




# Modeling Women's Psychological Flourishing Based on Self-Compassion, Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Social Support, and Body Appreciation: The Mediating Role of Psychological Flexibility

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The present study aimed to develop and test a structural model of women's psychological flourishing based on self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation, with psychological flexibility serving as a mediating variable.

**Methods and Materials:** This descriptive-correlational study employed a cross-sectional design and structural equation modeling (SEM). The study population consisted of adult women residing in Canada in 2026. A total of 620 women were selected through online convenience sampling and completed a battery of standardized questionnaires, including the Flourishing Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Body Appreciation Scale-2, and Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 29 and AMOS version 29. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analyses, confirmatory factor analyses, and structural equation modeling were performed. The significance of indirect effects was examined using a bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples and 95% confidence intervals.

**Findings:** The measurement model demonstrated excellent fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.12$ , CFI = .957, TLI = .951, RMSEA = .042, SRMR = .038). Significant positive correlations were observed among all study variables ( $p < .001$ ). Structural equation modeling revealed that self-compassion ( $\beta = .26$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ), perceived social support ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ ), body appreciation ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and psychological flexibility ( $\beta = .42$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted psychological flourishing. Furthermore, self-compassion ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), perceived social support ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and body appreciation ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted psychological flexibility. Bootstrap analyses confirmed significant indirect effects of all predictor variables on flourishing through psychological flexibility. The

model explained 64% of the variance in psychological flexibility and 78% of the variance in psychological flourishing.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation contribute significantly to women's psychological flourishing both directly and indirectly through psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility emerged as a central mechanism linking personal strengths and social resources to optimal psychological functioning. These results highlight the importance of multidimensional strengths-based interventions aimed at enhancing flexibility, self-compassion, emotional competencies, social connectedness, and positive body image to promote flourishing and well-being among women.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Flourishing, Self-Compassion, Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Social Support, Body Appreciation, Psychological Flexibility*

## 1. Introduction

Women's psychological flourishing has emerged as a central construct within contemporary positive psychology due to its emphasis on optimal functioning, meaning, personal growth, positive relationships, and the realization of human potential. Unlike traditional deficit-oriented perspectives that focus primarily on psychological symptoms and dysfunction, flourishing reflects a comprehensive state of well-being characterized by emotional, psychological, and social prosperity. Recent developments in positive psychology have increasingly emphasized flourishing as a critical indicator of human adaptation, resilience, and quality of life across diverse populations and contexts (Corrigan et al., 2025; Shrestha, 2024). The growing interest in flourishing stems from evidence demonstrating its associations with improved physical health, stronger interpersonal relationships, enhanced occupational performance, greater life satisfaction, and increased resilience in the face of adversity (Kemp, 2025; Papazoglou et al., 2021). As contemporary societies continue to face social, economic, technological, and psychological challenges, understanding the factors that contribute to flourishing among women has become increasingly important.

Women encounter unique developmental, social, and psychological experiences that may influence their pathways toward flourishing. These experiences include gender-specific social expectations, caregiving responsibilities, body image concerns, emotional labor demands, and exposure to societal pressures regarding appearance and achievement. Research has demonstrated that women's well-being is influenced not only by external circumstances but also by internal psychological resources that facilitate adaptive coping and self-development (El-Jor et al., 2025; Trinko et al., 2025). Consequently, identifying psychological strengths that promote flourishing may

contribute to the development of effective interventions aimed at enhancing women's mental health and overall quality of life. Contemporary positive psychology frameworks emphasize that flourishing emerges through the interaction of personal strengths, emotional competencies, social resources, and adaptive self-regulation processes rather than through any single factor alone (Segall & Kristeller, 2022; Shrestha, 2024).

Among the personal strengths associated with flourishing, self-compassion has received substantial empirical attention. Self-compassion refers to an individual's ability to respond to personal suffering, failures, and inadequacies with kindness, understanding, and acceptance rather than harsh self-criticism. It encompasses self-kindness, common humanity, and mindful awareness of difficult experiences. Theoretically, self-compassion provides a stable source of emotional support that protects individuals from excessive self-judgment and promotes adaptive emotional regulation. Individuals high in self-compassion tend to experience lower levels of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress while reporting greater well-being, resilience, and life satisfaction (Irmischer et al., 2024; Kausar et al., 2022). Recent evidence has further suggested that self-compassion functions as a protective factor across various populations by enhancing coping resources and facilitating psychological growth during challenging life circumstances (Ravanbakhsh et al., 2023; Tendhar et al., 2024). Moreover, self-compassion has been consistently linked with positive psychological outcomes, including flourishing, suggesting that compassionate self-relating may represent a foundational mechanism for optimal functioning (Rofiqah, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025).

Another critical determinant of flourishing is emotional intelligence, which refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in

oneself and others. Emotional intelligence contributes to adaptive functioning by facilitating emotional awareness, interpersonal competence, stress management, and effective decision-making. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence generally demonstrate superior coping abilities and stronger social relationships, both of which contribute to enhanced well-being. Research has shown that emotional intelligence is positively associated with resilience, occupational satisfaction, mental health, and psychological adjustment across a variety of contexts (Liu & Boyatzis, 2021; Maillet & Richard, 2021). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been identified as a key meta-skill supporting motivation, emotional regulation, and self-development, thereby facilitating long-term psychological well-being (Lu et al., 2024; Mitsea et al., 2024). The emerging literature also suggests that emotional intelligence contributes to flourishing by promoting adaptive emotional experiences and enhancing individuals' ability to navigate complex social environments (Gannamraju, 2025; Yoshinaga & Cooper, 2025).

Perceived social support constitutes another important predictor of psychological flourishing. Social support refers to the perception that one is cared for, valued, and able to receive assistance from family members, friends, and significant others. According to social support theory, supportive interpersonal relationships provide emotional reassurance, practical assistance, and opportunities for meaningful social engagement, all of which contribute to psychological well-being. Extensive research has demonstrated that perceived social support is associated with reduced psychological distress, greater life satisfaction, improved coping, and enhanced mental health outcomes (Rofiqah, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). Social support may be particularly important for women, who often rely on interpersonal connections as significant sources of emotional regulation and stress management. Moreover, positive social relationships have been recognized as a core component of flourishing itself, suggesting that perceived support may influence flourishing both directly and indirectly through other psychological resources (Corrigan et al., 2025; Papazoglou et al., 2021).

In recent years, increasing attention has been devoted to the role of body appreciation as a contributor to psychological well-being. Body appreciation represents a positive body image characterized by acceptance, respect, gratitude, and favorable attitudes toward one's body regardless of perceived imperfections. Unlike traditional body image research that emphasizes dissatisfaction and

pathology, body appreciation reflects a strengths-based perspective focused on positive embodiment and self-acceptance. Positive body image has been associated with higher self-esteem, better mental health, greater life satisfaction, and improved psychological functioning (Longhurst, 2021; Munroe, 2022). For women, body appreciation may be particularly relevant because societal appearance standards often contribute to body dissatisfaction and psychological distress. Individuals who appreciate and accept their bodies are more likely to engage in adaptive self-care behaviors, experience positive emotions, and maintain healthier psychological functioning (El-Jor et al., 2025; Irmischer et al., 2024). Consequently, body appreciation may serve as an important resource contributing to flourishing and overall well-being.

Although self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation have each been independently linked to positive psychological outcomes, contemporary theoretical perspectives suggest that their effects may operate through broader self-regulatory mechanisms. One such mechanism is psychological flexibility, a construct originating from acceptance and commitment theory. Psychological flexibility refers to the capacity to remain aware of present-moment experiences while pursuing valued goals despite the presence of difficult thoughts, emotions, or circumstances. Individuals who demonstrate greater psychological flexibility tend to exhibit adaptive coping, emotional resilience, and effective behavioral regulation, thereby promoting mental health and well-being (Ravanbakhsh et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025).

Psychological flexibility has gained considerable attention as a central process underlying positive psychological functioning. Rather than attempting to eliminate unpleasant internal experiences, psychologically flexible individuals learn to accept such experiences while maintaining commitment to meaningful actions. This capacity promotes resilience and adaptive functioning across diverse life domains. Evidence suggests that psychological flexibility is associated with lower psychological distress, greater life satisfaction, enhanced emotional regulation, and increased flourishing (Panditharathne Nishantha Kumara Wijesekara & Chen, 2021; Razza et al., 2025). Furthermore, interventions targeting mindfulness, acceptance, and self-awareness have demonstrated significant improvements in psychological flexibility and related well-being outcomes (Kazanjian, 2022; Tendhar et al., 2024).

Theoretical and empirical evidence indicates that self-compassion may foster psychological flexibility by encouraging individuals to approach difficult experiences with openness and acceptance rather than avoidance. Similarly, emotional intelligence may enhance flexibility by improving emotional awareness and regulation capacities. Perceived social support may facilitate flexible adaptation through the provision of emotional resources and interpersonal security, while body appreciation may contribute to flexibility by reducing self-critical cognitive processes and promoting acceptance of personal experiences (Kauser et al., 2022; Liu & Boyatzis, 2021; Longhurst, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). Consequently, psychological flexibility may function as a key mechanism linking these personal and interpersonal resources to flourishing.

Recent developments in mindfulness, contemplative science, and positive psychology provide additional support for this perspective. Studies have emphasized the role of mindfulness, self-awareness, detached self-observation, and acceptance-based processes in promoting adaptive functioning and psychological growth (Konte, 2023; Loncar & Fiskum, 2025). Mindfulness-based interventions have been associated with improvements in emotional wellness, self-compassion, resilience, and flourishing across diverse populations (Razza et al., 2025; Sansone, 2024). Furthermore, contemporary theories suggest that flourishing emerges when individuals cultivate awareness, emotional balance, interpersonal connectedness, and meaning-oriented engagement with life experiences (Isaac, 2026; Segall & Kristeller, 2022).

The relevance of flourishing has become even more pronounced in the context of contemporary societal challenges, including technological transformation, occupational stress, public health crises, and increasing demands on psychological adaptation. Emerging research highlights the importance of cultivating internal strengths and psychological resources that enable individuals to thrive despite adversity (Armaou et al., 2022; Cuchet et al., 2025). Positive psychological interventions focusing on compassion, emotional competencies, social connectedness, and psychological flexibility have shown promising effects in enhancing well-being and flourishing across educational, healthcare, workplace, and community settings (Corrigan et al., 2025; Mitsea et al., 2024). These findings underscore the need for comprehensive models that integrate multiple psychological strengths and mechanisms within a unified explanatory framework.

Despite growing evidence regarding the individual contributions of self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, body appreciation, and psychological flexibility, relatively few studies have simultaneously examined these constructs within a comprehensive structural model of women's flourishing. Existing research has often focused on isolated predictors or specific populations, limiting understanding of how these variables interact to promote optimal psychological functioning. Moreover, the potential mediating role of psychological flexibility in linking personal strengths and social resources to flourishing remains insufficiently explored among adult women. Addressing this gap may provide valuable theoretical insights regarding the mechanisms underlying flourishing and inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing women's well-being.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to model women's psychological flourishing based on self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation, with psychological flexibility examined as a mediating variable.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study design and Participant

This study employed a cross-sectional correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the direct and indirect relationships among self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, body appreciation, psychological flexibility, and psychological flourishing in women. The study population consisted of adult women residing in Canada during the 2026 research period. Participants were recruited through online advertisements distributed via social media platforms, women's community organizations, university mailing lists, and public online forums. Inclusion criteria included being female, residing in Canada, being at least 18 years of age, possessing sufficient English proficiency to complete the questionnaires, and providing informed consent for participation. Individuals who reported severe cognitive impairment or incomplete questionnaire responses were excluded from the final analysis. Using recommendations for structural equation modeling studies and considering the complexity of the proposed model, a sample of 620 women was recruited through convenience and voluntary sampling procedures. After screening for missing data, response consistency, and multivariate outliers, data from all 620

participants were retained for the final analyses. Participants represented diverse educational, occupational, and socioeconomic backgrounds from several Canadian provinces, thereby enhancing the heterogeneity of the sample and increasing the generalizability of the findings.

## 2.2. Measures

Data were collected using a battery of standardized self-report instruments with established psychometric properties. Psychological flourishing was assessed using the Flourishing Scale developed by Diener et al. (2010). This instrument consists of eight items designed to evaluate individuals' perceptions of success in important domains of functioning, including positive relationships, competence, self-esteem, purpose in life, optimism, and contribution to others. Respondents rate each item on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate greater psychological flourishing and overall psychosocial well-being. Previous studies have reported satisfactory internal consistency, construct validity, and convergent validity for the scale across different cultural contexts, including community and clinical samples.

Self-compassion was measured using the Self-Compassion Scale developed by Neff (2003). The original version contains 26 items distributed across six dimensions, including self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from almost never to almost always. Higher scores reflect greater levels of self-compassion and a more adaptive emotional stance toward personal difficulties and failures. Extensive research has demonstrated strong reliability coefficients, factorial validity, and criterion-related validity for the scale in diverse populations.

Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Wong and Law (2002). The instrument contains 16 items measuring four dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. Participants respond using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate greater emotional intelligence and more effective emotional processing abilities. Previous investigations have consistently supported the reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and factorial structure of the instrument across various cultural settings.

Perceived social support was evaluated using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al. (1988). The scale consists of 12 items measuring perceived support from family, friends, and significant others. Responses are provided on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Higher scores indicate greater perceived availability and adequacy of social support. Numerous studies have confirmed the instrument's excellent internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity among adult populations.

Body appreciation was measured using the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2) developed by Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015). This 10-item instrument assesses positive body image through dimensions such as body acceptance, body respect, appreciation of body functionality, and resistance to unrealistic appearance standards. Participants respond on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to always. Higher scores reflect greater body appreciation and a more positive relationship with one's body. Previous research has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, including excellent reliability and validity across diverse demographic groups.

Psychological flexibility was assessed using the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II) developed by Bond et al. (2011). The questionnaire contains seven items designed to evaluate an individual's capacity to remain in contact with present experiences while pursuing personally meaningful goals despite unwanted thoughts and emotions. Responses are recorded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from never true to always true. Following standard scoring procedures, higher adjusted scores indicate greater psychological flexibility. Previous studies have reported acceptable internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for the measure.

## 2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29 and AMOS version 29. Initially, descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis values, were calculated to evaluate the distributional characteristics of the variables. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine bivariate relationships among the study variables. Prior to structural equation modeling, assumptions related to normality, multicollinearity, and outliers were assessed. Confirmatory

factor analyses were conducted to evaluate the measurement properties of the latent constructs. Subsequently, structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypothesized direct and indirect pathways linking self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation to psychological flourishing through psychological flexibility. Model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including the chi-square statistic divided by degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Indirect effects were examined using the bootstrap resampling method with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. Statistical significance was determined at a probability level of  $p < .05$ .

### 3. Findings and Results

A total of 620 women participated in the study and completed all questionnaires. The mean age of the

participants was 34.72 years ( $SD = 9.11$ ), with an age range of 18 to 62 years. Regarding marital status, 52.6% were married, 39.4% were single, and 8.0% were divorced or widowed. In terms of educational attainment, 18.5% held a high school diploma, 27.7% had completed college-level education, 39.8% possessed a bachelor's degree, and 14.0% had postgraduate qualifications. Employment status indicated that 58.1% were employed full-time, 14.7% were employed part-time, 12.4% were students, and 14.8% were not currently employed. Preliminary screening showed no evidence of excessive missing data, multivariate outliers, or violations of normality assumptions. Skewness values ranged from -0.91 to 0.74 and kurtosis values ranged from -0.83 to 1.02, indicating acceptable univariate normality. Variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below 3.0 for all predictors, suggesting the absence of problematic multicollinearity.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological Flourishing	42.81	7.64	1					
2. Self-Compassion	83.27	14.52	.69**	1				
3. Emotional Intelligence	84.61	12.43	.63**	.57**	1			
4. Perceived Social Support	65.42	11.16	.60**	.49**	.54**	1		
5. Body Appreciation	38.73	8.04	.58**	.65**	.47**	.43**	1	
6. Psychological Flexibility	34.55	6.38	.72**	.68**	.61**	.56**	.63**	1

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among the study variables. The findings revealed that psychological flourishing demonstrated significant positive associations with self-compassion ( $r = .69, p < .001$ ), emotional intelligence ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ), perceived social support ( $r = .60, p < .001$ ), body appreciation ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ), and psychological flexibility ( $r = .72, p < .001$ ). Psychological flexibility exhibited

particularly strong relationships with self-compassion ( $r = .68, p < .001$ ) and body appreciation ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ), supporting its proposed role as a central mechanism linking personal and interpersonal resources to flourishing. The overall pattern of correlations was moderate to strong and in the expected direction, providing preliminary support for the hypothesized model and justifying the subsequent structural equation analyses.

**Table 2**

*Measurement Model and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results*

Construct	Factor Loading Range	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Psychological Flourishing	.71 – .89	.92	.60
Self-Compassion	.67 – .88	.94	.58
Emotional Intelligence	.69 – .86	.93	.56
Perceived Social Support	.73 – .91	.95	.67
Body Appreciation	.70 – .88	.92	.59
Psychological Flexibility	.68 – .87	.91	.57

The confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the measurement model provided an excellent fit to the observed data. The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was 2.12, which was well below the recommended threshold of 3.00. Incremental fit indices, including CFI (.957), TLI (.951), NFI (.944), and GFI (.915), all exceeded recommended standards, while RMSEA (.042) and SRMR (.038) indicated a very good level of model approximation. Furthermore, all

standardized factor loadings exceeded .67 and were statistically significant. Composite reliability values ranged from .91 to .95, demonstrating strong internal consistency across all constructs. Average variance extracted values exceeded .50 for every latent variable, providing evidence of convergent validity and supporting the adequacy of the measurement model for subsequent structural analyses.

**Table 3**

*Direct Effects in the Structural Model*

Path	$\beta$	SE	CR	p
Self-Compassion → Psychological Flexibility	.35	.04	8.75	< .001
Emotional Intelligence → Psychological Flexibility	.24	.03	7.12	< .001
Perceived Social Support → Psychological Flexibility	.18	.04	5.41	< .001
Body Appreciation → Psychological Flexibility	.29	.04	7.96	< .001
Psychological Flexibility → Psychological Flourishing	.42	.05	9.18	< .001
Self-Compassion → Psychological Flourishing	.26	.04	6.44	< .001
Emotional Intelligence → Psychological Flourishing	.17	.04	4.83	< .001
Perceived Social Support → Psychological Flourishing	.14	.03	4.21	< .001
Body Appreciation → Psychological Flourishing	.12	.03	3.88	< .001

Results from the structural model revealed that all hypothesized direct pathways were statistically significant. Self-compassion emerged as the strongest predictor of psychological flexibility ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ), followed by body appreciation ( $\beta = .29, p < .001$ ), emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ), and perceived social support ( $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ). Psychological flexibility exerted the strongest direct effect on psychological flourishing ( $\beta = .42, p < .001$ ), highlighting its central role within the model. Additionally,

self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation each maintained significant direct effects on flourishing, suggesting that both direct and indirect pathways contributed to women's psychological well-being. The model accounted for 64% of the variance in psychological flexibility and 78% of the variance in psychological flourishing, indicating substantial explanatory power.

**Table 4**

*Bootstrap Analysis of Indirect Effects Through Psychological Flexibility*

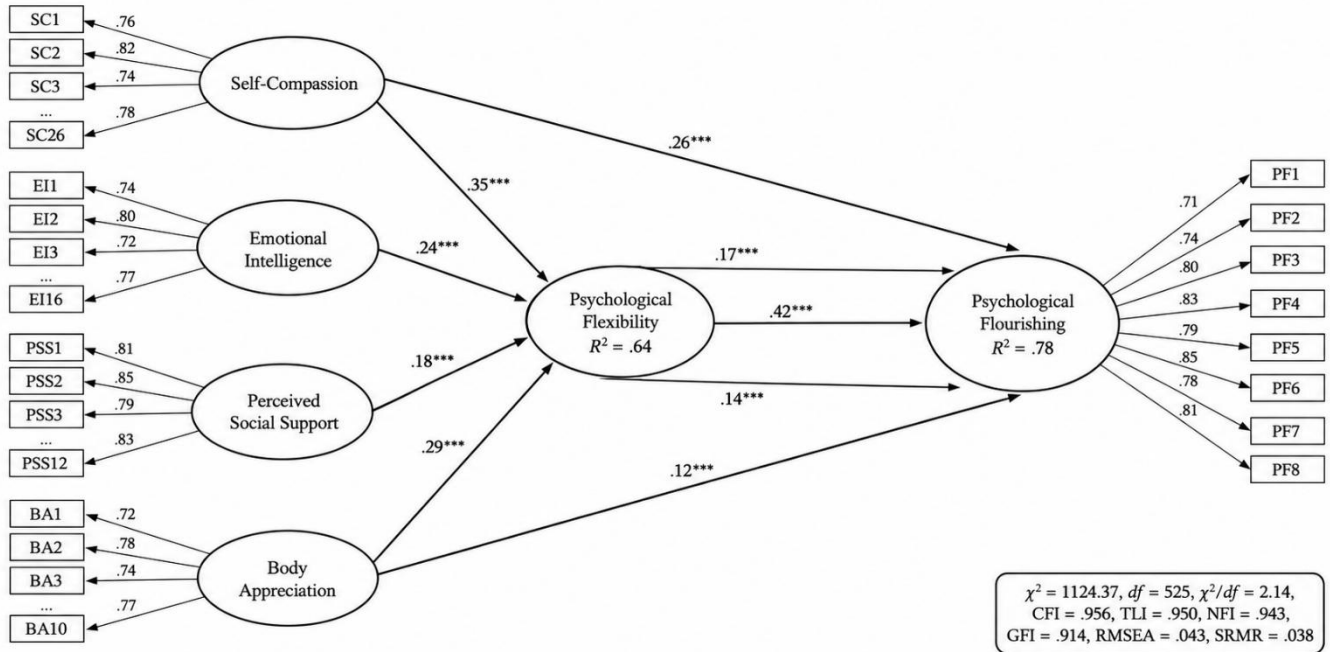
Indirect Path	Indirect Effect ( $\beta$ )	Boot SE	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Self-Compassion → Psychological Flexibility → Flourishing	.15	.03	.10	.21
Emotional Intelligence → Psychological Flexibility → Flourishing	.10	.02	.06	.15
Perceived Social Support → Psychological Flexibility → Flourishing	.08	.02	.04	.12
Body Appreciation → Psychological Flexibility → Flourishing	.12	.03	.07	.18

Bootstrap analyses using 5,000 resamples demonstrated significant indirect effects for all proposed mediation pathways. None of the confidence intervals included zero, confirming the mediating role of psychological flexibility. The strongest indirect effect was observed for self-compassion ( $\beta = .15$ ), followed by body appreciation ( $\beta = .12$ ), emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .10$ ), and perceived social support ( $\beta = .08$ ). These findings suggest that women who exhibit greater self-compassion, stronger emotional

intelligence, higher perceived social support, and more positive body appreciation tend to report greater psychological flexibility, which in turn contributes to enhanced psychological flourishing. The results therefore support a partial mediation model in which psychological flexibility functions as a key psychological process linking internal and external resources to optimal functioning and well-being.

**Figure 1**

*Final Structural Equation Model of Psychological Flourishing Based on Self-Compassion, Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Social Support, and Body Appreciation with the Mediating Role of Psychological Flexibility*



Note. All coefficients are standardized estimates. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The final structural model demonstrated excellent overall fit and substantial explanatory capacity. Standardized path coefficients indicated that psychological flexibility occupied a central position within the network of relationships, serving as a significant mediator between all predictor variables and psychological flourishing. The strongest total effect on flourishing was observed for self-compassion, followed by psychological flexibility, emotional intelligence, body appreciation, and perceived social support. Collectively, the findings indicate that women's flourishing is influenced by a combination of intrapersonal strengths, emotional competencies, supportive social environments, and positive body-related experiences, with psychological flexibility functioning as a critical mechanism through which these factors promote optimal psychological functioning. The high proportion of explained variance further suggests that the proposed model provides a comprehensive account of the determinants of flourishing among adult women and offers a robust framework for understanding positive psychological development in this population.

#### 4. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine a comprehensive model of women's psychological flourishing based on self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation, while investigating the mediating role of psychological flexibility. The findings demonstrated that all proposed predictors were positively associated with psychological flourishing and that psychological flexibility served as a significant mediator linking these personal and interpersonal resources to flourishing. The structural model exhibited excellent fit indices and explained a substantial proportion of variance in both psychological flexibility and flourishing, suggesting that the proposed framework provides a robust explanation of positive psychological functioning among adult women.

One of the most important findings of the present study was the significant positive relationship between self-compassion and psychological flourishing. Women who reported greater self-compassion demonstrated higher levels of flourishing, both directly and indirectly through increased psychological flexibility. This finding is consistent with the growing literature emphasizing self-compassion as a central

protective factor for mental health and well-being. Self-compassion enables individuals to respond to personal setbacks and emotional difficulties with understanding and kindness rather than criticism and self-blame. Such an adaptive self-relational style reduces emotional suffering and promotes resilience, thereby creating favorable conditions for flourishing. Previous studies have similarly demonstrated that self-compassion is associated with enhanced psychological adjustment, life satisfaction, emotional well-being, and positive self-development (Irmischer et al., 2024; Kauser et al., 2022). The findings also align with evidence showing that self-compassion contributes to flourishing through the cultivation of acceptance, emotional balance, and adaptive coping strategies (Ravanbakhsh et al., 2023; Rofiqah, 2023). Furthermore, recent investigations have highlighted the interconnected roles of self-compassion and psychological flexibility in promoting positive psychological outcomes, supporting the mediational pathway identified in the present study (Zhang et al., 2025).

The results further indicated that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of psychological flourishing. Women with higher emotional intelligence reported greater flourishing and demonstrated higher levels of psychological flexibility. This finding supports theoretical models proposing that emotional intelligence facilitates effective adaptation by improving emotional awareness, emotional regulation, interpersonal understanding, and constructive decision-making. Individuals who can accurately recognize and regulate emotions are better equipped to cope with challenges, maintain positive relationships, and pursue meaningful goals. These capacities contribute directly to flourishing by enhancing both emotional and social functioning. The current findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating strong associations between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, resilience, occupational satisfaction, and positive mental health outcomes (Liu & Boyatzis, 2021; Maillet & Richard, 2021). Additionally, recent studies have emphasized emotional intelligence as a foundational meta-skill that supports motivation, adaptive functioning, and long-term psychological development (Lu et al., 2024; Mitsea et al., 2024). The findings also correspond with evidence suggesting that emotional intelligence promotes holistic well-being and facilitates the development of psychological resources necessary for flourishing (Gannamraju, 2025; Yoshinaga & Cooper, 2025).

Another noteworthy finding was the significant contribution of perceived social support to psychological flourishing. Women who perceived greater support from family, friends, and significant others reported higher levels of flourishing and psychological flexibility. Social support has long been recognized as a critical determinant of mental health because supportive relationships provide emotional validation, practical assistance, and opportunities for meaningful social engagement. These interpersonal resources may reduce the impact of stress while simultaneously enhancing feelings of belonging, security, and personal value. The findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that perceived social support is positively associated with flourishing, psychological well-being, and adaptive functioning (Rofiqah, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). Positive psychology perspectives emphasize that flourishing cannot be understood solely as an individual phenomenon but must also be viewed within the context of social relationships and community connections (Corrigan et al., 2025; Papazoglou et al., 2021). Therefore, the significant role of perceived social support observed in the present study reinforces the importance of relational factors in women's well-being and psychological growth.

The present findings also revealed that body appreciation significantly predicted psychological flourishing. Women who expressed greater acceptance, respect, and appreciation for their bodies demonstrated higher flourishing scores and greater psychological flexibility. This result supports contemporary positive body image theories that conceptualize body appreciation as a protective psychological resource rather than merely the absence of body dissatisfaction. Women who appreciate their bodies are more likely to experience self-acceptance, positive emotions, and adaptive self-care behaviors, all of which contribute to overall well-being. These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of positive embodiment and body appreciation for psychological health and life satisfaction (Longhurst, 2021; Munroe, 2022). The findings further align with evidence suggesting that body appreciation serves as a buffer against social pressures and appearance-related concerns that frequently affect women's psychological functioning (El-Jor et al., 2025). By fostering a healthier and more accepting relationship with one's body, body appreciation may facilitate greater engagement with meaningful life experiences and consequently enhance flourishing.

A particularly important contribution of the present study concerns the central role of psychological flexibility. The results demonstrated that psychological flexibility was not only a strong direct predictor of flourishing but also served as a significant mediator linking all four predictors to flourishing. This finding supports acceptance and commitment theory, which conceptualizes psychological flexibility as a fundamental process underlying adaptive functioning and psychological health. Individuals who are psychologically flexible are able to remain open to difficult experiences while continuing to pursue personally meaningful goals. Such individuals are less likely to engage in experiential avoidance and more likely to respond adaptively to life's challenges. The present findings correspond with previous research indicating that psychological flexibility contributes to resilience, emotional regulation, life satisfaction, and well-being (Panditharathne Nishantha Kumara Wijesekara & Chen, 2021; Razza et al., 2025). Furthermore, psychological flexibility has been identified as a key mechanism through which mindfulness, self-compassion, and acceptance-based interventions exert their beneficial effects on mental health (Ravanbakhsh et al., 2023; Tendhar et al., 2024).

The mediating role of psychological flexibility provides valuable theoretical insights into the mechanisms through which personal strengths and social resources contribute to flourishing. Specifically, self-compassion, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, and body appreciation may not influence flourishing solely through direct effects. Rather, these resources appear to enhance individuals' capacity to respond flexibly to internal and external experiences. Women who possess greater self-compassion, emotional competence, supportive relationships, and positive body image may develop greater openness, acceptance, and adaptability when encountering life's difficulties. This increased flexibility subsequently facilitates flourishing by promoting meaningful engagement, psychological resilience, and positive functioning. These findings are consistent with recent theoretical developments emphasizing mindfulness, self-awareness, acceptance, and reflective self-observation as critical pathways toward human flourishing (Konte, 2023; Loncar & Fiskum, 2025). Similar conclusions have been drawn by studies highlighting the role of mindfulness-based and acceptance-oriented approaches in enhancing emotional wellness and psychological well-being (Kazanjan, 2022; Sansone, 2024).

The results can also be interpreted within broader positive psychology frameworks. Positive psychology proposes that flourishing emerges from the interaction of personal strengths, emotional competencies, social resources, and meaning-oriented processes rather than from the mere absence of psychological distress. The current findings strongly support this perspective by demonstrating that multiple strengths-based factors jointly contribute to flourishing through interconnected pathways. Self-compassion provides emotional kindness, emotional intelligence facilitates adaptive emotional functioning, social support offers interpersonal resources, body appreciation strengthens positive self-perception, and psychological flexibility integrates these capacities into adaptive behavioral functioning. Together, these variables create a network of psychological resources that enable women to thrive and experience higher levels of well-being. Such an interpretation is consistent with contemporary positive psychology models emphasizing resilience, meaning, connectedness, and personal growth as fundamental components of flourishing (Segall & Kristeller, 2022; Shrestha, 2024).

## 5. Conclusion

Moreover, the present findings are particularly relevant within the context of current global challenges, including increasing psychological stress, rapid technological changes, social uncertainty, and evolving societal expectations. Recent literature suggests that flourishing is becoming an increasingly important outcome for mental health research because it captures individuals' capacities not merely to survive adversity but to thrive despite it (Cuchet et al., 2025; Kemp, 2025). Emerging approaches in positive psychology, educational settings, workplace interventions, and technology-enhanced well-being programs have similarly emphasized the importance of cultivating psychological resources that promote flourishing and sustainable well-being (Armaou et al., 2022; Isaee, 2026; Mitsea et al., 2024). Therefore, the present findings contribute to a growing body of evidence supporting multidimensional approaches to psychological health that integrate individual strengths, social resources, and adaptive psychological processes.

## 6. Limitations and Suggestions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the cross-sectional design prevents definitive conclusions regarding

causal relationships among the variables. Although the structural model was theoretically supported, longitudinal or experimental designs are necessary to establish temporal precedence and causality. Second, all data were collected using self-report questionnaires, which may have introduced common method variance and social desirability bias. Third, the sample consisted exclusively of women residing in Canada, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to men, other age groups, or individuals from different cultural contexts. Fourth, although the model explained a substantial proportion of variance in flourishing, additional psychological, social, and environmental variables not included in the study may also contribute to women's flourishing.

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine how self-compassion, emotional intelligence, social support, body appreciation, and psychological flexibility influence flourishing over time. Researchers may also investigate potential moderating variables such as age, socioeconomic status, relationship status, cultural background, and occupational factors. Experimental and intervention-based studies would be valuable for testing whether enhancing psychological flexibility, self-compassion, or body appreciation leads to measurable improvements in flourishing. Future research may further explore additional mediating mechanisms, including resilience, meaning in life, gratitude, mindfulness, and self-efficacy. Cross-cultural comparisons would also help determine whether the observed relationships remain consistent across diverse cultural and social environments.

The findings suggest that programs designed to promote women's flourishing should adopt a multidimensional approach that simultaneously targets self-compassion, emotional intelligence, social connectedness, body appreciation, and psychological flexibility. Mental health professionals may benefit from incorporating acceptance-based and mindfulness-oriented interventions that strengthen psychological flexibility while fostering self-kindness and emotional awareness. Educational institutions, workplaces, and community organizations can develop initiatives that encourage supportive interpersonal relationships and positive body image. Preventive mental health programs should emphasize strengths-based approaches rather than focusing exclusively on psychological symptoms. By cultivating these psychological resources, practitioners may help women achieve greater well-being, resilience, personal growth, and long-term flourishing.

## Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

## Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

## Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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## Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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