Flourishing in Argentina: Evidence from the Global Flourishing Study (GFS) across socioeconomic groups and levels of religiosity

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Abstract: Using Wave 1 data from the Global Flourishing Study (GFS), this study examined the levels of well-being in multiple domains of flourishing and their variations across demographic groups in Argentina (N=6,724). The results show that the mean flourishing level of Argentine participants is above the pooled means across all 22 countries included in the GFS in the domains of psychological well-being, social well-being, and character & prosocial behavior, but it is below the cross-national average in socioeconomic outcomes. In addition, the mean levels of flourishing in Argentina differ across groups with different levels of religiosity. For instance, the mean scores on multiple indicators of flourishing are higher among Christian Argentinians than their non-religious counterparts. Moreover, the means on multiple indicators of flourishing are also higher among those who attended religious services frequently than those who never attended services. The results make a meaningful contribution to studies on flourishing in Argentina. The findings also provide intriguing paths for future research and highlight the importance of population-level monitoring of flourishing in Argentina.

Keywords: flourishing; Argentina; PERMA; religion; wellbeing

1. Introduction

While empirical sciences on well-being have formally emerged in recent decades, their roots can be traced back to ancient philosophical traditions, notably in the West to Aristotelian eudaimonia and Epicurean hedonism. By their very nature, well-being sciences are inherently interdisciplinary, drawing primarily from philosophy, psychology, and economics (Alexandrova, 2017). Influenced by Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, positive psychology has produced an extensive literature on human flourishing. Going beyond hedonism, eudaimonic psychologists propose more comprehensive ways of assessing an individual's well-being, extending beyond subjective measures of happiness (Ryff & Singer, 2006). Keyes highlighted the significance of social well-being, emphasizing an individual's satisfaction with their cultural and

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social environment (Keyes, 2007). According to the model of Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA), human flourishing is defined by five elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (Seligman, 2011). Moreover, Huppert and So (2013) ranked the flourishing levels of adults from 23 European countries, defining flourishing as a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively characterized by mental wellness and positive life assessment (Huppert & So, 2013).

The Aristotelian assertion that moral virtues constitute essential components of a eudaimonic existence is broadly acknowledged, and numerous neo-Aristotelian philosophers have underscored this argument in recent years (Badhwar, 2014; Kristjánsson, 2020; MacIntyre, 2007). Based on these considerations, VanderWeele proposed five domains of human flourishing: (i) happiness and life satisfaction, (ii) physical and mental health, (iii) meaning and purpose, (iv) character and virtues, and (v) close social relationships. Based on VanderWeele 's conceptual model, a Flourishing Index and a Secure Flourish Index were developed to assess flourishing, with the latter incorporating an additional domain of financial and material stability (Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2019).

Flourishing is a multifaceted concept (VanderWeele & Johnson, 2025a). Broadly speaking, it has been defined as "a state in which all aspects of a person's life are good" (VanderWeele, 2017a, p. 8149). Nevertheless, it remains challenging to discern the fundamental components of flourishing and to differentiate them from other factors that also exert considerable influence on well-being. This elucidates the plethora of metrics suggested for assessing flourishing. Beyond the discussion of the various components of flourishing, population levels of flourishing may be influenced by numerous demographic, social, economic, and other factors (VanderWeele & Johnson, 2025b).

Among various social determinants of well-being, recent research has started to examine the influence of religious practice on individual flourishing. Emerging empirical studies have shown that attending religious services is positively associated with multiple domains of flourishing, including happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, a sense of meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships (VanderWeele, 2017b). However, given the complex and nuanced relationship between religion and flourishing, future studies should explore how the dynamics may vary across cultural and religious contexts (Wormley et al., 2023).

The Global Flourishing Study (GFS) was designed to broaden the research on flourishing across diverse group of cultures. This cross-cultural research initiative spans 22 countries, covering a diverse array of cultural heritages, political systems, and levels of economic development. It collects data on various indicators and determinants of flourishing, while taking into account the diverse cultural perspectives on flourishing (Case et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2024).

Prior to the release of the GFS data, Case and colleagues (2023) compared the 22 countries included in the GFS, using a set of flourishing proxies they compiled from the Gallup World Poll, such as life satisfaction, Daily Emotions, Quality of Life, Climate and Environment, GCF Population, GCF Economics, GCF Health, GCF Education, and GCF Culture/Society. Their preliminary analysis showed that, across most indicators of flourishing, Argentina held an intermediate position with respect to the 22 countries considered.

1.1 Previous research on flourishing in Argentina

Research concerning human flourishing in Argentina commenced over a decade ago. Motivated by Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, the initial investigations concentrated on the economics of flourishing, aiming to extend beyond the economics of happiness (Crespo & Mesurado, 2015). In the country, empirical studies were based on the conceptualization of Keyes (2002), who describes a flourishing life as the optimal state of mental health characterized by high levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. According to Keyes, mental health can be understood as a continuum ranging from mental illness to flourishing. Between mental illness and flourishing, two intermediate states can be identified: (1) languishing mental health—characterized by a lack of well-being, purpose, and life satisfaction, along with a sense of emptiness or stagnation—and (2) moderate mental health, which represents a middle level of mental well-being.

Based on Keyes's conceptual framework, a 12-item Multidimensional Flourishing Scale, which encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, was developed and validated in Argentina, as well as in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain (Mesurado et al., 2018). Several studies have suggested good internal consistency reliability for both the overall scale and each corresponding subscale across these six nations. Furthermore, the instrument has been utilized in India, where it similarly exhibited high levels of validity and internal consistency (Chhajer et al., 2024). A previous Indian study also confirmed the scale's multidimensional structure, comprising three distinct dimensions: social, psychological, and emotional well-being (Saxena & Banerjee, 2021).

Investigations to date have indicated that 29% of Argentine adolescents reported flourishing in life (Rizzo & Gongora, 2022). Moreover, a study by Góngora and Castro Solano (2017) revealed that while only 6% of Argentine adults experienced languishing mental health, about 40% reported flourishing. These findings contrast with results from other countries. For example, only 8% of South Koreans and 18% of Americans reported flourishing, whereas a significantly higher percentage (40%, similar to Argentina) was reported among Chinese adults (Keyes, 2013). In addition, a prior study suggested that the flourishing levels of Argentine adults did not differ by gender, age, educational level, or whether the adults had children (Góngora & Solano, 2017). This same study also indicated that pathological personality traits (e.g., negative affect, detachment, disinhibition, and psychoticism) among non-clinical participants were negatively associated with domains of flourishing including emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Additionally, recent national-level research examined long-term trends (2010-2024) in subjective wellbeing and deprivation across socioeconomic groups in Argentina (Rodriguez Espinola et al., 2025).

Another study among emerging adults found that those who chose to pursue a university degree for altruistic reasons—such as selflessly helping others—also exhibited higher levels of psychological and social well-being, reflecting more eudaimonic dimensions of flourishing (Bálsamo et al., 2022). Similarly, Argentinean adults who indicate they work with a sense of calling (considering work an essential aspect of their life and being intrinsically motivated) reported greater emotional, psychological, and social well-being than those who work for external rewards (Mesurado et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, it is striking that the impact of intellectual virtues on human flourishing has received limited attention in contemporary research, despite their central role in the classical concept of eudaimonia. To address this knowledge gap, a scale was developed in Argentina to comprehensively assess intellectual virtues. Studies using this scale have indicated that

intellectual virtues are moderately associated with various dimensions of flourishing, particularly social and psychological well-being, with a weaker association to emotional well-being (Mesurado & Vanney, 2024). Other research investigated the role of intellectual character and honesty in youth flourishing using a hybrid structural equation model to test a proposed theoretical model (Mesurado & Vanney, 2025). A longitudinal study is also currently underway to study the causal relationships among the constructs in this model.[1]

1.2 Argentina in context

Argentina is a South American federal democratic republic with a population of almost 46 million according to the latest census in 2022[2], and a GDP per capita of US $14,024 in 2023[3]. The country gained independence from Spain in 1810, and until 1880, it experienced internal and external conflicts. Between 1880 and 1930, there was a period of stability in which the political system transitioned from a restricted to a real democracy. This political stability coincided with a period characterized by significant growth in agricultural exports, increased foreign investment, and substantial immigration, predominantly from Europe. These factors contributed to a notable expansion of the population and the economy. Although this period of prosperity later proved to be exceptional, it remained engraved in culture as evidence of an economic potential that Argentine society would henceforth never manage to realize (Gerchunoff & Hora, 2021).

The Great Depression and the retraction of global commerce interrupted the economic expansion of Argentina and initiated a new period of political instability, which included six coups d'état between 1930 and 1983. A particularly significant event was the military government of 1943, which brought General Juan Domingo Perón to the Secretariat of Labor. Perón mobilized the labor movement through state intervention and established a system of Labor Populism (Collier & Collier, 2002), eventually leading to conflict with a substantial segment of the Argentine elite, including factions of the military and the Catholic Church. In 1955, during his second term, Perón was overthrown and exiled, while his political party was prohibited from participating in elections until 1973, when Perón returned to power and remained in office until his death one year later. The 1970s were characterized by leftist guerrilla insurgence and state repression, culminating in the military dictatorship of 1976-1983, which involved *desaparecidos* and a war with Great Britain.

After 1983, Argentina consolidated its democratic regime. Today, it is one of the countries in the region where democracy is most valued (Latinobarómetro, 2024). However, the country has been unable to stabilize its economy. After two episodes of hyperinflation (1989 and 1990), Argentina undertook market reforms that brought low inflation and monetary stability at the cost of high unemployment. These reforms were reversed after a political, social, and economic crisis brought down the government of President Fernando de la Rúa in 2001. The economic model implemented in 2003 has been characterized by some as a left-wing populist machine (Levitsky & Roberts, 2011) and ended in 2023 with a crisis of "stagflation," a combination of stagnation and high inflation. According to Statista, the adjusted GDP per capita in 2013 was US$14,488, US$465

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[1] Cf. the JTF-founded project "Is a virtuous intellectual character a cause of human flourishing? An empirical investigation" (ID #63242).

[2] Source: Indec. https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-2-41-165

[3] Source: Statista. https://es.statista.com

higher than in 2023, while the inflation rate in 2023 was 211.4%. As a result, an outsider of the political system, the economist Javier Milei, was elected president in December of 2024 after proposing a return to a less-regulated market economy.

Economic deterioration had a social correlation: The crime rate increased from 1,484 incidents against individuals and property in 1991 to 3,298 in 2018 (Kessler & Bruno, 2018), which was the last year in which the National Victimization Survey results were published. Most of these crimes are geographically concentrated in two areas: Rosario, a city where violent drug gangs operate, and the Buenos Aires conurbation, a highly complex area where 29% of Argentina's total population and 40% of its poor population live. Nevertheless, Argentina is the country with the second lowest homicide rate in Latin America (Bergman et al., 2023) , and its relations with its neighboring countries have experienced an extended period of peace. Since the 1980s, there have been no significant instances that suggest the emergence of international conflicts.

In terms of education, Argentina demonstrates high levels of enrollment in primary and secondary schools. According to the 2022 census, 27% of adults over 18 have completed eight years of schooling, 52% have completed between nine and fifteen years, and 20% have completed more than sixteen years of formal education. Indeed, the proportion of individuals with a completed secondary education has increased since the enactment of the law N°26.206 in 2006 that made secondary schooling mandatory: 35.4% of the population aged 25–29 has completed secondary education, compared to 25.6% among those aged 30–54 and 18.2% among those aged 55 and older.

According to the non-governmental organization *Argentinos por la Educación*, in 2022, Argentina boasts a high school attendance rate of 97% among 15-year-olds, ranking second in Latin America, only behind Chile at 98%. However, despite the widespread and free access to education, the quality of the education varies considerably due to significant regional disparities—Argentina has a federal education system managed by provinces with varied socioeconomic conditions—and the increasing prevalence of high-quality private education in the 21st century (Kaplan & Piovani, 2018; Pérez Sosto & Romero, 2025).

Regarding religion, 81% of Argentinians reporting being religious (77.3 % are Christians), but religiosity has decreased from 88% in 2008, with a particularly notable decrease among the Catholic population (76.5% in 2008 and 62% in 2019). However, in a similar trend to Brazil's, Evangelicals have grown from 9% in 2008 to 15.3% in 2019 (Mallimaci et al., 2019). The survey carried out by Mallimaci and collaborators in 2019 is the latest data available on the country's religious composition. According to their report, the current percentage of non-religious people is 18.9%. Of the total number of non-religious people, 51.5% claim no religious affiliation (9.7% of the general population), 31.7% are atheists (6% of the general population), and 16.7% are agnostics (3.2% of the general population).

The Catholic Church in Argentina plays an important institutional role. The Argentine liberal elite initiated a secularization process inspired by the French idea of *laicité* between 1880 and 1905, but this project remained unfinished (Asúa, 2022). Its greatest effect occurred in the removal of the Church from functions that the State began to perform, such as civil registration, education, and scientific research, areas where anti-religious narratives still predominate (Fitz Herbert et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the Catholic Church has continued to be a significant public actor. The National Constitution recognizes the freedom of religion while simultaneously affirming the prominence of Roman Catholic Apostolic worship. Argentine political parties often employ

Catholic symbols and rhetoric (Mallimaci, 2016). Furthermore, in a context characterized by a rising incidence of poverty, the Church serves as an intermediary between the State and the provision of public services while also acting as a network of material and social support in the most marginalized sectors (Auyero, 2001, pp. 80–118). Indeed, according to the World Values Survey, the Catholic Church remains one of the few institutions that has sustained the trust of a majority of Argentinians from 1984 to the present (Carballo, 2020).

1.3 The present study

Using GFS Wave 1 data, this paper compared the levels of flourishing among Argentinian participants with the average flourishing levels pooled across all 22 participating countries in GFS. Flourishing was assessed with The Secure Flourish Index, a broad measure of multidimensional well-being (VanderWeele, 2017a).

Numerous drivers shape individuals' levels of well-being, such as climate, standard of living, social conflicts, religion, culture, and education. These environmental elements, unique to each country, can have a profound impact on individual well-being, either positively or negatively. Thus, as pointed out by Case et al. (2023), the GFS would allow for the analysis of "potential trade-offs among drivers or domains of flourishing" (p. 2).

Among the set of demographic factors affecting well-being, this article examines specifically the influence of religiosity on the flourishing of the Argentine population. Argentina is characterized by the absence of religious conflicts, with most of its citizens identifying as Catholic. While almost 20% of the population is non-religious—comprising individuals who are not affiliated with any religion, agnostic, or atheist—Catholicism continues to significantly shape the cultural landscape of the country. The existence of merely two predominant religious groups within the nation—Christians and non-believers—renders Argentina an intriguing locale for the examination of Christianity's influence on individual flourishing.

Therefore, the subsequent objectives directed the analysis throughout the article:

1. To compare the mean levels of flourishing reported by Argentine adult participants with the means of flourishing pooled across all 22 participating countries in GFS.

2. To analyze whether levels of flourishing on various indicators (including psychological well-being, social well-being, character & prosocial behaviors, physical health & health behaviors, and socioeconomic outcomes) vary between Christian and non-religious adults.

3. To analyze whether levels of flourishing on various indicators vary by frequency of religious service attendance.

2. Method

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 report of the questionnaire development process (Lomas et al., 2025), of which one aspect was a process piloting the items through cognitive interviewing, (Cowden et al., 2024); the Wave 1 codebook (Markham et al., 2024); the survey sampling design for Wave 1 (Padgett et al., 2025); the statistical analyses code

(Padgett et al., 2024); and the analytic methodology for demographic variation analyses for wave 1 (Padgett et al., 2024). The current paper, focusing specifically on Argentina, was pre-registered on October 15, 2024, https://doi.org/10.17605/osf.io/trcf3, as part of a coordinated set of country-specific analyses of demographic correlates of flourishing .

2.1 Data

The GFS is a study involving – in its first wave – 202,898 adult participants from 22 geographically and culturally diverse countries, with the samples weighted to be nationally representative within each country. GFS aims to enhance people's understanding of the distribution and determinants of wellbeing across national and cultural contexts. Wave 1 included the following countries and territories: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, Turkey, UK, and US. 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. In Argentina, data collection started on November 29, 2022, and concluded on November 30, 2023 (Ritter et al., 2024). Four additional waves of panel data on the participants will be collected 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 subjective well-being, health, meaning, character, relationships, and financial stability (VanderWeele, 2017a), plus other demographic, social, economic, political, religious, personality, childhood, community, health, and wellbeing 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; for additional details, see the questionnaire development process report (Lomas et al., 2025).

For the current study, the Argentine sample was utilized. The sample size from Argentina is 6,724 (47% male, 53% female, and 0.3% other genders), and the age range is from 18 to 80 years and older. In terms of marital status, 23% of the participants are married. Those who are separated comprise 6.8%, while 4.8% are divorced. Widowed participants account for 6.0%. The largest group, single and never married, makes up 35% of the participants. Additionally, 23% are living with a domestic partner. Moreover, 35% of the participants have up to 8 years of education. The largest group, comprising 57% of the participants, has between 9 and 15 years of education. Additionally, 9.4% have more than 16 years of education.

Finally, in terms of religious affiliation, 74% of participants identify as Christian. Those with no religious affiliation, including atheists and agnostics, comprise 20% of the respondents. The remaining participants, who belong to various other religions, represent 4.3% of the total.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Flourishing

Twelve items were selected from the 48 multidimensional well-being indicators included in the GFS. The items were chosen from the Secure Flourish Index, which assesses the domains of psychological well-being, social well-being, character and prosocial behaviors, physical health and health behaviors, and socioeconomic factors.

The items *Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Meaning, Purpose,* and *Self-Rated Mental Health* were grouped under the psychological well-being domain of flourishing. *Subjective Social Connectedness* was categorized under social well-being. *Promoting Good* and *Delayed Gratification* fell under *Character & Prosocial Behaviors. Self-Rated Physical Health* was classified within *Physical Health & Health Behaviors.* Finally, *Financial and Material Worry about Expenses* and *Financial and Material Worry about Safety* were organized under *Socioeconomic Outcomes.* Details regarding measurement of the items are presented in the Supplementary Material.

2.2.2 Religiosity

Two items were selected to assess participants' religiosity. First, the participants were asked about their religious affiliation: (1) Christianity, (2) Islam, (3) Hinduism, (4) Buddhism, (5) Judaism, (6) Sikhism, (7) Baha'i, (8) Jainism, (9) Shinto, (10) Taoism, (11) Confucianism, (12) Primal, (13) Animist, or Folk religion, Spiritism, (14) Umbanda, Candombe, and other African-derived religions, (15) Chinese folk/traditional religion, (16) Some other religion or (17) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic. Since most Argentines considered themselves Christian (74%) or not religious (20%), this article focused only on these two groups. See Table 1.

Table 1. *Religious affiliation for Argentinean participants*

Religious affiliation	N = 6,724
Christianity	4,992 (74%)
Islam	9 (0.1%)
Hinduism	6 (<0.1%)
Buddhism	35 (0.5%)
Judaism	40 (0.6%)
Sikhism	0 (<0.1%)
Baha'i	0 (0%)
Jainism	0 (0%)
Shinto	0 (0%)
Taoism	2 (<0.1%)
Confucianism	0 (<0.1%)
Primal, Animist, or Folk religion	19 (0.3%)
Spiritism	0 (0%)
Umbanda, Candomble, and other African-derived religions	0 (0%)
Chinese folk/traditional religion	0 (0%)
Some other religion	156 (2.3%)
No religion/Atheist/Agnostic	1,352 (20%)
(Missing)	111 (1.7%)

Second, participants were asked, "How often do you attend religious services?" The response options were (1) More than once a week, (2) Once a week, (3) One to three times a month, (4) A few times a year, and (5) Never. In this study, we focused on the responses of three groups, which represent the most common frequencies of attendance at religious services among the religious groups considered: (1) More than once a week (7.9%), (2) Once a week (12%), and (3) Never (44%). See Table 2.

Table 2. *Religious affiliation for Argentinean participants*

Religious service attendance	N = 6,724
More than 1/week	532 (7.9%)
1/week	773 (12%)
1-3/month	461 (6.8%)
A few times a year	1,949 (29%)
Never	2,982 (44%)
(Missing)	27 0.4%)

2.3 Analyses

2.3.1 Statistical models

Analyses were aligned with those conducted globally on each outcome (see linked pre-registrations). The statistical methods for these demographic variation analyses consist of: (1) describing the weighted sample characteristics; (2) overall mean/proportion on each outcome; and (3) subgroup means across demographic characteristics for each outcome. All reported outcome means and proportions will be accompanied by complex survey adjusted standard errors and 95% confidence interval. A global p-value from a significance test of differences in means or proportions across demographic categories will be provided, and the reported p-values are a Wald-type tests for complex surveys (Lumley & Scott, 2014; Rao & Scott, 1984). The full set of results for all outcomes described previously will be reported in the online supplement with focal results presented in text.

Additionally, to evaluate the three objectives of this article, we calculated Student's t-tests using the R Studio program. However, these additional analyses, unlike the main analyses, were not preregistered.

2.3.2 Inference criteria

We will present exact p-values and 95% confidence intervals. P-values will correspond to 2-tailed tests for each of our analyses. In our tables, and for ease of reviewing results, we will present multiple p-value cutoffs (both with and without Bonferroni correction for multiple testing) because different investigators often use different threshold standards for interpreting evidence based on current norms in their specific discipline. For analyses presented in the Online Supplement, our Bonferroni correction is 0.05/68 outcomes = $p < 0.0007$.

2.3.3 Missing data and multiple imputation

All missing variables are imputed using multivariate imputation by chained equations, with five imputed datasets generated (Sterne et al., 2009; van Buuren, 2023). The imputation model incorporated the criterion/outcome variable, all demographic characteristics, including race/ethnicity and religious affiliation when available, and sampling weights. The sampling weights were included as a variable in the imputation models to allow for specific variable missingness to be related to probability of study inclusion. To account for variations in the assessment of certain variables across countries (e.g., race/ethnicity and religious affiliation), we conducted the imputation process separately for each country. The within-country imputation approach ensured that the imputation model accurately reflects country-specific contexts and assessment methods.

2.3.4 Accounting for complex sampling design

The GFS used different sampling schemes across countries based on the availability of existing panels and recruitment needs (Ritter et al., 2024). 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 et al., 2025).

3. Results

3.1 Comparison of flourishing levels reported by Argentine participants with pooled average flourishing levels across all 22 participating countries in GFS.

The first objective of this paper is to compare the levels of flourishing reported by Argentine participants with the average levels of flourishing pooled across all 22 countries in GFS. For this comparison, we selected the items that comprise the Secure Flourish Index from the set of indicators of multi-dimensional well-being evaluated in the GFS. Twelve Student t-tests were performed to evaluate each of these 12 items (see Table 3 below). Refer to the supplementary materials for the tables presenting all the indicators evaluated in the GFS.

3.1.1 Psychological wellbeing

In relation to the items addressing psychological well-being, the results indicated that Argentine adults have higher levels of happiness [t (825.8348) = 2.85, $p \leq$ 01], life satisfaction [t (1869.473) = 2.23, $p \leq$ 05], and meaning [t (1337.661) = 3.64, $p \leq$ 001] than the average of the GFS sample.

However, no significant differences were found in relation to purpose and self-rated mental health. That is, Argentine adults presented similar levels of purpose in life to adults in other countries included in the GFS [t (2432.092) = 1.54, p = .12], and the same occurred with self-rated mental health [t (2496.196) = .92, p = .36].

3.1.2 Social wellbeing

Regarding the indicators of social well-being, the results showed that Argentine adults reported higher levels of contentment with their relationships than the average across all countries in the GFS sample [t (760.83) = 2.59, $p \leq$ .01]. However, the reported levels of satisfying relationships were similar to the international average [t (1004.21) = 1.39, p = .08].

Table 3. *Estimated means across multiple domains of flourishing for all participating countries in GFS combined and for Argentina*

Outcome	GFS				Argentina			
	Mean	SE	95% CI	Hetero-geneity (tau)	Mean	SE	95% CI	Standard Deviation
Multidimensional Well-being								
Psychological Well-being								
Happiness	7.00	0.12	(6.76,7.25)	0.58	7.36	0.039	(7.28, 7.43)	2.14
Life Satisfaction	6.85	0.16	(6.54,7.16)	0.74	7.22	0.043	(7.13, 7.30)	2.38
Meaning	7.39	0.14	(7.12,7.66)	0.65	7.92	0.040	(7.84, 8.00)	2.22
Purpose	7.65	0.17	(7.32,7.98)	0.79	7.92	0.040	(7.84, 8.00)	2.33
Self-Rated Mental Health	7.71	0.17	(7.36,8.05)	0.82	7.87	0.039	(7.80, 7.95)	2.16
Social Well-being								
Subjective Social Connectedness	7.55	0.12	(7.30,7.79)	0.58	7.81	0.039	(7.73, 7.88)	2.20
Contentment with Relationships	7.71	0.12	(7.46,7.95)	0.58	8.04	0.043	(7.96, 8.13)	2.37
Satisfying Relationships	7.38	0.13	(7.13,7.63)	0.59	7.57	0.042	(7.49, 7.65)	2.45
Character & Prosocial Behaviors								
Promoting Good	8.01	0.12	(7.77,8.25)	0.57	8.63	0.029	(8.57, 8.68)	1.64
Delayed Gratification	7.45	0.16	(7.14,7.75)	0.74	8.12	0.036	(8.05, 8.18)	2.11
Physical Health & Health Behaviors								
Self-Rated Physical Health	7.21	0.14	(6.93,7.49)	0.67	7.26	0.040	(7.18, 7.33)	2.19
Socioeconomic Outcomes								
Financial and Material Worry about Expenses	5.59	0.22	(5.16,6.02)	1.03	3.96	0.064	(3.83, 4.08)	3.66
Financial and Material Worry about Safety	5.89	0.25	(5.41,6.38)	1.16	3.79	0.064	(3.66, 3.91)	3.73

Note. The Subjective Social Connectedness is obtained from the average of the responses that participants gave to two questions: "I am content with my friendships and relationships" and "My relationships are as satisfying as I would want them to be."

3.1.3 Character & prosocial behaviors

In relation to the items addressing character & prosocial behaviors, the results indicate that Argentine adults present higher levels of promoting good [t (1178.569) = 5.02, $p \leq$ 001] and delayed gratification [t (2255.17) = 4.09, $p \leq$ 001] than the GFS sample.

3.1.4 Physical health & health behaviors

Regarding the indicators addressing physical health & health behaviors, the results indicated that Argentine adults presented similar levels of self-reported physical health to the average across all countries in the GFS sample [t (1337.661) = .34, p = .73].

3.1.5 Socioeconomic outcomes

Finally, concerning the items addressing the socioeconomic outcomes, the results indicate that Argentine adults perceive higher levels of financial and material worry about being able to meet monthly living expenses [t (3237.381) = 7.11, $p \leq 001$] and worry about safety, food, or housing [t (4811.512) = 8.14, $p \leq 001$] than those reported on average by the GFS sample.

3.2 Levels of flourishing between Christian and non-religious adults.

The second objective of this study is to analyze whether flourishing levels vary between Christian and non-religious adults. To this end, we focused only on these two groups (Christian and non-religious) because most Argentine adults are Christian or consider themselves non-religious.

The results indicated that Argentinean Christian adults present higher psychological well-being, social well-being, and virtuous character levels than non-religious adults. Specifically concerning psychological well-being indicators, it was found that Argentinean Christian adults present higher levels of happiness [t=5.81(2122.74), p< .001], life satisfaction [t=6.42(2310.64), p< .001], meaning [t=6.19(2035.29), p< .001], purpose [t=9.69(1816.74), p< .001], and self-rated mental health [t=8.18(1958), p< .001] than non-religious (see Table 4 below).

In relation to the social well-being items, the results indicated that Argentine Christian adults reported higher levels of contentment with their relationships [t=4.52(2037.34), p< .001] and more satisfying relationships [t=4.38(2255.49), p< .001] than non-religious adults (see Table 4).

Furthermore, regarding the character & prosocial behaviors indicator, the results indicated that Christians presented higher levels of promoting good [t=4.32(2020.6), p< .001] and delayed gratification [t=4.54(1944.47), p< .001] than non-religious adults (see Table 4).

However, no significant differences were found in the indicators concerning physical health & health behaviors and socioeconomic outcomes between Christian and non-religious Argentine adults. Both groups of adults presented similar levels of self-rated physical health and financial and material worry (see Table 4).

3.3 Levels of flourishing among adults with different frequencies of religious service attendance

Finally, this paper's third objective is to analyze whether the levels of selected flourishing indicators vary depending on the frequency of religious service attendance among Argentinians. Regarding attendance at religious services among Argentinians, 7.9% of participants attended more than once a week, while 12% attended once a week. Those who never attend make up 44% of participants. The remaining participants, who participate in religious services with varying frequencies, constitute 36.1%. In this study, we examined the differences among the extreme groups of religious service attendance. Specifically, three groups were analyzed: those adults who attend religious services more than once a week, those who do it once a week, and those who do not practice religion.

Table 4. *Levels of flourishing between Christian and non-religious adults*

Outcome	Christianity n = 4,992	No religion/ Atheist/Agnostic n = 1,352	t (df) p-value
Multidimensional Well-being			
Psychological Well-being			
Happiness	7.46 (7.38,7.55)	6.91 (6.74,7.07)	t=5.81(2122.74), p< .001
Life Satisfaction	7.36 (7.26,7.46)	6.70 (6.52,6.87)	t=6.42(2310.64), p< .001
Meaning	8.05 (7.96,8.14)	7.40 (7.21,7.58)	t=6.19(2035.29), p< .001
Purpose	8.15 (8.06,8.23)	7.03 (6.82,7.24)	t=9.69(1816.74), p< .001
Self-Rated Mental Health	8.05 (7.97,8.14)	7.20 (7.02,7.39)	t=8.18(1958), p< .001
Social Well-being			
Subjective Social Connectedness	7.92 (7.83,8.00)	7.44 (7.26,7.61)	t=4.84(2033), p< .001
Contentment with Relationships	8.16 (8.07, 8.26)	7.66 (7.47,7.86)	t=4.52(2037.34), p< .001
Satisfying Relationships	7.67 (7.57,7.77)	7.21 (7.03,7.39)	t=4.38(2255.49), p< .001
Character & Prosocial Behaviors			
Promoting Good	8.70 (8.63,8.76)	8.37 (8.24,8.51)	t=4.32(2020.6), p< .001
Delayed Gratification	8.21 (8.14,8.29)	7.79 (7.62,7.95)	t=4.54(1944.47), p< .001
Physical Health & Health Behaviors			
Self-Rated Physical Health	7.28 (7.20,7.37)	7.14 (6.97,7.31)	t=1.44(2075.82), p = .15
Socioeconomic Outcomes			
Financial and Material Worry about Expenses	3.89 (3.74,4.04)	4.11 (3.84,4.37)	t=-1.42(2291.72), p = .16
Financial and Material Worry about Safety	3.70 (3.55,3.85)	3.99 (3.72,4.26)	t=-1.84(2255.49), p = .07

The results showed statistically significant differences in the various indicators of flourishing among adults with varying frequencies of religious practice. Concerning psychological well-being indicators, the results indicate that Argentine adults who attend religious services more than once a week or once a week have higher levels of psychological well-being than those who do not. Specifically, those who attend religious services more than once a week or once a week have higher levels of happiness [>1/week vs. never t=11.32(834.52), p< .001; 1/week vs. never t=4.72(1168.66), p< .001], life satisfaction [>1/week vs. never t=10.12(767.25), p< .001; 1/week vs. never t=5.82(1244.84), p<.001], meaning [>1/week vs. never t=10(1014.71), p< .001; 1/week vs. never t=5.99(1493.12), p< .001], purpose [>1/week vs. never t=15.40(1157.4), p< .001; 1/week vs. never t=6.59(1224.31), p< .001], and self-rated mental health [>1/week vs never t=7.58(753.95), p< .001; 1/week vs. never t=5.47(1250.42), p< .001] than those who do not practice their faith or are not believers. The same pattern is observed among those who practice their religion more than once a week and those who practice once a week. Moreover, those who attend religious services more than once a week present higher levels of psychological well-being in all its elements than those who do it once a week (see Table 5 below).

Table 5. *Levels of flourishing between different frequencies of religious service attendance in Argentina*

Outcome	>1/week n = 532 mean (95% CI)	1/week n= 773 mean (95% CI)	Never n= 2,982 mean (95% CI)	>1/week vs never t (df) p-value	1/week vs never t (df) p-value	>1/week vs 1/week t (df) p-value
Multidimensional Well-being						
Psychological Well-being						
Happiness	8.48 (8.25,8.70)	7.65 (7.41,7.88)	7.02 (6.91,7.14)	t=11.32 (834.52), p< .001	t=4.72 (1168.66), p< .001	t=5 (1276.54), p <.001
Life Satisfaction	8.44 (8.17,8.72)	7.67 (7.43,7.90)	6.88 (6.75,7.00)	t=10.12 (767.25), p< .001	t=5.82 (1244.84), p< .001	t=4.17 (1263.08), p <.001
Meaning	8.81 (8.61,9.02)	8.30 (8.10,8.50)	7.57 (7.44,7.70)	t=10 (1014.71), p< .001	t=5.99 (1493.12), p< .001	t=3.49 (1246.28), p <.001
Purpose	9.17 (8.99,9.34)	8.39 (8.15,8.63)	7.48 (7.35,7.60)	t=15.40 (1157.4), p< .001	t=6.59 (1224.31), p< .001	t=5.15 (1283.6), p <.001
Self-Rated Mental Health	8.65 (8.39,8.91)	8.23 (8.01,8.44)	7.55 (7.43,7.66)	t=7.58 (753.95), p< .001	t=5.47 (1250.42), p< .001	t=2.44 (1139.1), p <.01
Social Well-being						
Subjective Social Connectedness	8.59 (8.34,8.84)	8.09 (7.87,8.30)	7.56 (7.44,7.67)	t=7.34 (773.33), p< .001	t=4.26 (1250.42), p< .001	t=2.97 (1167.61), p <.001
Contentment with Relationships	8.85 (8.57,9.12)	8.35 (8.12,8.58)	7.79 (7.66,7.92)	t=6.83 (787.84), p< .001	t=4.15 (1309.44), p< .001	t=2.73 (1147.50), p <.01
Satisfying Relationships	8.34 (8.03,8.65)	7.82 (7.57,8.07)	7.33 (7.20,7.45)	t=5.92 (714.35), p< .001	t=3.44 (1187.04), p< .001	t=2.56 (1120.34), p <.01
Character & Prosocial Behaviors						
Promoting Good	9.24 (9.09,9.39)	8.67 (8.50,8.85)	8.48 (8.40,8.57)	t=8.52 (959.98), p< .001	t=1.89 (1212.41), p = .06	t=4.85 (1301.62), p <.001

Outcome	>1/week n = 532 mean (95% CI)	1/week n= 773 mean (95% CI)	Never n= 2,982 mean (95% CI)	>1/week vs never t (df) p-value	1/week vs never t (df) p-value	>1/week vs 1/week t (df) p-value
Delayed Gratification	8.82 (8.57,9.06)	8.19 (7.98,8.40)	7.94 (7.84,8.04)	t=6.52 (719.11), p< .001	t=2.11 (1146.54), p< .05	t=3.83 (1165.24), p <.001
Physical Health & Health Behaviors						
Self-Rated Physical Health	7.80 (7.51,8.08)	7.45 (7.23,7.67)	7.12 (7.01,7.24)	t=4.34 (714.61), p< .001	t=2.60 (1227.79), p< .01	t=1.90 (1086.91), p = .06
Socioeconomic Outcomes						
Financial and Material Worry about Expenses	4.52 (4.01,5.02)	4.39 (3.99,4.79)	3.81 (3.63,3.99)	t=2.60 (672.56), p< .001	t=2.59 (1104.59), p< .01	t=.40 (1106.68), p = .69
Financial and Material Worry about Safety	4.42 (3.91,4.93)	3.97 (3.57,4.37)	3.75 (3.56,3.93)	t=2.42 (677.85), p< .05	t=.98 (1124.27), p = .33	t=1.36 (1099.14), p = .17

In relation to the social well-being items, Argentine adults who practice their religion more than once a week or once a week have higher levels of social well-being than those who do not practice their religion or lack faith. Specifically, they present higher levels of contentment with their relationships [>1/week vs never *t*=6.83(787.84), *p*< .001; 1/week vs. never *t*=4.15(1309.44), *p*< .001] than adults who are not religious. Likewise, those who attend religious services more than once a week present higher levels of contentment with their relationships than those who do it once a week [*t*=2.73 (1147.50), *p*< .01]. In addition, they present higher levels of satisfying relationships [>1/week vs never *t*=5.92(714.35), *p*< .001; 1/week vs. never *t*=3.44(1187.04), *p*< .001] than adults who are not religious. Likewise, those who attend religious services more than once a week present higher levels of satisfying relationships than those who do it once a week [*t*=2.56 (1120.34), *p*< .01].

Regarding the character & prosocial behaviors indicators, we found that Argentine adults who attend religious services more than once a week present higher levels of promoting good than those who practice once a week [*t*=8.52(959.98), *p*< .001] or those who never do so [*t*=4.85 (1301.62), *p* <.001]. No differences were found between those who attend religious services once a week and those who do not practice or lack faith. In addition, those who practice more than once a week and those who attend religious services once a week have higher levels of delayed gratification than those who do not [>1/week vs never *t*=6.52(719.11), *p*< .001; 1/week vs. never *t*=2.11(1146.54), *p*< .05]. Likewise, those who attend religious services more than once a week have higher levels of delayed gratification than those who do it once a week [*t*=3.83 (1165.24), *p* <.001].

In relation to the indicators of physical health & health behaviors, Argentine adults who attend religious services more than once a week or once a week present higher levels of self-rated physical health than adults who do not practice their faith or are not believers [>1/week vs. never *t*=4.34(714.61), *p*< .001; 1/week vs never *t*=2.60(1227.79), *p*< .01]. No self-rated physical health differences were found between those who attend religious services more than once and once a week.

Finally, in relation to the items describing socioeconomic outcomes, adults who attend religious services more than once a week or once a week have fewer financial and material worries regarding everyday monthly expenses than those who do not practice their religion or lack faith [>1/week vs never *t*=2.60(672.56), *p*< .001; 1/week vs never *t*=2.59(1104.59), *p*< .01]. Those who practice their religion more than once a week have similar levels of financial and material concern about meeting regular monthly living expenses as those who attend religious services once a week. Moreover, adults who practice their religion more than once a week have lower levels of worry about safety, food, or housing than those who are not religious [*t*=2.42(677.85), *p*< .05]. No significant differences were found among the other groups.

4. Discussion

The findings of this research represent a substantial contribution to the studies on flourishing conducted in Argentina, as they facilitate the integration of local results within a more global contextual framework. In this sense, the results of the first wave of the GFS show that Argentines' flourishing is above the GFS average in the domains of psychological well-being (3 out of 5 indicators above average), social well-being (1 out of 2), and character and prosocial behaviors (2 out of 2); at an average level in physical health (1 out of 1); and below average in socioeconomic outcomes (2 out of 2).

An initial examination of these findings indicates that Argentinians exhibit a median level of flourishing in several domains, notwithstanding Argentine adults' perception of elevated concerns regarding their financial and material capacity to cover monthly living expenses. The context in which the data was taken makes these results particularly striking. In 2022, Argentinians were not only suffering the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in a country where the lockdown lasted from March 2020 to mid-2021, but the economy was also in such a crisis that it led to the resignation of Economy Minister Martín Guzmán in July. In addition, President Alberto Fernández registered the lowest approval indicators since the return of democracy in 1983, with a negative rating of around 75%. Considering the arduous socioeconomic conditions that prevailed in 2022 and 2023, it is pertinent to inquire into the factors that contributed to the notable wellbeing of Argentines under such unfavorable circumstances. We hypothesized that, although achieving a minimum level of economic and financial well-being is a prerequisite for flourishing, its relation to flourishing is not one-to-one. The case of Argentina would seem to support this hypothesis with higher levels of flourishing on most self-report measures than the GFS average, but lower of financial and material stability. Furthermore, it would also be interesting to investigate how a more stable economic environment in Argentina could increase the flourishing of Argentinians.

The GFS serves as an exemplary framework for understanding various indicators of flourishing. The present paper and research focuses on one such driver: religion. In line with previous research indicating a correlation between religion and flourishing (VanderWeele,

2017b), the statistical analysis shows that the high level of religiosity that characterizes Argentina may be an explanatory variable for the high level of flourishing since not only religious groups showed more flourishing than the non-religious in psychological well-being, social well-being, and character and virtues dimension, but also practitioners showed higher levels than non-practitioners in psychological and social well-being. Interestingly, practitioners also reported fewer financial and material worries.

As previous studies have shown, religion can positively impact several aspects of flourishing. The sense of divine involvement promoted by Christianity is positively associated with finding meaning in life (Jung, 2015); religious beliefs and positive emotions are related to positive feedback spirals (Van Cappellen et al., 2021); religion promotes healthier lifestyles (Wormley et al., 2023); and religious practice provides a sense of belonging and promotes the integration in social networks that produces an increase in life satisfaction (Chen et al., 2021; Lim & Putnam, 2010).

These mechanisms probably play a role in the connection between religiosity and flourishing in Argentina, but we want to propose more specific explanations linked to the Argentine context. Based on our results, we also speculate that religious worldviews may reduce the influence of material worries on other aspects of flourishing. At the cognitive level, religious beliefs and practices may be a source of hope and a way of giving sense to suffering that may reduce material worries (Banerjee & Bloom, 2014). It is also possible that religiosity, focusing on non-materialistic values, reduces the relevance of the material context and, thus, the worries they may carry. In fact, as materialistic values tend to reduce happiness (Kasser, 2002; Van Boven, 2005), this values approach may also explain the correlation between religiosity and flourishing. How about something like this:

For the religious, life is often seen as a prelude to something greater — a realm beyond, where ultimate well-being awaits. For non-believers, by contrast, this life is the only one, and thus a rational approach to living on this view might be to savor "as much of what the world has to offer as possible and making use of as many of its possibilities and offerings as one can" (Rosa & Trejo-Mathys, 2015, p. 182). Internet and social media have greatly expanded the common knowledge about the many possibilities society offers, but to take advantage of them, time and money are needed, two resources that have become scarcer in Argentina as the economic situation deteriorated. For non-religious individuals in places like Argentina, the belief in a single, finite life may lead to anxiety when they realize that the only life they believe in is far too distant from the possibilities that the contemporary world offers.

However, this latter interpretation may not be applicable to all religious groups. Certain Evangelical groups, such as Pentecostals, consider material success a sign of salvation (Cartledge, 2021). If religion provides a transcendent meaning and purpose, the fact that these meanings are directly linked to material well-being cannot be trivial. Between certain non-Catholic Christians, which, as we have mentioned, is a growing population in Argentina, a bad economic situation can be doubly frustrating: not only do they feel deprived in this life, but they may also consider it a sign of condemnation in the afterlife. Within this worldview, we should expect a stronger correlation between financial security and other dimensions of flourishing. Nevertheless, Evangelicals in Latin America have also diverted individuals from poorer areas away from addiction and crime and provided them with prospects for social advancement. We have not been

able to make these subtle distinctions with the data from this study, but they are interesting aspects for further research.

This last observation leads us to delve into the characteristics of Catholicism, the majority religion in Argentina. Despite the declining share of adherents, Catholicism continues to exert a significant institutional, political, social, and cultural influence, resembling what some scholars have observed in Italy.(Ecklund et al., 2019). Catholic symbolism is present in the architecture of all major cities; the clergy actively participates in public discussions, and many Catholic institutions provide basic social services, such as education and social care, in places where the State has no presence. One piece of data illustrates this influence: the public opinion company *Giacobbe y Asociados* carries out an annual study of influencers in Argentina which, in 2024, included three Catholic leaders among the 50 most important influencers in the country: Pope Francis (12th place), Jesus (18th place) and John Paul II (33rd place).[4]

In addition to the general impact of religiosity, Catholicism has aspects that may have a more specific effect on the flourishing indicators related to social well-being. Similar to the entire Christian tradition, Catholicism considers charity the highest theological virtue. However, Catholic doctrine places special emphasis on the relevance of the social aspects of religion. First, at least since the late 19th century, the Catholic Church has focused on the concept of social justice, which promotes the equitable distribution of goods and opportunities in society (Francis, 2015; John Paul II, 1991; Leo XIII, 1891; Paul VI, 1967; Pio XI, 1931). Second, Catholics consecrate marriage as sacred, so there is an essential doctrinal weight on the importance of family life. Third, Catholics should participate in the Mass at least once a week, on Saturday evenings or Sundays. In other words, their faith requires regular engagement with the local network of Catholics.

Several hypotheses can be put forward about how these doctrines impact flourishing. The emphasis on charity and social justice could explain why the Christians who practice more than once a week report more character & prosocial behavior than those who practice less or not at all and those who are non-religious. The importance of weekly collective rituals would also explain why practitioners report higher levels of social connectedness. They may also explain why practitioners report lower material anxieties: since the practice favors involvement in religious social networks, these may provide more material opportunities and social support. With more trusting relationships, practitioners may be more likely to receive job offers. Also, given the Church's social role in Argentina and its collaboration with the State in providing social services to low-income populations, religious people may be better informed about how, when, and where they can receive material assistance from the State or charitable organizations. In contexts of high inflation, this information may be a relevant advantage, especially for low-income populations, offering greater hope for making ends meet.

We might even speculate a more generalized influence of the social aspects of a Catholic culture. Qualitative studies have shown that many nonreligious in Argentina -and in Mexico, where there is also a Catholic majority- feel culturally Catholic and celebrate Christmas and/or accompany friends and family in religious rituals, not because they share the transcendent meaning of the celebration, but because they value how these rituals bring friends and family

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[4] See at https://noticias.perfil.com/noticias/informacion-general/encuesta-2024-las-100-personalidades-masinfluyentes-de-argentina.phtml (last accessed 01/08/2024).

together (Mora Duro & Fitz Herbert, 2024). This shows that the nonreligious may obtain social connectedness from religion despite not sharing religious beliefs. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that Argentines present higher levels of subjective social connectedness than the average level across countries. Thus, it could be thought that the social culture of Catholicism has latent effects even among the non-religious (Merton, 2002, p. 126). However, we should note that our analysis shows that even if this were the case, the practice of religion remains relevant. Even if nonreligious people can flourish in a Catholic context, religious practitioners flourish more.

In summary, our study shows that the flourishing level of Argentine adults is above the pooled average across all participating countries in GFS in the domains of psychological well-being, social well-being, and character and prosocial behavior. We also speculate that the below-average levels of flourishing in socioeconomic outcomes may be mitigated by other factors, including the absence of severe climates, natural disasters, wars, or social conflicts; the opportunities afforded by the nation for complimentary access to education and the public health system; the chance to reside close to nature; and, in a relevant way, religion. This final factor was examined in detail within the paper, revealing that the level of flourishing indicators is higher among Christian Argentinian adults than among their non-religious counterparts in similar demographic circumstances. Moreover, a greater frequency of attendance at religious services is also correlated with higher levels of flourishing.

5. Limitations and further studies

The sample considered in this study has limitations for describing Argentina's overall population. Compared with the 2022 population census data, the segment of the population with the lowest level of education is notably over-represented and the segment with the highest level of education is considerably sub-represented in the sample, introducing a possible bias in the responses. A cross-national analysis of the educational attainment from Wave 1 of the GFS also noted a prominent discrepancy between the estimation of educational attainment from the GFS and OECDE in the Argentina data (Padgett et al., forthcoming). Moreover, an analysis at the subnational level considering the geographical distribution of participants is recommended. Argentina showcases diverse climates, productive models, cultures, and political framework regimes. For example, while some provinces are politically classified as democratic, others are semi-authoritarian (Gervasoni, 2010). This diversity is also notable in religiosity. Catholicism is the majority religion throughout the country; still, the country's north is significantly more religious than the south, while the center occupies an intermediate position (Mallimaci et al., 2019). To ensure that the results accurately reflect the country's population, it is essential to maintain a geographical distribution of participants that corresponds proportionately to the population of various regions within the country.

The results also present intriguing avenues for future research. Flourishing is a complex notion involving a multiplicity of interrelated aspects (Höltge et al., 2022). This paper considered only the indicators of the Secure Flourishing Index (VanderWeele, 2017a) and analyzed them individually to describe flourishing. However, overall flourishing has not been examined here as a composite construct. Future studies must delve deeper into the conceptualization of flourishing to determine which elements are their essential constituents and which are predictors. The numerous indicators included in the longitudinal Global Flourishing Study beyond the flourishing index, conducted across 22 countries, will help, on one hand, "to identify those

aspects of flourishing which are in fact held in common [in different cultures], to focus on those together" (VanderWeele et al., 2023, p. 6) and, on the other hand, to recognize relevant predictors of flourishing, as "environments matter for flourishing, and hostile environments are likely to impede opportunities to flourish" (Willen et al., 2025, p. 2). Moreover, further research could potentially further supplement the Secure Flourish Index. It would be advisable to conduct empirical evaluations to ascertain their relations, e.g. financial and material stability, could act as relevant determinant of flourishing instead of being considered a component (VanderWeele et al., 2025). Furthermore, including a minimum of three items within each domain would allow for evaluating factor loadings to facilitate a more thorough evaluation of the instrument's internal structure and ensure enhanced reliability.

Regarding Argentina, the future findings of the longitudinal study concerning indicators of flourishing at this critical country juncture are particularly intriguing, as the nation is currently navigating a pivotal period. The prevailing material concerns identified in this study could be contextual to a certain extent and are likely linked to the nation's economic performance over the preceding decades. Argentinians have not only endured economic stagnation but have also faced increasingly high inflation rates, escalating from 3.7% annually in 2003 to 31.9% in 2013, and surging to 211.4% in 2023. These heightened inflation rates have substantially impacted everyone's daily life. However, it is unclear whether material and financial concerns will remain relevant in the coming years, as 2024 saw a sharp and progressive decline in inflation. Public opinion polls show that fewer people now mention inflation as a significant concern, and most economic forecasts predict growth for the country in 2025. If these expectations are confirmed, economic indicators will improve, providing an excellent opportunity to analyze the evolution of the impact of financial and material well-being on flourishing. Better economic conditions may reduce worries, but as Durkheim (1951) indicated more than a century ago, the effect of economic growth on personal well-being is mediated by expectations. An improvement in the national economy may also create unrealistic expectations concerning individual progress, which could subsequently result in adverse sentiments.

Finally, a more thorough analysis of the various Christian denominations in Argentina could be performed. As previously indicated, the population of evangelical Christians is increasing, and diverse interpretations may exist regarding the relationship between social welfare and salvation among Christian groups, which could influence the association between financial stability and overall flourishing. Furthermore, despite the acknowledged correlation between religiosity and flourishing, considerable speculation persists regarding the mechanisms that elucidate this relationship. Qualitative research, which remains relatively sparse in this domain, possesses the potential to make significant contributions to the enhancement of existing hypotheses. Additionally, it is imperative to deepen our understanding of why nonreligious individuals reported lower levels of flourishing, as well as to explore how they may attain flourishing through methods compatible with their belief systems.

6. Conclusion

Based on the GFS Wave 1 data, this paper shows that the flourishing level of Argentine adults involved in the study is above the GFS means in psychological well-being, social well-being, and character & prosocial behavior but below average in socioeconomic outputs. Given that the data was collected during a period of notable economic adversity in the country, the reported levels

of flourishing in psychological well-being, social connectedness, and character and prosocial behavior are above our expectation.

The findings constitute a significant contribution to the research pertaining to flourishing undertaken in Argentina, as they facilitate the incorporation of local outcomes within a global contextual framework. The research presents interesting avenues for future investigation. The results also suggest the importance of population-level monitoring of flourishing in Argentina, as the country undergoes significant transformation.

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CEV, BM, and ALFH wrote the manuscript with contributions from TL, RNP, BC, RGC, YC, BRJ, and TJV. BM and RNP provided the code for data analysis and conducted the analysis. BRJ and TJV acquired funding, coordinated data collection, participated in survey design, supervised the development of the analytic code, and contributed to the review and editing of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest statement

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

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

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted copy editing to enhance readability and to ensure the text is free of grammatical and spelling errors. The authors 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).

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Appendix

Table A1. *GFS Summary across all countries and outcomes*

Outcome	Mean	SE	95% CI	Heterogeneity (tau)
Thematic Area 1: Multidimensional Well-being				
Psychological Well-being				
Happiness	7.00	0.12	(6.76,7.25)	0.58
Life Satisfaction	6.85	0.16	(6.54,7.16)	0.74
Present Life Evaluation	6.34	0.17	(6.01,6.67)	0.79
Future Life Evaluation	7.49	0.14	(7.21,7.77)	0.67
Optimism	8.11	0.16	(7.79,8.43)	0.76
Freedom	7.80	0.13	(7.55,8.06)	0.61
Peace	0.71	0.02	(0.67,0.76)	0.11
Balance in Life	0.69	0.02	(0.64,0.74)	0.12
Mastery	0.79	0.03	(0.74,0.84)	0.12
Meaning	7.39	0.14	(7.12,7.66)	0.65
Purpose	7.65	0.17	(7.32,7.98)	0.79
Self-Rated Mental Health	7.71	0.17	(7.36,8.05)	0.82
Social Well-being				
Subjective Social Connectedness	7.55	0.12	(7.30,7.79)	0.58
Contentment with Relationships	7.71	0.12	(7.46,7.95)	0.58
Satisfying Relationships	7.38	0.13	(7.13,7.63)	0.59
Social Support	7.40	0.19	(7.02,7.78)	0.90
Intimate Friend	0.83	0.01	(0.81,0.86)	0.06
Government Approval	0.43	0.04	(0.35,0.51)	0.19
Political Voice	0.51	0.04	(0.43,0.59)	0.19
Belonging	7.74	0.15	(7.45,8.03)	0.69
City Satisfaction	0.82	0.02	(0.79,0.86)	0.09
Trust	0.25	0.03	(0.20,0.30)	0.13
Community Participation	0.20	0.01	(0.17,0.23)	0.07
Psychological Distress				
Traumatic Distress	0.36	0.02	(0.32,0.41)	0.10
Depression	0.32	0.02	(0.27,0.37)	0.12
Anxiety	0.30	0.02	(0.25,0.34)	0.11
Suffering	0.44	0.02	(0.40,0.49)	0.11

Outcome	Mean	SE	95% CI	Heterogeneity (tau)
Social Distress				
Loneliness	6.62	0.11	(6.40,6.84)	0.52
Discrimination	0.24	0.02	(0.20,0.27)	0.09
Character & Prosocial Behaviors				
Promoting Good	8.01	0.12	(7.77,8.25)	0.57
Delayed Gratification	7.45	0.16	(7.14,7.75)	0.74
Hope	8.13	0.16	(7.81,8.45)	0.76
Gratitude	7.84	0.15	(7.54,8.14)	0.71
Love	8.19	0.15	(7.90,8.49)	0.71
Forgiveness	0.75	0.02	(0.70,0.80)	0.11
Charitable Giving	0.38	0.04	(0.31,0.45)	0.18
Helping	0.56	0.03	(0.49,0.63)	0.16
Volunteering	0.24	0.03	(0.19,0.29)	0.12
Physical Health & Health Behaviors				
Self-Rated Physical Health	7.21	0.14	(6.93,7.49)	0.67
Health Limitations	0.21	0.01	(0.18,0.24)	0.06
Pain	0.44	0.02	(0.40,0.48)	0.10
Smoking	2.36	0.42	(1.54,3.17)	1.95
Drinking	1.78	0.28	(1.23,2.33)	1.32
Exercise	2.45	0.15	(2.16,2.74)	0.69
Socioeconomic Outcomes				
Financial Stability	5.59	0.22	(5.16,6.02)	1.03
Material Stability	5.89	0.25	(5.41,6.38)	1.16
Education	0.19	0.03	(0.14,0.25)	0.14
Employment	0.56	0.02	(0.52,0.60)	0.09
Subjective Financial Well-Being	0.64	0.04	(0.56,0.71)	0.18
Housing	0.64	0.02	(0.61,0.68)	0.09
Thematic Area 2: Religion/Spirituality				
Self-Reported Religion/Spirituality	0.61	0.04	(0.53,0.70)	0.21
Religious Service Attendance	0.37	0.05	(0.27,0.48)	0.25
Life after Death Belief	0.54	0.04	(0.47,0.60)	0.17
Religious Experience	0.39	0.04	(0.31,0.47)	0.20
Religious Reading	0.30	0.04	(0.22,0.39)	0.21
Prayer-Meditation	0.50	0.06	(0.38,0.61)	0.27

Outcome	Mean	SE	95% CI	Heterogeneity (tau)
Belief in God	0.78	0.05	(0.69,0.87)	0.22
Intrinsic Religiosity	0.67	0.05	(0.56,0.78)	0.26
Religious Comfort	0.72	0.05	(0.62,0.82)	0.25
Loved by God	0.73	0.05	(0.62,0.84)	0.26
Spiritual Punishment	0.32	0.05	(0.23,0.41)	0.22
Religious Criticism	0.33	0.04	(0.25,0.41)	0.19
Evangelism	0.58	0.05	(0.49,0.67)	0.21
Thematic Area 3: Personality Traits				
Extraversion	3.25	0.09	(3.08,3.42)	0.41
Openness to Experience	2.72	0.09	(2.55,2.89)	0.41
Agreeableness	2.24	0.08	(2.08,2.39)	0.37
Conscientiousness	1.96	0.11	(1.74,2.19)	0.53
Neuroticism	2.69	0.09	(2.52,2.86)	0.40
Thematic Area 4: Family Factors				
Ever Married	0.65	0.03	(0.60,0.71)	0.13
Divorced	0.05	0.01	(0.03,0.06)	0.03
Children	1.17	0.15	(0.87,1.47)	0.73