



The Global Flourishing Study

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO A LIFE WELL-LIVED?

Highlights from the inaugural
wave of data collection



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Executive Summary

The Global Flourishing Study (GFS) is a groundbreaking research initiative that aims to deepen our understanding of one of humanity's enduring questions:

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO A LIFE WELL-LIVED?

At the core of this study is the concept of **flourishing** — “the relative attainment of a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good, including the contexts in which that person lives.”¹ This holistic view of wellbeing acknowledges that a well-lived life is more than just health or happiness — it is a rich interplay of multiple life dimensions.²

To capture the complexity of this dynamic, the GFS measures flourishing across six core domains: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, close social relationships, and financial and material stability.

The initial wave of data collection included over 207,000 participants from 22 countries and Hong Kong (S.A.R. of China), representing a broad range of geographic regions, cultural backgrounds and economic development levels.

5 years

207,000 participants

23 diverse countries
and territories

1 VanderWeele, T. J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(31), 8148-8156.

2 VanderWeele, T. J., & Lomas, T. (2023). Terminology and the well-being literature. *Affective Science*, 4, 36-40.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS INAUGURAL WAVE INCLUDE:

1 Age and Flourishing

The relationship between age and flourishing varies across countries. For instance, in India and Tanzania, flourishing tends to decline with age, while in places like Australia and Sweden, it actually improves as people grow older.

2 Mental Health Surpluses and Deficits

Mental health emerges as a key factor in flourishing, but not always in the same way. In countries like Israel and Poland, mental health ratings contribute, on average, to higher flourishing scores across all age groups. Conversely, in countries like Brazil and the United States, mental health ratings drag down flourishing scores for younger respondents but boost flourishing among older adults.

3 Impact of Group Activities

Regular participation in group activities, whether religious or civic, is generally associated with greater flourishing. In countries like the Philippines and Türkiye, the positive relationship between flourishing and religious service attendance is stronger than that between flourishing and civic participation. Meanwhile, in countries like Spain and Germany, religious and civic engagement are similarly associated with greater flourishing.

The Global Flourishing Study's longitudinal design sets it apart from most other multicountry wellbeing studies; rather than offering a snapshot in time, the GFS surveys the same individuals over multiple years. The recently released two-wave dataset offers researchers the opportunity to move beyond correlations to tease out what factors are responsible for greater human flourishing. In turn, the insights gained could be used to inform policymakers, practitioners and community leaders alike — anyone invested in creating environments where people can truly flourish.



Introduction

The Global Flourishing Study (GFS) is a collaboration among researchers at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard, Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion and Gallup to address limitations in current research on human flourishing. The study investigates what contributes to a life well-lived — a topic that has long occupied a central place in philosophical traditions and religions worldwide and throughout history.

In recent decades, there has been a surge of interest in grappling with this question among social scientists, policymakers and business leaders,³ albeit often through a narrow lens. Concepts such as happiness, wellness and life satisfaction dominate the larger wellbeing discourse. Several national statistical agencies measure and track these crucial, interrelated concepts, which may be used to “inform the appraisal, design and evaluation of policy” decisions.⁴

Measurement of these concepts is informative but incomplete. The Global Flourishing Study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on human flourishing — a state of complete physical, social, emotional, cognitive, volitional and spiritual wellbeing.⁵ Flourishing is an emerging research agenda that integrates these discrete elements into a constellation of attributes that capture a fuller assessment of how a person is doing in life and the broader context in which they live.⁶

Employing this innovative framework is not the only way the GFS helps expand our current understanding of a life well-lived. Most survey-based research into wellbeing-related topics relies on cross-sectional data, which means each survey iteration samples a new group of respondents. The GFS uses a longitudinal panel to survey the same individuals over time, allowing researchers to see more clearly how changes in various social, demographic, economic, psychological, religious and character-related variables (among other attributes) affect individuals' capacity to flourish.

3 Lomas, T., Pawelski, J. O., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2023). A flexible map of flourishing: The dynamics and drivers of flourishing, well-being, health, and happiness. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 13(4), 1-38. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v13i4.3665>; An OECD survey of employee well-being: An instrument to measure employee well-being inside companies (OECD Papers on Well-Being and Inequalities No. 24). (2024). OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/74f48e24-en>

4 OECD guidelines on measuring subjective well-being. (2013). OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en>

5 VanderWeele, T. J., Johnson, B. R., Bialowolski, P. T., Bonhag, R., Bradshaw, M., Breedlove, T., Case, B., Chen, Y., Chen, Z. J., Counted, V., Cowden, R. G., de la Rosa, P. A., Felton, C., Fogleman, A., Gibson, C., Grigoropoulou, N., Gundersen, C., Jang, S. J., Johnson, K. A., Kent, B. V., Kim, E. S., et al. (n.d.). The Global Flourishing Study: Study profile and initial results on flourishing. *Nature Mental Health*, in press.

6 VanderWeele, T. J., & Johnson, B. R. (2025). Why we need to measure people's well-being - lessons from a global survey. *Nature*, 641, 34-36.

The GFS's overarching aim is to stimulate further dialogue around flourishing, which helps map the topography of the human experience in a more nuanced and complete way.

HOW IS FLOURISHING DEFINED AND MEASURED?

The GFS defines flourishing as “the relative attainment of a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good, including the contexts in which that person lives.”⁷

Flourishing has three key features:

- 1 A multidimensional concept covering a diverse range of aspects in a person’s life.** People can flourish more in some areas of their lives and less in others.
- 2 A measure that underscores a process rather than a condition.** An individual is never fully flourishing but rather is on a journey toward greater flourishing.
- 3 A subjective state intimately conditioned by the surrounding community and environment.** In this state, the wellbeing of the community and environment is a key part of one’s own flourishing.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: CREATING A FLOURISHING MOVEMENT

The GFS provides rich data for reflection on Communities of Practice.⁸ A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people united by a shared practice — in this case, promoting human flourishing — who learn, grow and improve together through intentional interaction. As a practitioner-oriented complement to academic research, CoPs serve as a vehicle for translating knowledge into practice by fostering relationships through collaborative inquiry and mutual support.

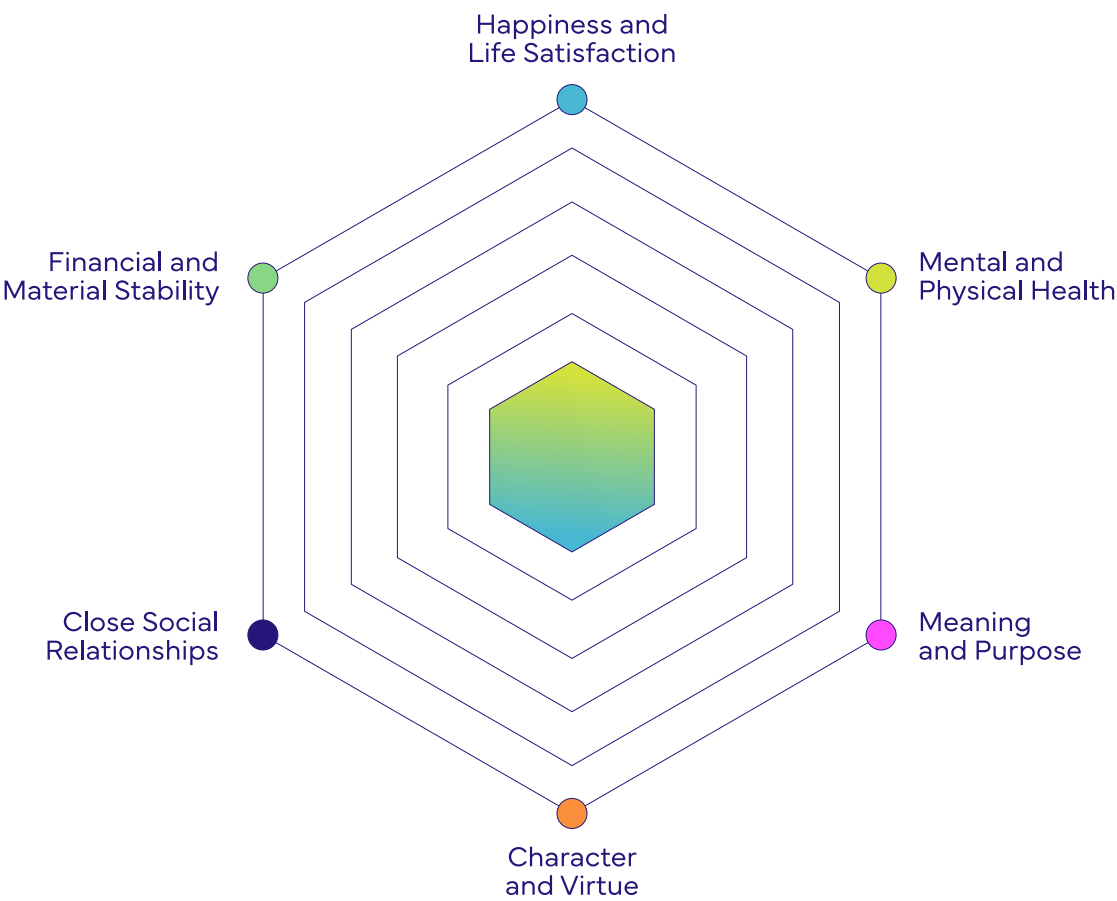
Since its founding five years ago, [The Flourishing Network](#) has grown to include multiple CoPs across sectors and 500+ members worldwide. By focusing on different aspects of flourishing, including research, education and policy, it aims to create an inclusive, interdisciplinary network that promotes collaboration while creating conditions for both individual and collective flourishing.

Armed with rigorous data and research, Communities of Practice may be the best mechanism **for creating a global flourishing movement.**

⁷ VanderWeele, T. J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(31), 8148–8156.

⁸ Lee, M. T., Johnson, B. R., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2023). *Understanding flourishing: Developing a global community of practice*. Baylor ISR Special Report. Baylor University.

Given the complexity of this concept, there is no single, comprehensive way to identify and measure all essential aspects of human flourishing. The GFS offers one approach by focusing on six core domains: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, close social relationships, and financial and material security. Each domain is, in turn, measured with two survey questions, as shown in Table 1.⁹



9 VanderWeele, T. J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(31), 8148–8156.

TABLE 1

Six Core Domains of Human Flourishing

Domain	Question Text	Scale
DOMAIN 1 Happiness and Life Satisfaction	Overall, how satisfied are you with life as a whole these days?	0 = Not At All Satisfied With Your Life 10 = Completely Satisfied With Your Life
	In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel?	0 = Extremely Unhappy 10 = Extremely Happy
DOMAIN 2 Mental and Physical Health	In general, how would you rate your physical health?	0 = Poor 10 = Excellent
	How would you rate your overall mental health?	0 = Poor 10 = Excellent
DOMAIN 3 Meaning and Purpose	Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	0 = Not at All Worthwhile 10 = Completely Worthwhile
	I understand my purpose in life.	0 = Strongly Disagree 10 = Strong Agree
DOMAIN 4 Character and Virtue	I always act to promote good in all circumstances, even in difficult and challenging situations.	0 = Not True of Me 10 = Completely True of Me
	I am always able to give up some happiness now for greater happiness later.	0 = Not True of Me 10 = Completely True of Me
DOMAIN 5 Close Social Relationships	I am content with my friendships and relationships.	0 = Strongly Disagree 10 = Strong Agree
	My relationships are as satisfying as I would want them to be.	0 = Strongly Disagree 10 = Strong Agree
DOMAIN 6 Financial and Material Stability	How often do you worry about being able to meet normal monthly living expenses?	0 = Worry All of the Time 10 = Do Not Ever Worry
	How often do you worry about safety, food, or housing?	0 = Worry All of the Time 10 = Do Not Ever Worry

This report focuses on the average score of the survey items in the first five domains — known as the Flourishing Index — and the subcomponents of this index as the main outcomes of interest. Research treats the final domain — financial and material resources — sometimes as part of wellbeing and sometimes as a determinant of wellbeing. In turn, some research using GFS data incorporates this domain to derive the Secure Flourishing Index score. However, this report separates this sixth domain to demonstrate the association between financial and material resources and the Flourishing Index (see [Figure 3](#)).

Beyond the core flourishing indicators, the GFS features several additional survey items that measure key attributes or attitudes that past research suggests may promote human flourishing. These potential determinants include demographic, social, economic, political, religious/spiritual, personality, childhood experiences, community and health variables.

The GFS research team embraced an inclusive approach to developing this questionnaire to maximize the limited space available on the survey. For additional information on the intentional process leading to the creation of the survey instrument, please see the [Questionnaire Development Report](#).¹⁰



¹⁰ Lomas, T., Bradshaw, M., Case, B., Cowden, R., Crabtree, S., English, C., Fogleman, A., Johnson, K. A., Ritter, Z., Johnson, B. R., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2025). The development of the Global Flourishing Study questionnaire: Charting the evolution of a new 109-item inventory of human flourishing. *BMC Global and Public Health*.

WHAT MAKES THE GLOBAL FLOURISHING STUDY UNIQUE?

In the inaugural wave of data collection, the GFS included over 207,000 participants from 22 countries and Hong Kong (S.A.R. of China), which collectively span a broad range of geographic regions, cultural backgrounds and levels of economic development representing over 64% of the world’s population.¹¹

FIGURE 1
Countries and Territories Where GFS Data Were Collected



¹¹ Data from mainland China were not included in the first public dataset released in February 2024 due to fieldwork delays. The first wave of data collection concluded in China in April 2024, and the second wave of data collection began in November 2024. Therefore, academic articles recently published using Wave 1 data do not include these data. Both waves of data from China are now available in the second public dataset released in April 2025.

While other nationally representative, multicountry studies on happiness, wellness or life satisfaction match or exceed the coverage achieved in this undertaking, three significant aspects set the GFS apart.

- 1 The GFS is longitudinal** — the same individuals are asked the same set of questions in every wave of data collection. In contrast, most large-scale, multicountry studies on related topics are time-series cross-sectional, where different individuals are surveyed in each wave. By tracking changes in self-reported behaviors and attitudes among the same set of respondents, the longitudinal research design enables researchers to move beyond correlations and determine what factors are responsible for greater human flourishing.
- 2 The GFS collects data across several countries and territories with diverse cultural heritages, political systems and economic development levels.** In contrast, most longitudinal studies on related topics tend to focus on one or a few relatively WEIRD countries — Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic — often with a Judeo-Christian heritage. By expanding the aperture of experience, researchers are better positioned to determine whether certain patterns associated with flourishing are universal or context dependent.
- 3 The GFS research team partners with the Center for Open Science (COS) to implement the principles of transparency, reproducibility and research integrity** through data sharing, study preregistration and documentation of data collection methodology. The first and second waves of data collection and accompanying resources — methodology reports, codebook and translation materials — are all available on the [COS website](#).

The remaining sections of this report present descriptive findings from the first data collection wave released to the public in February 2024 and illustrate the richness of these data.

SECTION 1

The Current State of Global Flourishing

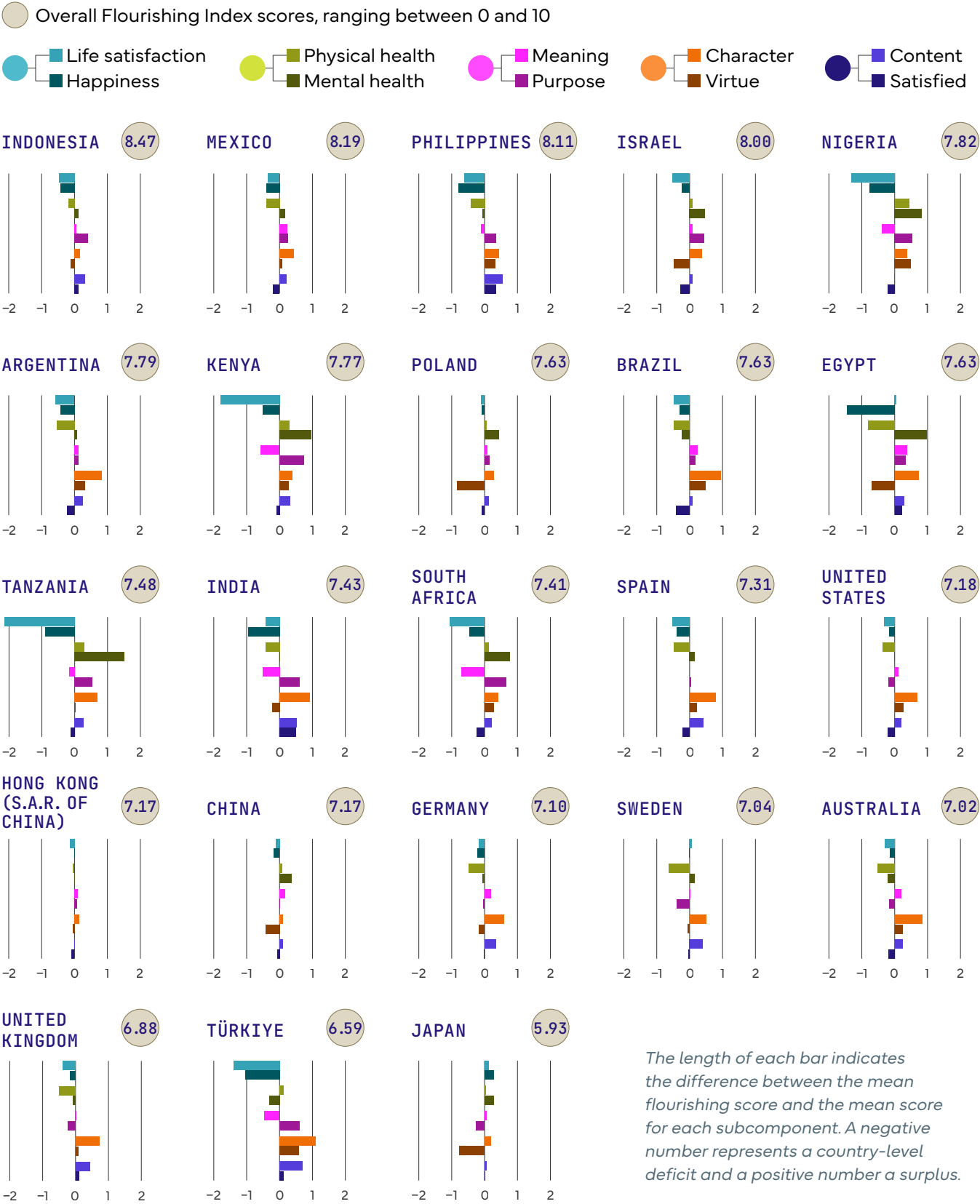
A key research objective of the GFS is to determine to what extent individuals in different countries and territories are flourishing and how that varies across domains. This section begins to answer this question by comparing results across countries.

Flourishing is measured by a composite index using two self-report questions in five domains: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships. The Flourishing Index is measured on a 0 to 10 scale, where zero is the absence of flourishing, and 10 is comprehensive attainment.

This flourishing score varies significantly across the countries and territories surveyed. Indonesia (8.47), Mexico (8.19) and the Philippines (8.11) exhibit the highest scores; the lowest levels of flourishing are found in Japan (5.93), Türkiye (6.59) and the United Kingdom (6.88).



FIGURE 2
Flourishing Levels by Country



Countries, like people, may flourish more in some areas of life and less in others. Such flourishing surpluses may offer a reservoir that helps offset flourishing deficits. Figure 2 illustrates these country-level surpluses and deficits through the bars that radiate from the center. The length of each bar indicates the difference between the mean flourishing score and the mean score for each subcomponent. For instance, the difference in Tanzania between the flourishing score (7.48) and life satisfaction (5.33) is 2.15 points — the largest flourishing deficit across all countries in this study. Notably, the largest flourishing surplus across all countries (1.51 points) is also in Tanzania, between the flourishing score (7.48) and self-reported mental health (8.99).

Viewing the data from this perspective reveals several patterns, including:

- 1** Happiness and life satisfaction are flourishing deficits in most countries, particularly Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Türkiye.
- 2** Mental health and understanding your purpose in life produce important flourishing surpluses in Egypt, Israel, Kenya, Nigeria, Poland, South Africa and Tanzania. Life purpose is also a surplus in India and Türkiye. In contrast, mental health and life purpose are net neutral or present a slight deficit in many high-income countries, including Australia, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- 3** Despite belonging to the same domain, understanding your purpose in life and finding the things you do in life worthwhile do not consistently move in similar directions at the country level, as might be expected. Notably, finding the things you do worthwhile lags overall flourishing scores in India, Nigeria, South Africa and Türkiye, while the average score for life purpose exceeds the flourishing measure in those same countries.

Zooming back out to the composite Flourishing Index, researchers differ on whether the sixth domain measuring financial and material stability is an integral component of the flourishing concept or an important contributor to flourishing. Yet, there is a broad consensus that a positive relationship between flourishing and material wellbeing should exist.

**To understand
what it means to
truly flourish in
life, it is essential
to listen closely
to people's lived
experiences and
perspectives.**



FIGURE 3

Differences in Flourishing Index Scores by Financial/Material Security

Least vs. Most Financially and Materially Secure

● Insecure (0-3) ● Secure (7-10)

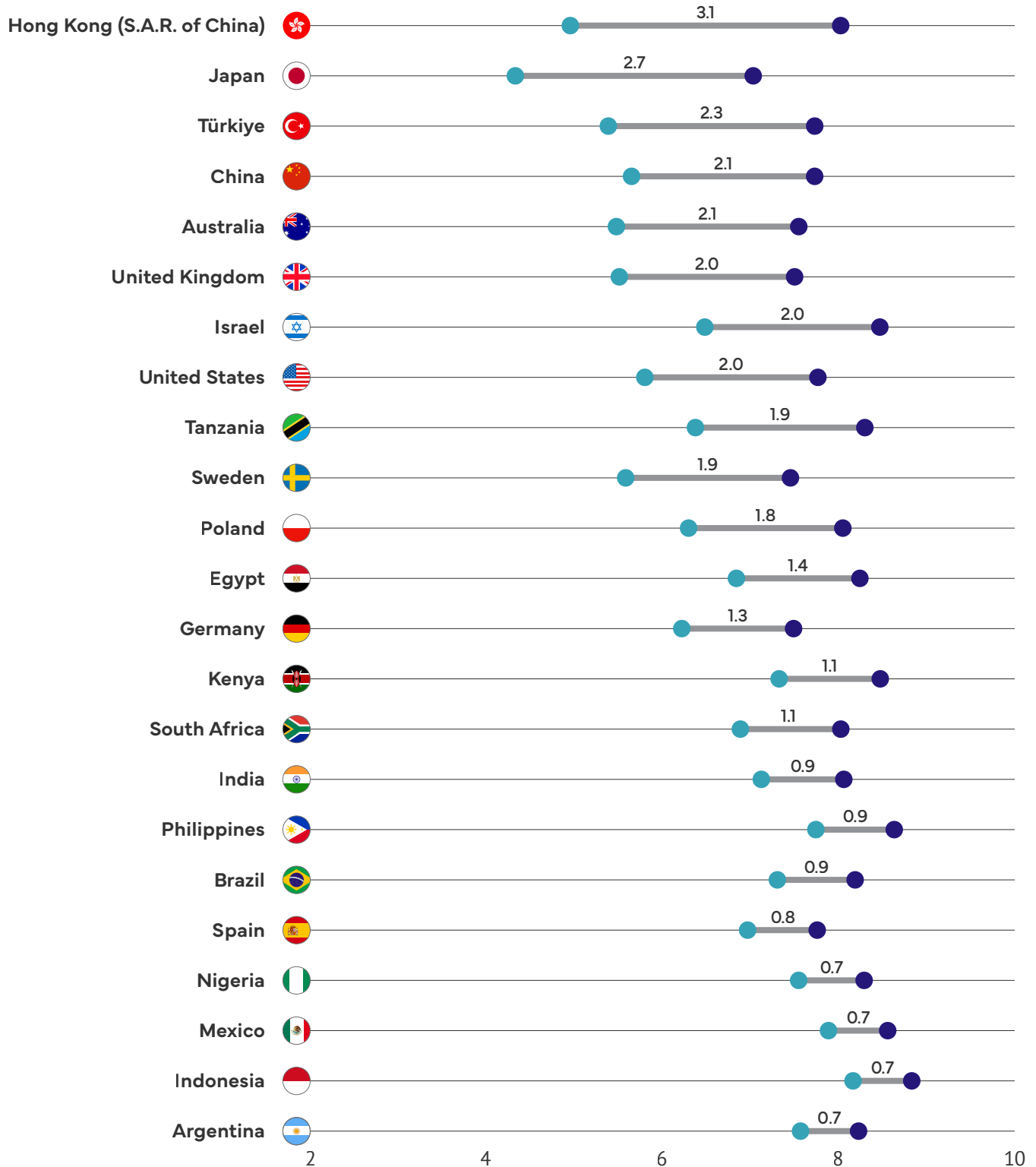


Figure 3 shows the difference in mean flourishing scores between the least and most financially secure individuals. Financial and material security is measured as the mean score of the two survey items in Domain 6 of [Table 1](#). The score for the “least secure” individuals falls between 0 and 3, and the “most secure” between 7 and 10.

As anticipated, financial and material stability is a strong predictor of the composite flourishing score across all countries in the study. This association remains statistically robust in every country after controlling for other known predictors of flourishing.

This overview of the Flourishing Index and its subcomponents identifies consistent relationships that span all countries and reveals how different countries and territories are flourishing in different ways.

INSIGHTS TO HUMAN FLOURISHING IN AN IDYLIC COMMUNITY

To understand what enables communities to flourish, it is also essential to listen closely to people’s lived experiences and perspectives. Therefore, GFS researchers are participating in allied qualitative studies to gain deeper understanding of what it means to flourish. Our research has centered on the Town at Trilith, a purpose-built community near Atlanta, GA, designed to foster flourishing among its residents — primarily storytellers, artisans and entrepreneurs living alongside Trilith Studios, the home of major film productions.

This idyllic community features thoughtfully designed public spaces and carefully curated shops and restaurants, integrating wellbeing and a better way of life into every decision to support its motto: Be Well, Do Good, Together. Through in-depth interviews and field observations, our study explored how intentional community design and shared purpose can shape residents everyday experiences of flourishing.

“I really do want to flourish.

... And it’s not just about me; it’s about others in my community that I am connected to, and I want them to flourish as well. And so that, to me, is more important than settling for happiness.”

– Middle-aged female resident

“Love is what powers flourishing,

and there is a communal aspect to it. If my neighbor isn’t flourishing, then that has to be my problem. If you want to flourish, you have to be willing to stretch yourself. It’s true that an individual plant can thrive, but the real beauty is when you see a garden, where together we can flourish better.”

– Middle-aged male resident

The Shape of Flourishing With Age

The relationship between age and wellbeing is well-explored and perhaps one of the best-known findings from this line of research. In particular, studies that use life evaluation or life satisfaction questions as a proxy for wellbeing have famously found a U-shaped pattern where wellbeing is, on average, higher in early adulthood and later in life, with a notable dip during middle age. However, recent studies and GFS data show notable pattern variation across countries between age and wellbeing.¹²

The country-level relationship between flourishing and age is not easily characterized by a letter of the alphabet, as shown in **Figure 4**. In Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, flourishing appears to increase with age. The difference between young and old is most striking in the United States, where the average flourishing score is 6.36 for adults aged 18 to 29 and 7.68 among those aged 60 to 69. Other recent studies have observed similar patterns in the U.S. and other high-income countries.¹³

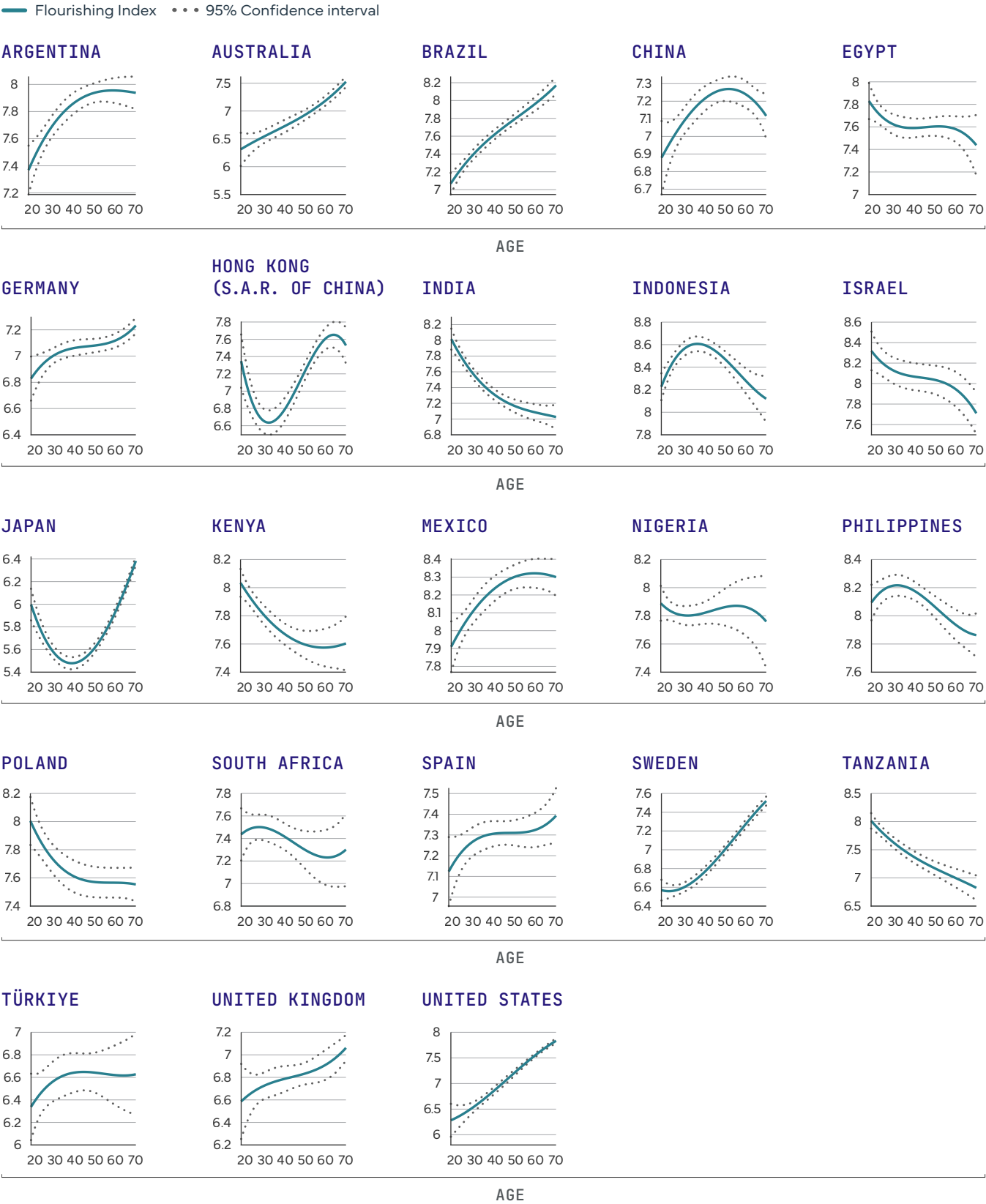
Not all high-income countries surveyed follow this increase-with-age pattern. In Hong Kong (S.A.R. of China) and Japan, the pattern is J-shaped, with younger individuals, on average, flourishing slightly more than their middle-aged counterparts but less than older ones. In Israel and Poland, the pattern is reversed, with flourishing decreasing, on average, with age.

Several low- and middle-income countries — Egypt, India, Kenya, the Philippines and Tanzania — also exhibit this decrease-with-age pattern. The difference between young and old is most striking in Tanzania, where the average flourishing score is 7.83 for adults aged 18 to 29 and 7.04 for those aged 60 to 69.

Indonesia and China exhibit an inverse J-shaped pattern, where middle-aged individuals are, on average, flourishing better than their younger and older counterparts. Finally, no clear association between age and flourishing is evident in Nigeria, South Africa and Türkiye.

- 12 Blanchflower, D. G. (2021). Is happiness U-shaped everywhere? Age and subjective well-being in 145 countries. *Journal of Population Economics*, 34(2), 575-624. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-020-00797-z>
- 13 Helliwell, J., Huang, H., Shiplett, H., & Wang, S. (2024). World happiness report. Chapter 2: Happiness of the younger, the older, and those in between. University of Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.18724/WHR-FIP2-QJ33>

FIGURE 4
The Shape of Flourishing
Country-Level Relationship Between Flourishing and Age




When focusing on mental and physical health by age, interesting patterns in flourishing surpluses and deficits emerge. While self-reported physical health tends to decline, on average, with age, as might be expected, this is not the case in Australia, Brazil and the United States, where self-reported physical health tends to stay roughly the same with age. Across all countries and territories, physical health is, on average, a surplus or at least net neutral for young individuals but a deficit for older individuals.

In contrast, no universal pattern emerges for mental health. In China, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, Poland, South Africa and Tanzania, mental health is a flourishing surplus or net neutral across all age groups. In most other countries, mental health is, on average, a flourishing deficit for young individuals and a surplus or at least net neutral for older individuals. This pattern is most striking in Brazil, Sweden and the United States and aligns with recent calls to action over a looming youth mental health crisis.

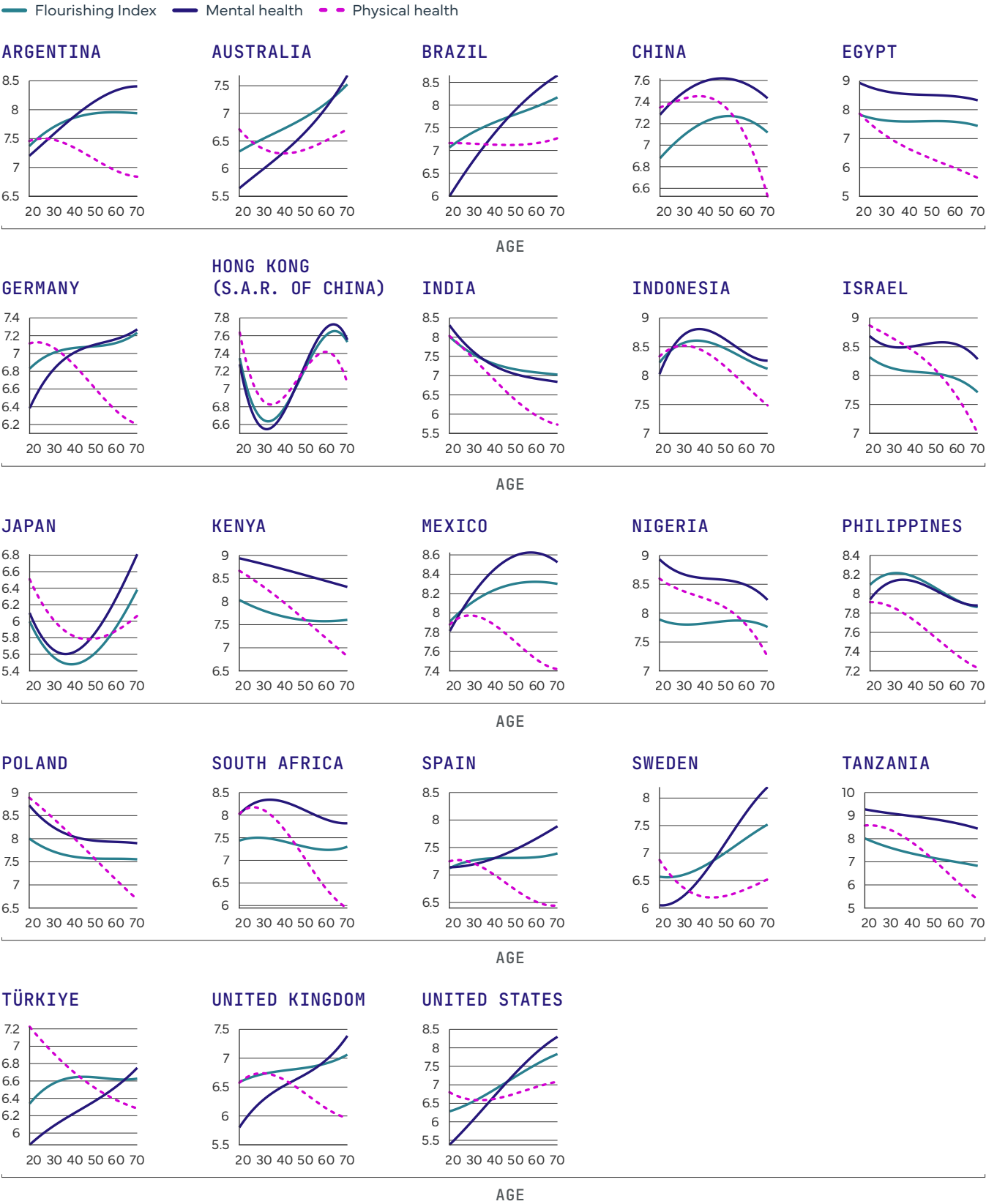
The average mental health score in the United States is 5.68 for adults aged 18 to 29 and 8.06 among those aged 60 to 69.

More research is needed in countries where flourishing increases with age to determine whether these results presage a novel “age effect” pattern or a “cohort effect.” In the case of the former, social and economic conditions today may be less salubrious for young people, but their wellbeing will steadily increase, on average, with age. In the case of the latter, the youth today may continue to follow a U-shaped pattern whereby the wellbeing of younger cohorts will decline over time compared with previous generations.



**The outcome is
not predetermined;
policies supporting
the wellbeing of young
people can help shape
the future.**

FIGURE 5
Flourishing: Health Deficits And Assets
Country-Level Relationship, by Age



Participation in Group Activities as a Pathway to Flourishing

While country of residence and demographic factors may influence individual flourishing to some extent, the GFS also seeks to identify behaviors, personal experiences and beliefs that may lead to greater flourishing.

Such areas of focus include the influence of religion/spirituality and the role of community participation in human flourishing. In this regard, two survey items measure religious service attendance and involvement in civic activities. Participation in such group activities can offer several paths to improved wellbeing, such as a sense of social connection. Current analyses are descriptive associations but subsequent waves of longitudinal data will allow us to assess causal evidence.

Figure 6 shows the difference in flourishing scores between individuals who never attend religious services or civic activities and those who attend at least once a week. Attendance is generally associated with greater flourishing, even after controlling for other well-known predictors. However, the variation across countries and between the types of activity is notable.

First, in most countries, the positive relationship between flourishing and religious service attendance is more prevalent than between flourishing and participation in civic activities. A statistically significant positive relationship exists between flourishing and religious service attendance in 21 out of 23 countries and territories, compared with 15 out of 23 between flourishing and civil society participation.

Second, the difference between flourishing and participation in these activities varies considerably in Israel, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Türkiye and the United States. For example, in the Philippines, the average difference in flourishing between a person who attends a religious service at least weekly and a person who never attends is 0.86 points, whereas the difference between a person who attends a civil society activity at least weekly compared with a person who never attends is 0.17 points.

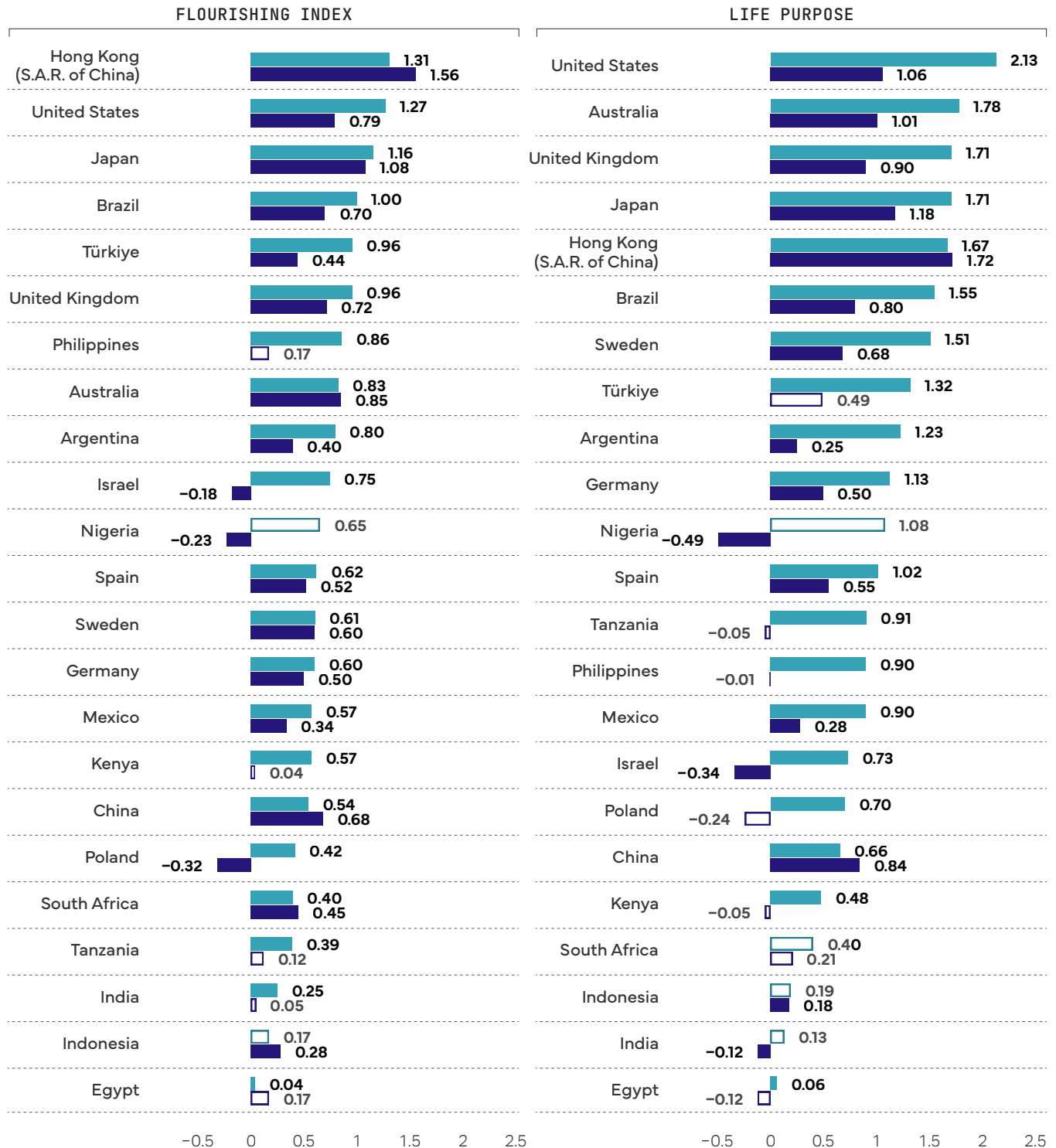
Conversely, in several countries such as Australia, Spain, Sweden and Germany, the positive association between participation in a group activity and flourishing is roughly equivalent regardless of whether that activity is religious or civic.

FIGURE 6

Positive Association Between Attending Group Activities, Flourishing and Purpose

Point Difference on a 10-Point Scale: At Least Once a Week vs. 'Never'

■ Religious service attendance ■ Non-religious group participation



Shaded bars with black font represent statistically significant relationships at $p < .05$ level, while unshaded bars with grey font do not meet that threshold. Statistical significance is obtained from country-level OLS models regressing the flourishing index score or life purpose on gender, age, education, feelings about household income, marital status and employment status.

The composite Flourishing Index can conceal interesting variations at the subcomponent level. For example, [Figure 6](#) shows that in most countries, the positive association between religious service attendance and understanding one's purpose in life is markedly larger than between civil society participation and understanding one's purpose.

Importantly, **the relationships described above are descriptive and do not imply causality.**

For instance, the causal arrow may be pointed in the other direction — people with higher wellbeing may be more likely to participate in group activities. The recently released GFS longitudinal data containing two data waves may help uncover the effect participation has on overall wellbeing.

Moreover, these data may eventually also offer insight into the intermediary pathways that lead to greater wellbeing, such as whether religious church attendance increases flourishing by boosting an individual's sense of meaning and purpose.

HUMAN FLOURISHING IN A MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON

The GFS gives insight into those who are struggling and how challenging circumstances can sometimes also lead to resilience and subsequent flourishing. To this end, GFS researchers are completing prison studies to determine the capacity for those incarcerated — even death row inmates — to flourish. The Mississippi State Penitentiary — commonly known as Parchman — is a maximum-security prison located in the heart of the Mississippi Delta with a long history of corruption and violence. Recently, however, it has become the site of a unique correctional effort to transform not only the prison environment but also the lives of the prisoners.

As a result of this experiment, many inmates at Parchman are finding ways to flourish. Specifically, several prisoners have shared how participating in faith-based communities has resulted in relationships that have fundamentally changed the trajectory of their lives and given them a renewed sense of hope, purpose, gratitude and a desire to serve others. Involvement in religious communities has led to increased prosocial behavior and declines in violence, misconduct and suicides — providing a powerful example of the human ability to flourish in even the most unlikely of places.

"I've been on death row for more than 30 years. People ask me how I can be flourishing while I'm waiting to be executed. I tell them that we all received a death sentence when we were born. ... But I found eternal life here.

I have a hope and purpose that many on the outside do not have."

— 51-year-old male

"After all these many years of being in and out of prison, I finally found an authentic community of believers here at Parchman. I gave my life to God, and it was only then that I was able to finally forgive myself.

I have a peace, and I can finally sleep at night."

—Middle-aged male

Conclusion

The descriptive findings presented in this report are a small sampling of the richness that the Global Flourishing Study data offer. There are some notable consistent patterns across countries but also considerable variations that warrant further exploration. This diversity underscores the complexity of human flourishing and the need for continued research to understand what underlying factors contribute to it.

A step in that direction is the recently released special collection of academic papers that use the first wave of GFS data to examine a wide variety of topics. A running list of these publications is available [here](#).

Moving beyond rich, descriptive correlations, the second wave of data collection is now available on the [Center for Open Science website](#). This longitudinal dataset, which follows the same individuals over time, enables researchers to begin teasing out causal relationships and identifying pathways to flourishing.

In that spirit, the third wave of data collection is currently underway, with an expected release to the public in spring 2026.

With each additional survey wave, we aim to arm researchers with valuable data to generate evidence-based discoveries that inform policymakers and practitioners with insights to **improve wellbeing worldwide.**

Methodology Note

Results for this Gallup survey are based on face-to-face, telephone and web surveys conducted between March 21, 2022 and April 12, 2024, with 207,920 adults aged 18 and older living in 22 countries and one territory. For results based on the total country sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error ranged between ± 0.81 and ± 3.11 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls. For more technical details, please see the [Methodology Report](#).



Core Research Partners

The Global Flourishing Study is a collaboration among four organizations with combined expertise in the subject matter and research methodology needed to make this unprecedented endeavor successful.



The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard was founded in 2016 with the aim of studying and promoting flourishing and synthesizing knowledge across diverse fields in the social sciences and humanities. The Program has a strong interdisciplinary team of scholars studying flourishing and has published numerous studies on flourishing and its determinants.



The Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor initiates, conducts and supports research on religion involving scholars and projects across many academic disciplines. The institute studies the effects of all religions worldwide on outcomes such as prosocial behavior, family life, population health, economic development and social conflict.



Gallup is a global analytics and advice firm with more than 80 years of experience measuring public opinion and human development. In the organization's own research and in working partnerships with government, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, Gallup develops indicators to measure key global development and social responsibility indicators over time.



Center for Open Science: Founded in 2013, COS is a nonprofit culture change organization with a mission to increase the openness, integrity and reproducibility of scientific research. COS pursues this mission by building communities around open science practices, supporting metascience research, and developing and maintaining free, open-source software tools, including the Open Science Framework (OSF).

CORE FUNDERS

Funders for the GFS include the John Templeton Foundation, Templeton Religion Trust, Templeton World Charity Foundation, the Well-Being for Planet Earth Foundation, the Fetzer Institute, Well Being Trust, the Paul L. Foster Family Foundation, and the David & Carol Myers Foundation. The project follows Sir John Templeton's intent of applying rigorous research methods to expand the spiritual horizons of humankind.

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