



# Multidimensional Flourishing in Africa: An Intracontinental Analysis of 38 Well-Being Indicators in 40 Countries

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## Abstract

Despite the rising global interest in well-being and its various dimensions, research in this area has been criticized for its Western-centric conceptual and geographical emphasis. In this cross-sectional study, we leverage more than 30 indicators of well-being from three years of Gallup World Poll (2020–2022) data to explore the diversity of well-being in nationally representative samples from 40 countries on the African continent ( $N=90,093$ ). Our descriptive analysis provided evidence of between-country differences in well-being, including among countries within the same region. There was also some evidence of within-country variation across the indicators of well-being. We draw on several theoretical perspectives to discuss the diverse experiences of well-being in the African context, highlighting the importance of applying a culturally sensitive lens to understanding and promoting well-being. Our descriptive exploration of multidimensional well-being in Africa shines a spotlight on a part of the world that has received comparatively less empirical attention in this area, and provides a useful foundation for future research toward building a more inclusive and diverse global picture of human flourishing.

**Keywords** Well-being · Africa · Gallup World Poll · World happiness report

Well-being is a multifaceted and complex concept that encompasses various dimensions of human life, including physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and financial stability (Lee et al., 2021). Over the past few decades, there has been a growing interest in understanding and promoting well-being at both individual and societal levels, driven by an increasing recognition of the importance of human flourishing and its implications for societal development and policymaking (Diener et al., 2018; VanderWeele et al., 2023). One of the most well-known attempts to measure well-being across countries is the World Happiness Report (2023), which ranks countries based on life evaluation

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using Cantril's ladder (Helliwell et al., 2023). While this approach has provided valuable insights into global well-being, it may not capture the full complexity and diversity of well-being, particularly in regions like Africa, where sociocultural, political, and economic dynamics tend to differ from those in Western countries (Cowden et al., 2023a, 2023b). For instance, the Maasai people of Kenya and Tanzania have a semi-nomadic lifestyle based on pastoral farming. Despite facing economic hardship by Western standards (low GDP per capita), the Maasai might report relatively high levels of well-being because their lifestyle is closely tied to their cultural values and community relationships (Biswas-Diener et al., 2005). For the Maasai people, well-being may not be accurately represented by measures such as GDP per capita, which do not consider these cultural factors. Hence, there is a need to explore the varieties of well-being in Africa more comprehensively, taking into account the unique characteristics of the region, which are often underrepresented in global, large-scale studies on well-being. A better understanding of well-being in Africa is crucial not only for regional development and policymaking but also for enriching the global discourse on individual well-being and human flourishing more broadly. To address this gap in the literature, the present study aims to challenge and extend the World Happiness Report approach by examining not only life evaluation but also other dimensions of well-being. We attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding of well-being in Africa by considering a wide range of well-being variables, including life evaluations, daily emotions and experiences, and quality of life. This evidence will provide a useful foundation for future research, policy, and practice focused on addressing the specific needs and aspirations of people living in Africa.

## 1 Africa and Well-being

Over the past few decades, well-being has emerged as a critical area of academic interest, with numerous studies investigating its determinants and dimensions (e.g., Diener et al., 1995; Helliwell et al., 2023; Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2017). Within the African context, understanding well-being is particularly important, given the continent's diverse cultural, social, and economic conditions. In Africa, as elsewhere, well-being is a multidimensional concept that encompasses various aspects of people's lives that are predicted by factors such as personality (Diener et al., 2003), culture (Diener et al., 2018), income (Jebb et al., 2018), and religion (Nell & Rothmann, 2018). It is important to examine both objective and subjective measures of well-being in order to gain a greater understanding of the conditions that influence human flourishing in Africa (Voukelatou et al., 2021). Objective indicators often relate to economic, social, and health factors, while subjective measures capture individuals' assessments of their own lives, including life satisfaction, happiness, and psychological well-being (Diener et al., 1995). These dimensions of well-being are often intertwined, with objective circumstances shaping subjective experiences and evaluations, and vice versa (Dolan et al., 2008).

One prominent framework used to examine well-being in Africa is the capabilities approach, developed by Sen (1999) and further elaborated by Nussbaum (2000). This framework emphasizes the importance of people's capabilities to lead the kind of lives they value and has informed research on well-being in Africa, directing attention to a range of factors beyond income and material conditions. For instance, Alkire (2005) applied the capabilities approach to assess well-being in several developing countries, highlighting the role of education, health, and political participation in shaping people's

quality of life. Another relevant theoretical perspective for discussing well-being in Africa is the concept of *Ubuntu*, which is rooted in African philosophy and emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals, community, and society (Worthington & Cowden, 2017). The *Ubuntu* framework suggests that individual well-being is closely tied to community life—social relationships, collective harmony, and the pursuit of common goals (Metz, 2011). Although the *Ubuntu* concept is mostly used in Southern Africa (amongst the Zulu and Xhosa people), other regions of Africa have similar concepts that highlight this sense of interconnectedness and humanness across communities. For example, in Eastern Africa, concepts such as *Ujamaa* and *Umuganda* emphasize this spirit of togetherness. In Western Africa, expressions like *Teranga*, *Biiri bi Baaya*, and *Wazobia* capture the essence of unity and compassion. In Northern Africa, the Arabic phrase المساواة والتراحم (Al-Musawat wal Tarahum) conveys a similar meaning of equality and compassion. In Central Africa, terms like *Likumbi* and *Wathu* embody the idea of interconnectedness and humanness. These shared values demonstrate the widespread importance of community and harmony across the diverse cultures and languages found throughout the African continent, and the importance of community cohesion for health and well-being (Swartz & Kilian, 2014).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in comparing well-being across countries. The World Happiness Report is a prominent example (Helliwell et al., 2023), which reveals considerable variation in well-being across African nations. For instance, in the 2023 report, Mauritius ranked highest in life evaluations among African countries (59th worldwide), while Sierra Leone ranked lowest at 135th out of 137 countries (Helliwell et al., 2023). However, the World Happiness Report used data from the Gallup World Poll to rank countries based on a single item pertaining to subjective well-being, namely an index of life evaluation known as Cantril's ladder, which invites people to imagine where they stand on a ten-rung ladder whose base and top reflect the worst and best life imaginable. As such, some scholars have argued that the World Happiness Report's narrow focus on life evaluation may not fully capture the complexities of well-being in Africa, including the cultural, historical, and social factors that make the continent so diverse (Coulthard et al., 2011; Lomas, 2016).

In order to better understand well-being in Africa, it is important to consider the role of goal satisfaction (telic) theories, which propose that well-being is contingent on the extent to which an individual's basic needs are met by their environment (Omodei & Wearing, 1990). Veenhoven (2000) refers to this as the 'livability' of the environment. On the other hand, the individual's ability to capitalize on and adapt to the environment to their advantage is known as 'lifeability.' Among the various models that describe these needs, Maslow's "hierarchy" is particularly influential, comprising six core needs: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, self-actualization, and transcendence (Maslow, 1943). The unique challenges and opportunities presented by Africa's diverse contexts require a nuanced examination of well-being. While many African countries and regions face material deprivation, efforts to address these deficiencies may contribute to a sense of purpose and meaning (Diener et al., 2010a, 2010b). This observation aligns with the notion that higher-level resources can sometimes compensate for the deficiency of lower-level ones (Kashdan et al., 2008). The Sustainable Development Goals developed by the United Nations serve as a useful framework for assessing well-being in Africa, as they highlight the importance of environmental factors in meeting people's needs (Carlsen & Bruggemann, 2022).

## 2 A Multifaceted, Context-Driven Approach to Well-Being in Africa

Research on well-being in Africa necessitates a multifaceted and context-driven approach that recognizes the continent's distinct cultural, social, and economic features (Oishi & Diener, 2014). Africa's diverse social norms, traditions, and values play a significant role in shaping well-being, and a context-sensitive approach that acknowledges these unique conditions is crucial for developing a more comprehensive understanding of well-being across the continent (Oyserman et al., 2002). For example, collectivist cultures, which are prevalent in many African societies, prioritize group harmony, interdependence, and social relationships, and can influence various dimensions of well-being (Hofstede, 2001). Understanding the cultural nuances of well-being in Africa requires the integration of indigenous concepts and perspectives, such as the Afrocentric worldview, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals and the environment (Mkhize, 2021; Neblett et al., 2010).

Use of diverse interpretative frameworks allows us to delve deeper into the nuanced factors that might influence well-being in Africa, in addition to adopting alternative measures and indices that enrich the construct of well-being in a contextually appropriate way. Considering a broader set of well-being variables can provide an opportunity to build a more comprehensive understanding of the unique aspects of well-being in the Africa region (Diener et al., 2018). For example, the Gross National Happiness Index (Bates, 2009), which was initially developed in Bhutan, could be adapted to African contexts to provide an assessment of well-being that considers cultural, spiritual, and environmental dimensions alongside economic indicators (Ura et al., 2012).

Incorporating goal satisfaction (telic) theories, such as Maslow's "hierarchy" of needs (Maslow, 1943) into the analysis of well-being in Africa, may also allow researchers to examine the extent to which the environment and individual capacities contribute to human flourishing in the region (Carlsen & Bruggemann, 2022). This integration helps identify areas in which targeted interventions and policies can be developed to address the specific needs and aspirations of people living in Africa in order to promote individual well-being and human flourishing on the continent (Diener et al., 2010a, 2010b).

## 3 The Present Study

Exploring well-being in Africa necessitates a nuanced approach that transcends conventional metrics, such as those that are often emphasized in multinational analyses like the World Happiness Report (see Helliwell et al., 2023). The rankings in the World Happiness Report, while instrumental in highlighting global happiness trends, are based on a single life evaluation measure from the Gallup World Poll (GWP). Moreover, when it does take other factors into account, such as in its regression analyses that seek to account for such life evaluation, it predominantly leans on a select group of indicators including income, social support, and healthy life expectancy. Such a focus, albeit important, may not fully capture the multifaceted and richly layered fabric of well-being as experienced within the diverse cultural, social, and economic landscape of Africa. This limitation underscores the need to apply a broader analytical lens that can more effectively grasp the complexity of well-being across the continent.

African societies exhibit a profound sense of community, interdependence, and collectivism that are deeply ingrained in the cultural ethos across the continent. This communal

orientation, often encapsulated in several African philosophies (e.g., Ubuntu in Southern Africa) emphasizes the well-being of the community as being integral to the well-being of the individual (Metz & Gaie, 2010a, 2010b). The distinct cultural features within Africa must be considered in order to fully understand how well-being is conceptualized and experienced across different African regions. Metrics focused solely on individualistic perspectives of happiness and life satisfaction may not fully capture the communal dimensions of well-being that are prevalent in many African societies.

The socioeconomic conditions across Africa's regions—from the oil-rich nations of North Africa to the agriculturally dependent economies of sub-Saharan Africa—influence the well-being of their populations (Arndt & Simler, 2010). Economic stability, access to healthcare, educational opportunities, and employment conditions vary widely, impacting the daily lives and future outlooks of African populations. Expressions of well-being in Africa are as varied as its cultures and languages (Lutz, 2011). For instance, the importance of music, dance, and storytelling in many African communities as sources of joy, resilience, and social cohesion are often underemphasized in large-scale, multi-country empirical research on well-being. These cultural expressions, pivotal to the social fabric of African societies, are important for understanding and measuring well-being, and underscore the need for incorporating culturally relevant indicators into research on human flourishing in Africa.

To address some of these limitations, the present study leverages the full richness of the GWP data (i.e., beyond just the life evaluation measures that are commonly used in large-scale, global research) by analyzing an array of factors that may elucidate the complexity of well-being in the African context. This descriptive study is particularly relevant given the lack of extensive research on well-being in Africa, which often limits the comparability of African countries with other regions. As we explore indicators of well-being that extend beyond more conventional metrics, we seek to uncover distinct well-being patterns that resonate with the unique cultural, socioeconomic, and environmental contexts of African countries and regions. We anticipate discovering substantial variation in well-being experiences both across regions and among countries within those regions. For example, we might reasonably expect distinct patterns of well-being in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting the divergent historical, cultural, and socioeconomic realities of countries in these regions. Even within these regions, country-specific factors such as governance, economic stability, and cultural norms may shape differences in well-being between countries.

## 4 Methods

### 4.1 Data Collection

The GWP survey usually takes 15–20 min to complete, and involves around 60–80 items (with the number varying among respondents based on screener questions, filters and skip patterns). The GWP involves nationally representative, probability-based samples among the adult populations, aged 15 and older, involving approximately 1,000 people per country and a different selection of people each year. This sample size is to allow, after accounting for the survey weights, a maximum confidence interval of approximately 4 percentage points, providing enough power ( $\beta = 0.80$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) to detect a group difference of approximately 9 percentage points. This paper analyses

data spanning three years of the GWP (2020, 2021, and 2022), with the three waves combined in the analysis to produce a larger overall sample. Data collection was undertaken in accordance with the standard and established protocol of the GWP.

**2020 Wave.** In 2020, the survey included 116 countries ( $n = 121,207$ ), representing more than 90% of the world's population. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error ranges from  $\pm 1.1$  to  $\pm 5.5$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The GWP usually involves face-to-face data collection. However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gallup prepared a contingency methodology based entirely on telephone interviewing. Thus, although some in-person interviews were conducted in few countries at the beginning of 2020, and ahead of national lockdowns, in most countries the survey was conducted over mobile and landline telephones throughout the year. The sampling frame therefore represents adults aged 15 and older with access to a phone (either landline or mobile). As all eligible landline exchanges and valid mobile service providers are included, coverage area is the entire country including rural areas.

**2021 Wave.** In 2021, 122 countries were sampled ( $n = 122,846$ ), representing over 90% of the global population. By 2021, a number of countries were still struggling to get their populations vaccinated and sporadic lockdowns continued in many parts of the world (Govender et al., 2022; Prati & Mancini, 2021). As a result, the GWP reviewed the situation in each country and determined which countries were safe to return to in-person data collection with appropriate safety measures in place, which ones to continue with telephone data collection, and the ones that would not be included in the 2021 data collection roster. In 2021, 51 of the 122 countries sampled returned to face-to-face interviewing (vast majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and some countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, former Soviet states, developing Asia, and the Middle East), while the rest followed the format started in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2022 Wave.** In 2022, the survey sampled 142 countries ( $n = 142,601$ ), representing over 90% of the world's population. In 2022, 142 countries were sampled representing over 90% of the global adult population with 142,601 individual respondents. The GWP was able to fully return to face-to-face interviewing in most countries where they had traditionally collected World Poll surveys using this mode of data collection.

Across the three years of GWP data, the total sample of participants from the 40 African countries included in our analysis was  $N = 90,093$  (2020:  $n = 24,185$ ; 2021:  $n = 27,046$ ; 2022:  $n = 38,862$ ). A breakdown of the sample size per country by year is provided in Supplemental Table 1.

## 5 Items Analysed

Applying a multidimensional conception of well-being (Chen et al., 2022; Lomas & VanderWeele, 2022; Shiba et al., 2022), we included 38 indicators that were selected a priori to collectively provide broad conceptual coverage of individual well-being. Further details about these items, the response scale for each item, and recoding decisions for analysis can be found in Supplemental Text 1. Our use of these items aligns with recent analyses of the GWP in which numerous indicators were selected because of their relevance and representativeness of multidimensional well-being (e.g., Lomas, 2023).

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics and Rankings for Indicators of Well-being in Each Country

| Country                          | Life evaluation: present |         | Life evaluation: future |         | Life evaluation: combined |         | Life evaluation: difference |         | Well-rested |         | Treated with respect |         | Learn something new |         |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|-------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|                                  | Mean                     | Ranking | Mean                    | Ranking | Mean                      | Ranking | Mean                        | Ranking | % yes       | Ranking | % yes                | Ranking | % yes               | Ranking |
| Algeria                          | 5.48                     | 79      | 7.12                    | 73      | 6.30                      | 82      | 1.64                        | 64      | 66.08       | 91      | 86.30                | 105     | 38.48               | 125     |
| Benin                            | 4.43                     | 117     | 7.64                    | 38      | 6.04                      | 100     | 3.21                        | 5       | 55.77       | 132     | 78.61                | 128     | 50.34               | 93      |
| Botswana                         | 3.44                     | 138     | 6.15                    | 128     | 4.82                      | 138     | 2.65                        | 20      | 70.74       | 54      | 87.05                | 102     | 48.57               | 103     |
| Burkina Faso                     | 4.66                     | 110     | 7.44                    | 52      | 6.08                      | 95      | 2.68                        | 19      | 60.25       | 119     | 74.75                | 136     | 52.71               | 84      |
| Cameroon                         | 4.98                     | 97      | 7.14                    | 70      | 6.08                      | 96      | 2.14                        | 39      | 67.17       | 82      | 81.94                | 119     | 57.36               | 65      |
| Chad                             | 4.40                     | 119     | 5.99                    | 133     | 5.24                      | 129     | 1.52                        | 73      | 68.32       | 72      | 75.33                | 134     | 54.38               | 74      |
| Comoros                          | 3.55                     | 136     | 6.67                    | 106     | 5.08                      | 133     | 3.17                        | 6       | 65.03       | 96      | 88.89                | 90      | 46.24               | 112     |
| Congo (Brazzaville) <sup>a</sup> | 5.32                     | 84      | 7.14                    | 71      | 6.27                      | 84      | 1.72                        | 60      | 68.64       | 69      | 77.10                | 130     | 50.44               | 92      |
| Congo (Kinshasa) <sup>b</sup>    | 3.21                     | 140     | 6.14                    | 129     | 4.78                      | 139     | 2.74                        | 17      | 61.30       | 115     | 68.44                | 143     | 50.26               | 95      |
| Cote d'Ivoire                    | 5.13                     | 93      | 7.67                    | 32      | 6.41                      | 72      | 2.54                        | 25      | 65.21       | 94      | 83.44                | 113     | 55.89               | 71      |
| Egypt                            | 4.18                     | 126     | 5.73                    | 140     | 4.95                      | 134     | 1.54                        | 70      | 56.90       | 130     | 90.76                | 78      | 33.33               | 134     |
| Eswatini                         | 3.50                     | 137     | 6.04                    | 131     | 4.75                      | 141     | 2.57                        | 24      | 68.90       | 65      | 83.19                | 114     | 52.15               | 85      |
| Ethiopia                         | 4.09                     | 128     | 7.25                    | 67      | 5.68                      | 114     | 3.13                        | 8       | 55.62       | 135     | 63.44                | 145     | 44.05               | 121     |
| Gabon                            | 4.97                     | 98      | 7.29                    | 63      | 6.14                      | 92      | 2.28                        | 33      | 67.17       | 83      | 83.10                | 115     | 58.54               | 58      |
| Gambia                           | 4.28                     | 124     | 7.82                    | 21      | 6.07                      | 97      | 3.51                        | 3       | 64.46       | 100     | 88.85                | 91      | 59.67               | 53      |
| Ghana                            | 4.78                     | 107     | 7.81                    | 22      | 6.34                      | 78      | 2.92                        | 10      | 69.20       | 63      | 87.66                | 99      | 56.77               | 67      |
| Guinea                           | 5.04                     | 96      | 6.80                    | 100     | 5.92                      | 103     | 1.75                        | 58      | 68.14       | 74      | 84.25                | 108     | 69.21               | 15      |
| Kenya                            | 4.44                     | 116     | 6.85                    | 94      | 5.65                      | 115     | 2.41                        | 30      | 66.80       | 84      | 76.89                | 131     | 70.58               | 9       |
| Lesotho                          | 3.19                     | 141     | 5.99                    | 134     | 4.61                      | 142     | 2.72                        | 18      | 57.45       | 128     | 78.94                | 127     | 67.00               | 23      |
| Liberia                          | 4.04                     | 131     | 7.65                    | 35      | 5.86                      | 107     | 3.60                        | 2       | 59.89       | 120     | 82.38                | 118     | 69.09               | 17      |
| Libya                            | 5.71                     | 69      | 7.50                    | 45      | 6.67                      | 53      | 1.70                        | 62      | 70.91       | 51      | 92.59                | 59      | 47.00               | 107     |
| Madagascar                       | 4.02                     | 132     | 6.82                    | 98      | 5.43                      | 122     | 2.79                        | 15      | 65.17       | 95      | 83.69                | 111     | 63.35               | 36      |
| Malawi                           | 3.43                     | 139     | 6.28                    | 123     | 4.85                      | 137     | 2.85                        | 12      | 73.47       | 40      | 75.41                | 133     | 48.39               | 104     |
| Mali                             | 4.09                     | 129     | 7.35                    | 58      | 5.73                      | 110     | 3.27                        | 4       | 63.69       | 106     | 84.23                | 109     | 44.68               | 118     |
| Mauritania                       | 4.72                     | 108     | 6.40                    | 119     | 5.61                      | 118     | 1.60                        | 67      | 62.42       | 110     | 83.83                | 110     | 59.43               | 55      |
| Mauritius                        | 5.81                     | 65      | 7.12                    | 74      | 6.46                      | 68      | 1.33                        | 79      | 66.74       | 85      | 95.44                | 22      | 54.04               | 76      |
| Morocco                          | 4.87                     | 104     | 7.65                    | 36      | 6.37                      | 74      | 2.61                        | 23      | 65.92       | 92      | 91.26                | 73      | 50.13               | 96      |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country                          | Life evaluation: present |         | Life evaluation: future |         | Life evaluation: combined |         | Life evaluation: difference |         | Well-rested |         | Treated with respect |         | Learn something new |         |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|-------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|                                  | Mean                     | Ranking | Mean                    | Ranking | Mean                      | Ranking | Mean                        | Ranking | % yes       | Ranking | % yes                | Ranking | % yes               | Ranking |
| Mozambique                       | 4.93                     | 100     | 6.43                    | 117     | 5.83                      | 108     | 1.38                        | 77      | 74.93       | 29      | 86.68                | 103     | 58.78               | 57      |
| Namibia                          | 4.63                     | 112     | 6.76                    | 103     | 5.69                      | 113     | 2.13                        | 41      | 70.67       | 55      | 81.07                | 123     | 60.72               | 49      |
| Niger                            | 4.50                     | 115     | 7.30                    | 62      | 5.89                      | 105     | 2.83                        | 13      | 63.85       | 104     | 81.59                | 120     | 73.24               | 6       |
| Nigeria                          | 4.90                     | 102     | 8.09                    | 11      | 6.51                      | 63      | 3.15                        | 7       | 72.45       | 46      | 82.51                | 117     | 67.99               | 18      |
| Senegal                          | 4.87                     | 105     | 7.67                    | 33      | 6.27                      | 85      | 2.77                        | 16      | 68.33       | 71      | 91.22                | 74      | 78.17               | 1       |
| Sierra Leone                     | 3.08                     | 143     | 6.80                    | 101     | 4.95                      | 135     | 3.72                        | 1       | 54.01       | 138     | 73.44                | 137     | 49.08               | 101     |
| South Africa                     | 5.28                     | 86      | 7.81                    | 23      | 6.54                      | 61      | 2.53                        | 26      | 78.41       | 18      | 87.30                | 100     | 62.34               | 44      |
| Tanzania                         | 3.60                     | 134     | 5.98                    | 135     | 4.86                      | 136     | 2.27                        | 34      | 68.31       | 73      | 80.30                | 124     | 61.72               | 47      |
| Togo                             | 4.05                     | 130     | 6.94                    | 89      | 5.49                      | 121     | 2.89                        | 11      | 61.81       | 113     | 75.00                | 135     | 54.14               | 75      |
| Tunisia                          | 4.54                     | 114     | 6.23                    | 126     | 5.40                      | 125     | 1.64                        | 65      | 57.18       | 129     | 89.13                | 89      | 30.13               | 136     |
| Uganda                           | 4.43                     | 118     | 6.94                    | 90      | 5.70                      | 112     | 2.50                        | 27      | 67.77       | 77      | 75.45                | 132     | 69.85               | 10      |
| Zambia                           | 3.82                     | 133     | 6.78                    | 102     | 5.37                      | 126     | 2.82                        | 14      | 67.60       | 79      | 85.61                | 106     | 55.21               | 73      |
| Zimbabwe                         | 3.18                     | 142     | 5.41                    | 143     | 4.30                      | 143     | 2.22                        | 38      | 61.80       | 114     | 79.58                | 125     | 53.98               | 77      |
| Country                          | Enjoyment                |         | Smile or laugh          |         | Calmness                  |         | Physical pain               |         | Worry       |         | Sadness              |         | Stress              |         |
|                                  | % yes                    | Ranking | % yes                   | Ranking | % yes                     | Ranking | % yes                       | Ranking | % yes       | Ranking | % yes                | Ranking | % yes               | Ranking |
| Algeria                          | 53.65                    | 126     | 63.56                   | 122     | 60.38                     | 125     | 33.32                       | 77      | 38.16       | 59      | 18.37                | 21      | 29.51               | 27      |
| Benin                            | 48.76                    | 137     | 72.71                   | 83      | 57.66                     | 132     | 51.09                       | 135     | 54.27       | 122     | 32.95                | 103     | 30.43               | 33      |
| Botswana                         | 62.04                    | 104     | 76.41                   | 58      | 74.38                     | 79      | 42.76                       | 117     | 37.59       | 57      | 29.39                | 91      | 37.12               | 66      |
| Burkina Faso                     | 60.98                    | 106     | 67.83                   | 107     | 64.53                     | 117     | 33.19                       | 75      | 55.18       | 124     | 32.95                | 104     | 48.61               | 113     |
| Cameroon                         | 52.52                    | 128     | 69.86                   | 100     | 62.10                     | 121     | 44.54                       | 123     | 50.84       | 111     | 34.27                | 114     | 43.12               | 101     |
| Chad                             | 57.51                    | 120     | 63.94                   | 120     | 65.17                     | 114     | 67.79                       | 144     | 59.68       | 138     | 54.00                | 144     | 51.13               | 128     |
| Comoros                          | 65.50                    | 87      | 69.43                   | 103     | 71.77                     | 92      | 45.17                       | 125     | 46.21       | 92      | 34.75                | 116     | 42.66               | 98      |
| Congo (Brazzaville) <sup>a</sup> | 57.10                    | 122     | 65.32                   | 113     | 52.87                     | 138     | 47.06                       | 126     | 57.53       | 133     | 44.90                | 138     | 39.93               | 82      |



Table 1 (continued)

| Country                       | Enjoyment |         | Smile or laugh |         | Calmness |         | Physical pain |         | Worry |         | Sadness |         | Stress |         |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|----------------|---------|----------|---------|---------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
|                               | % yes     | Ranking | % yes          | Ranking | % yes    | Ranking | % yes         | Ranking | % yes | Ranking | % yes   | Ranking | % yes  | Ranking |
| Congo (Kinshasa) <sup>b</sup> | 54.35     | 125     | 64.84          | 116     | 57.64    | 133     | 53.21         | 139     | 59.38 | 136     | 46.60   | 140     | 44.56  | 103     |
| Cote d'Ivoire                 | 57.94     | 119     | 74.22          | 76      | 60.81    | 124     | 49.37         | 131     | 48.51 | 106     | 34.59   | 115     | 34.30  | 49      |
| Egypt                         | 44.47     | 141     | 63.98          | 119     | 58.13    | 131     | 50.87         | 133     | 43.92 | 82      | 33.12   | 106     | 50.20  | 125     |
| Eswatini                      | 70.26     | 68      | 75.71          | 65      | 69.76    | 98      | 39.35         | 101     | 51.10 | 112     | 35.88   | 120     | 47.28  | 111     |
| Ethiopia                      | 66.99     | 84      | 65.34          | 112     | 79.44    | 56      | 26.27         | 33      | 33.73 | 35      | 27.70   | 82      | 30.07  | 29      |
| Gabon                         | 53.20     | 127     | 71.85          | 87      | 61.81    | 122     | 38.60         | 99      | 51.87 | 115     | 37.23   | 123     | 34.80  | 52      |
| Gambia                        | 71.30     | 64      | 85.81          | 11      | 79.56    | 51      | 52.65         | 138     | 55.11 | 123     | 44.49   | 137     | 45.73  | 105     |
| Ghana                         | 54.81     | 124     | 82.36          | 27      | 80.50    | 45      | 36.40         | 91      | 34.28 | 41      | 25.13   | 65      | 47.09  | 109     |
| Guinea                        | 63.70     | 94      | 75.39          | 69      | 55.83    | 134     | 47.79         | 128     | 57.21 | 130     | 39.68   | 128     | 37.34  | 68      |
| Kenya                         | 73.39     | 62      | 78.67          | 47      | 72.12    | 89      | 32.91         | 72      | 31.85 | 26      | 23.93   | 59      | 34.05  | 47      |
| Lesotho                       | 69.67     | 70      | 75.91          | 63      | 58.58    | 129     | 39.55         | 105     | 40.51 | 71      | 23.88   | 57      | 35.30  | 55      |
| Liberia                       | 45.85     | 140     | 76.12          | 60      | 60.25    | 126     | 55.03         | 141     | 57.24 | 131     | 48.78   | 142     | 57.68  | 140     |
| Libya                         | 70.85     | 67      | 71.40          | 92      | 76.07    | 74      | 48.51         | 130     | 44.68 | 85      | 32.91   | 101     | 45.79  | 106     |
| Madagascar                    | 62.67     | 98      | 79.97          | 36      | 62.41    | 120     | 44.95         | 124     | 42.55 | 79      | 35.26   | 119     | 48.98  | 119     |
| Malawi                        | 48.72     | 138     | 62.59          | 126     | 51.38    | 140     | 39.63         | 106     | 40.23 | 70      | 38.73   | 127     | 30.45  | 34      |
| Mali                          | 73.44     | 60      | 75.68          | 67      | 68.40    | 106     | 40.69         | 110     | 60.33 | 141     | 33.64   | 109     | 38.09  | 73      |
| Mauritania                    | 59.05     | 113     | 69.78          | 102     | 64.99    | 115     | 56.17         | 142     | 46.37 | 93      | 33.73   | 111     | 35.54  | 59      |
| Mauritius                     | 67.57     | 81      | 79.31          | 42      | 69.17    | 104     | 27.86         | 44      | 19.30 | 3       | 16.52   | 13      | 20.98  | 8       |
| Morocco                       | 51.07     | 134     | 65.99          | 111     | 69.46    | 102     | 37.19         | 95      | 38.23 | 60      | 29.24   | 89      | 37.47  | 70      |
| Mozambique                    | 51.34     | 132     | 72.30          | 84      | 72.54    | 87      | 38.90         | 100     | 55.77 | 126     | 37.40   | 124     | 27.41  | 20      |
| Namibia                       | 51.66     | 130     | 81.91          | 28      | 62.61    | 119     | 23.17         | 22      | 33.50 | 34      | 21.50   | 41      | 31.39  | 38      |
| Niger                         | 77.02     | 44      | 85.79          | 12      | 66.45    | 110     | 51.87         | 137     | 47.80 | 101     | 36.73   | 122     | 42.36  | 97      |
| Nigeria                       | 62.15     | 103     | 82.65          | 26      | 69.52    | 101     | 32.71         | 71      | 39.74 | 67      | 22.62   | 50      | 46.44  | 107     |
| Senegal                       | 76.46     | 49      | 88.76          | 2       | 80.06    | 49      | 53.36         | 140     | 42.03 | 76      | 24.12   | 60      | 48.61  | 114     |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country                          | Enjoyment |  | Smile or laugh  |                           | Calmness                         |                        | Physical pain  |         | Worry |         | Sadness |         | Stress |         |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                  | % yes     | Ranking                                    | % yes           | Ranking                   | % yes                            | Ranking                | % yes          | Ranking | % yes | Ranking | % yes   | Ranking | % yes  | Ranking |
| Sierra Leone                     | 36.81     | 142  | 65.14           | 115                       | 55.06                            | 136                    | 69.80          | 145     | 62.83 | 143     | 49.96   | 143     | 57.59  | 139     |
| South Africa                     | 78.38     | 38   | 84.60           | 15                        | 69.46                            | 103                    | 26.53          | 35      | 35.04 | 45      | 23.27   | 52      | 37.68  | 71      |
| Tanzania                         | 63.59     | 95   | 76.05           | 61                        | 79.52                            | 54                     | 40.43          | 109     | 25.62 | 9       | 26.58   | 76      | 56.01  | 135     |
| Togo                             | 50.15     | 136  | 70.63           | 97                        | 55.61                            | 135                    | 51.85          | 136     | 57.27 | 132     | 33.73   | 112     | 40.37  | 84      |
| Tunisia                          | 47.05     | 139  | 63.71           | 121                       | 64.96                            | 116                    | 43.70          | 122     | 51.84 | 114     | 21.82   | 43      | 49.15  | 120     |
| Uganda                           | 60.90     | 107  | 79.01           | 45                        | 66.91                            | 109                    | 43.09          | 119     | 48.23 | 104     | 38.06   | 125     | 54.94  | 133     |
| Zambia                           | 65.37     | 89   | 76.84           | 55                        | 74.77                            | 77                     | 36.04          | 89      | 45.20 | 88      | 31.27   | 97      | 40.62  | 86      |
| Zimbabwe                         | 58.96     | 114  | 79.04           | 43                        | 71.92                            | 90                     | 34.61          | 84      | 35.70 | 48      | 26.23   | 74      | 35.75  | 62      |
| Country                          | Anger     | Amount of things happening is 'just right' | Life in balance | Harmony with those around | Thoughts and feelings in harmony | Feel stable and secure | Content        |         |       |         |         |         |        |         |
|                                  | % yes     | Ranking                                    | % always/often  | Ranking                   | % always/often                   | Ranking                | % always/often |         |       |         |         |         |        |         |
| Algeria                          | 26.06     | 108  | 69.53           | 35                        | 64.60                            | 76                     | 72.37          | 111     | 67.47 | 97      | 70.76   | 99      | 69.35  | 97      |
| Benin                            | 29.39     | 115  | 41.51           | 127                       | 38.69                            | 127                    | 60.67          | 136     | 51.70 | 131     | 52.16   | 127     | 51.61  | 127     |
| Botswana                         | 19.17     | 69   | 40.94           | 128                       | 38.22                            | 129                    | 64.70          | 129     | 51.09 | 132     | 58.81   | 119     | 55.04  | 124     |
| Burkina Faso                     | 24.76     | 100  | -               | -                         | -                                | -                      | -              | -       | -     | -       | -       | -       | -      | -       |
| Cameroon                         | 24.69     | 98   | 42.86           | 124                       | 46.41                            | 116                    | 65.72          | 127     | 64.81 | 109     | 59.85   | 117     | 55.82  | 121     |
| Chad                             | 35.25     | 130  | 54.61           | 100                       | 47.26                            | 113                    | 61.66          | 135     | 54.61 | 126     | 51.32   | 129     | 51.17  | 128     |
| Comoros                          | 24.45     | 97   | 45.94           | 120                       | 33.34                            | 134                    | 57.92          | 137     | 43.33 | 138     | 47.94   | 133     | 44.86  | 132     |
| Congo (Brazzaville) <sup>a</sup> | 30.64     | 120  | 30.70           | 138                       | 37.91                            | 130                    | 56.46          | 139     | 51.82 | 130     | 47.65   | 135     | 43.97  | 133     |
| Congo (Kinshasa) <sup>b</sup>    | 32.27     | 127  | 30.70           | 139                       | 36.84                            | 131                    | 63.15          | 132     | 45.31 | 137     | 39.17   | 140     | 39.69  | 137     |

Table 1 (continued)

| Country       | Anger |         | Amount of things happening is 'just right' |         | Life in balance |         | Harmony with those around |         | Thoughts and feelings in harmony |                | Feel stable and secure |                | Content |                |
|---------------|-------|---------|--|---------|-----------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|
|               | % yes | Ranking | % always/often                             | Ranking | % always/often  | Ranking | % always/often            | Ranking | % always/often                   | % always/often | Ranking                | % always/often | Ranking | % always/often |
| Cote d'Ivoire | 24.75 | 99      | 57.44                                      | 86      | 63.37           | 81      | 77.05                     | 99      | 72.85                            | 81             | 74.12                  | 85             | 74.69   | 80             |
| Egypt         | 30.36 | 119     | 65.01                                      | 58      | 62.22           | 87      | 84.80                     | 60      | 63.50                            | 112            | 84.52                  | 40             | 91.36   | 7              |
| Eswatini      | 30.82 | 122     | 33.17                                      | 136     | 23.47           | 141     | 68.46                     | 120     | 41.28                            | 139            | 47.90                  | 134            | 38.66   | 139            |
| Ethiopia      | 26.36 | 110     | 28.61                                      | 140     | 24.64           | 140     | 84.32                     | 62      | 50.14                            | 133            | 50.83                  | 131            | 41.00   | 134            |
| Gabon         | 30.80 | 121     | 51.50                                      | 109     | 57.45           | 98      | 72.72                     | 110     | 66.56                            | 100            | 66.68                  | 106            | 62.18   | 107            |
| Gambia        | 31.91 | 125     | 74.49                                      | 18      | 71.45           | 43      | 86.27                     | 49      | 76.52                            | 67             | 72.65                  | 90             | 78.56   | 62             |
| Ghana         | 17.87 | 63      | 64.35                                      | 63      | 61.84           | 89      | 82.28                     | 75      | 76.02                            | 69             | 69.38                  | 100            | 70.11   | 95             |
| Guinea        | 29.83 | 116     | 47.52                                      | 116     | 44.12           | 121     | 63.16                     | 131     | 59.74                            | 118            | 60.63                  | 115            | 63.08   | 106            |
| Kenya         | 23.97 | 95      | 52.78                                      | 105     | 42.38           | 122     | 71.78                     | 113     | 58.70                            | 120            | 57.10                  | 122            | 53.65   | 126            |
| Lesotho       | 22.01 | 83      | 48.34                                      | 114     | 44.70           | 120     | 73.85                     | 107     | 60.21                            | 117            | 64.04                  | 111            | 59.14   | 114            |
| Liberia       | 25.52 | 105     | 56.73                                      | 89      | 50.12           | 109     | 63.89                     | 130     | 55.40                            | 123            | 60.59                  | 116            | 59.79   | 111            |
| Libya         | 38.99 | 138     | 72.02                                      | 26      | 73.08           | 38      | 79.11                     | 87      | 74.56                            | 75             | 79.48                  | 65             | 88.27   | 18             |
| Madagascar    | 26.04 | 107     | 40.17                                      | 131     | 32.75           | 135     | 62.88                     | 133     | 46.89                            | 134            | 42.50                  | 138            | 37.40   | 140            |
| Malawi        | 17.61 | 60      | 32.57                                      | 137     | 31.61           | 136     | 39.25                     | 142     | 37.61                            | 142            | 38.48                  | 141            | 30.70   | 142            |
| Mali          | 33.90 | 128     | 78.38                                      | 8       | 83.76           | 6       | 93.11                     | 13      | 79.21                            | 61             | 87.38                  | 21             | 85.84   | 27             |
| Mauritania    | 35.79 | 134     | 64.37                                      | 62      | 62.46           | 86      | 70.08                     | 115     | 65.71                            | 104            | 72.38                  | 91             | 69.21   | 98             |
| Mauritius     | 7.71  | 3       | 56.11                                      | 91      | 67.90           | 63      | 79.78                     | 83      | 72.08                            | 85             | 81.61                  | 55             | 76.57   | 73             |
| Morocco       | 30.28 | 118     | 54.55                                      | 101     | 45.25           | 119     | 65.87                     | 126     | 56.01                            | 122            | 68.56                  | 102            | 56.28   | 120            |
| Mozambique    | 18.37 | 66      | 42.67                                      | 125     | 42.05           | 123     | 62.20                     | 134     | 55.11                            | 125            | 52.61                  | 126            | 58.56   | 116            |
| Namibia       | 20.24 | 74      | 55.02                                      | 97      | 52.83           | 106     | 69.09                     | 119     | 63.42                            | 113            | 64.34                  | 109            | 55.82   | 122            |
| Niger         | 26.10 | 109     | 73.39                                      | 21      | 69.61           | 51      | 73.92                     | 106     | 69.89                            | 91             | 68.50                  | 103            | 72.37   | 91             |
| Nigeria       | 23.62 | 90      | 72.51                                      | 25      | 64.64           | 75      | 90.53                     | 29      | 86.16                            | 20             | 77.85                  | 72             | 82.81   | 45             |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country                          | Anger          |         | Amount of things happening is 'just right' |         | Life in balance |         | Harmony with those around |         | Thoughts and feelings in harmony |         | Feel stable and secure |         | Content                  |         |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------|--|---------|-----------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
|                                  | % yes          | Ranking | % always/often                             | Ranking | % always/often  | Ranking | % always/often            | Ranking | % always/often                   | Ranking | % always/often         | Ranking | % always/often           | Ranking |
| Senegal                          | 17.26          | 57      | 73.39                                      | 22      | 68.95           | 54      | 85.38                     | 58      | 77.03                            | 66      | 81.64                  | 54      | 81.85                    | 51      |
| Sierra Leone                     | 37.24          | 136     | 37.89                                      | 135     | 28.76           | 138     | 57.68                     | 138     | 40.26                            | 141     | 36.57                  | 142     | 40.34                    | 135     |
| South Africa                     | 17.44          | 59      | 64.65                                      | 61      | 64.01           | 80      | 77.45                     | 97      | 75.04                            | 74      | 68.94                  | 101     | 67.69                    | 101     |
| Tanzania                         | 17.73          | 62      | 38.79                                      | 133     | 34.01           | 133     | 76.39                     | 100     | 67.61                            | 96      | 63.13                  | 112     | 57.63                    | 118     |
| Togo                             | 30.24          | 117     | 47.94                                      | 115     | 47.10           | 115     | 67.20                     | 124     | 52.13                            | 129     | 53.22                  | 125     | 50.30                    | 129     |
| Tunisia                          | 35.39          | 132     | 62.87                                      | 70      | 64.90           | 73      | 77.51                     | 96      | 60.41                            | 115     | 76.67                  | 78      | 78.32                    | 65      |
| Uganda                           | 35.38          | 131     | 40.90                                      | 129     | 40.47           | 125     | 67.90                     | 121     | 54.00                            | 128     | 49.26                  | 132     | 46.68                    | 131     |
| Zambia                           | 22.52          | 85      | 47.25                                      | 117     | 40.36           | 126     | 78.82                     | 88      | 67.81                            | 95      | 51.38                  | 128     | 39.80                    | 136     |
| Zimbabwe                         | 13.24          | 28      | 28.24                                      | 142     | 19.04           | 142     | 69.86                     | 116     | 45.63                            | 136     | 46.18                  | 136     | 39.20                    | 138     |
| Country                          | Mind at ease   |         | Inner peace                                |         | Health problems |         | People to count on        |         | Opportunities to make friends    |         | Safe walking alone     |         | Money or property stolen |         |
|                                  | % always/often | Ranking | % always/often                             | Ranking | % yes           | Ranking | % yes                     | Ranking | % yes                            | Ranking | % yes                  | Ranking | % yes                    | Ranking |
| Algeria                          | 69.14          | 79      | 66.67                                      | 71      | 19.63           | 31      | 82.54                     | 73      | 59.94                            | 135     | 57.32                  | 90      | 14.32                    | 86      |
| Benin                            | 48.12          | 127     | 48.27                                      | 115     | 35.82           | 128     | 45.44                     | 144     | 61.53                            | 134     | 56.99                  | 91      | 28.34                    | 113     |
| Botswana                         | 49.95          | 126     | 45.69                                      | 118     | 30.57           | 116     | 75.04                     | 100     | 71.61                            | 119     | 35.88                  | 138     | 37.00                    | 129     |
| Burkina Faso                     | -              | -       | -  | -       | 31.44           | 119     | 65.88                     | 121     | 69.89                            | 121     | 52.99                  | 101     | 29.82                    | 117     |
| Cameroon                         | 55.37          | 113     | 52.61                                      | 112     | 31.57           | 120     | 67.98                     | 117     | 67.83                            | 126     | 42.39                  | 128     | 38.50                    | 130     |
| Chad                             | 50.47          | 125     | 53.36                                      | 111     | 50.95           | 145     | 71.97                     | 108     | 79.01                            | 85      | 45.97                  | 120     | 30.83                    | 119     |
| Comoros                          | 58.74          | 105     | 38.90                                      | 132     | 47.16           | 144     | 47.18                     | 143     | 65.45                            | 130     | 62.00                  | 87      | 22.60                    | 103     |
| Congo (Brazzaville) <sup>a</sup> | 52.33          | 119     | 45.01                                      | 119     | 44.10           | 140     | 61.83                     | 130     | 72.73                            | 116     | 46.08                  | 119     | 32.91                    | 124     |
| Congo (Kinshasa) <sup>b</sup>    | 51.83          | 121     | 38.88                                      | 133     | 33.65           | 125     | 65.41                     | 124     | 69.43                            | 122     | 51.34                  | 107     | 35.73                    | 128     |

Table 1 (continued)

| Country       | Mind at ease   |         | Inner peace    |         | Health problems |         | People to count on |         | Opportunities to make friends |         | Safe walking alone |         | Money or property stolen |         |
|---------------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
|               | % always/often | Ranking | % always/often | Ranking | % yes           | Ranking | % yes              | Ranking | % yes                         | Ranking | % yes              | Ranking | % yes                    | Ranking |
| Cote d'Ivoire | 72.70          | 64      | 73.66          | 40      | 35.26           | 126     | 58.02              | 135     | 76.09                         | 101     | 53.17              | 99      | 24.31                    | 107     |
| Egypt         | 58.17          | 107     | 64.80          | 84      | 27.47           | 104     | 71.26              | 110     | 76.20                         | 98      | 84.47              | 20      | 14.05                    | 85      |
| Eswatini      | 32.02          | 139     | 30.78          | 136     | 45.78           | 142     | 71.23              | 111     | 56.48                         | 138     | 35.03              | 140     | 29.55                    | 115     |
| Ethiopia      | 41.70          | 133     | 34.85          | 134     | 15.42           | 11      | 78.17              | 92      | 80.29                         | 74      | 52.13              | 105     | 18.72                    | 96      |
| Gabon         | 67.03          | 88      | 58.28          | 101     | 24.95           | 89      | 74.66              | 102     | 65.81                         | 128     | 35.11              | 139     | 41.31                    | 134     |
| Gambia        | 73.22          | 59      | 63.28          | 88      | 35.79           | 127     | 58.77              | 132     | 79.37                         | 83      | 38.48              | 135     | 49.19                    | 136     |
| Ghana         | 68.84          | 81      | 67.26          | 66      | 18.61           | 28      | 66.58              | 119     | 74.18                         | 108     | 63.33              | 82      | 26.92                    | 111     |
| Guinea        | 58.15          | 108     | 57.11          | 104     | 39.54           | 134     | 63.56              | 129     | 73.79                         | 113     | 49.52              | 110     | 33.14                    | 126     |
| Kenya         | 52.57          | 117     | 44.13          | 122     | 19.70           | 32      | 69.13              | 114     | 78.83                         | 86      | 51.67              | 106     | 38.50                    | 131     |
| Lesotho       | 55.01          | 114     | 41.54          | 130     | 45.90           | 143     | 67.96              | 118     | 63.54                         | 133     | 28.75              | 144     | 22.55                    | 102     |
| Liberia       | 60.08          | 102     | 61.21          | 93      | 40.04           | 136     | 59.69              | 131     | 78.75                         | 87      | 32.19              | 143     | 52.69                    | 138     |
| Libya         | 75.26          | 48      | 79.83          | 17      | 20.97           | 49      | 77.79              | 93      | -                             | -       | 71.27              | 58      | -                        | -       |
| Madagascar    | 39.35          | 136     | 32.81          | 135     | 40.53           | 138     | 64.24              | 127     | 74.80                         | 106     | 39.24              | 133     | 32.43                    | 122     |
| Malawi        | 39.89          | 135     | 27.86          | 138     | 40.65           | 139     | 52.14              | 141     | 70.56                         | 120     | 42.77              | 127     | 41.30                    | 133     |
| Mali          | 77.54          | 39      | 72.28          | 44      | 30.84           | 117     | 58.64              | 134     | 78.61                         | 89      | 59.77              | 89      | 31.94                    | 121     |
| Mauritania    | 72.21          | 68      | 66.48          | 72      | 44.57           | 141     | 64.80              | 126     | 73.56                         | 115     | 54.11              | 98      | 26.57                    | 109     |
| Mauritius     | 72.07          | 69      | 71.86          | 47      | 17.29           | 19      | 87.53              | 51      | 81.13                         | 69      | 66.24              | 70      | 7.10                     | 25      |
| Morocco       | 40.06          | 134     | 46.87          | 116     | 27.04           | 99      | 55.45              | 138     | 68.61                         | 123     | 67.61              | 66      | 13.17                    | 80      |
| Mozambique    | 51.89          | 120     | 44.12          | 123     | 39.70           | 135     | 68.43              | 115     | 89.15                         | 17      | 47.78              | 116     | 19.44                    | 99      |
| Namibia       | 60.86          | 99      | 54.03          | 108     | 19.82           | 34      | 79.11              | 88      | 68.56                         | 124     | 37.82              | 136     | 35.29                    | 127     |
| Niger         | 76.18          | 43      | 67.45          | 65      | 36.62           | 129     | 58.69              | 133     | 83.34                         | 47      | 62.51              | 85      | 33.13                    | 125     |
| Nigeria       | 79.03          | 34      | 65.06          | 82      | 14.17           | 7       | 71.16              | 112     | 79.50                         | 81      | 50.36              | 109     | 30.92                    | 120     |
| Senegal       | 83.46          | 15      | 72.03          | 45      | 40.23           | 137     | 64.13              | 128     | 83.98                         | 42      | 54.68              | 96      | 27.83                    | 112     |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country                          | Mind at ease           |         | Inner peace    |         | Health problems |         | People to count on |         | Opportunities to make friends |         | Safe walking alone |         | Money or property stolen |         |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------|----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
|                                  | % always/often         | Ranking | % always/often | Ranking | % yes           | Ranking | % yes              | Ranking | % yes                         | Ranking | % yes              | Ranking | % yes                    | Ranking |
| Sierra Leone                     | 31.24                  | 140     | 26.30          | 142     | 33.13           | 123     | 52.15              | 140     | 66.18                         | 127     | 48.28              | 113     | 51.63                    | 137     |
| South Africa                     | 69.74                  | 76      | 66.86          | 69      | 22.01           | 60      | 88.57              | 45      | 81.11                         | 70      | 36.11              | 137     | 29.74                    | 116     |
| Tanzania                         | 48.00                  | 128     | 41.87          | 129     | 22.76           | 65      | 65.01              | 125     | 75.89                         | 102     | 67.15              | 68      | 29.46                    | 114     |
| Togo                             | 51.43                  | 124     | 46.20          | 117     | 37.38           | 131     | 56.34              | 136     | 59.40                         | 137     | 52.19              | 104     | 25.82                    | 108     |
| Tunisia                          | 60.96                  | 98      | 64.13          | 86      | 23.09           | 67      | 72.99              | 105     | 59.73                         | 136     | 56.89              | 92      | 16.57                    | 91      |
| Uganda                           | 51.54                  | 123     | 42.17          | 128     | 30.16           | 114     | 78.71              | 90      | 76.77                         | 96      | 45.20              | 121     | 44.28                    | 135     |
| Zambia                           | 58.95                  | 104     | 39.85          | 131     | 23.66           | 74      | 70.25              | 113     | 80.05                         | 76      | 44.49              | 123     | 39.22                    | 132     |
| Zimbabwe                         | 38.47                  | 137     | 27.30          | 140     | 27.45           | 103     | 68.16              | 116     | 73.80                         | 112     | 39.04              | 134     | 30.67                    | 118     |
| Country                          | Assaulted in past year |         | Donated money  |         | Volunteered     |         | Helped someone     |         | Enjoy work                    |         | Choice in work     |         | Lack money for food      |         |
|                                  | % yes                  | Ranking | % yes          | Ranking | % yes           | Ranking | % yes              | Ranking | % yes                         | Ranking | % yes              | Ranking | % yes                    | Ranking |
| Algeria                          | 8.60                   | 96      | 18.75          | 114     | 16.87           | 94      | 58.61              | 84      | 64.89                         | 134     | 43.17              | 139     | 19.23                    | 41      |
| Benin                            | 12.93                  | 120     | 15.17          | 128     | 15.49           | 104     | 55.53              | 92      | 85.16                         | 68      | 69.27              | 72      | 72.67                    | 131     |
| Botswana                         | 12.44                  | 117     | 10.43          | 139     | 15.20           | 107     | 73.28              | 12      | 67.29                         | 131     | 73.17              | 46      | 71.75                    | 128     |
| Burkina Faso                     | 10.98                  | 111     | 29.87          | 74      | 27.51           | 41      | 67.38              | 38      | 84.52                         | 71      | 64.16              | 101     | 56.82                    | 98      |
| Cameroon                         | 20.91                  | 134     | 25.20          | 86      | 25.68           | 48      | 74.98              | 8       | 78.57                         | 102     | 71.11              | 57      | 73.67                    | 133     |
| Chad                             | 18.54                  | 132     | 36.90          | 46      | 38.83           | 9       | 68.30              | 30      | 73.92                         | 119     | 71.39              | 55      | 71.20                    | 127     |
| Comoros                          | 9.07                   | 101     | 19.23          | 113     | 31.61           | 25      | 58.48              | 85      | 79.32                         | 99      | 63.73              | 103     | 59.97                    | 109     |
| Congo (Brazzaville) <sup>a</sup> | 19.88                  | 133     | 21.16          | 109     | 27.75           | 40      | 69.01              | 26      | 77.34                         | 105     | 81.85              | 7       | 69.81                    | 124     |
| Congo (Kinshasa) <sup>b</sup>    | 18.36                  | 130     | 21.55          | 104     | 32.47           | 21      | 69.12              | 24      | 62.53                         | 139     | 68.67              | 74      | 80.93                    | 143     |
| Cote d'Ivoire                    | 8.83                   | 97      | 24.78          | 89      | 17.63           | 90      | 66.83              | 42      | 83.29                         | 77      | 74.37              | 37      | 64.06                    | 117     |
| Egypt                            | 8.07                   | 89      | 14.04          | 131     | 6.76            | 142     | 67.96              | 32      | 73.59                         | 120     | 44.44              | 138     | 40.93                    | 69      |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country      | Assaulted in past year |         | Donated money |         | Volunteered |         | Helped someone |         | Enjoy work |         | Choice in work |         | Lack money for food |         |
|--------------|------------------------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|---------|----------------|---------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|              | % yes                  | Ranking | % yes         | Ranking | % yes       | Ranking | % yes          | Ranking | % yes      | Ranking | % yes          | Ranking | % yes               | Ranking |
| Eswatini     | 10.21                  | 108     | 13.57         | 132     | 25.35       | 50      | 71.32          | 18      | 54.93      | 142     | 49.35          | 130     | 78.37               | 141     |
| Ethiopia     | 11.59                  | 114     | 45.62         | 32      | 31.55       | 26      | 64.11          | 57      | 84.22      | 72      | 54.26          | 126     | 59.07               | 107     |
| Gabon        | 15.00                  | 123     | 13.43         | 133     | 11.98       | 120     | 63.04          | 67      | 78.79      | 101     | 74.57          | 36      | 73.13               | 132     |
| Gambia       | 24.10                  | 135     | 54.00         | 14      | 33.49       | 16      | 69.19          | 23      | 76.75      | 107     | 68.47          | 75      | 60.92               | 114     |
| Ghana        | 12.58                  | 118     | 40.21         | 40      | 33.10       | 20      | 66.61          | 44      | 75.08      | 115     | 74.20          | 40      | 55.85               | 95      |
| Guinea       | 16.99                  | 128     | 30.15         | 72      | 29.37       | 33      | 70.07          | 22      | 82.32      | 83      | 67.77          | 78      | 69.21               | 123     |
| Kenya        | 24.85                  | 137     | 50.84         | 21      | 50.25       | 4       | 76.10          | 6       | 76.42      | 110     | 70.89          | 59      | 72.47               | 130     |
| Lesotho      | 8.93                   | 99      | 8.29          | 140     | 23.53       | 64      | 63.66          | 59      | 74.23      | 117     | 66.04          | 90      | 77.18               | 140     |
| Liberia      | 28.99                  | 138     | 30.33         | 71      | 64.84       | 1       | 80.20          | 3       | 51.22      | 144     | 77.58          | 18      | 75.02               | 136     |
| Libya        | –                      | –       | 23.92         | 92      | 22.32       | 68      | 82.90          | 1       | 86.01      | 63      | 68.10          | 76      | 44.53               | 78      |
| Madagascar   | 10.14                  | 107     | 22.54         | 101     | 41.36       | 6       | 53.33          | 98      | 80.83      | 95      | 81.94          | 6       | 69.07               | 122     |
| Malawi       | 7.96                   | 88      | 17.09         | 118     | 31.20       | 28      | 65.37          | 52      | 64.84      | 135     | 82.18          | 5       | 73.93               | 134     |
| Mali         | 16.63                  | 127     | 13.40         | 134     | 25.81       | 47      | 58.63          | 83      | 84.57      | 70      | 82.72          | 4       | 57.96               | 101     |
| Mauritania   | 11.68                  | 115     | 23.11         | 96      | 34.65       | 14      | 63.40          | 64      | 71.49      | 125     | 68.03          | 77      | 60.00               | 110     |
| Mauritius    | 1.97                   | 15      | 29.14         | 78      | 25.01       | 55      | 47.99          | 117     | 93.54      | 14      | 72.09          | 51      | 35.08               | 61      |
| Morocco      | –                      | –       | 3.97          | 145     | 8.85        | 134     | 68.43          | 28      | 78.41      | 103     | 63.67          | 104     | 53.11               | 90      |
| Mozambique   | 11.39                  | 113     | 18.49         | 116     | 29.02       | 35      | 53.10          | 99      | 85.79      | 64      | 65.44          | 95      | 63.80               | 116     |
| Namibia      | 16.05                  | 126     | 16.88         | 119     | 25.16       | 52      | 71.34          | 17      | 76.61      | 109     | 72.56          | 49      | 68.40               | 121     |
| Niger        | 15.91                  | 125     | 16.79         | 120     | 22.60       | 67      | 68.25          | 31      | 68.88      | 128     | 63.92          | 102     | 76.55               | 139     |
| Nigeria      | 18.48                  | 131     | 37.30         | 45      | 39.96       | 7       | 80.92          | 2       | 76.07      | 111     | 74.74          | 35      | 74.52               | 135     |
| Senegal      | 6.33                   | 79      | 21.37         | 107     | 27.17       | 42      | 72.53          | 14      | 87.98      | 56      | 76.72          | 21      | 61.09               | 115     |
| Sierra Leone | 32.31                  | 139     | 25.85         | 84      | 42.40       | 5       | 76.30          | 5       | 49.67      | 145     | 63.47          | 105     | 76.42               | 138     |
| South Africa | 17.46                  | 129     | 26.04         | 83      | 30.30       | 30      | 68.41          | 29      | 75.33      | 113     | 70.88          | 60      | 57.07               | 100     |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country                          | Assaulted in past year |         | Donated money                     |         | Volunteered                       |         | Helped someone |         | Enjoy work |         | Choice in work |         | Lack money for food |         |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|----------------|---------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|                                  | % yes                  | Ranking | % yes                             | Ranking | % yes                             | Ranking | % yes          | Ranking | % yes      | Ranking | % yes          | Ranking | % yes               | Ranking |
| Tanzania                         | 4.94                   | 70      | 40.69                             | 37      | 14.70                             | 110     | 51.14          | 105     | 73.28      | 121     | 88.87          | 2       | 52.01               | 89      |
| Togo                             | 10.72                  | 109     | 18.54                             | 115     | 28.80                             | 36      | 59.09          | 78      | 85.50      | 67      | 72.36          | 50      | 64.15               | 118     |
| Tunisia                          | 12.72                  | 119     | 7.36                              | 142     | 10.25                             | 126     | 63.66          | 60      | 66.38      | 133     | 46.69          | 134     | 29.47               | 57      |
| Uganda                           | 24.69                  | 136     | 32.19                             | 65      | 34.12                             | 15      | 72.82          | 13      | 70.93      | 126     | 76.11          | 25      | 70.08               | 125     |
| Zambia                           | 15.50                  | 124     | 23.37                             | 95      | 26.26                             | 46      | 74.56          | 10      | 67.51      | 130     | 71.42          | 54      | 76.39               | 137     |
| Zimbabwe                         | 6.50                   | 83      | 14.32                             | 130     | 23.78                             | 63      | 63.33          | 65      | 57.23      | 141     | 66.83          | 84      | 78.73               | 142     |
| Country                          | Lack money for shelter |         | Satisfied with standard of living |         | Standard of living getting better |         |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
|                                  | % yes                  | Ranking | % satisfied                       | Ranking | % getting better                  | Ranking |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Algeria                          | 24.55                  | 60      | 61.55                             | 89      | 35.86                             | 115     |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Benin                            | 59.33                  | 141     | 40.84                             | 128     | 59.01                             | 27      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Botswana                         | 38.12                  | 82      | 24.49                             | 143     | 44.46                             | 83      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Burkina Faso                     | 49.28                  | 116     | 47.81                             | 114     | 69.56                             | 9       |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Cameroon                         | 55.01                  | 133     | 51.41                             | 109     | 55.67                             | 38      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Chad                             | 60.57                  | 143     | 58.76                             | 96      | 60.98                             | 20      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Comoros                          | 46.87                  | 103     | 40.66                             | 129     | 34.27                             | 119     |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Congo (Brazzaville) <sup>a</sup> | 55.19                  | 134     | 56.79                             | 103     | 46.64                             | 73      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Congo (Kinshasa) <sup>b</sup>    | 53.50                  | 127     | 38.43                             | 131     | 31.98                             | 124     |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Cote d'Ivoire                    | 46.40                  | 102     | 47.59                             | 115     | 56.97                             | 32      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Egypt                            | 20.50                  | 54      | 73.94                             | 60      | 36.94                             | 109     |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Eswatini                         | 35.91                  | 79      | 26.88                             | 142     | 30.09                             | 133     |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Ethiopia                         | 47.93                  | 110     | 46.54                             | 116     | 48.51                             | 65      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |
| Gabon                            | 48.49                  | 112     | 44.62                             | 122     | 43.16                             | 88      |                |         |            |         |                |         |                     |         |



Table 1 (continued)

| Country      | Lack money for shelter |         | Satisfied with standard of living |         | Standard of living getting better |         |
|--------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|
|              | % yes                  | Ranking | % satisfied                       | Ranking | % getting better                  | Ranking |
| Gambia       | 54.27                  | 130     | 28.32                             | 141     | 42.89                             | 90      |
| Ghana        | 39.81                  | 84      | 49.31                             | 111     | 45.05                             | 77      |
| Guinea       | 56.14                  | 138     | 57.50                             | 98      | 56.14                             | 35      |
| Kenya        | 58.38                  | 140     | 45.28                             | 118     | 44.54                             | 82      |
| Lesotho      | 53.73                  | 129     | 32.15                             | 138     | 32.69                             | 123     |
| Liberia      | 60.41                  | 142     | 34.13                             | 136     | 39.12                             | 100     |
| Libya        | 32.50                  | 73      | 78.34                             | 41      | 68.87                             | 10      |
| Madagascar   | 52.84                  | 125     | 33.03                             | 137     | 35.15                             | 117     |
| Malawi       | 55.51                  | 137     | 31.87                             | 139     | 34.19                             | 120     |
| Mali         | 47.53                  | 106     | 44.85                             | 121     | 45.54                             | 75      |
| Mauritania   | 51.44                  | 120     | 54.78                             | 107     | 51.78                             | 57      |
| Mauritius    | 18.94                  | 50      | 71.26                             | 67      | 53.79                             | 47      |
| Morocco      | 38.72                  | 83      | 75.89                             | 52      | 47.98                             | 68      |
| Mozambique   | 54.94                  | 132     | 75.45                             | 54      | 51.67                             | 59      |
| Namibia      | 54.31                  | 131     | 36.43                             | 132     | 53.31                             | 51      |
| Niger        | 65.39                  | 144     | 59.57                             | 93      | 54.51                             | 43      |
| Nigeria      | 48.05                  | 111     | 36.31                             | 133     | 44.35                             | 84      |
| Senegal      | 50.86                  | 119     | 56.16                             | 105     | 63.07                             | 16      |
| Sierra Leone | 58.19                  | 139     | 30.23                             | 140     | 26.01                             | 136     |
| South Africa | 31.60                  | 71      | 56.35                             | 104     | 55.40                             | 40      |
| Tanzania     | 37.83                  | 80      | 38.58                             | 130     | 40.74                             | 95      |
| Togo         | 41.92                  | 91      | 34.43                             | 135     | 51.40                             | 60      |
| Tunisia      | 20.66                  | 55      | 55.71                             | 106     | 38.37                             | 102     |
| Uganda       | 45.37                  | 97      | 45.18                             | 119     | 47.23                             | 71      |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Country  | Lack money for shelter |         | Satisfied with standard of living |         | Standard of living getting better |         |
|----------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|
|          | % yes                  | Ranking | % satisfied                       | Ranking | % getting better                  | Ranking |
| Zambia   | 46.24                  | 101     | 35.95                             | 134     | 45.69                             | 74      |
| Zimbabwe | 40.48                  | 86      | 44.32                             | 123     | 31.29                             | 126     |

Further information about the items can be found in the Supplemental Text. Hyphen (-) indicates the item was not completed by participants in the country. <sup>a</sup>Republic of the Congo. <sup>b</sup>Democratic Republic of the Congo. Estimates were computed using weights provided by Gallup

## 6 Results

For all 38 well-being indicators that were analysed, we report two metrics for each of the 40 African countries included in the GWP: (a) the country's ranking (out of all countries in the GWP); and (b) a relevant descriptive statistic for each item (i.e., mean or percentage). The results are reported in Table 1.

## 7 Life Evaluations

Life evaluation scores, combining present and future evaluations, vary across African countries. For instance, Mauritius shows a high combined life evaluation mean of 6.46 (ranking 68th), reflecting its relatively better socioeconomic conditions and political stability compared to other African countries. In contrast, Congo (Kinshasa) presents a lower mean for combined life evaluation of 4.78 (ranking 139th), indicative of the challenges that the country faces. The difference in life evaluation scores between present and future outlook, as seen with Botswana (mean of 2.65, ranking 20th) and Tunisia (mean of 1.64, ranking 65th), points to varying degrees of optimism across the continent.

## 8 Daily Emotions and Experiences

A wide range of daily emotions and experiences were observed across the African countries. For instance, Botswana ranks 54th on the well-rested item, whereas Egypt ranks 130th. The percentage of people treated with respect is notably high in Mauritius at 95.44% (ranked 22nd), contrasting with Chad where only 75.33% felt the same (ranked 134th). Cross-country variability may suggest cultural and societal differences in daily emotions and experiences on the continent.

## 9 Quality of Life

*Health.* Nigeria stands out with less than one-fifth of participants reporting that they had health problems (14.17%, ranking 7th). Conversely, Comoros experiences significant health challenges, as indicated by a comparatively high percentage of participants endorsing health problems (47.16%, ranking 144th).

*Personal Safety and Security.* In terms of feeling stable and secure, Mali is highlighted with 87.38% of participants endorsing this item (ranking 21st), which could point to the role that strong social and government structures have in contributing to a sense of safety. Togo, however, with only 55.61% of participants reporting that they felt calm (ranking 135th), may reflect ongoing concerns about personal safety.

*Work.* Job satisfaction appears to be relatively high in Senegal, with 87.98% of participants reporting enjoyment in their work (ranking 56th). Whereas employment conditions are more positive in Senegal, comparatively lower enjoyment of work in Liberia (51.22%, ranking 144th) suggests that improvements in employment conditions may be needed in the country.

*Poverty.* Sierra Leone, with 76.42% reporting a lack of money for food (ranking 138th), highlights acute economic challenges facing the country. A comparatively lower percentage of participants endorsed this item in Algeria (19.23%, ranking 41st), suggesting less pronounced economic disparities compared to Sierra Leone.

*Standard of Living.* In Senegal, perceptions about the standard of living improving (63.07%, ranking 16th) contrasts with Sierra Leone's dire outlook, where only 26.01% indicated that their standard of living appears to be getting better (ranking 136th). Such differences are perhaps indicative of varying levels of development and prosperity across the continent.

## 10 Discussion

Our descriptive analysis of multidimensional well-being across African countries and regions highlights the importance of applying a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to understanding well-being in Africa. Findings from our analysis of recent GWP data reveal several trends and provide valuable insights into variations in well-being indicators across different African countries. For example, life evaluation rankings were somewhat varied across African countries, with higher life evaluation generally seen in countries that have better socioeconomic conditions, political stability, and overall quality of life. Through the lens of the capabilities approach (Sen, 1999), which emphasizes the importance of group's freedom to choose and achieve well-being due to resources like income, education, and healthcare, this pattern of findings is not coincidental. Many countries with higher life evaluation scores, such as Mauritius and Algeria, are likely to have better access to the kinds of capabilities that support overall well-being. Differences between present and future life evaluation indicate people's optimism and expectations for the future compared to present. Goal satisfaction theories, such as Maslow's "hierarchy" of needs (Maslow, 1943), may explain these variations, as people in countries with lower present life evaluation may be more motivated to strive for better living conditions to satisfy their basic and psychological needs.

When exploring the percentages of people feeling well-rested and treated with respect, notable variation was observed across the countries. One possible explanation for this variation is differences in collectivistic orientation, such as cultural values (e.g., Ubuntu) and practices that prioritize community engagement and mutual aid (Appiah, 2008; Metz & Gaie, 2010a, 2010b), or social norms that emphasize respect and dignity in interactions, as exemplified by Rwanda's emphasis on reconciliation and unity post-genocide (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Reyntjens, 2016). The disparities in responses to learning or doing something interesting across African countries suggest varied daily experiences. However, attributing these differences solely to educational opportunities and infrastructure might be misleading, since a single day's response may reflect immediate personal or environmental factors rather than systemic educational disparities (Sen, 1999; UNESCO, 2014). Therefore, responses might reflect a wide range of factors influencing daily life, including but not limited to, personal circumstances, cultural practices, and immediate social environments. While education and infrastructure undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping opportunities for learning and personal development, the direct linkage between a single day's activities and these broader systemic factors warrants careful consideration.

In some nations that had relatively high percentages of participants who reported smiling or laughing the previous day (e.g., such as Gambia and South Africa), the cultural dynamics are often imbued with joy and resilience (Fredrickson, 2001). Calmness responses also showed variation across countries. Countries with comparatively higher endorsement of calmness, such as Gambia, Ghana, and Senegal, may reflect common denominators shared among these countries. For example, people living in these countries tend to relatively have better access to healthcare (World Health Organization, 2020), more stable governance structures (Transparency International, 2019), and stronger social support systems aid (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). These social-structural factors not only have the potential to indirectly support the regulation of negative affective states, but may also play a foundational role in the cultural and social fabric that underpins community well-being.

Research indicates that factors such as healthcare access, economic development, and social support have the potential to influence physical pain, worry, and sadness (World Health Organization, 2017; Layard et al., 2014). Accordingly, African countries like Algeria, Mauritius, and Nigeria reported lower levels of these negative experiences, which may be attributed to better healthcare (e.g., in Algeria and Mauritius), political stability (e.g., in Algeria and Nigeria), and social support (e.g., in Nigeria) in these countries. For instance, Algeria has made healthcare more accessible through rural primary care facilities and universal healthcare policies (Hamadi & Datoussaid, 2019). Mauritius benefits from political stability through its resilient democratic institutions and regular fair elections (World Bank, 2012). Nigeria enjoys extended family networks and political stability that can support well-being (Ebimgbo et al., 2019). Stress, another important well-being indicator, is often associated with economic, social, and political conditions (Cohen et al., 2007). Lower stress levels in Mauritius and Algeria may be tied to their comparatively better political stability, healthcare access, and social support systems.

Our findings also highlight various well-being differences across African countries, such as for anger, life balance, harmony, stability, security, and contentment. While our findings suggest feelings of stability and security in countries like Egypt, Mali, and Mauritius, such interpretations must be approached with caution due to the dynamic political landscapes within these regions. For instance, despite a relatively low percentage of participants in Egypt reporting that they were assaulted in the last year, the country has faced significant political instability (Abdelkader, 2017; Maher & Zhao, 2022), underscoring the complexities of attributing well-being solely to social and government structures. Individual perceptions of well-being on any given day can be influenced by many factors beyond immediate political or social stability, reflecting the notion that security is a foundational need (Maslow, 1943). However, the relatively high percentage of participants who endorsed experiencing anger in the Congo (Kinshasa) could be attributed to ongoing political instability and conflict, which may have detrimental consequences for individual well-being (Verweijen, 2016). Conversely, the low percentage of participants who endorsed the anger item in Mauritius may reflect a more stable political environment and stronger social bonds, which can foster a sense of security and support the well-being of the population (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2011).

The comparatively high levels of life balance and harmony observed in Mali could be partly attributed to a strong sense of social identity and community support. This finding resonates with the idea that a strong sense of belonging and connection to social groups

can positively impact well-being and life satisfaction, as documented in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The relationship between economic development and well-being is complex, as wealthier countries may not necessarily have higher well-being scores. Some prior work suggests that once a certain level of income has been reached, additional wealth may not significantly contribute to happiness (e.g., Diener et al., 1995; Shin, 1980). Variation in endorsement of the health problems item between Mauritius and Egypt, as well as the differences in the life evaluations between Algeria and Congo (Brazzaville), are perhaps indicative of the complex link between economic development and well-being. Factors such as the distribution of wealth, social support systems, and access to healthcare could also contribute to cross-country differences on these items.

Taken together, understanding the well-being of individuals in African countries requires considering various perspectives from psychology, sociology, and economics. While economic development plays a role in well-being, other factors such as social support, access to healthcare, and political stability are also crucial in shaping the overall well-being of individuals. Generally, countries with higher GDP per capita tend to have better well-being (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2008). In Africa, wealthier countries like Mauritius and South Africa, tend to rank higher on positive indicators such as enjoyment and smile or laugh. However, this relationship is not linear, and some countries with lower GDP per capita, like Eswatini and Lesotho, also have relatively high enjoyment rankings. This discrepancy highlights the importance of considering other factors besides economic development when examining well-being. Political stability can also influence well-being. Countries with stable governance structures and low levels of conflict generally exhibit better well-being (Helliwell et al., 2021). For example, Botswana, which has a relatively stable political environment, ranks higher in calmness (79th) compared to conflict-affected countries like Congo (Kinshasa) (133rd). However, political stability alone does not guarantee high well-being, as shown by Gabon's low rankings in enjoyment (127th) and calmness (122nd) in the current study.

Social structures, including education, healthcare, and social support, also have the potential to influence well-being. Although countries with better access to healthcare, education, and social support tend to have higher well-being (Diener et al., 2018), Kenya shows an interesting paradox in its well-being indicators: despite having made notable strides in improving access to healthcare and education, it ranks relatively low in combined life evaluation (115th) and yet ranks relatively high in enjoyment (62nd) and smiling or laughing (47th). This discrepancy prompts a closer examination of the nature of well-being experienced by Kenyans, including questions about whether Kenyans might be experiencing or expressing more hedonic well-being, characterized by the pursuit of pleasure and immediate satisfaction, as opposed to eudemonic well-being, which is associated with finding meaning and fulfilment in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This pattern of findings may reflect the complex landscape of well-being in Kenya, where daily positive emotions are prevalent even in the face of challenges that may affect overall satisfaction with life. Azibo's (1991) meta-theory provides a framework for understanding the African personality from a culturally specific standpoint, emphasizing the importance of African cultural values, communalism, and spirituality in shaping individual identities and behaviors. This perspective may be instrumental in interpreting this pattern of findings in Kenya, as experiences such as enjoyment and smiling or laughter may be deeply rooted in cultural expressions of joy and community engagement that are characteristic of many African societies.

## 11 Well-Being Across Regions of Africa

### 11.1 Central Africa

The findings for the Central African region suggest that well-being indicators may be influenced by cultural factors, such as communalism, which emphasizes the importance of interdependence and group harmony (Gyekye, 1997). This communalism manifests through comparatively high percentages of volunteering and helping someone in a number of these countries (e.g., Chad and Congo (Kinshasa)), indicating a shared responsibility for the welfare of others (a core aspect of communal values). While communalism can provide social support in times of need, it may also create tension and conflict when resources are scarce (Tejani, 2007). In situations where there is competition for limited resources, the communal orientation can lead to disagreements and conflicts within the community, which may be reflected in comparatively higher percentages of anger and stress reported in countries like Chad and Congo (Kinshasa). Furthermore, the history of political turmoil and conflict in the Central African region has had a significant impact on people's well-being (Gyekye, 1997). Political instability, violence, and lack of effective governance can create an environment where basic needs are not met, social support systems are weakened, and people's sense of security is compromised. These factors can lead to increased stress, worry, and lower overall well-being. Central Africa's history of political turmoil and conflict is likely to have had a profound impact on the well-being of people in this region, adding to the complex picture of individual well-being within this region.

### 12 Eastern Africa

Eastern African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, exhibit a range of well-being rankings and indicators. Maslow's (1943) "hierarchy" of needs sheds light on how social and economic conditions might well-being by impeding the fulfilment of basic needs. This framework emphasizes the role of education as a foundational element for advancing beyond basic survival needs towards achieving higher-order psychological and self-fulfilment needs that enhance overall well-being. Notably, Kenya and Uganda excel in offering opportunities for learning something new (ranking 9th and 10th, respectively), in contrast to Ethiopia (ranking 121st). This disparity highlights potential inequalities in educational and personal development opportunities across Eastern Africa, which could substantially impact well-being. Further examination of well-being indicators reveals diverse expressions of enjoyment and smiling or laughter within this African region. Kenya stands out with comparatively high rankings in enjoyment (62nd) and smiling or laughing (47th), suggesting a cultural inclination toward positive emotional expressions despite challenges (Biswas-Diener et al., 2005). However, this narrative changes when considering Ethiopia's lower rankings on similar variables like smiling or laughing (112th) and enjoyment (84th), indicating a different set of cultural and historical influences that shape expressions of positive emotions and experiences of well-being more broadly within the region. Durkheim's theory of social integration (Durkheim, 1897; also see Kroh & Prechsl, 2023) offers another way to understand the well-being findings for Eastern Africa. According to this theory, the degree of social integration and social capital within a society can influence well-being. In Eastern African countries, generally lower reports of life being in

balance, experiencing harmony with others, and feeling stable and secure might indicate lower levels of social integration and social capital. Contrary to the research on widespread challenges in safety, health, and economic stability in the region (see Lukhele, 2015; Riddle et al., 2023), our data in some Eastern African countries for learning something new (e.g., Uganda) and enjoyment (e.g., Kenya) points to a complex picture of resilience and positivity amidst socioeconomic challenges.

### 13 Northern Africa

Countries in the North African region, including Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia, display a variety of rankings across the indicators of well-being. One potential explanation for variations in well-being among these countries is the capabilities approach (Sen, 1999), which emphasises the importance of income, education, and healthcare access in determining people's ability to function and achieve well-being. For example, Egypt stands out with a relatively low ranking on the well-rested indicator (130th) compared a higher ranking on the treated with respect indicator (78th), which may reflect disparities in resource access and lingering effects of political instability and social unrest in the country (Abdelkader, 2017). Several countries in this region were also ranked among the lowest of any country in enjoyment, smile or laugh, and calmness (e.g., Algeria, Tunisia), indicating relatively worse well-being on these indicators compared to other countries in Africa. Although this pattern of findings does not apply to all North African countries or across all indicators of well-being, it is possible that our findings for certain well-being metrics in some North African countries may reflect cultural differences (Hofstede, 2001) that could be explored further in subsequent work concerning the cultural impacts on well-being in difference parts of Africa.

### 14 Western Africa

The findings in West African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal can be discussed using extended family systems theory. Countries in this region generally had moderate combined life evaluation rankings (e.g., Ghana ranking 78th and Nigeria ranking 63rd). High rankings for some countries for experiencing harmony with others, such as in Nigeria (29th) and Senegal (58th), could be attributed to extended family systems that foster social relationships and communal harmony (Nkama, 2022; Ukagwu, 2022). This theoretical perspective emphasizes intergenerational cooperation, the transmission of cultural values, and mutual support among community members (e.g., *wazobia* in Nigeria), which might contribute to the comparatively higher rankings for the harmony with others item in certain West African countries (Negedu & Ojomah, 2022). Evidence of variation in well-being within the West African region, such as Senegal ranking comparatively high on enjoyment (49th) and Liberia having one of the lowest rankings of any country on enjoyment (140th), could suggest differences in cultural, social, economic, or political factors. Lower rankings for worry, life in balance, thoughts and feelings in harmony, and feeling stable and secure in some countries, such as Benin, might be indicative of challenges related to safety, health, and economic stability in some parts of the region. Although extended family systems may provide support and promote social cohesion (Ukagwu, 2022), external factors such as political instability, poverty, and health crises might negatively impact the well-being of



people living in many parts of the West African region. Conversely, comparatively lower rankings for anger, health problems, and money or property stolen could be signs that traditional social systems in this region of Africa might not be sufficient to cope with modern challenges, or that they are under strain from external influences.

## 15 Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia exhibit varying well-being rankings, which can be understood using several concepts and theories. Economic disparities and social conditions impact people's ability to fulfil their basic and psychological needs, resulting in diverse well-being outcomes. Utilizing Maslow's "hierarchy" of needs (Maslow, 1943) as a theoretical framework, variations in well-being rankings among Southern African countries may reflect disparities in the satisfaction of needs. For example, South Africa's higher combined life evaluation ranking (61st) might indicate that a larger proportion of the population can satisfy their basic and psychological needs compared to Zimbabwe, where a low ranking on combined life evaluation (143rd) suggests a more significant struggle in meeting these needs. The diverse well-being rankings in Southern Africa may also be attributed to differences in political, economic, and social contexts. Modernization and post-modernization theory may help to explain how these contextual factors might influence well-being (Zinkina et al., 2022). According to this theory, as societies undergo modernization, they experience changes in values, beliefs, and social norms, which in turn affect well-being. Southern African countries are at different stages of modernization, perhaps contributing to different experiences of well-being within the region. Examination of other well-being indicators provides evidence of the nuances that exist in the region. Lesotho, for example, shows somewhat of a paradoxical pattern with a comparatively lower ranking in calmness (129th) but a higher stress ranking (55th) relative to other Southern African countries, suggesting that low stress may not necessarily correspond with experiencing calmness in some contexts. South Africa and Lesotho display contrasting profiles in their expression of positive emotions, such as on rankings for smiling or laughing (South Africa 15th, Lesotho 63rd) and enjoyment (South Africa 38th, Lesotho 70th), potentially reflecting the influence of sociocultural and contextual factors on well-being (e.g., local economy, healthcare infrastructure, cultural practices).

Well-being varies substantially across regions of Africa, reflecting the diverse socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts of the continent. Although some regions generally rank better across different indicators of well-being compared to others, variations within each region highlight the importance of examining each country's unique context when considering multidimensional well-being. Understanding these variations can help inform policies and interventions aimed at improving human flourishing across the African continent.

## 16 Practical Considerations, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

We can infer from the general discussion that countries with lower socioeconomic conditions, less political stability, and poorer overall quality of life might generally have fewer opportunities for positive social interactions and fewer capabilities to draw on. The

capabilities approach (Sen, 1999) emphasizes the importance of an individual's freedom to choose and achieve well-being through access to resources such as income, education, and healthcare. This perspective is crucial when considering the well-being disparate observed across various countries. For example, in the domain of learning something new, Kenya stands out with a high ranking (9th), suggesting a vibrant environment for intellectual growth and curiosity. This contrasts with the challenges faced in the same dimension by Algeria, which is ranked 125th, possibly pointing to potential gaps in educational access or quality that could impede personal development and societal progress. In healthcare, the ranking of Namibia (22nd) for physical pain signifies relatively better health outcomes or access to pain management resources compared to Chad (which ranks 144th), highlighting critical healthcare system challenges that may require urgent attention to support well-being (see Chipare et al., 2020). Nigeria's higher ranking (11th) in the life evaluation (difference) metric (reflecting a high degree of optimism about the future) may suggest a more favorable economic outlook or public confidence in future development, whereas Botswana's ranking (128th) may point to economic concerns or uncertainties about future growth and stability. These findings challenge simplistic narratives, revealing a complex tapestry of strengths and vulnerabilities that influence opportunities for positive social interactions and individual capabilities. Moreover, our findings indicate that even in contexts of social-structural vulnerability, there are dimensions of life that may contribute positively to the well-being of individuals (Cowden et al., 2020).

The methodological, practical, and sociocultural implications of the items used in the GWP to assess well-being have significant bearings on the results and their interpretation, particularly in the context of diverse African countries. For example, the reliance on a single-day snapshot to assess emotions and experiences may not fully capture the complexity of individuals' emotional states over time. Emotional states can fluctuate daily, suggesting that assessments based on a single day may not reflect an individual's overall emotional well-being (Kahneman et al., 2004). Furthermore, asking participants to recall specific details about the previous day can introduce recall bias, where memory can be selective and influenced by a person's current mood, potentially distorting the accuracy of reported experiences (Schwarz & Sudman, 1994). This potential bias may compromise the reliability of the data, especially in cross-cultural contexts where the interpretation and expression of emotions can vary significantly (Matsumoto, 2001). Future research might consider employing alternative measurement approaches that could provide a richer, context sensitive understanding of well-being across the diverse continent of Africa (Diener et al., 2010a, 2010b; Norenzayan & Heine, 2005).

Our descriptive analysis revealed substantial diversity in well-being on the African continent, reflecting the unique social, economic, cultural, and historical contexts of African countries and regions. The application of different theoretical lenses, such as Maslow's "hierarchy" of needs, the capabilities approach, and cultural dimensions theory, provides a framework for understanding cross-country variation in well-being. However, our findings are limited by the interpretive challenges associated with the nature of the data. The indicators of well-being employed in this analysis, while informative, may not fully capture the complexities and nuanced realities of well-being across different African countries. This could potentially result in an incomplete portrayal of individual experiences and variability between countries and regions. Additionally, the theoretical perspectives that we drew on may not adequately address the various factors influencing well-being indicators. Another pertinent constraint is the cross-sectional nature of the data, which restricts our ability to interpret changes over time or draw conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships between variables.

Although this study offers a broad and comprehensive picture of multidimensional well-being in numerous countries within Africa, our analytic approach did not include adjustment for potential confounding. Therefore, it is possible that some differences between countries may be confounded by unmeasured factors. Along similar lines, yearly data collection for the GWP from 2020–2022 varied across the African countries that were included in our analysis. Data collection in many countries over this three-year period was affected by pandemic-related challenges, such that some African countries had more years of data available than others. In light of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on human flourishing in Africa (Counted et al., 2022; Govender et al., 2020; Wilson Fadji et al., 2023), differences in indicators of well-being could be due to differences in the availability of data across countries from 2020 to 2022. For example, countries that did not have data for 2020 or 2021 may show higher well-being on certain indicators compared to countries that had data for all three years because the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on well-being are likely to have been stronger during the early part of the public health crisis (Cowden et al., 2023a, 2023b). As a result, some caution should be applied when comparing well-being across the countries included in this study.

While our study helps to enrich the existing body of empirical literature on well-being in Africa, it lacks a detailed proposition of frameworks or guidelines that could inform the revision or refinement of survey items and the data collection process for the GWP to align more closely with the African context. Our findings largely provide an overview of the GWP data on well-being in Africa, without offering concrete steps for tailoring the research approach to better capture more unique aspects of well-being in Africa. To address these limitations and enrich future research, it may be important to consider a more contextually sensitive framework (e.g., collectivistic social orientation) that accounts for the distinct social, economic, and cultural landscapes of African countries. Adopting a collectivistic perspective can provide insight into the role of communal support in buffering against the adverse effects of socioeconomic challenges and political instability on well-being in Africa (Diener et al., 2018; Sen, 1999). In highlighting the significance of social capital and communal networks in enhancing individual and collective well-being, this approach underscores the necessity of incorporating cultural and social contexts into well-being policies and interventions on the continent.

Follow-up research is needed to explore the specific factors that contribute to well-being disparities within and between African regions. This research could involve in-depth case studies and qualitative methods to better understand the experiences of individuals in different countries. When designing and implementing interventions to improve well-being, consideration should be given to the diverse well-being outcomes across Africa. Policies should be tailored to the unique contexts of each country, taking into account the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence well-being. Efforts should be made to strengthen data collection and reporting on well-being indicators in African countries. Improved data quality will allow for monitoring of multidimensional well-being at the population level and support evidence-based policymaking (Cowden et al., 2023a, 2023b).

## 17 Conclusion

In conclusion, our intracontinental descriptive analysis of the GWP data provided some evidence of disparities in well-being across African countries. Such variability in well-being underscores the importance of targeted interventions that consider the unique

cultural, economic, and social contexts of each country to effectively support the well-being of local citizens. Strengthening social capital, improving health disparities, and fostering economic development are critical capabilities that Africa must continue to develop for the promotion of human flourishing across the continent.

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## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The authors declare that they have no known competing interests that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

**Ethical Approval and Informed Consent** All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Thus, the survey was conducted by Gallup in accordance with their established ethical procedures, including informed consent.

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