

Characteristics of Wisdom According to Four Stages of Development (Adolescent, Young, Middle Adult and Old Age)

Riana Sahrani^{1*} Andri Setia Dharma¹

¹Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta 11440, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: rianas@fpsi.untar.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The many problems in society cannot be separated from the role of wisdom in individual. This is because people who have wisdom will think and act appropriately, so that harmony in the environment is maintained. The long-term purpose of this research was obtaining the Indonesian version of the Wisdom measurement tool. Then the results will be taken into consideration for the gain an Indonesian version of the measurement tool, which is in accordance with Indonesian values and culture. This study took a sample of adolescent, young adults, middle adults, and old age people, starting with eliciting the answers to the characteristics of wisdom (stage I, a total of 345 respondents) according to adolescent (12-20 years old), young adults (21-40 years old), middle adults (41- 60 years old) and the elderly (61-90 years old). Furthermore, in stage II (328 respondents), the distribution of characteristics questionnaires that have been summarized from the four age groups. Data processing in this study uses the method of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Twenty-five items are obtained, which are grouped into three factors that influence wisdom: (1) Think smart; (2) Positive Personality; (3) Reliability in Acting.

Keywords: *Wisdom, characteristics of wisdom, four stages of development*

1. INTRODUCTION

The main research was carried out because of a theoretical background, that is the absence of a standard measuring tool that measures wisdom, especially for Indonesians. Wisdom itself can be interpreted as the intelligence of an individual in using his or her mind based on experience and knowledge, together with the integration of thoughts, feelings and behavior, as well as a willingness to evaluate oneself, in assessing and deciding on a problem, so as to create harmony between individuals and the environment [1].

Researcher generally used the 3D-WS (Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale) questionnaire made by Ardel [2]. The latest research of Ardel and Bruya [3] toward some college students in USA, also used this questioner. The result is that perceived stress was negatively correlated with wisdom. Campayo et al. [4] who are recommended as wise people in Jakarta (Indonesia). Meanwhile, other researchers make a policy questionnaire or measuring instrument in other forms, to measure wisdom. For example, Smith and Baltes [5] made a Wisdom-Related Knowledge measuring tool that was applied to Germans, and Webster [6] who made a Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS) measuring tool to be applied to Canadians, or Thomas et al [7] who made the measuring instrument The

San Diego Wisdom Scale (SD-WISE) by linking wisdom with neurobiology, which is applied to Americans, as well as Ardel [2]. After that, Fung, Chow, and Cheung [8] made 40 items of the Brief Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (BSAWS), applied in Hong Kong, China.

The researcher wants to make an Indonesian version of a measure of wisdom, in this case to measure wisdom in adolescents; young adults; middle adult; and elderly people because there is still a research gap. Cognitive area is still dominance in the finding of some western researcher. Meanwhile, east researcher found that wisdom is very related with affective area of individual. So, there is the influence of cultural factors in this case [9]. It can be comprehending that wisdom of western is more emphasis on how people think about alternative solution of problem they encountered, that cognitive domain. But, in Eastern culture, wisdom is more associated with the affective domain, for instance about how people can harmoniously adjust to other people and their environment.

In addition, this study examines people from three developmental stages, because it is expected that the results of the study will be richer, because they are viewed from various age stages in a cross-sectional manner. The results of previous research regarding the characteristics of wisdom factors in adolescents [10] resulted in the finding that there were 3 (three) factors characteristic of wisdom according to adolescents. The three factors are: (1) Smart

Thinking; (2) Positive Personality; (3) Reliability in Acting. So, this research is developed based on the latest research of Sahrani [10], with adding three others stage of human development based on age. This study is intended to obtain results in the form of characteristics of wise people according to Indonesians, in this case according to 4 (four) stages of development: adolescents, young adults, middle adults, and old age.

2. BACKGROUND

Wisdom is defined as an extraordinary skill in dealing with fundamental problems regarding the meaning of life, and how to live life well [5]. Baltes and Smith (5) provide a further explanation, this extraordinary skill means that people who are experts can be distinguished from people who are not experts in solving complex life problems. Therefore, a wise person is predicted to be able to overcome the problems that exist in their daily life, which are related to norms and interactions with other people in the social environment, so as to create harmonious conditions between individuals and their environment. In this study, wisdom is defined as the intelligence of an individual in using his or her mind based on experience and knowledge, together with the integration of thoughts, feelings and behavior, as well as a willingness to evaluate oneself, in assessing and deciding on a problem, so as to create harmony between individuals and the environment. Ardelit was represented from the Western world, who made a measure of wisdom [2], that is costing of three dimensions: the cognitive, affective, and reflective dimension. Cognitive dimension, namely a deep understanding of life, and the willingness to know the truth. Apart from that, explore the meaning behind phenomena and facts, especially those related to intrapersonal and interpersonal conditions. This includes knowledge and acceptance of both positive and negative aspects of the human condition, along with its limitations and uncertainties in life. The affective dimension is an attitude of empathy and compassion for others. The reflective dimension is the perception of phenomena and events from various points of view. The need for self-evaluation, self-awareness and enlightenment. So Ardelit made a measuring instrument using 3 characteristics, namely that a wise person must be seen as a unit of cognitive, affective, and reflective.

Sahrani's research [10] found that there were 44 points of wisdom characteristics according to adolescents, which were then divided into three (3) factors of wisdom characteristics according to adolescents. Based on the results of grouping these items, the researcher named factor 1 as "Smart Thinking" (consisting of 15 characteristics); factor 2 as "Positive Personality" (consisting of 17 characteristics); and factor 3 as Data collection was carried out by distributing two kinds of questionnaires to participants from three stages of development. Then the researcher elicits or obtains answers to questions about the characteristics or

"Reliability in Acting" (consists of 12 items). The item that most contributes to the Intelligent Thinking Factor is "caution in action" (.790); furthermore, the item that contributes the most from the Positive Personality Factors is "loyal" (.701); The last item that most contributes to the Reliability Factor in Action is "being able to express opinions and communicate" (.731). The results of this study are somewhat different from the findings of the "Eastern" study, particularly from Indonesia, namely Basri [11]. Basri found 5 (five) factors that describe the characteristics of wisdom, namely: high moral spiritual condition, having good human relationships, having the ability to judge and make decisions, optimal personal conditions, and having special / special abilities.

There are results that indicate that wisdom is different in different national cultures, therefore, many researchers have researched wisdom, generally based on certain cultures or countries. For instance, Pasupathi, Staudinger, and Baltes [12] used Wisdom-Related Dilemmas toward students in Germany, and the result was adolescent had the seed of wisdom. After that, Takahashi and Overton [13] took research toward Japanese and American, with synthetic wisdom measures as one of their measurement tools. Webster [14] made his measurement tool and tested on Canadian sample. Besides measurement tools as a scale or questionnaires, there were some researchers made tools in interviewing form, such as Gluck, Bluck, Baron, and McAdams [15], who created tools named Autobiographical narratives. The others were Takahashi and Bordia [16] who found that wisdom was different in west country and east country, that wisdom in the west emphasize in cognitive area, while in the east more on affective way.

3. METHODS

This study took a sample of adolescent, young adults, middle adults, and old age people, starting with eliciting the answers to the characteristics of wisdom (stage I, a total of 345 respondents) according to adolescent (12-20 years old), young adults (21-40 years old), middle adults (41- 60 years old) and the elderly (61-90 years old). Furthermore, in stage II (328 respondents), the distribution of characteristics questionnaires that have been summarized from the four age groups. Based on the views of participants from the three stages of development, stage II made a questionnaire to test the characteristics of the wisdom obtained in stage I. The research instrument used was two kinds of questionnaires, namely the first stage questionnaire in the form of open-ended questions about what the characteristics of a wise person were. The second stage questionnaire was made based on the answers to the first stage questionnaire, then processed by factor analysis.

characteristics of a wise person. This is done by collecting as many opinions or open answers as possible from the research respondents. Then, the answers are grouped based on the same meaning. Then, a number of characteristics

were selected that were mentioned most frequently by the respondents of this study. Furthermore, the characteristics of the wisdom that have been selected are made into items for the rating scale which has a continuum ranging from 1 (very depicting characteristics of wisdom) to 7 (highly describing characteristics of wisdom). Next, the

questionnaire was distributed to different respondents. The data processing in this study uses the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method because this method is suitable for obtaining a grouping of policy factors according to four stages of development, in accordance with the research objectives at the beginning.

Table 1 Examples of Wisdom Characteristics Elicitation

No.	Age	Education	Answers
1	34	Senior High School	When making decisions using the heart and logic, not taking sides with certain personal or individual interests, usually by nature they are calm, not ambitious.
2	50	Senior High School	a person who can place himself on two different sides can produce a decision that is not detrimental to one party, at least in one party that is disadvantaged but can be minimized. Concrete example: if there are 2 people fighting a wise person is able to mediate the problem.
3	80	Senior High School	if he gives precise advice on the problem posed to him, gives sensible direction, the person is assertive.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The questionnaires that were collected and can be processed from stage I amounted to 345 out of 500 questionnaires, which were distributed manually or online. The details of the respondents are as follows: 177 female respondents (51.3%) and 168 male adolescents (48.7%), aged between 21 and 90 years. Respondents aged young adults (21-40 years) amounted to 251 people, consisting of 125 men and 126 women. Respondents aged middle adults (41-60 years) amounted to 85 people, consisting of 42 men and 43 women. Finally, there are 9 elderly respondents (61-90 years), consisting of 1 male and 8 females. One person from the elderly is not attending school, while the others from the three stages of age are graduates from elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, S1, S2, S3, or are still studying at university. They (of three stages of age) work as employees, and some are self-employed. They (of the three stages of age) are graduates of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, S1, or S2, and work as students, employees, self-employed, professional staff, unemployed, retired, and housewives. They are graduates of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, as employees, and there are 32% who still work as entrepreneurs / tourists. The answers that have been written by the respondent are then inputted by the researcher as a whole. Examples can be seen in Table 1.

The answers of 345 respondents were sorted one by one, then reviewed and combined with characteristics that had similar meanings and characteristics. This process produces 26 final characteristics. Thus the 26 points of the characteristics of a wise person will then be made in the form of a questionnaire and given back to different respondents (stage II). The 26 characteristics are as shown in Table 2.

The number of questionnaires collected in stage II is 328 out of 700 questionnaires distributed manually or online. The details of the respondents are as follows: 181 female respondents (55.2%) and 147 male adolescents (44.8%), aged between 21 and 90 years. Respondents aged young adults (21-40 years) amounted to 137 people, consisting of 66 men and 76 women. They are high school graduates or are currently studying in universities, as employees, and some are undertaking self-employed jobs. Respondents aged middle adults (41-60 years) totaled 73 people, consisting of 29 men and 44 women. They are graduates of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, S1, or S2, as well as working as employees, some who undertake self-employed work, and others (retirement, housewives, etc.). Finally, there are 69 elderly respondents (61-90 years), consisting of 37 men and 32 women. They are graduates of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school as employees, and there are 32% who still work as entrepreneurs / tourists.

Table 2 Characteristics of Wisdom According to the Three Age Stages

No.	Characteristics of the Wise Person
1	Review the problem from various points of view, be careful in acting
2	Thinking about the impact of the decision, careful in thinking, full of consideration
3	Able and courageous to decide appropriately, to find solutions to problems
4	Introspective, careful in speaking and acting
5	Pay more attention to the interests of the people than to self, obey the rules

6	Able to judge his/herself and others
7	Able to control emotions, calm down, think positively
8	Sincere, sincere, willing to accept criticism and other people's opinions
9	Humble, soft-spoken, polite, gentle, friendly, calm
10	Generous, willing to help, willing to sacrifice, compassionate
11	Decisive, have principles, have leadership, are authoritative, are role models
12	Respect for hi/herself and others
13	Able to work together, willing to listen to other people's opinions
14	Simple, unpretentious life, what it is
15	Steadfast, not giving up easily, persevering
16	Forgiving, willing to forgive others, loving peace, full of understanding
17	Admitting mistakes, willing to apologize to others
18	Fair, impartial, objective
19	Responsible, consistent, consistent, committed, have integrity
20	Discipline, respect for time
21	Confident, able to express opinions, independent, easy to adapt
22	Intelligent, competent, forward-thinking / open-minded, critical
23	Knowledgeable, insightful, experienced
24	empathetic, able to feel the feelings or suffering of others
25	Able to provide advice to others
26	able to evaluate themselves, know their strengths and weaknesses

Data processing in this study uses the method of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Based on the results of the factor analysis of 26 statement items describing the characteristics of wisdom, it was found that there were 3 factors with eigenvalues > 1.00. The following is an overview of the scree plot of research data. After performing the test with varimax rotation, items that have a factor loading value > 0.5 are grouped into one factor group. Of the 26 statement items, 1 item was discarded because it had a factor loading value < 0.5 (point 6). Table 3 is an overview of the grain loading factor values.

Based on the results of grouping these items, the researchers (researcher 1 and 2 of this research) named factor 1 "Thinking smart" (6 items), factor 2 "Positive Personality" (8 points), and factor 3 "Reliability in acting" (11 items). However, the dominant factor or the largest number of each age is the factor number two: The Positive Personality factor. This can be concluded based on the cultural in wisdom, that people in eastern country prefer to live in harmonious, stronger in affective domain of wisdom.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to create and develop a measure of Wisdom according to three stages of development, which is a continuation of similar studies in adolescence. Wisdom is defined as the intelligence of the individual in using his or her mind based on experience and knowledge, together with the integration of thoughts, feelings and behavior, as well as the willingness to evaluate

themselves, in assessing and deciding on a problem, so as to create harmony between the individual and the environment.

This study resulted in 3 factors of policy characteristics according to four stages of developmental age, namely young adults, middle adults, and elderly people. There are 25 characteristics obtained from this research, which consists of 3 factors, namely: (1) Smart Thinking; (2) Positive Personality; (3) Reliability in Acting. These three factors are exactly the same as what the researchers obtained from previous studies, namely the characteristics of wisdom according to adolescents. So, it can be concluded that these wisdom factors apply in general, both according to people who are adolescents, early adults, middle adults, and elderly people. Wisdom is not a meaningless concept but can be interpreted in general by all the people studied. Wisdom can be seen from the real behavior of people who are considered wise. Wisdom is universal, although there are still differences between the research of the "West" and the "East" (in this case in Indonesia).

This research is still in its early stages, so it is necessary to continue with more respondents and of various ages. The limitation of this research still need more effort to find elderly who can read and write questionnaire by themselves. So, in the future the researchers need to think about this, for instance to run this research in other method. In addition, the main research will also use FGD (Focus Group Discussion) to get a deeper meaning of what Indonesia policies are, so that the final goal is to make a measuring instrument for the Indonesian version of Wisdom to be more comprehensive.

Table 3 Loading factor value of wisdom characteristics items according to four age stages

No	Items of Factor 1 (Thinking Smart)	Four age stages
11	Decisive, have principles, have leadership, are authoritative, are role models	0.548
15	Steadfast, not giving up easily, persevering	0.644
22	Intelligent, competent, forward-thinking / open-minded, critical	0.697
23	Knowledgeable, insightful, experienced	0.797
25	Able to provide advice to others	0.712
26	able to evaluate themselves, know their strengths and weaknesses	0.641
No	Items of Factor 2 (Positive Personality)	Four age stages
5	Pay more attention to the interests of the people than to self, obey the rules	0.724
9	Humble, soft-spoken, polite, gentle, friendly, calm	0.661
10	Generous, willing to help, willing to sacrifice, compassionate	0.711
14	Simple, unpretentious life, what it is	0.772
16	Forgiving, willing to forgive others, loving peace, full of understanding	0.569
19	Responsible, consistent, committed, have integrity	0.607
21	Confident, able to express opinions, independent, easy to adapt	0.614
24	empathetic, able to feel the feelings or suffering of others	0.592
No	Items of Factor 3 (Reliability in Acting)	Four age stages
1	Review the problem from various points of view, be careful in acting	0.773
2	Thinking about the impact of the decision, careful in thinking, full of consideration	0.757
3	Able and courageous to decide appropriately, to find solutions to problems	0.605
4	Introspective, careful in speaking and acting	0.702
7	Able to control emotions, calm down, think positively	0.648
8	Sincere, willing to accept criticism and other people's opinions	0.676
12	Respect for his/herself and others	0.674
13	Able to work together, willing to listen to other people's opinions	0.694
17	Admitting mistakes, willing to apologize to others	0.508
18	Fair, impartial, objective	0.601
20	Discipline, respect for time	0.503

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers would like to thank DPPM (Direktorat Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat) Universitas Tarumanagara, for the internal research funds that have been provided, so that this research can be carried out properly.

REFERENCES

- [1] Sahrani, R., Matindas, R. W., Takwin, B., & Mansoer, W. W. (2014). The role of reflection of difficult life experiences on wisdom. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 40(2), 315-323.
- [2] Ardel, M. (2003). Empirical assessment of a three-dimensional wisdom scale. *Research on Aging*, 25, 275-324.

- [3] Ardet, M. & Bruya, B. (2020). Three-Dimensional Wisdom and Perceived Stress among College Students. *Journal of Adult Development*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-020-09358-w>
- [4] Campayo, J. G, del Hoyo, Y. L., Barcelo-Solerm A.B., Navarro-Gil, M., Borao, L., Giarin, V., Tovar-Garcia, R. R., & Montero-Marin, J. (2018). Exploring the wisdom structure: Validation of the Spanish new short Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS) and its explanatory power on psychological health-related variables. *Frontier in Psychology*, 9, 2-19.
- [5] Smith, J., & Baltes, P. B. (1990). Wisdom-related knowledge: Age/cohort differences in response to life planning problems. *Developmental Psychology* 26, 494-505.
- [6] Webster, J. D. (2003). An exploratory analysis of a Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale. *Journal of Adult Development*, 10(1), 13–21.
- [7] Thomas, M. L., Bangen, K.J., Palmer, B.W., Sirkin, A., Avanzino, J.A., Depp, C.A., Glorioso, D., Daly, R. E., & Jeste, D. V. (2017). A new scale for assessing wisdom based on common domains and a neurobiological model: The San Diego Wisdom Scale (SD-WISE). *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, doi: 10.1016/j.jpsychires.2017.09.005.
- [8] Fung, S., Chow, E. O., & Cheung, C. (2020). Development and validation of a brief self-assessed wisdom scale. *BMC Geriatrics*, 20:54.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-020-1456-9>
- [9] Takahashi, M., & Bordia, P. (2000). The concept of wisdom: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Psychology*, 35(1), 1-9.
- [10] Sahrani, R. (2019). Faktor-faktor karakteristik kebijaksanaan menurut remaja. *Jurnal Psikologi Sosial*, 17(1), 36-45.
- [11] Basri, A. S. (2006). Kearifan dan manifestasinya pada tokoh-tokoh lanjut usia. *Makara, Sosial Humaniora*, 10(2), 70-78.
- [12] Pasupathi, M. & Staudinger, U. M. (2001). Do advanced moral reasoners also show wisdom? Linking moral reasoning and wisdom-related knowledge and judgement. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 25, 401-415.
- [13] Takahashi, M., & Overton, W. F. (2002). Wisdom: A culturally inclusive developmental perspective. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 26(3), 269-277.
- [14] Webster, J. D. (2003). An exploratory analysis of a Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale. *Journal of Adult Development*, 10(1), 13–21.
- [15] Gluck, J., Bluck, S., Baron, J., & McAdams, D. P. (2005). The wisdom of experience: Autobiographical narratives across adulthood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 29, 197–208.
- [16] Takahashi, M., & Bordia, P. (2000). The concept of wisdom: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Psychology*, 35(1), 1-9.