

# Investigating the Impact of Age and Cultural Diversity in Perceptions of Life Milestones: A Case Study on Online Global Cultural Exchange (OGCE) International Project

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Received: 15 August 2024 | Accepted: 1 October 2024 | Published: 1 November 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ijares.2024.6.3.55>

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**Abstract:** *This study explores the impact of cultural background on attitudes toward life milestone celebrations among 122 participants from different countries attending a summer camp in Indonesia. The primary objective was to examine the relationships between respondents' age, gender, ethnicity, and religion, and their attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. The study utilized descriptive statistics, crosstab analysis, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analyses to analyze participants' responses to six questions about their views on celebrating life milestones. Simultaneously, comments from 34 participants were analyzed to draw insights on their attitude towards life milestone celebrations. The results indicated that ethnicity and religious background significantly influence attitudes towards celebrations, with age also playing a notable role. Gender did not show a significant impact. This research is novel in its extensive investigation of how cultural background affects life milestone celebrations. The study offers practical implications for event planners and community organizers in multicultural and multi-religious settings, highlighting the need to account for diverse preferences and practices. Recommendations for future research include exploring broader demographic groups and focusing on specific cultural and religious traditions to gain deeper insights into how different backgrounds influence life milestone celebrations*

**Keywords:** Cultural Exchange, Life Milestone Celebrations, Intercultural Perspective

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## 1. Introduction

Life milestones are significant events that mark a person's progress through life. Celebrating life milestones is a way of recognizing the continuity, growth, and achievements of a person's life. The Department of English Literature - Sultan Agung Islamic University (UNISSULA) organised a summer camp programme title "Online Global Culture Exchange (OGCE)" which was held on 23rd – 27th October 2023. The theme of the programme was "Age Consciousness & Life Milestones Celebration across Culture." Students from different countries across the globe participated the programme. The present study is an output of this programme.

As people from various cultures internalize different values throughout life, these values then guide their socioemotional experiences of aging (Fung, 2013). Life milestone celebrations, such as birthdays, weddings, and graduations, hold significant cultural, emotional, and social

importance across different societies. These events often reflect a blend of personal values, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs. Celebrating occasions makes people feel more socially supported, which is defined as having faith that others will be there for you while you're going through tough times (Brick et al., 2023). However, as globalization and migration continue to reshape social landscapes, the ways in which individuals from various cultural backgrounds celebrate these milestones are evolving. The increasing diversity within societies introduces complexities in understanding how different cultural, religious, and national backgrounds influence attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. This is further complicated by generational differences that may shape how traditions are maintained or adapted.

Respect and understanding may flourish when people learn about and participate in one another's cultural celebrations of important life events. It helps us understand the significance of these occasions for other people, how to handle particular social situations (such as going to a Bar Mitzvah or avoiding birthday parties in certain cultures), and, in the end, it fortifies our feeling of global citizenship.

The need for this study arises from the desire to better understand these changing dynamics and how they affect individuals' approaches to life milestone celebrations. Almost less is known about the potential effects of celebrations on people's well-being (Brick et al., 2023). The researcher also noted a dearth of current studies that were pertinent to the topics covered in this investigation. To promote tolerance and acceptance among members of different faiths and cultures, this comprehension is fundamental. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the diverse perspectives and priorities held by different groups by investigating how cultural background influences attitudes toward life milestone celebrations.

The study aims to investigate how respondents' perspectives toward life milestone celebrations are influenced by their age, gender, religion, and ethnicity. The study aims to uncover important trends and differences among varied groups by analyzing how different backgrounds impact celebration habits and preferences. The study's importance rests in the fact that it may provide light on realistic methods for community participation and event planning, especially in varied contexts. When people and organizations take the time to learn about the religious and cultural intricacies of milestone celebrations, they are better able to host events that are welcoming to all and respectful of people's traditions and beliefs. Furthermore, this study has the potential to open up new avenues for investigation into how life milestone celebrations are changing in our globally interdependent society.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Online Global Cultural Exchange (OGCE) program**

The Online Global Culture Exchange (OGCE) program, initiated by the Department of English Literature at UNISSULA, Indonesia, emerged in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Recognizing the need for continued international collaboration despite physical limitations, OGCE was designed to foster cross-cultural exchange within a virtual environment. Over the past three years, OGCE has evolved into a highly sought-after short program at UNISSULA, as evidenced by the significant increase in international participation. From a modest inaugural cohort of 20 participants in 2020, the program attracted a remarkable 162 international participants in 2023. The most recent iteration, OGCE 2023, held from October 23rd to 27th, 2023, explored the theme of "Age Consciousness & Life Milestones Celebration across Culture." This program brought together students from a diverse

range of countries, fostering a platform for intercultural dialogue and exploration. The present study is a direct outcome of this enriching program.

## **2.2 Life milestone celebrations**

Individuals across various cultures and societies experience typical life milestones that shape their life trajectories (Karasik and Robinson, 2022). These milestones include events such as entering primary and secondary school, pursuing further education or training, finding employment, leaving the family home, forming intimate relationships, becoming parents, and potentially separating from partners (Baxter et al., 2012). These transitions mark significant changes in roles, expectations, and social positions throughout different life phases, including childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age (Brailean, 2016). The variability in childrearing practices and cultural beliefs influences the timing and sequence of these milestones, showcasing the diverse experiences individuals have within and between cultures, impacting their development and well-being (Heinz et al., 2009). The social and cultural context significantly shapes the life course, reflecting changing conceptions of family structures, living arrangements, and individual development.

Celebrating life milestones varies across cultures, reflecting diverse values and traditions. Parties and gatherings play a significant role in marking these occasions, such as birthdays, weddings, funerals, and community festivals (Elza et al., 2010). Different cultures have unique ways of coming together to commemorate significant events, often involving food, music, and rituals that symbolize transitions and connections within the community (Askham, 2022). These celebrations contribute to personal and collective well-being by fostering social connectedness, exploring identity, supporting transitions, and building relationships. Whether it's through formal ceremonies or spontaneous gatherings, celebrations serve as cultural expressions of values and beliefs, highlighting the importance of shared experiences in enhancing the human experience (Kuckkahn, 2005).

## **2.3 Factors that influence life milestones celebrations.**

Life milestone celebrations are influenced by various factors. Cultural norms play a significant role, as certain events align with expected transitional events in the cultural life script (Umanath and Berntsen, 2020). Historical figures' memorialization shapes cultural values and influences social behaviour, fostering national unity around significant events and figures (Deliatynskiy et al., 2020). Anniversaries, serving political and national identity purposes, provide regularity in life experiences and promote nationalism, with Europeans celebrating cultural heroes and Americans focusing on events (Johnston, 2017). Milestone ages prompt individuals to evaluate their lives differently, emphasizing health satisfaction and life outlook at these junctures, reflecting a punctuated mental map of their life cycle (Miron-Shatz et al., 2015). Additionally, milestones in history, such as Roman milestones, can reflect political allegiance and instability rather than just road construction or repair, showcasing regional differences in responses to political challenges (Sauer, 2013).

Gender and religion play significant roles in shaping attitudes toward life events and celebrations. Research indicates that religious individuals tend to perceive God as a causal agent in health-related life-and-death events more frequently than nonreligious individuals (Loewenthal and Cornwall, 1993). Moreover, religious children exhibit a higher attraction to death compared to nonreligious children, with differences in the types of rationales provided for their attitudes (Orbach and Florian, 1992). Additionally, studies show that changes in religious belief and behaviour are influenced by various life events, with positive events increasing the importance of religious beliefs and church attendance, while negative events

have the opposite effect (Wessing, 2012). Understanding these influences is crucial for comprehending how gender and religion impact attitudes toward life event celebrations.

Research shows that gender differences exist in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) intentions at festivals, with females exhibiting a full mediating effect of visitor satisfaction between perceived value and eWOM intention (Ahn et al., 2020; Albrecht and Cornwall, 1989). On the other hand, religious beliefs and behaviours are influenced by life events, where positive events tend to increase the importance of one's religious beliefs and church involvement, while negative events have the opposite effect (Ahn et al., 2020). Therefore, when considering attitudes towards life event celebrations, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of gender on eWOM intentions and the influence of religious beliefs on how individuals perceive and engage with various life events.

#### **2.4 Age consciousness and life milestones celebration**

Age consciousness influences the celebration of life events, as highlighted in various studies. Younger individuals tend to report more life events, including desirable ones, compared to older individuals, regardless of depression status (Giorgio, 2021). Major life events, especially in the domains of family and health, play a significant role in shaping one's awareness of age-related gains and losses. Specific family events are associated with a higher awareness of age-related gains, while health events are linked to a higher awareness of age-related losses (Rupprecht et al., 2022). The celebration of life events, such as birthdays, can evoke mixed feelings about aging, with societies often emphasizing youth and innocence over maturity and age milestones (Oei and Zwart, 1990). Overall, age consciousness influences how individuals perceive and celebrate significant life events, reflecting their awareness of aging processes and changes.

#### **2.5 Ethnicity and life milestones celebration**

Ethnicity plays a significant role in the celebration of life events, as observed in various cultural contexts. Festivals serve as platforms for ethnic recognition, identity expression, and cultural unity, showcasing distinctive traits (Giorgio, 2021). Scholars have highlighted how public celebrations are utilized by minorities to contest and challenge national culture and identity, reconfiguring racialization and ethnicization (Heideking et al., 2022). Rituals and festivities, such as the *Osing* ritual of *Seblang*, demonstrate how cultural events intertwine with ethnic heritage and community prosperity. Through festivals, communities articulate their heritage, strengthen group identity, and address social issues, fostering social interaction and negotiation of relationships (Wessing, 2012). These celebrations not only provide opportunities for personal affirmation and political action but also contribute to social revitalization and the communication of shared experiences within the group (Yeh, 2005).

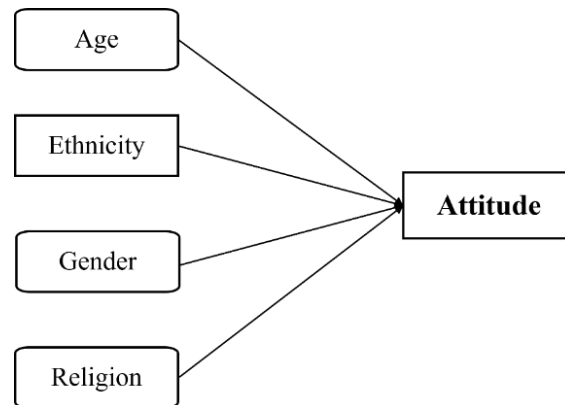
#### **2.6 Religion and life milestones celebration**

The relationship between religion and the celebration of life events is multifaceted. Religious events like festivals and rituals often serve as occasions for sharing, conviviality, and spiritual fulfilment. Celebrations of life's milestones are greatly influenced by religious beliefs. It establishes norms for how these occasions should be observed, gives people something to strive for during festivities, and helps us make sense of what is happening. The Jewish Bar Mitzvah, which marks a boy's coming of age, is characterized by ritualized prayer and reading that highlight the importance of learning and heritage in Judaism (Horenczyk and Hachohen Wolf, 2011). Beyond rituals, religious beliefs about the hereafter might impact how individuals see death and rites of grieving. A range of religious traditions are observed at birthday celebrations. Hinduism and Buddhism place great importance on them, in contrast to faiths like Judaism and

Christianity, which tend to downplay their significance (Rojas and Watkins-Fassler, 2022). Muslims are free to make their own decisions without external interference, and some Eastern faiths even associate a person's birthday with a spiritual turning point in their lives (Rojas and Watkins-Fassler, 2022).

### 2.7 Conceptual research framework

From the review of the literature, the present study assumes that Age and cultural background (ethnicity, religion, and gender) have a significant influence on the attitude of people toward life milestones celebrations. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework.**

### 3. Methodology

The methodology of the study involved an online survey conducted among 122 participants from different countries attending the OGCE-2023 summer camp at UNISSULA, Indonesia. The purpose of the poll was to learn how respondents' cultural backgrounds affected their perspectives on major life events. The survey included demographic questions and six questions about the significance of cultural customs, the value of birthday parties, and the impact that respondents' age, ethnic background, and religious views had on these types of festivities. Additionally, the respondents were requested to share comments on how age and cultural background influence their attitude toward life event celebrations.

To summarize the demographic information and replies of the participants, the acquired data were analysed using SPSS version 25.0, which includes descriptive statistics. Crosstab analysis was used to examine the relationship between participants' typical birthday celebration styles and their religious backgrounds. ANOVA tests assessed whether there were significant differences in attitudes toward celebrations based on age, gender, ethnicity, and religion. Correlation analysis explored relationships between respondents' backgrounds and their attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. Regression analysis further investigated the influence of different variables on respondents' attitudes.

The study utilized MS Excel to illustrate the figures and present the findings visually. This combination of statistical analyses and visualization tools enabled a comprehensive examination of the impact of cultural backgrounds on attitudes toward life milestone celebrations and provided insights for practical implications and future research directions.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Background of respondents

The background statistics provide insight into the demographics of the participants. Findings presented in Figure 2 indicate that the majority of the participants identified as female (67%), followed by male (30%), with a small number opting not to disclose their gender. Simultaneously, the age distribution showed that the majority of the participants fall within the 18-24 age range, which comprises over 90% of the total participants. A small percentage falls within the 25-34 age range, and even fewer fall within the 35-44 age range. This indicated that the survey participants represented younger individuals, with a significant focus on those between 18 and 24 years old.

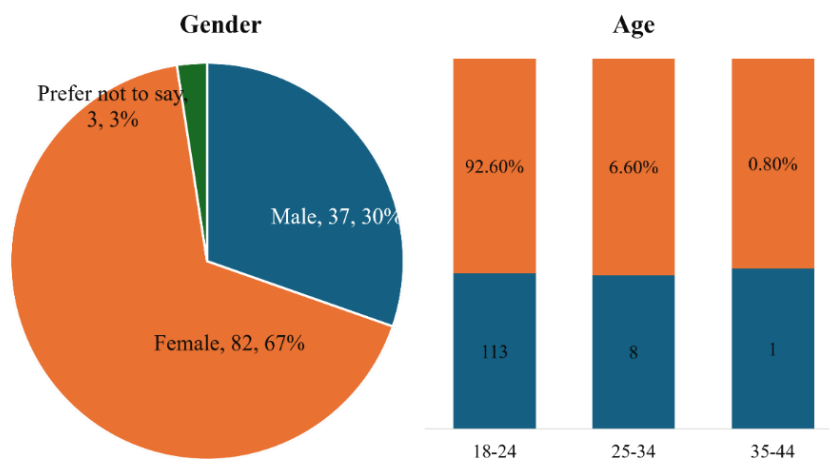


Figure 2: Gender and Age distribution of respondents.

Additionally, the ethnicity distribution among the participants varied, with the majority hailing from the Philippines (71.3%), followed by Indonesia (8.2%) and Malaysia (7.4%). Other represented nationalities included China (3.3%), India (2.5%), and Thailand (2.5%), among others, with smaller percentages (Figure 3). Bangladeshi, Cambodian, and Myanmar participants each comprised 0.8%, while Brunei had 1.6%. This distribution highlights the diversity of nationalities surveyed, with a significant participation by the Philippines.

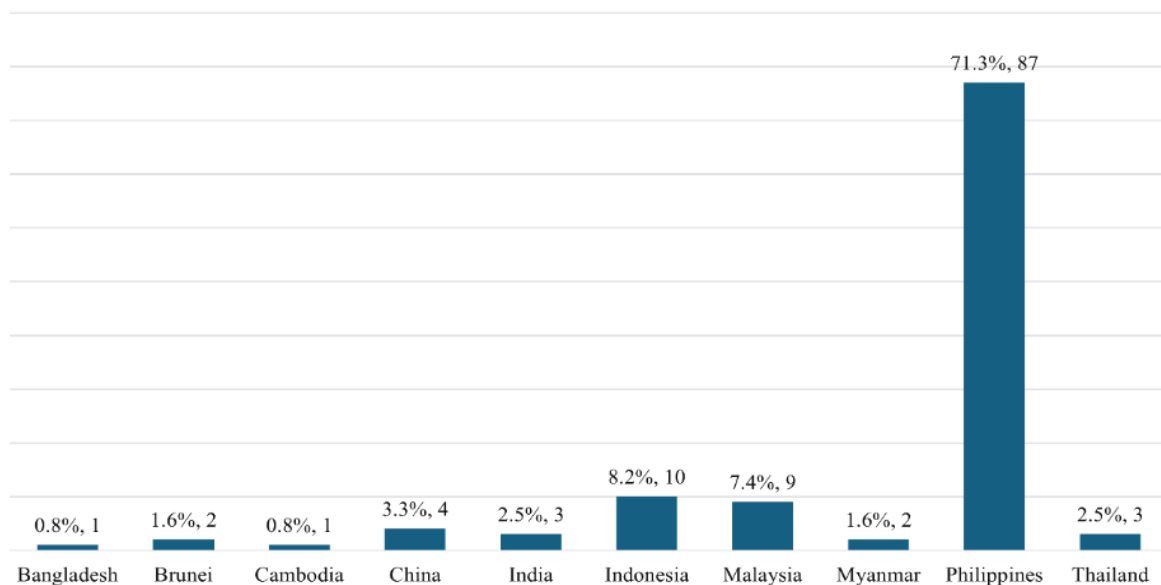


Figure 3: Ethnicity distribution of respondents.

Finally, the participants' religious affiliations were found to be diverse as presented in Figure 4. The majority identified as Christian (69.7%), followed by Islam (16.4%), Buddhism (4.9%), and Hinduism (3.3%). Additionally, a small percentage (5.7%) identified with other religions. This breakdown underscores the religious diversity among the participants, with Christianity being the most prevalent followed by Islam, while smaller percentages represented Buddhism, Hinduism, and other faiths.

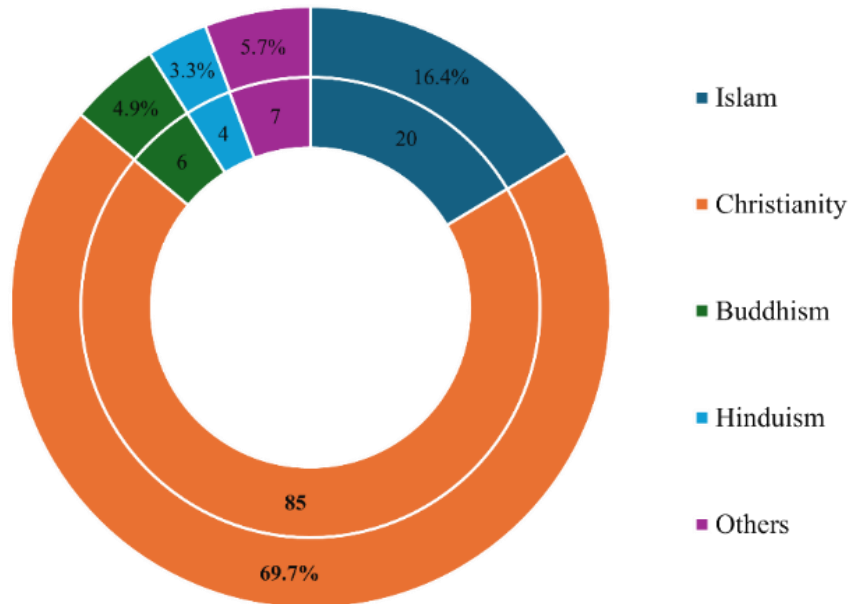


Figure 4: Religious background of respondents.

#### 4.2 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics provide insights into the respondents' attitudes towards life milestone celebrations based on their responses to six questions. The findings are presented in Table 1. For the importance of cultural traditions in life event celebrations (Q1), the majority (51.0%) found them extremely important, with a mean score of 4.48 and a standard deviation of 0.835. Regarding birthday celebrations (Q2), the most common response was celebrating with friends and family gatherings (42.0%), with a mean score of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 1.414. For celebrating milestones like weddings or graduations (Q3), most respondents (44.6%) expressed excitement and enthusiasm, with a mean score of 4.39 and a standard deviation of 0.777. When considering the influence of age (Q4) on celebrations, a substantial portion (41.0%) strongly agreed that it does the way they celebrate their life events, with a mean score of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.859. Similarly, for the influence of cultural background (Q5), a significant proportion (41.8%) agreed that it affects their celebrations, with a mean score of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.036. Finally, regarding religious beliefs and celebrations (Q6), the most common responses was 'agree' (39.3%) and 'strongly agree' (16.4%) implying that religious belief does not conflict with their life event celebrations. These statistics illustrate the diversity of attitudes towards life milestone celebrations among the respondents, with variations in the importance placed on cultural traditions, methods of celebration, and the perceived influence of age, cultural background, and religious beliefs.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Items	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard dev.
Q1. How important are cultural traditions in your life event celebrations?				
▪ Not important at all	1	.6		
▪ Not important	2	1.3		
▪ Not sure	15	9.6	4.48	0.835
▪ Important	24	15.3		
▪ Extremely important	80	<b>51.0</b>		
Q2. How do you typically celebrate birthdays?				
▪ Small family gathering	23	14.6		
▪ Large family gathering	11	7.0		
▪ Friends and family gathering	66	<b>42.0</b>	2.97	1.414
▪ Themed party with friends	3	1.9		
▪ Quiet dinner with close friends only	7	4.5		
▪ I do not celebrate birthdays	12	7.6		
Q3. How do you feel about celebrating milestones such as weddings, graduations, or anniversaries?				
▪ Neutral	22	14.0		
▪ Overwhelmed and interested	30	19.1	4.39	0.777
▪ Excited and enthusiastic	70	<b>44.6</b>		
Q4. To what level do you agree or disagree that your age influences the way you celebrate life events?				
▪ Strongly disagree	2	1.6		
▪ Disagree	1	.8		
▪ Neutral	21	17.2	4.17	0.859
▪ Agree	48	39.3		
▪ Strongly agree	50	<b>41.0</b>		
Q5. To what level do you agree or disagree that your cultural background influences the way you celebrate life events?				
▪ Strongly disagree	8	6.6		
▪ Neutral	32	26.2		
▪ Agree	51	<b>41.8</b>	3.80	1.036
▪ Strongly agree	31	25.4		
Q6. My religious belief does not conflict with my life event celebrations.				
▪ Strongly disagree	6	4.9		
▪ Disagree	16	13.1		
▪ Neutral	32	26.2	3.49	1.070
▪ Agree	48	39.3		
▪ Strongly agree	20	16.4		

### 4.3 Crosstab analysis

The crosstab analysis between respondents' typical birthday celebration styles and their religious backgrounds reveals interesting patterns (Table 2). Among respondents who identified as Muslim, a notable percentage (30.0%) of them preferred not celebrating birthdays at all and a similar percentage opted for small family gatherings. However, among those who did celebrate, most of them opted for friends and family gathering (25%). On the other hand, Christian respondents predominantly celebrated birthdays with friends and family gatherings (62.3%), followed by small family gatherings (15.4%). Interestingly, themed parties with friends were exclusively reported by Christian respondents. The six Buddhist respondents showed a preference for friends and family gatherings (50%), small family gathering (16.7%), and not celebrating birthdays (33.33%). Hindu respondents were split between small family gatherings (25%) and friends and family gathering (75%). These findings suggest a correlation between respondents' religious backgrounds and their preferred styles of birthday celebrations, with variations in celebration preferences evident across different religious groups.



**Table 2: Crosstabulation: How do you typically celebrate birthdays and Religion**

Response	Count/ Percentage	Islam	Christianity	Buddhism	Hinduism	Others
Small family gathering	Count	6	13	1	1	2
	%	30.0%	15.4%	16.7%	25.0%	28.5%
Large family gathering	Count	1	9	0	0	1
	%	5.0%	10.6%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Friends and family gathering	Count	5	53	3	3	2
	%	25.0%	62.3%	50.0%	75.0%	28.5%
Themed party with friends	Count	0	3	0	0	0
	%	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Quiet dinner with close friends only	Count	2	4	0	0	1
	%	10.0%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
I do not celebrate birthdays	Count	6	3	2	0	1
	%	30.0%	3.5%	33.3%	0.0%	14.3%

The crosstab analysis between respondents' beliefs regarding the compatibility of their religious beliefs with life event celebrations and their religious backgrounds yields intriguing insights. The findings are presented in Table 3. Among Muslim respondents, a notable portion disagreed (31.3%) that their religious beliefs align with their life event celebrations. Conversely, the majority of Christian respondents agreed (64.6%) or strongly agreed (90.0%) that their religious beliefs harmonize with their life event celebrations. Buddhist respondents were more varied in their responses, with a significant proportion expressing neutrality (12.5%) or agreement (6.3%). Hindu respondents were split between neutrality (3.1%), agreement (6.3%), and disagreement (6.3%). Other religious groups reported a mix of responses across the spectrum. These findings suggest that while many Christian respondents perceive congruence between their religious beliefs and life event celebrations, Muslim respondents tend to express more disagreement regarding this alignment, reflecting potential differences in perspectives on the relationship between religion and life events across various religious backgrounds.

**Table 3 Crosstab: My religious belief does not conflict with my life event celebrations and Religion.**

Response	Count/ Percentage	Islam	Christianity	Buddhism	Hinduism	Others
Strongly disagree	Count	0	6	0	0	0
	%	0.0%	7.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disagree	Count	5	11	0	0	0
	%	25%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Neutral	Count	6	19	2	1	4
	%	30%	22.3 %	33.3%	25.0%	57.0%
Agree	Count	8	31	3	3	3
	%	40%	36.5%	50.0%	75.0%	43.0%
Strongly agree	Count	1	18	1	0	0
	%	5.0%	21.2%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%

#### 4.4. ANOVA

The results of the ANOVA test (Table 4) shed light on whether there are any significant differences in the respondents' attitudes toward life milestone celebrations based on their background (Age, Gender, Religion, and Ethnicity). For age, the test revealed a statistically significant difference among the groups ( $F = 3.568$ ,  $Sig. = .031$ ), suggesting that respondents

in different age groups hold varying attitudes towards life milestone celebrations. In terms of gender, the analysis did not find any significant differences ( $F = 1.265$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .286$ ), indicating that respondents' gender does not notably influence their attitudes toward celebrations.

When examining religious backgrounds, significant differences were observed among the groups ( $F = 2.827$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .028$ ), which implies that the respondents' religious beliefs do impact their attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. Lastly, the test did not show significant differences based on ethnicity ( $F = 1.826$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .071$ ), suggesting that respondents from different countries do not exhibit drastically different attitudes toward celebrations.

In summary, the ANOVA test results indicate that age and religion play a significant role in shaping respondents' attitudes toward life milestone celebrations, while gender and ethnicity do not show significant differences in this context.

**Table 4: ANOVA test result**

	Variables	Mean	F-value	Sig.
Age	○ 18-24	3.9558	3.568	<b>.031</b>
	○ 25-34	4.4688		
	○ 35-44	3.2500		
Gender	▪ Male	4.1081	1.265	.286
	▪ Female	3.9360		
	▪ Prefer not to say	3.7500		
Religion	○ Islam	3.6500	2.827	<b>.028</b>
	○ Christianity	4.0941		
	○ Buddhism	3.8333		
	○ Hinduism	4.0000		
	○ Others	3.7143		
Ethnicity	▪ Bangladesh	3.2500	1.826	.071
	▪ Brunei	3.5000		
	▪ Cambodia	4.5000		
	▪ China	3.8125		
	▪ India	3.4167		
	▪ Indonesia	3.6000		
	▪ Malaysia	4.0278		
	▪ Myanmar	4.0000		
	▪ Philippines	4.0833		
	▪ Thailand	3.4167		

#### 4.5 Correlations

The correlation analysis reveals relationships between respondents' backgrounds (Gender, Religion, Age, and Ethnicity) and their attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. The most notable finding is the significant positive correlation between ethnicity and attitude ( $r = .236^{**}$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .009$ ), suggesting that respondents' ethnicity has a meaningful impact on their attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. Meanwhile, there were no significant correlations between attitude and gender ( $r = -.144$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .113$ ), religion ( $r = .004$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .968$ ), or age ( $r = .108$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .235$ ). This implies that, except for ethnicity, the other background variables do not have a strong or significant influence on respondents' attitudes towards life milestone celebrations.

**Table 5: Correlation analysis**

Variables		Gender	Religion	Age	Ethnicity
Religion	Pearson Correlation	.039	1		
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.174	-.095	1	
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	-.158	.027	-.089	1
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	-.144	.004	.108	<b>.236**</b>

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

#### 4.6 Regression

The regression analysis examines the influence of gender, religion, age, and ethnicity on respondents' attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. The results indicate that ethnicity is the only variable with a statistically significant effect on attitude ( $B = .053$ ,  $Beta = .232$ ,  $t = 2.569$ ,  $Sig. = .011$ ). This suggests that respondents' ethnicity plays an important role in shaping their attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. In contrast, the effects of gender, religion, and age on attitude were not statistically significant, as indicated by their respective p-values of .338, .896, and .210. These findings emphasize the importance of considering ethnicity when examining attitudes toward life milestone celebrations, as it appears to be a key factor influencing respondents' perspectives.

**Table 6: Regression analysis**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.335	.427		7.815	.000	2.490	4.181
	Gender	-.106	.110	-.088	-.961	.338	-.325	.112
	Religion	.008	.058	.012	.131	.896	-.108	.123
	Age	.229	.181	.115	1.262	.210	-.130	.588
	Ethnicity	.053	.021	.232	2.569	.011	.012	.094

*a. Dependent Variable: Attitude*

#### 4.7 Qualitative findings

Respondents were asked to share their perception about how age and cultural background influence their attitude towards life event celebrations. A total of 34 responses were received. The comments provided by respondents from the summer camp offer a range of insights into how age and cultural background influence attitudes towards life event celebrations. Overall, the responses highlight a complex interplay between age, cultural traditions, and personal preferences when it comes to celebrating life milestones such as birthdays, weddings, and other significant events. Younger respondents often express more excitement and enthusiasm towards life event celebrations, preferring lively and vibrant gatherings with friends and family. This age group tends to embrace new experiences and may even incorporate modern or hybrid elements into traditional celebrations, such as themed parties and the use of social media for documentation and sharing. As individuals grow older, there seems to be a shift towards more subdued and intimate celebrations, emphasizing the non-material aspects of life events and valuing close relationships with loved ones. Older participants often express a preference for simpler celebrations and reflect on the importance of family traditions and cultural customs.

Cultural background plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals approach celebrations. Respondents from different cultures describe specific customs and rituals associated with their heritage, such as the significance of certain foods (e.g., pancit for long life in the Philippines)

or practices like family prayer sessions and the use of yellow rice in Indonesia. These cultural elements influence how celebrations are conducted and the importance placed on certain milestones. The comments also indicate that cultural differences affect not only the types of events celebrated but also how they are celebrated. For example, some respondents note that in Western cultures, birthdays are often marked by parties, gifts, and cake, while in Asian cultures, traditional festivals and religious events hold greater significance.

Overall, these insights highlight the diversity in attitudes towards life event celebrations across age groups and cultural backgrounds. Participants' comments suggest that while there may be shifts in how individuals approach celebrations as they age, cultural heritage remains a significant and enduring influence on how life events are commemorated.

## 5. Discussion

The study's findings reveal complex relationships between background factors such as age, gender, religion, and ethnicity and respondents' attitudes toward life milestone celebrations. Demographically, the participants were primarily young adults (aged 18-24) and predominantly female, with the majority coming from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. This reflects a diverse group in terms of ethnicity and religion, mainly consisting of Christians, Muslims, and smaller representations of Buddhists, Hindus, and other faiths.

Regarding attitudes toward life milestone celebrations, cultural traditions were deemed important by the majority, especially those from the Christian community, who also exhibited excitement and enthusiasm for celebrations such as weddings and graduations. This aligns with previous studies (Umanath and Berntsen, 2020; Cheng, 2023; Rojas and Watkins-Fassler, 2022), that suggest cultural and religious contexts significantly shape individuals' approaches to milestones. While Christian respondents generally felt their beliefs aligned well with celebrations, Muslims expressed more disagreement, possibly reflecting contrasting perspectives on the integration of religious traditions with life events.

The ANOVA test showed significant differences in attitudes based on age and religion, while gender and ethnicity did not present notable variations. These results echo existing literature, including research by Masuda and Holmes (1978), that highlights the impact of life stages and cultural backgrounds on celebration preferences and practices. Interestingly, correlation and regression analyses underscore the critical role of ethnicity in influencing attitudes, suggesting that cultural nuances rooted in ethnicity profoundly shape individuals' perspectives on celebrations. In contrast, the effects of gender, religion, and age were less pronounced, diverging from some prior research, such as the study by Loewenthal and Cornwall (1993), which found stronger associations between these variables and attitudes toward celebrations.

### 5.1 Comparing qualitative and quantitative findings.

There are some discrepancies and similarities between the insights from the comments provided by respondents and the insights drawn from the quantitative analysis. The discussion, in this regard, is as follows:

**Influence of Age:** The comments suggest that age plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward life event celebrations. Younger respondents are generally more enthusiastic about celebrations and open to new experiences, while older respondents prefer simpler and more intimate gatherings. However, the quantitative analysis indicates that age did not have a significant correlation with attitudes toward life event celebrations (Sig. = 0.235). This suggests

that while respondents perceive age as an important factor in their attitudes toward celebrations, the quantitative data does not show a strong or significant relationship.

**Influence of Cultural Background:** The comments emphasize the importance of cultural background in shaping attitudes toward life event celebrations. Respondents describe specific customs, traditions, and practices that influence how they celebrate milestones. This aligns with the quantitative analysis, which found a significant relationship between ethnicity (as a proxy for cultural background) and attitudes toward life event celebrations ( $r = 0.236^{**}$ , Sig. = 0.009). Both qualitative and quantitative data support the idea that cultural background is a key factor in shaping attitudes toward celebrations.

**Influence of Religion:** The comments did not focus heavily on the influence of religion on attitudes toward celebrations, whereas the quantitative analysis found a significant difference in attitudes based on religious background ( $F = 2.827$ , Sig. = 0.028). This discrepancy suggests that while religion may play an important role in shaping attitudes toward celebrations, respondents may not be as aware of or may not explicitly acknowledge its influence in their comments.

**Gender:** The comments did not emphasize any notable differences in attitudes toward life event celebrations based on gender. This aligns with the quantitative analysis, which found no significant differences based on gender ( $F = 1.265$ , Sig. = 0.286).

Overall, the insights from the comments and the quantitative analysis align on some aspects, such as the influence of cultural background, but differ in others, such as the impact of age and religion. This suggests that while cultural background is a significant influence on attitudes toward life event celebrations, the perceived impact of age and religion may not be as strong or clear-cut as respondents believe.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the multifaceted nature of attitudes toward life milestone celebrations and the importance of considering ethnicity as a key influencing factor. The findings resonate with previous studies on cultural and religious influences, but also highlight some new insights regarding the nuanced impacts of ethnicity on individuals' attitudes and practices surrounding life events.

## **6. Conclusion**

The findings of the study demonstrate that respondents' attitudes towards life milestone celebrations are influenced significantly by their ethnicity and religious backgrounds, with age also playing a notable role. Gender does not appear to significantly influence attitudes toward celebrations. The prominence of cultural traditions, friends and family gatherings for birthdays, and enthusiasm for weddings and graduations indicate that social and familial bonds remain central to these celebrations across diverse groups.

Practical implications of the findings suggest that individuals planning celebrations, particularly those in multicultural and multi-religious communities, should consider the diverse preferences and attitudes of different groups. Organizations or event planners hosting large events, such as weddings, birthdays, or other life milestones, should account for cultural and religious nuances to ensure inclusivity and respect for the varied traditions of participants. For future research, a broader demographic representation, particularly including older age groups, may provide deeper insights into the impact of different life stages on celebration

practices. Additionally, a more focused exploration of specific religious and cultural practices may offer a richer understanding of how different traditions influence life milestone celebrations. Longitudinal studies could also be beneficial in examining how attitudes towards life milestone celebrations evolve over time and with changing societal norms.

Overall, this study sheds light on the complex interplay between cultural, religious, and national backgrounds and individuals' approaches to life milestone celebrations, providing a foundation for further research and practical applications in planning and organizing these significant events.

### Acknowledgment

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Faculty of Languages and Communication Science, Universitas Sultan Agung, and the International Office of Universitas Islam Sultan Agung for their invaluable support and resources. We also thank IIUM Malaysia for their collaboration and assistance throughout this research project.

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