

RESULT 1

WISDOM AT THE END OF LIFE

**An Analysis the relation between wisdom
and well-being in partners country - POLAND**



Project: The Pursuit of Wisdom in Adult Education

No 2020-1-PL01-KA204-082037





WISDOM AT THE END OF LIFE

**Wisdom at the End of Life. An Analysis the relation
between wisdom and well-being in partners country
POLAND**

**Mądrość u kresu życia. Analiza relacji między mądrością
a dobrym życiem seniorów w krajach partnerskich
POLSKA**

Society is changing – Europeans are living longer than ever before and the age profile of the population is shifting rapidly. This demographic change is characterised by a declining percentage of people who are of working age and a simultaneous increase in the number of elderly people (EUROSTAT, 2020).

Recent years have witnessed a growing trend in population ageing. The share of elderly persons in the population of Poland is gradually increasing. At the end of 2020, the number of persons aged 60 and more exceeded 9.8 million, which was by 1.0% more than a year before. The percentage of elderly persons in Polish population amounted to 25.6%.

According to the projection of Statistics Poland, the number of population aged 60 and more in Poland in 2030 is to increase and reach 10.8 million, and in 2050 – 13.7 million.

Then older people will constitute about 40% of total population of Poland. In 2020, the age dependency ratio¹ rose to 28.2 from 27.2 noted a year before. The ratio of post-working age population per 100 persons at working age equalled 37.5, while in the previous year it was 36.5.

The majority of seniors lives in cities. In 2020, the urbanization rate for persons aged 60 and more was at 64.3%. Seniors comprised 27.7% of urban population and 22.7% of rural population.ⁱ

The results of the Social Cohesion Survey of 2019 show that seniors are characterized by a much lower activity related to the main task performed in everyday life.





Learning and education give us the opportunity to rethink the relationship between generations.

Rather than separation, the focus should be on solidarity between different generations in order to combat social exclusion, age discrimination, and disparaging views of elderly people.

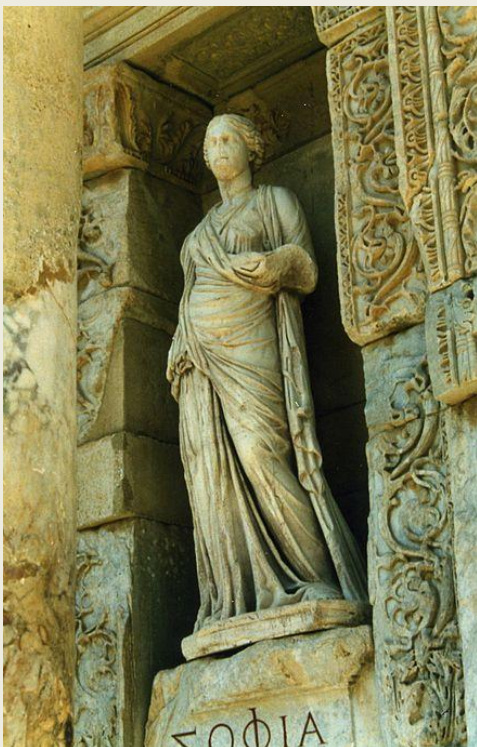
The age of a person, although it is an important condition for the manifestation of wisdom, is not a sufficient condition.

Therefore, the question arises how to understand wisdom and what contributes to its formation and growth, since the factor of time itself does not guarantee its revealing.ⁱⁱ

The demand for intergenerational education is the result of age segregation in society. In education, this division persists until old age. Seniors have few opportunities to experience intergenerational learning.

People most often stay in a peer group: from kindergarten to universities of the third age. Intergenerational education has a beneficial effect on older people because it gives them the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge, and also reduces the risk of depression and feelings of isolation.

It is necessary to counteract the difficult situation of elderly people living in institutions, without lack of support, with the risk of isolation. Seniors need an environment where they can impart wisdom through stories (personal wisdom).



Personification of Wisdom (Koine Greek: Σοφία, Sophia) in the Library of Celsus in Ephesus (second century).

Lifelong learning is the incorporation of continuous learning throughout life.

The value of learning for active aging Learning enables a person to cope with the unpredictable challenges of life and to take advantage of opportunities to control their destiny.

It increases their practical capacity to contribute to current society and to transmit experience, ideas and innovation for life in the future.



Wisdom as a result of positive aging.

Growing in wisdom in the following years of life requires combining:

- practical knowledge,
- emotional intelligence,
- empathy skills.

How the wisdom of elders can promote social well-being?

Elders continue to be highly respected members of their communities. Considered the custodians of wisdom, elders in many societies enjoy considerable degrees of social reverenceⁱⁱⁱ.

Life conditions such as physical health, socioeconomic status, financial situation, the physical environment, and social involvement cannot fully explain the well-being of older persons.

Instead, personality characteristics and developmental influences appear to have a stronger impact.

Wisdom (defined as a composite of cognitive, reflective, and affective qualities) has a profoundly positive influence on life satisfaction independent of objective circumstances.^{iv}

Elders have long been an elemental source of social well-being. The greatest obligation elders is to pass on their knowledge of the world—their wisdom—to the next generation.

ⁱ The situation of older people in Poland in 2020.

ⁱⁱ Mądrość jako efekt pozytywnego starzenia się. Perspektywa psychologiczna [Wisdom as a result of positive ageing. The psychological perspective], prof. dr hab. Stanisława Steuden, ISSN: 1641-1196.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Path to Well-Being, Paul Stoller Ph.D. The Wisdom of Elders, 2020.

^{iv} Wisdom and Life Satisfaction in Old Age, Monika Ardelt, The Journals of Gerontology: Series B, Volume 52B, Issue 1, January 1997.

Wisdom in the context of aging, end-of-life issues and the quality of life

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Wisdom is highly appreciated characteristics in the majority of cultures. Already 700 years ago, Thomas Aquinas decreed, “of all the pursuits open to men, the search for wisdom is most perfect, more sublime, more profitable, and more full of joy.” In spite of this strong message, empirical studies of wisdom in psychology and gerontology did not begin until the 1970s (Bangen et al. 2013). The concept of wisdom is very difficult to grasp - there are number of definitions that emphasize various aspects of this complex characteristic. For example, Paul J. Baltes sees it as an „expert knowledge and judgment about important, difficult and uncertain questions associated with the meaning and conduct of life” (Baltes & Kunzmann 2003, p. 131). M. Ardel (2008) views the wisdom as a combination of cognitive, reflective, and affective personality qualities, while cognitive aspect refers to „an understanding of life and a desire to know the truth, i.e., to comprehend the significance and deeper meaning of phenomena and events, particularly with regard to intrapersonal and interpersonal matters. [It] includes knowledge and acceptance of the positive and negative aspects of human nature, of the inherent limits of knowledge, and of life’s unpredictability and uncertainties” (Ardelt, 2004b, p. 275; Ardel, 2005, p. 9). Reflective part consists of a „perception of phenomena and events from multiple perspectives“, which „requires self-examination, self-awareness and self-insight“, whilst the affective component reflects „sympathetic and compassionate love for others“ (Ardelt 2004, p. 275; Ardel 2005, p. 9). S. Ryan based on the analysis of Socrates’ philosophy states, that person is wise if and only if (1) has extensive factual and theoretical knowledge, (2) knows how to live well, (3) is successful at living well and, (4) has very few unjustified beliefs (Ryan 2007).

It is clear, that some of the definitions are truly specific and some do have few components common. Based on the analyses, it is possible to find the overlap among the various definitions. They most frequently include subcomponents such as:

- „(1) social decision making and pragmatic knowledge of life, which relates to social reasoning, ability to give good advice, life knowledge, and life skills;
- (2) prosocial attitudes and behaviors, which include empathy, compassion, warmth, altruism, and a sense of fairness;
- (3) reflection and self-understanding, which relates to introspection, insight, intuition, and self-knowledge and awareness;
- (4) acknowledgement of and coping effectively with uncertainty;
- (5) emotional homeostasis, which relates to affect regulation and self-control“ (Bangen et al. 2013, p. 1256). There are some more, not as commonly mentioned, however also important:
- „(6) value relativism and tolerance, which involves a nonjudgmental stance and acceptance of other value systems;
- (7) openness to new experience;
- (8) spirituality;
- (9) sense of humor“ (ibidem).

The strong message in the context of wisdom is its connection with aging. Several studies point to the fact that there are age-related differences in wisdom – it seems that wisdom increases with age (see e.g. Happé et al. 1998; Grossmann et al. 2010; Worthy, D. A. et al. 2011).

There is an interesting remark by J. Balla (2009) inspired by E. Goldberg (2006) about the advantages of aging brain. The loss of some memories and specific information can - paradoxically - contribute to wisdom. This idea is based on the theory of information complexes and the principle of neural networks. The neural network stores knowledge based on generalizations and is therefore able to evaluate mutually similar and common characteristics of mutually different situations and phenomena. This ability is created in the neural network only after repeated repetitions and is relatively independent of the functioning of individual neurons. On the contrary, it is preserved even in the event of a failure of several members of the neural network, while specific information disappears, but so-called silent knowledge is stored relatively better. According to Goldberg (2006), the acquisition of wisdom also takes place by making the use of the aging brain more efficient. Despite brain aging, loss of involvement, and death of neurons, generic memory can improve with age until the end of life, even when other cognitive functions decline. Moreover, the loss of specific information by aging brings an advantage as the general ones containing the essence of information are more prominent (Balla 2009).

However, there is not a causal relation – being old does not automatically mean to be wise. Research in our country examining the context of aging and wisdom points to the fact that it is necessary, for example:

- to take into account the historical and cultural contexts of the age in which the aging person lived most of their lives;
- to analyze subject's personality, especially in terms of how s/he regulates an individual's behavior;
- to respect the individuality and uniqueness of the aging process (Kovac 2011).

Regarding the personality specifics that should be also taken into account, in our conditions, for example, it has been shown that all three components of wisdom (as reported by M. Ardeli - 2008, ie cognitive, reflective, and affective) correlate significantly positively with personality characteristics such as: extraversion, openness, friendliness and conscientiousness; at the same time, wisdom is closely linked to low levels of anxiety, neuroticism and depression (Ruiselova & Prokopcakova 2011). It is obvious, that wisdom is also related to the quality of life. According to psychologist J. Krivohlavy (2004) wisdom enables a person to live a good or even optimal life under various difficult circumstances. Scientific studies also proof the significant connection between the quality of life and wisdom – according to them, wisdom is related to better physical and mental health and improved quality of life among older adults (Richards & Hatch 2011; Webster 2014).

It is also believed that wisdom comes not only with the age but also with dramatic life events that lead to re-evaluation of values or life goals. There are specific studies oriented towards the analysis of wisdom in lethally ill or dying people – however, results point to the fact that wisdom components typical for these groups of people do not differ much from those gained by age. L. P. Montross-Thomas et al. (2018) identified in hospice patients subscales of wisdom as follows:

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- (1) prosocial attitudes and behaviors;
 - (2) social decision making and general knowledge of life;
 - (3) emotional regulation;
 - (4) openness to new experience;
 - (5) acknowledgment of uncertainty;
 - (6) spirituality and religiosity;
 - (7) reflection and self-understanding;
 - (8) sense of humor;
 - (9) value relativism and tolerance.

In this context, M. Ardel and C. A. Edwards stress also the importance of well-being as a crucial aspect of the quality of life at its end. In older community residents and hospice patients study they explored whether wisdom might be particularly beneficial for people at the end of life, when extrinsic means to increase well-being largely disappear. The study reports that wisdom is positively related to subjective well-being in the later years, which draws an attention to the mutual influence of wisdom, well-being, and the end of life issues.

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1. Introduction

“We are not provided with wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves, after a long journey through the ‘desert’, which no one can take from us, and from which no effort can be spared” (Marcel Proust, 1919).

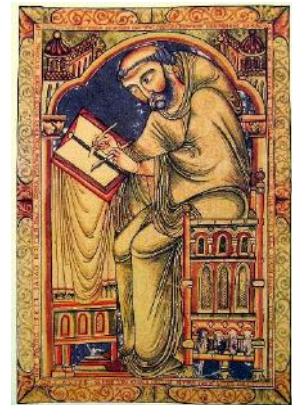
Abstract:

From classical antiquity to the Middle Ages, the wisdom it is associated with old age and

there were several possibilities for wisdom. From the modernity, the ties between knowledge, wisdom and old age have been lost over time, as capitalism advanced. Currently, the elderly no longer associated with wisdom, and some social indicators suggest that, although they live longer, the elderly live worse.

Wisdom, as a widely desired attribute, is already part of history of Man since Antiquity. In addition to distinctions between epochs, religions or philosophies, some authors propose a distinction territorial dimension of world wisdom conceptions: Western conceptions and Eastern conceptions and seek to compare the two cultures. Western traditions include those that most proliferated in the construction of Western thought: Biblical, Greek, Ancient Egypt and the Anglo-American tradition. The oriental tradition, in turn, it is broader, more diversified and consists of microdoctrines, authors restrict their attention only to the great teachings of the east: the Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Medieval people, however, could dream of a good, peaceful and wise, even if it was a reward gained only after death, after old age. Modernity brings the almost impossibility of any wisdom, even in old age. In modernity something happens unsettling in the field of knowledge. The entry into the scene of scientific knowledge will determine a



separation that was not there before: the separation between knowledge and scholarship, on the one hand, and wisdom, on the other, and this it will now occupy a much smaller place in the cultural universe.

Before the moderns, wisdom was a greater value, and all knowledge was sought inseparably from it. One fed the other: the wiser, the more apt to knowledge; the more knowledgeable, the more close to wisdom. Modernity separates the two. The knowledge it breaks down into specialties, becoming also more technical. When, after the

Renaissance, physics separated from medieval cosmology, astronomy separates from astrology; mathematics, numerology; the chemistry, alchemy, etc., the field of knowledge is divided into several specialized areas and knowledge becomes more and more the subject of scientists allocated to different metiers.



If there was, in Antiquity - and we are talking here about a time before the Middle Ages -, a clear relationship between old age and wisdom, was not because ancient societies were “wiser” than ours, or simply because social and political conditions were more conducive to making older people also wiser.

In addition to the contexts of each age or each people, there seems to be a stronger, more intimate relationship between one thing and another: wisdom seems be characteristic of mature adulthood; it seems to be a condition that is more easily acquired with the development (maturity) of the body and the mind of the individual who has acquired a certain life experience. Precisely this learning, this experience, helped to live better in old age. However, there is much evidence that the elderly of our time live worse.

With the increase in life expectancy, the elderly population has been increasing and has become the focus of attention. Worldwide, there is an average growth of the elderly population of 2% per year, having tripled in number in the last 50 years. In Portugal, the elderly population has been increasing, occupying almost 20% of the total population, according to data from the last Censu. This increase and the resulting social transformation leads us to the elderly individual, the place he occupies in today's society as a significant and active member, and the way his knowledge and wisdom can contribute to its evolution.

Wisdom does not come automatically with age. Nothing comes - except wrinkles. True, some wines improve over time, but only if the grapes were good in the first place.

Abigail Van Buren

Old age is now considered, not the decline of life, but a stage where the elderly person can develop all the potential that you still have within you. Old age is also a personal challenge, and perhaps the most important task in life, with the opportunity to culminate in wisdom, considered the most advanced stage of human development and the height of his personality.

Perhaps Proust was right, wisdom must be discovered by us, in a long journey of constant changes, and in an effort to adapt to adversity. These changes could be promoters of

learning and personal growth. Thus, wisdom appears as a construct that manifests and operates in the difficulties of life, but that also develops from adverse paths; seems to reside in a capacity to better understand ambiguity, to know the deep meaning of things and also the limits of that knowledge. Research has sought to define wisdom by presenting different dimensions to represent it, which will be explored in the theoretical framework of this study.

The concept of successful aging implies an ability to adapt to losses, deal with the unpredictability of life, seek meaningful goals for the individual and choose lifestyles that can contribute to maintaining physical and mental health. If some theories argue that there is a decline in wisdom with age, associated with aging, others say that age is positively related to wisdom and well-being, and to the accumulation of life experiences. And yet, that wise thinking about life issues contributes for successful aging and increased longevity.

With great wisdom, studying hard, thinking hard, trying to understand everything and everyone, a man can, after about forty years of life, learn to keep silent.
Millôr Fernandes

In this context, our general objective is to know how life experiences can foster wisdom in the elderly. The relevance is related to the fact that, at a time when life expectancy increases and the Portuguese population ages, being important understand that learning takes the elderly person with wisdom from their life experiences. This knowledge can be the bridge for an intervention in order to promote the integration of the elderly

person in their community and sharing their experiences and life lessons with generations of younger people and also to promote, with the elderly population, successful forms of aging, promoting the integration of paths leading to wisdom. It will be interesting and current if this study allows us to understand that, despite the decline in cognitive functions in the elderly, the number of this population can be valuable for the emotional and social well-being of communities, and contribute their knowledge and wisdom in favour of their evolution.

The life cycle is a development process over which the individual adds experiences, and where no stage is more important than another. However, the later developmental phase, old age, has been overlooked in favour of other developmental phases, seen as more important.

Aging is a complex, idiosyncratic and multifactorial process, subject to factors psychological, biological and social, and constant changes. With aging, biological level, a deterioration of capacities and functions, which often restricts the activity of elderly. However, it is also known that there are certain functions that are maintained and still others that are developable, such as creative skills, personal growth and wisdom.

The recognition of the potential of the elderly individual in society has led to the concept of successful aging, which is distinguished from pathological aging, where there is disease seriousness or degree of dependence, and normative aging, where this disease and dependence are absent, despite the risk of their presence.

Thus, aging can occur with levels of biological, psychological and social functioning high levels, psychological well-being and quality of life, which has been called successful or active aging, contrary to stereotypes related to old age. However, this aging will always be a complex process and will occur in an idiosyncratic way over the development, contributing to the unique character of the human being.

The criteria for assessing successful aging can be objective or subjective, depending on whether the reference is on a measurable performance and functionality scale, or rather, in the subjective appraisals that the elderly individual makes about their aging, assuming the set of emotional experiences that he himself experiences, with indicators such as happiness and personal satisfaction. The concept of intravariability of functions for each. Thus, the individual plays an important role in describing behavioural changes throughout the life cycle. The finitude of life can condition, from a certain age, the individual's behaviour and aging, but does not remove the possibility of the balance of life experiences result in successful aging.

Wisdom also has a great tradition in Philosophy, based on Greek culture, considering even the etymological basis of Philosophy the love of wisdom. Greek philosophers distinguished between wisdom and knowledge. Greek wisdom consisted not only of research and knowledge the world, but it also had its pragmatic end in the search for an attitude and life practices that lead to leading a good life.

Thus, wisdom was related not only to the nature of the world and of Man, but also with the search for a purpose of life and with a constant and critical awareness of their own ignorance. Bacon was the great driver of the scientific method, believing that wisdom came from an inductive and methodical observation of phenomena, which was only possible through the use of reasoning. Descartes believed that reasoning and reflection

When old age arrives, accept it, love it. It abounds in pleasures if you know how to love it. The years that gradually decline are among the sweetest in a man's life. Even when you have reached the extreme limit of hair, they still reserve pleasures. Seneca.

were facilitators of wise thinking. Kant believed that Man was not wise but that he only had love for wisdom

If there was, in Antiquity - and we are talking here about a time before the Middle Ages, a clear relationship between old age and wisdom, was not because ancient societies were “wiser” than ours, or simply because social and political conditions were more conducive to making older people also wiser

2. Wisdom

What makes the boat go is not the full sail, but the unseen wind. Plato

The term wisdom is defined as “a great abundance of knowledge; quality of who is knowing; science; prudence; righteousness; reason” (Portuguese Language Dictionary, 6th edition, p. 1473). The word derives from the Greek “**Sophia**” which refers to the quality of exercising good judgment from the experience, observation and reflection. Aristotle (322 BC) in his work Ethics Nicomachus used the term "phronesis" to describe "practical wisdom" or the ability to act correctly.

In fact, throughout the history of human development, the individual has sought wisdom, it can be said that this is the pinnacle of human development.

Individuals with wisdom has different positive qualities as an integrated personality, superior judgment skills in conflict situations and resilience in the face of vicissitudes of life. At a late stage of human development, the wise individual will be able to age successfully, compared to another less wise. In optimal circumstances, aging will be associated with greater emotional balance, contentment with life and a theosophical approach that corresponds to wisdom (Glück & Baltes, 2006).

Where is the wisdom that we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge that we have lost in information?

Eliot Thomas

Wisdom is thus defined as knowledge and judgment about the meaning of life and the orchestration of human development in order to achieve excellence, combining personal and collective well-being. It allows not only cognitive effort and adaptive motivation to

achieve individual goals but also the convergence of successes with the search for the common good. Wisdom facilitates the personal development and can promote the development of interpersonal relationships and the development of the other. Although

not a result of old age per se, it appears that the elderly who use their life experiences optimally tends to acquire wisdom.

The search for the meaning of wisdom was accomplished through an investigation using the Delphi method. This investigation included the collection of opinions from researchers and university experts from different countries, in a total of 53 statements, relating and discriminating wisdom, intelligence and spirituality. It was concluded that wisdom is a unique entity of the human being, uncommon, a quality of personality that can be learned and measured, and that evolves with age through cognitive and emotional development advanced, fuelled by experience. Resilience and successful coping strategies proved to be more important for the promotion of wisdom than intelligence and spirituality.

There is more than wisdom, and they are all necessary for the world; it's not bad that they alternate. [Yourcenar](#) , Marguerite

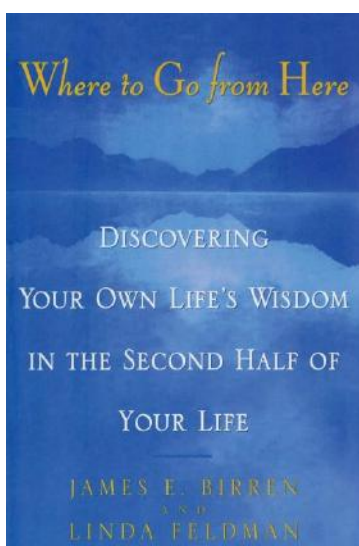
There seems to be a positive relationship between wisdom and emotional well-being in individuals elderly, which may allow to identify pathways for positive development at this later stage of life. High levels of perceived self-control and involvement

with life, together with problem solving starting from a positive evaluation of those same problems, reinforce the emotional well-being associated with wisdom and promote successful aging. The implicit theories report the laypersons and common-sense descriptions about the design of wisdom. Wisdom is a universal concept, used in common language, being defined as an exceptional characteristic of the functioning and development of the human being, identified as a state of mind and behavioural profile that comprises an intellectual, affective and motivation of the individual.

Clayton (1975) analysed the construct of wisdom from a layperson's perspective and obtained the following meanings: empathetic, with intelligent, intuitive, observant experience. Subsequently, Clayton & Birren (1980) isolated three characteristic attributes of wise people:

- 1) affective characteristics, like empathy and compassion,
- 2) a reflective dimension, like introspection and intuition, and
- 3) a cognitive dimension, encompassing experience and intelligence.

Sternberg (1985) identified six qualities as attributes of wisdom: the ability to reasoning, wit (including deep knowledge and understanding of phenomena, and the other), learning from other ideas and the environment,



the capacity for judgment, the use of information in a fast way, and the high discernment and perspicacity.

Holliday & Chandler (1986) consider that wisdom comprises five characteristics:

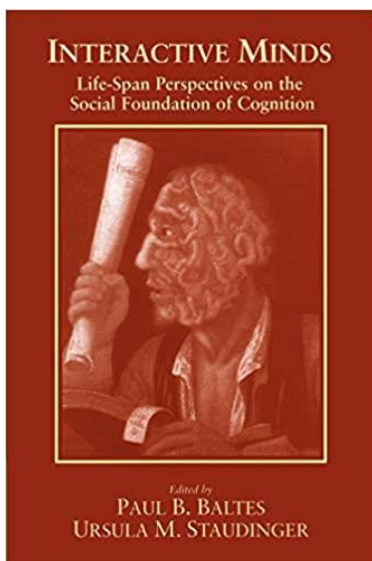
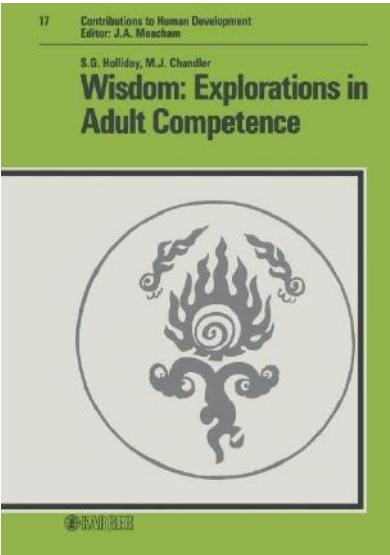
- 1) exceptional understanding,
- 2) communication and judgment skills,
- 3) general competence that includes both personality characteristics and skills such as creativity and intelligence,
- 4) interpersonal skills, and finally,
- 5) social discretion, which includes not harming others and absence of judgment.

Wisdom is also associated with high levels of personal and interpersonal competence, including the ability to listen, evaluate and give advice. It is also used for the sake of others and for the purpose of to do good (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). Seven wisdom properties are defined when done an analysis from a historical and philosophical perspective:

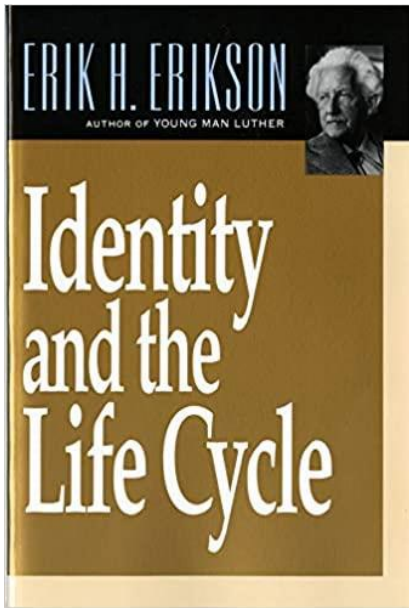
- a) wisdom represents a higher level of knowledge of judgment and counselling;
- b) wisdom raises important and difficult questions and strategies on the conduct and the meaning of life;
- c) wisdom includes knowledge of the limits of knowledge and uncertainty of phenomena in life;
- d) includes a knowledge of great reach and balanced, orchestrating knowledge and virtue;
- e) involves perfect synergy between mind and character;
- f) wisdom represents the use of knowledge for the good of oneself himself and others and finally

g) wisdom although difficult to achieve, it is easily recognized when it manifests.

(Baltes, 1993, 1999, cit. In Baltes & Staudinger)



2.1. Explicit theories of wisdom



Explicit theories analyse what is quantifiable in human behaviour as a manifestation of wisdom, interconnected with personality and cognitive development. The developmental perspective of the life cycle of Erikson (1982) proposes eight stages of development during which the individual is confronted with evolutionary crises, whose resolution strengthens it and predisposes it to the next stage of development, along these their sense of identity. These evolutionary tasks bring with them imposed challenges society to the individual, throughout their developmental cycle, namely in adulthood and in old age, and whose overcoming gives him satisfaction and a sense of competence (Havighurst, 1972).

Erikson proposes for the adult phase two developmental stages: “generativity versus stagnation”, between the ages of 30 and 60, which presupposes that the adult is able to achieve a satisfactory functioning in their professional activity, in their family and interpersonal relationships, accepting the physiological changes that begin to appear. The resulting quality of this stadium is the caring (Erikson, 1985). The positive resolution of the generativity stage has an impact on the elderly towards successful and wise aging (Schoklitsch & Baumann, 2012). The “Integrity versus despair”, eighth stage, for individuals over 60, implies especially the adaptation to a phase in which physical health is declining, reform appears and with it the adaptation to new roles, and the approach of death. Some individuals learn wisdom with life's challenges, others learn bitterness and bitterness. When the individual assumes his successes and failures, accepts the way he lived his life, adapting to changes, can integrate the developmental phases, giving it meaning, transcending self-centeredness and culminating in wisdom.

Within the scope of life cycle theory, a ninth stage of development is still considered, covering the 80s and 90s, with new demands and difficulties. In this stadium comes the notion of gero-transcendence, which progressively manifests itself, and where there is substitution of a materialistic view of life by another metacognitive one, with the re-evaluation of the cycle of life and an active involvement in this introspection. The elderly in this stadium refers an introspective understanding of the meaning of life, acceptance of change and proximity to who left, demonstrating wisdom and insight about the meaning of life.

Thus, wisdom can be analysed as a personal characteristic (Erikson, 1985); as a form of post-formal thought characteristic of neo-Piagetian theories; or as a specialized perspective of analysing the meaning and conduct in life. In this last perspective,

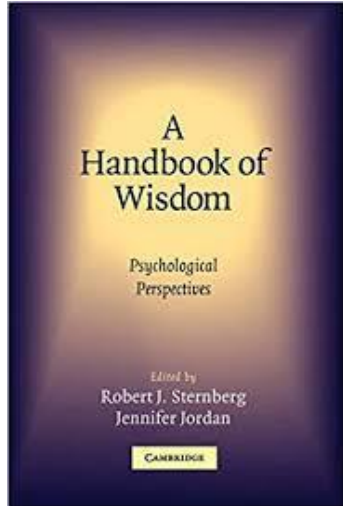
Sternberg (1990) conceptualizes wisdom as the knowledge that the individual has both the objectives that he proposes to achieve and his own limitations; an personality that reconciles tolerance to the different ambiguities that life presents, a deep motivation and the implication in the meanings of life and its contexts, and in concretizations for the common good, balancing intrapersonal and interpersonal interests. This author proposed for wisdom, the Balance Theory (Sternberg, 1990). This theory describes tacit knowledge underlying practical intelligence ("knowing how" instead of "knowing what") that is used in a balance constant between the self and others, and that associated with the context allows to achieve the common good. The wise person is obliged to different moral decisions throughout life, dilemmas that activate his reasoning ability acquired in adolescence and adulthood. The life history and values of the will influence

their tacit knowledge to deal with different interests and generate a balanced and wise answer. The individual analyzes his possible response in order to adjust possible changes in the context, or adaptation to a necessary one. The ultimate goal will always be common good (Sternberg, 1985). For this author, wisdom always involves judgment when there is a competition of interests with no clear solution. To this end, the balance of personal interests and wise judgment implies exceptional problem-solving skills.

Meachem (1990) conceives wisdom as a process of meta-knowledge between what individual knows and what he doubts. Wink & Helson (1997) recognize practical wisdom,

motivated by intrapersonal development (affective maturity, self-knowledge and integrity), and a transcendental wisdom that reflects the development of the individual at the inter-relational level (relating empathy, transcending oneself, recognizing the limits of knowledge). They developed an 18-item scale to assess the practical dimension and conducted

interviews with open questions for the transcendental dimension. The wise person showed analytical skills of life's problems, interest in human values and openness to new experiences.



It is not enough to acquire wisdom; in addition, it is necessary to know how to use it. Cicero

In the investigation conducted by the “Berlin Group”, wisdom was defined as “pragmatism fundamental aspects of existence, that is, knowledge and judgment about the essence of the condition and ways and means of planning, dealing with and understanding a full life”. Five wisdom criteria were defined, divided into basic criteria and metacriteria. The basic criteria, necessary but not sufficient to define wise knowledge, include factual knowledge and procedural knowledge; the metacriteria, important in pragmatic assessment of the domains of life, define the importance of context throughout the life cycle life, the relativization of events and the recognition and management of uncertainty throughout this same path. The basic criteria will be developed in a first phase and then, at a later stage, the meta-criteria, when there is already a life experience and personal changes that consolidate wisdom.

Some investigations have shown that chronological age has not been shown to be a factor determinant of wisdom, with elderly individuals presenting the same performances as adults young people. However, although investigations have shown that with the advancing age fluid intelligence decreases, knowledge associated with wisdom, on the contrary, increases. The experience acquired throughout life, especially when the demands placed on the proves the wisdom for performing tasks, was an indicator of better performance in this criterion. It was also found that the elderly activates their potential more easily pragmatic knowledge about life events and consequent wisdom than adults young people (Staudinger & Baltes, 1996). Wisdom can be understood as “a refinement of cognitive pragmatics, highly sensitive to the context and uncertainty of existence”.

Wisdom can be fostered by crises and obstacles that the individual encounters throughout development, challenging their ways of looking at reality, and others, allowing them to gain a broader and broader perspective of it. Ardelit (2000) defined wisdom in three dimensions:

1. the cognitive dimension, where the individual wants to know life in depth, whether the

intrapersonal level and interpersonal level, including knowledge and acceptance of positive and negative aspects of human nature, the inherent limits of that knowledge and the uncertainties that life itself presents;



Special issue: New Developments in Psychological Wisdom Research

Measuring Wisdom: Existing Approaches, Continuing Challenges, and New Developments

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Received: July 17, 2017; Editorial Decision Date: October 13, 2017

Decision Editor: Bob G. Knight, PhD

Abstract

The question how wisdom can best be measured is still open to debate. Currently, there are two groups of wisdom measures: open-ended performance measures and self-report measures. This overview article describes the most popular current measures of wisdom: the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm, the Bremen Wisdom Paradigm, Grossmann's wise-reasoning approach, the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale, the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale, and the Adult Self-Transcendence Inventory. It discusses the specific challenges of both open-ended and self-report approaches with respect to content validity, convergent and divergent validity, concurrent and discriminant validity, and ecological validity. Finally, promising new developments are outlined that may bridge the gap between wisdom as a competence and wisdom as an attitude and increase ecological validity by being more similar to real-life manifestations of wisdom. These new developments include autobiographical approaches and advice-giving paradigms.

Keywords: Wisdom, Measurement, Validity

Measuring Wisdom: New Developments and Continuing Challenges

When I tell people that I am a wisdom researcher, they usually first ask me what wisdom is—and then almost invariably the next question is, “But can you measure that?” How wisdom can be measured is indeed a complex question, and I do not think we have found a fully convincing answer yet. This article intends to review the current state of wisdom measurement, but also to stimulate new research that adds to our toolbox of wisdom measures.

Why do we even need to measure wisdom? Arguably, wisdom has long been studied in philosophy, theology, or the historical sciences without a need to assign numbers to individuals and run them through complex statistical analyses.

I believe that wisdom research benefits greatly from the use of qualitative methodologies (e.g., Edmondson, 2005; Igarashi, Lovinson, & Altwain, in revision) or from combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., DeMechele, Ferrari, & Rotta, 2015; Glück, Black, Baron, & McAdams, 2005; König & Glück, 2013; Weststrate & Glück, 2017). However, reliable and valid measures of wisdom allow us to study complex psychological research questions in larger samples of individuals that could not otherwise be investigated. In addition, as I hope to show in the following, trying to capture an elusive concept like wisdom in a standardizable way is a rather fascinating creative endeavor in itself that can teach us a lot about the potentials and the limitations of psychological measurement in general.

2. the reflective dimension, which refers to the capacity and motivation to invest in self-knowledge (self-analysis, awareness and discernment), requiring a decentralization of the individual to obtain knowledge through different perspectives, from way to better understand, both their motivations and behaviours, and those of others;

3. the compassionate dimension, which comes as a consequence of the above, and which the individual's motivation to help and contribute to the well-being of others; this perspective does not imply that the individual avoids internal negative emotions, on the contrary, through self-awareness and self-analysis (the reflective dimension), the individual has the competence to recognize, regulate and overcome your negative emotions, without adversely affecting your own life and that of others.

The model of the Wisdom Project, by Naschenweng & Konig (2009), evaluated wisdom



and its dimensions. In the description made by a group of participants, naming characteristics of people who considered wise, the following were found, totally or partially, in the individual dimensions:

1. the cognitive dimension, revealed in knowledge, experience and ability to solve problems, even complex;
2. the reflective dimension, the ability to learn from mistakes, question situations and learn from them;
3. the affective dimension, empathy and social awareness;
4. the dimension of openness to experience and openness to others, and the experience of situations in interpersonal relationship where tolerance stood out;
5. the emotional regulation dimension, including the self-acceptance of your emotions, and the way serene to deal with them;
6. the dimension of positive adaptation, implied in the positive way of dealing with situations and the humour;
7. the dimension of spirituality, self-transcendence and connection with nature;
8. the knowledge dimension, applied in the form of guidance from the other and counselling;
9. the self-awareness dimension, revealed in the honesty, authenticity and awareness of their limitations.

The MORE model of Life Experiences, by Glück & Bluck (2013), postulates that there are four resources that influence the way individuals perceive and evaluate events and changes in life, and how they integrate experiences into their developmental history. These resources are:



1. the sense of mastery, which gives the individual the sense of being able to deal with challenges throughout life, even knowing that it is not possible to control all situations, and accepting the unpredictability of life;

2. openness, new experiences and the perspective of others, lack of judgment by others and acceptance of values different from yours, an attitude that necessarily implies high levels of tolerance for different ways of living; this opening works like precursor of wisdom for providing a broader understanding of reality and can be learned throughout life through contexts that serve as an example of it;

3. a reflective attitude, a motivation to see life's phenomena in a complex way, and less simplistic, in order to understand the links between different phenomena, and question yourself too;

4. emotional regulation and empathy, includes the perception and control of your own emotions, even when these are contradictory or ambivalent, and simultaneously be able to cope with the emotions of others, effectively, maintaining an empathic attitude (Ardelt, 2000).

This empathetic attitude means being able to put yourself in the other's place, without involvement. It also means supporting others, leaving your own needs behind (Glück & Bluck, 2013); this emotional regulation tends to develop throughout life and will be expected the elderly to be able to do it more easily than a teenager or young adult.

Analysing the different theories about wisdom, the fact that it is built around life, forcing a level of confrontation, direct or indirect, with the issues of our existence. Many of these issues are traumatic experiences, reported as subjective interior growth, making room for greater interaction with others, greater openness, spiritual development and a stronger sense of competence (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

However, not everyone achieves wisdom with life's challenges. Many go through these situations without integrating them into learning. It seems necessary to bring certain resources with reflect on experiences, integrate them and learn from them (Glück & Bluck, 2013). These four MORE model features are not a stable part of the individual's personality; four on the contrary, they co-develop with each other and with wisdom, dynamically, throughout life. The manifestation of wisdom in the individual will also depend on the level of personal development and the context or situation experienced. This means that there will be contexts that provide wisdom, while others are not. Likewise, achieving wisdom is not always a matter of experiencing difficult or traumatic

situations; the birth of a child, considered a positive experience by the generality, it may also constitute a lesson of wisdom incorporated in the life of the individual. There will always be in most individuals, throughout their life, situations in which use the “wisdom of experience”, transforming negative experiences into positive ones, incorporating these lessons in your life story, even justifying directions that eventually the life path may have taken.

3. Assess wisdom

Wisdom is a complex construct involving competences (knowledge, experience and skills in problem solving), reflection (critical self-assessment) and self-directed affection and directed at others, which implies different forms of assessment. There are different ways to evaluate the wisdom.

It is that wisdom is a job, and being just sane costs a lot, because to make mistakes, just let yourself go. Alfred de Musset

In assessing an individual's wisdom, it will be important to distinguish between general wisdom, that regards life in general, the way of thinking about complex issues, without the involvement of the subject, and personal wisdom, which will be that which concerns the individual's own life, the appreciation that this makes her and the learning resulting from her own experiences. In assessing wisdom in general, peers may be the best evaluators of this competence in the individual, while in relation to personal wisdom, the choice of the best evaluators may fall on family and friends.

Although the relationship between age and wisdom points to the fact that the elderly person may be wiser, it will be important to look at how this assessment is done; the autobiographical reports of life history experiences seem to be a promising way to assess wisdom in the elderly.

4. Wisdom and happiness

In a general sense, happiness is related to well-being. Veenhoven (2004) analyses the happiness in two distinct axes: a vertical axis, where it differentiates opportunities for a life successful and results obtained in life, a distinction that he considers necessary, given that not always the individual to take advantage of the opportunities that arise throughout life; a horizontal axis, where distinguishes external qualities of the environment and the internal qualities of the individual himself. These two dichotomies facilitate four qualities of life, which relate to the term happiness:



1. the combination of life opportunities and the qualities of the external environment are promoters of a social environment that allows the individual to feel well-being and have opportunities to access schooling, financial affluence, political freedom and social equality;

2. the combination of life opportunities and intrinsic qualities reveal the capacities that the individual has in the management of life events and the ability to cope in situations difficult;

3. the combination of the results obtained in life and the external qualities of life produce the life goals, where life has meaning if serving higher goals, in a transcendental perspective;

4. the combination of the results obtained in life and the individual's internal qualities reveal the individual's appreciation of his own life, or satisfaction with life.

The definition of “being happy” can be made by the individual's affective appreciation of his own life (Bergsma & Ardel, 2012). But the idea that wisdom leads to happiness can be controversial. The wise individual can be happy; however, the insight that wisdom has provides can conflict with happiness, given the greater perception that the individual has of reality. Thus, he will be able to transcend his own interests and life goals, to pursue the

I never forgot the days of my childhood when we used to join the circle of the elders in the community to listen to the treasure of their wisdom and experience.

Nelson Mandela

J Happiness Stud
DOI 10.1007/s10902-011-9275-5

Self-Reported Wisdom and Happiness: An Empirical Investigation

Ad Bergsma · Monika Ardelt

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Abstract Possible tensions between wisdom and happiness have been extensively debated in philosophy. Some regard wisdom as the ‘supreme part of happiness’, whereas other think that a more accurate and wiser view on reality might reduce happiness. Analyzing a Dutch internet survey of 7037 respondents, we discovered that wisdom and happiness were modestly positively related. Wisdom, measured with the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS), explained 9.2% of the variation in hedonic happiness. The correlation with the reflective dimension of wisdom was the strongest. In addition, wisdom was more important for happiness among adults with only an elementary education. Our results suggest that happiness and wisdom do not conflict.

Keywords Happiness · Wisdom · Utilitarianism · Eudaimonic well-being · Positive affect · Personal growth · Adjustment

The thought that the enjoyment of reality is good in itself is already embodied in the wisdom of the Talmud; it states that everybody has to justify himself in the life hereafter for every failure to enjoy a legitimately offered pleasure in this world.

Marie Jahoda (1958)

The most manifest sign of wisdom is a continual cheerfulness: her state is like that of things in the regions above the moon, always clear and serene.

Michel de Montaigne (1905)

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Published online: 27 May 2011

 Springer

who considers the common good, to the detriment of his personal choices, and ultimately, his happiness. This pursuit of altruistic goals can still lead to happiness greater than hedonism (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Personal adaptation to life circumstances includes positive developmental changes leading to subjective well-being. But wisdom can cross the borders of well-being subjective and social integration. It requires an analysis of oneself, flexibility, tolerance to ambiguity, discipline and most likely, the ability to deal with pain. Hence, many

adverse circumstances of life are sometimes promoters of their development. This does not mean that wisdom is inversely correlated with happiness, but that the path to this it will depend on effort, discipline and persistence (Pascual-Leone, 2000).

Still, wisdom may not be related to life satisfaction and happiness in individuals whose circumstances of quality of life and opportunities are optimal; but it will be important how promoter of life satisfaction and happiness when the external circumstances of life are difficult and physical resources fail. It is easier to be happy when everything goes well than when life circumstances are harsh. The latter will require coping skills and wisdom to maintain that happiness.

It is really a big annoyance that wisdom can only be gained through hard
work.

Maugham, William
