtues. Men, meanwhile, tended to report slightly higher levels of financial security. This pattern reflects structural realities in the Philippines, where men are more economically active (73.4% of men aged 15+ compared to 47.2% of women; World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2024) and where women earn, on average, only 69.6% of men's income (World Economic Forum, 2024). These employment and wage differences – together with cultural expectations for men to contribute economically to the household – may help explain small gender differences observed in perceptions of financial security.

Age-related patterns generally reflected expected life-course dynamics. Younger Filipino adults tended to report somewhat higher life satisfaction, while the older adults (80+) reported lower means on life satisfaction and physical health. These patterns align with findings from the World Happiness Report, where Filipinos under age 30 also reported the highest life evaluations compared to older age groups (Helliwell, Huang, et al., 2024). These age-related differences likely stem from general aging processes – including physical health decline, reduced mobility, and increased vulnerability to chronic conditions – rather than differences in access to activities or resources alone. Older adults are generally closer to the end of life compared to young adults and they may be more vulnerable to health problems.

Social connectedness was found to be high among adults aged 30–39. This period often represents a stage in life when social networks are broad and actively maintained through employment, participation in community activities, and involvement in children's schooling or expanded kinship responsibilities. It also precedes the life-stage transitions when social ties can narrow due to caregiving burdens for aging parents, family-related stressors, or the gradual loss of peers – factors more common in later middle adulthood and old age. In contrast, adults aged 80 and above reported the low levels of social connectedness. Although Filipino norms emphasize *utang-na-loób* (debt of gratitude) and family care for older adults (Medina & Medina, 2023), co-residence does not necessarily translate into broader social engagement or deeper relational satisfaction among the elderly (Abalos, 2020). In practical terms, factors such as limited mobility, reduced access to transportation, and the loss of contemporaries tend to narrow social

networks in advanced age. These challenges may more directly account for the lower social connectedness observed among the oldest adults, alongside other factors such as reported family neglect (Felipe-Dimog et al., 2024) that require further investigation.

4.3 Marital status, employment, and education variations

Marital status differences in flourishing domains in this sample were generally modest, and the averages for single and married Filipinos were often very similar. While single individuals tended to report slightly higher means on some indicators – such as meaning, character strengths/virtues, physical health, and social connectedness – the magnitude of these differences was small, making it difficult to conclude that one group is flourishing more than another. This nuance is important, particularly given that broad interpretations based on a limited set of outcomes could overstate patterns not consistently reflected across all indicators (Purol et al., 2021). Within the Philippine context, strong community and extended family networks may provide meaningful sources of support regardless of marital status, which could help explain why flourishing levels were relatively comparable across groups.

The interpretation of marital status categories in the Philippines also requires some cultural context. Because divorce is not legally available, the small number of respondents who selected “divorced” (9 individuals or 0.2%) may have interpreted this category as annulment or may have obtained a divorce abroad. This limits direct comparison with countries where divorce is common and where the “married” category may disproportionately reflect currently stable or higher-quality marriages. Given this unique context, it is possible that some married individuals in the Philippines face substantial financial and caregiving demands – such as the cost of their children’s education or the responsibility of caring for aging parents – which may influence certain aspects of well-being. However, because flourishing scores among married and single adults were largely similar, these contextual factors should be interpreted cautiously and not taken as evidence of actual meaningful differences.

A somewhat clearer pattern emerged for individuals who reported being separated. This group tended to report lower well-being across several indicators compared with other marital status groups, which may align with research from other contexts showing that separation is associated with increased psychological strain and reduced well-being (Hsu & Barrett, 2020). These findings suggest that the challenges associated with marital dissolution – such as relational stress, financial disruption, or changes in social roles – may have implications for flourishing. In contrast, married Filipinos generally showed comparable average levels of well-being to singles, indicating that marital status may matter most at the point of relational instability (e.g., separation) rather than in distinguishing between single and married individuals.

Economic stability appeared to be an important aspect of flourishing for Filipinos, although differences across employment and education groups in the present study were generally small and should be interpreted cautiously. Broader regional inequalities in the Philippines continue to shape perceptions of financial security, with rural areas experiencing higher poverty rates tending to show greater financial worries overall (PSA, 2024). Despite these structural challenges, levels of purpose remained relatively high across different employment categories. This may reflect cultural orientations toward resilience, often described through virtues such as *lakas-ng-loób* (inner strength) and *bahala na* (a culturally adaptive form of courage in uncertainty), which have been noted to help individuals maintain optimism in the face of economic strain. Retired individuals in the sample reported slightly higher averages on financial and material security compared with other groups, though again the differences were modest. Given that retirement

in the Philippines is often associated with financial vulnerability, due in part to a pension system ranked among the weakest globally (Simeon, 2022), these descriptive patterns may probably reflect the role of strong familial networks, which frequently provide economic and emotional support for older adults. However, because the observed differences were not large, interpretations should be made with caution.

Educational attainment showed small but consistent associations with several flourishing indicators, including meaning, gratitude, hope, and financial stability. Although the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 created a K–12 system intended to improve employability, employers have continued to show a marked preference for applicants with college degrees (Philippine Business for Education, 2024). In practice, many K–12 graduates gain access primarily to entry-level administrative roles, which may have narrower income and career trajectories. Within this broader employment context, individuals with higher educational attainment tend to have greater access to job opportunities and potentially more stable income sources – factors that may contribute to their modestly higher averages on meaning-related and financial indicators in this study.

Education also carries deep cultural significance in the Philippines. Beyond its instrumental function, it is often viewed as a pathway to upward mobility and a means of fulfilling familial obligations, such as supporting younger siblings or aging parents (Torralba et al., 2007). These expectations align with the value of *utang-na-loób* (debt of gratitude), which emphasizes reciprocal care across generations. This cultural framing may help contextualize why individuals with higher education tend to report slightly higher levels of meaning and purpose. Still, the magnitudes of these differences were limited, underscoring the need to interpret these patterns as indicative rather than strongly distinct.

4.4 Religious service attendance and flourishing among Filipinos

Religious service attendance showed one of the strongest descriptive associations with flourishing in this sample, with weekly or more frequent attendance tending to correspond to higher averages on several well-being indicators, including life satisfaction, character strengths/virtues, and social connectedness. The findings align with the Philippines' deeply religious culture, where 73% of adults consider religion very important (Cowden, Davoodi, et al., 2025; Social Weather Stations, 2021). In a global study on faith and religiosity among young people, researchers saw that 89% of Filipino youth identify themselves as believers, and the image of God that is prevalent among the participants is that of a merciful and loving personal God (Cortes & Ramirez, 2025; Gaitano et al., 2025). In terms of habits of prayer, the same study showed that 58% of Filipino youth pray several times a day, 26% do so every day and 11% once a week. Research has similarly linked religiousness and spirituality among Filipino youth with positive developmental outcomes and prosocial tendencies (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2023; Buenconsejo et al., 2024). Although these studies primarily focused on Filipino youth, one could argue that in a broader sense, religious practice in the Philippines is not just a question of attendance to specific activities but also involves a personal, relational dimension with God, as seen in these habits of prayer. In the Philippines, religious practices are seen to be intertwined with spirituality or transcendence, and both concepts tend to overlap with each other (Buenconsejo, 2018b). These cultural dynamics may help contextualize why religious attendance corresponds with higher flourishing averages, while acknowledging that the present study is descriptive and does not examine causality or mechanisms.

Frequent attendance at religious services indicates immersion in the life of a religious community, which may foster a relationship to the Divine (for theistic religions) and interpersonal relationships among its members. Communal worship may also reinforce the value of *kapwa* by promoting shared values and spiritual practices, which tend to promote a sense of belonging and meaning in life. Furthermore, Christianity's message of love, hope, forgiveness, and salvation has been suggested as potentially significant for the promotion of health (VanderWeele, 2024), which is especially relevant in the Philippines as a Christian-majority country. Additionally, religious institutions often serve as support systems or social infrastructures, providing not only spiritual guidance but also practical assistance, particularly in resource-scarce settings (Buenconsejo, 2018b; del Castillo et al., 2021). In fact, Cornelio and Teehankee (2024) suggest that religious institutions take on a greater social role in times of natural disasters, of which the Philippines is especially vulnerable considering its location in the Pacific Ring of Fire and the typhoon belt, with an average of 20 tropical cyclones entering the region each year (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, n.d.). According to the Natural Disaster Databook 2023, the Philippines ranks as the third highest in Asia for disaster occurrences over the last 123 years, with 638 recorded events, trailing behind China with 915 and India with 642 (Asian Disaster Reduction Center, 2023). While earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding, and landslides mark a constant disruption to day-to-day experience of well-being, a culture of trust in divine providence is common (del Castillo et al., 2021). As it happens, faith has been found to be a crucial element in the overall recovery of several Philippine communities following the destruction wrought by super typhoon *Haiyan* in 2013 (Grellmann, 2022).

Correspondingly, although these differences should still be interpreted cautiously, the "never attended" group exhibited the lowest flourishing levels, which suggests the integral role of spirituality and religious communities in Filipino well-being. These findings also support the idea that communal religious practices may have a stronger impact on flourishing than private spiritual activities, as they combine value-based teachings with social support structures (Chen & VanderWeele, 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Pankowski & Wytrychiewicz-Pankowska, 2023; Shiba et al., 2023; VanderWeele, 2017b). In the Philippine context, regular participation in religious services often entails not only worship but also sustained involvement in community life, including shared rituals, mutual assistance, and moral socialization (Buenconsejo, 2018a; Yabut, 2013), which may help contextualize these observed differences. As a predominantly Catholic country, Filipino culture is characterized by pious practices and devotions, often manifested in religious feasts celebrated at a public level (Sapitula, 2014).

Taken together, the descriptive patterns in this study highlight the ways by which religious service attendance may intersect with broader cultural and relational dynamics in shaping well-being in the Philippines. Because communal religious life often integrates social support, shared meaning, and value-based guidance, faith-based organizations and community religious spaces may represent promising venues for culturally grounded well-being initiatives. Policy interventions such as public health initiatives, mental health strategies, and economic livelihood programs remain important and may be strengthened when they are designed and implemented with attention to culturally rooted values. However, for policies to be truly effective, key drivers of Filipino well-being need to be considered. Complementary policy efforts that strengthen education, economic opportunities, and community cohesion could further enhance flourishing, particularly when aligned with indigenous psychological concepts such as *kapwa* (shared identity) and *kagandahang-loób* (generosity of spirit). Future policy development and research

may therefore benefit from exploring community-based, family-centered, and faith-sensitive well-being interventions that resonate with the lived realities of Filipino communities.

5. Limitations and future directions

This study has several methodological limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The cross-sectional design prevents conclusions about causality, and the associations identified between sociodemographic factors and flourishing indicators should be interpreted as descriptive rather than explanatory. Subsequent waves of Global Flourishing Study data will allow for longitudinal analyses. Although the survey captured a broad range of flourishing dimensions, they relied on self-report measures. While social desirability may be somewhat mitigated by online administration, cultural norms emphasizing relational harmony could still influence how Filipino participants responded to questions about well-being and character. The use of an online survey platform may have also increased the likelihood that some groups – particularly older adults, individuals in low-connectivity regions, and those with limited digital literacy – to be underrepresented. Future research could incorporate mixed methods approaches to capture the lived experiences and cultural interpretations that shape flourishing in the Philippines. Longitudinal studies would help clarify how flourishing changes across major life transitions and socio-economic shifts. Additional research examining structural determinants – such as local governance, healthcare access, economic policies, and disaster vulnerability – could clarify how contextual conditions interact with cultural strengths. Finally, developing and evaluating culturally grounded well-being interventions that incorporate Filipino indigenous concepts (e.g., *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, *lakas-ng-loób*) may provide valuable tools for supporting well-being at the community and policy levels.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a descriptive portrait of flourishing using a nationally representative sample of Filipino adults and situates these findings within the cultural, historical, and socio-economic context of the Philippines. The results indicate that flourishing may vary across selected sociodemographic groups, though many of these differences were modest. In the Philippines, flourishing is deeply intertwined with its relational, religious, and family-centered sociocultural context. By situating these patterns with reference to indigenous Filipino values – such as *kapwa* (shared identity) – as well as social, economic, and religious dynamics, the study highlights how flourishing may be understood within a collectivist and highly religious society. While the analyses do not test cultural mechanisms directly, the findings point to the possibility that relational orientations, community participation, and cultural traditions shape how well-being is experienced and expressed in the Philippine context. The descriptive associations observed for religious service attendance also suggest that communal spiritual life remains an important aspect of well-being for many Filipinos, consistent with prior research emphasizing the social and existential functions of religious communities. Positioned within the broader Global Flourishing Study, these findings underscore the value of including culturally distinct and underrepresented populations in global well-being research. By expanding empirical attention beyond Western and high-income contexts, this study contributes to a more inclusive understanding of human flourishing and provides insights that may inform culturally responsive policies and community-based initiatives in the Philippines.

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Conflict of interest

Tyler J. VanderWeele reports consulting fees from Gloop Inc., along with shared revenue received by Harvard University in its license agreement with Gloop according to the University IP policy. Other authors declare no competing interests.

Funding statement

The Global Flourishing Study was generously funded by the John Templeton Foundation (#61665), Templeton Religion Trust (#1308), Templeton World Charity Foundation (#0605), Well-Being for Planet Earth, Fetzer Institute (#4354), Well Being Trust, Paul L. Foster Family Foundation, and the David & Carol Myers Foundation. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of these organizations.

Ethical approval

This project was ruled exempt by the Baylor University Institutional Review Board (#1841317-2). All personally identifiable information was removed from the data used in this study by Gallup Inc. Institutional Review Board approval for all data collection activities was obtained by Gallup Inc.

AI statement

AI tools (Grammarly and Microsoft Copilot) were used for grammar and language refinement. The authors prepared the original draft of this manuscript and take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this article are openly available on the Open Science Framework and in the Supplementary Materials. The specific dataset used was Wave 1 non-sensitive global data available from February 2024 to March 2026 via preregistration and publicly available thereafter (<https://www.cos.io/gfs-access-data>).

Publishing timeline

Received 18 December 2025

Revised version received 5 February 2026

Accepted 8 February 2026

Published 28 February 2026

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