

## The Wisdom Prediction Based on Personality Factors in Youth

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### Abstract

**Background:** The wisdom is dependent on the unique integration of personality structure which enables people to transcend their personal perspectives and accept collective and public concerns. Fundamental ties between wisdom and growth of youth personality have been recently discussed by personality theories including Erikson, Jung and Kohut. These theories suggest that there is a lot of relation between the growth of personality and wisdom.

**Objectives:** The aim of this study is to predict based on personality traits.

**Methods:** The research design is correlation. The research sample was consisted of 150 available subjects (convenience sampling). Their average age was 20 (16-24) who 70% (105 people) of them were female and 30 % (45) were male. NEO Five-Factor test (NEO-PI-R) was used to collect data from three-dimensional scale of wisdom (3D-WS). Pear-son correlation and backward regression analysis were used to analyze the data. **Results:** The results showed that there is a significant relationship between personality traits and wisdom. Given the importance of internal and external factors associated with wisdom, understanding these factors will contribute to a better understanding of wisdom structures.

**Conclusions:** Big five factors of personality (neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness and extraversion) are correlated with wisdom. Also neuroticism, agreeableness, openness and extraversion among big 5 factors of personality can significantly predict wisdom variance. Although the personality factors are predictive of Wisdom, but based on research, a complete unification between the factors of prediction is more precise.

**Keywords:** Wisdom, Personality factors, Youth

## **Introduction**

Fundamental ties between wisdom and growth of youth personality have been recently discussed by personality theories including Erikson, Jung and Kohut. We have identified two key indicators of character-based wisdom: advanced self-development and self-transcendence. The wisdom is dependent on the unique integration of personality structure which enables people to transcend their personal perspectives and accept collective and public concerns. About personality dimension of wisdom, some assumptions can be deduced from 3 personality theories of Erikson, Jung and Kohut. Although these theorists are different in their orientation to the character (i.e. Ericsson: psycho social, Jung: analytical and Kohut: object relations), but each of them discusses the growth and development as a key feature of wise character. These futures represent unique integration and grown personality structure that improve intellectual concerns with self-referential thoughts, feelings and structures that interact with self, others and the world (Orwoll & Perlmutter 1990).

Growth helps to define wisdom personality component. For Erickson (1968, 1978, 1982; Ericsson, Ericsson & Kionick, 1986), phenomenological “I” or “ego” as a result of the inherent tackle with crisis in the final stage of life, means integrity versus despair, the full productivity is achieved. Wisdom is associated with virtue. These concerns while maintain continuity with the past are related to the stage, including responsibility for life as what is past; the positive compliance with physical analysis and impending death and giving up future leadership. Wisdom is grown throughout life by growth stimulation to closed response to various crises related to age.

According to Jung (1956, 1971a, 1971b, 1953a, 1953b) self is the wisdom rout. Jung’s theory puts progressively a source of wisdom faced with the deeper aspects of self in terms of the psychological. This process is started by Access to the personal unconsciousness, the integration of dark aspect of self and balance between opposing forces such as inner and outer reality, good and evil, men and women desires. Such self-awareness, which makes the basis for wisdom requires considerable effort that few people try it.

According to Kohut (1977, 1978a,b), an empirical self is a source of wisdom. According to the development of a common focus on child-parent relationships, Kohut thinks about the growth of self in youth hood, particularly in respect of narcissism. The concept of Kohut narcissism is naturally an essential part of healthy development, different from Freud’s concept of immature and repressed narcissism. According to Kohut, healthy narcissism is started in early childhood by age-appropriate daydreaming of omnipotence and grandiosity and then by internalizing ideal parents that provide omniscience and perfection. The two narcissistic stages of grown self are effectively adapted by the ups and downs of life in coherent youth hood and are relied on the fixed ideals and values in the behavior tips. Maturation of the primary narcissistic needs to a consistent youth forms is a prerequisite to form wisdom that its full growth depends on other conversions as a result of empathy, grown humor and temporary admission. The ultimate conversion of narcissism to wisdom is represented the final point of growth from an integrated personality. Briefly, these theories are constructed from the perspective of personality growth constructivism that organized and active self in a dynamic process that requires the conscious and unconscious influences. The wisdom as individuality and self-grow this dependent on age and cumulative perception and grown narcissism contains unique levels of consciousness and psychological growth. Wise people should use such these traits that show exceptional maturity and integrated personalities.

These features, however, describes the wise men, but they alone are not enough to define the compo-

nents of a wisdom personality. But another aspect of the character, the grown self, that makes wisdom unique, is necessary. The self-excellence is one of the consequences of an advanced character development, the ability to go beyond an individualistic concerns to the collective challenges or communal issues. The self-excellences an essential component for wisdom and justifies the long-term prospects and understand the profound epistemological and philosophical issues of the wise to some extent. The wisdom developmental process is associated with self-maturity that is moving from the self-centered focus to public understanding of reality.

In addition to Ericsson, Jung and Kohat, some theorists such as Loevinger, Helson and Wink, Labouvie-Vief and Ardelit have the personality perspective to wisdom. Among them, Ardelit defines wisdom as personality traits which integrates the cognitive, reflective and emotional dimensions.

Meanwhile, empirical research in the field of everyday concepts of wisdom provides evidence for the wisdom relationship with personality traits such as maturity, absence of emotional instability, open-mindedness, even-temperedness and sociability (For example, Clayton and Birrne, 1980; Holliday and Chandler, 1986). The purpose of this study was to investigate the position of wisdom in psychometric space defined by the standard sizes of personality.

## Method

The methodology of this study is correlation. The study population is consisted of youths. The study sample was included 150 youths (16-24 years old ) with an average age of 20 who were convenience sampling.70% were female (105) and 30% were male (n = 45). In terms of education, 3% (n = 5), 29% (n =

44), 23 % (n = 40), 30% (n = 45), 12% (n = 18) and had high school diploma, diploma, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's respectively. The following tools were used to collect data:

- **Three-dimensional wisdom scale (3D-WS):** Three-dimensional wisdom scale was made by Monica Ardelit from the University of Florida in 2003. This scale is consisted of 39 articles and measures three dimensions of cognitive, reflective and emotional. Cognitive, reflective and emotional dimensions include 14, 12 and 13 articles respectively. Three-dimensional wisdom scale internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is in the range of 0.71 to 0.85.
- **NEO Five-Factor test (NEO-PI):** This questionnaire is a character gauge tool to Likert scale and contains 240 five-degree questions as completely disagree, disagree, do not know, agree, completely disagree and is applicable from the age of 15. As its name implies, it measures five personality factors that include: neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and flexibility. The internal consistency of the total scale and its reliability are 0.81 and 0.78, respectively (Haghshenas, 2006).

All subjects were asked to rate themselves in this questionnaire after speaking with them and receiving consent and without getting information about the questionnaire. The subjects were assured that their responses would be confidential. The correlation and regression analysis were used as statistical methods.

## Results

In the following analysis, the relationship between wisdom and predictive factors will be separately examined. This method allows us to obtain the information about multivariate relationships sizes as well as key variables involved in the production of these relations. At the same time, the multiple regression models with backward method was applied to identify a set of predictors with minimal overlap of previous vari-

ance for each area of predictor variables.

Data were analyzed by the following steps to determine the relationship of wisdom and personality. First the mean and standard deviation of variables (Table 1), then zero-order correlations between variables was calculated (Table 2) after determining the normality of the data using one-sample nonparametric kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Then backward regression methods were used to determine which of the personality factors have a significant role in explaining the wisdom variance (Table 3 and 4).

**Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of wisdom variables and personality factors**

	Mean		Std	
Wisdom	42.82		5.14	
Neuroticism	92.38		23.05	
Conscientiousness	118.15		19.97	
Agreeableness	118.74		15.64	
Openness	108.22		14.44	
Extraversion	107.72		17.64	

	wisdom	wisdom	Wisdom	wisdom	Wisdom				
Extraversion	.398**	Openness	.222**	Agreeableness	.434**	Conscientiousness	.369**	Neuroticism	-.627**
Intimacy	.316**	Imagination	-.030	the trust	.386**	Competence	.438**	Anxiety	-.439**
Sociability	.365**	Aesthetic	.100	Frankness	.271**	Discipline	.054	aggression	-.616**
Self-assertive	.287**	Emotions	-.024	Altruism	.275**	Loyalty	.113	Depression	-.591**
activeness	-.002	practices	.330**	Companionship	.492**	Trying to succeed	.282**	Timidity	-.284**
Thrill-seeking	.073	beliefs	.192**	Humility	-.134	Continance	.229**	Impulsivity	-.159*
Positive emotions	.416**	Values	.308**	Understand others	.193**	Cautious in decision-making	.421**	Vulnerability to stress	-.469**

\*\* significant at the 0.01 level  
 \* significant at the 0.05 level

As seen in Table 2, there is negative correlation between wisdom and neuroticism and there are positive correlation between wisdom and conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness and extraversion .In other words, if a person gets lower scores in neuroticism and higher scores in conscientiousness, agreeableness openness to experience and extraversion , will get higher scores in wisdom. These coefficients are raw and cannot tell us if a set of personality traits inserted into the regression model together, which will have a significant role in explaining the wisdom variance. Therefore, a series of backward multivariate regression analysis was performed which its results are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3: Results of multivariate regression to predict the wisdom from personality factors**

Predictor variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Beta coefficients	B	t	.Sig
Fixed					33.835	7.308	000.
Neuroticism				491.-	110.-	-6.68	000.
Agreeableness				219.	072.	3.31	001.
Openness	701.	492.	478.	181.	065.	2.71	007.
Extroversion				121.	035.	1.66	099.

Table 3 shows that 4 factors of neuroticism, agreeableness, openness and extraversion among big 5 factors of personality can significantly predict wisdom variance scores to 49%.

**Table 4: Results of multivariate regression forecast to predict wisdom from the sub-index scores of neuroticism, agreeableness, openness and extraversion.**

Predictor variables		R	Beta coeffi- B			t	Sig.		
Neuroticism	Constant					53.20	50.58	.000	
	aggression	.663	.439	.432	-.001	-.400	-.37	-4.84	.000
	Depression					-.326	-.30	-3.94	.000
Conscientious-ness	Constant					30.66	15.56	.000	
	competence					.291	.390	3.26	.001
	Cautious in deci- sion-making	.483	.223	.223	-.011	.251	.240	2.82	.005
agreeableness	Constant					30.37	18.05	.000	
	Companionship	.537	.289	.279	-.007	.404	.440	5.377	.000
	the trust					.233	.244	3.11	.002
openness	Constant					30.92	13.41	.000	
	practices	.406	.165	.154	-.002	.273	.347	3.52	.001
	Values					.244	.360	3.14	.002
Extraversion	Constant					29.46	15.51	.000	
	Pluralism					.240	.245	3.20	.002
	Self-assertive	.517	.267	.252	.000	.168	.212	2.28	.024
	Positive emo- tions					.315	.305	4.21	.000

The evaluation of the big factors sub-set shows that there is a negative correlation between wisdom and each of the six sub-indices of neuroticism (Anxiety, aggression, depression, shyness, vulnerability to stress, impulsivity) but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of aggression and depression are able to express wisdom variance to 43%. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and 4 traits of conscientiousness (Competence, strive to succeed, self-control, cautious in decision-making), but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of competence and cautious in decision-making are able to express wisdom variance to 22%. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and all traits of agreeableness apart from the characteristic humility (Trust, frankness, compassion, companionship, understanding others), but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of trust and compassion are able to express wisdom variance to 27%. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and 3 traits of openness (practices, ideas and values), but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of practices and values are able to express wisdom variance to 15%. At the end, There is a positive correlation between wisdom and 4 traits of extraversion (gregariousness, self-assertiveness, positive emotions, intimacy), but after implementation of backward regression, just 3 traits of gregariousness, self-assertiveness and positive emotions are able to express wisdom variance to 26%.

## Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between wisdom and personality traits. Based on the data in Table 2, big five factors of personality (neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness and extraversion) are correlated with wisdom. Table 3 also shows that, although all 5 personality

sion among big 5 factors of personality can significantly predict wisdom variance scores to 49%.

The findings show the negative relationship between wisdom and neuroticism. In other words, if a person gets lower scores in neuroticism index, will get higher score in wisdom. The evaluation of sub-index neuroticism traits shows the negative relationship between each of the six sub-indices of neuroticism) Anxiety, aggression, depression, shyness, vulnerability to stress, impulsivity) and wisdom but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of aggression and depression are able to express wisdom variance to 43%. Broad dimensions of personality include comparing compatibility, emotional stability, conflict and nervousness or neuroticism. The basis of neuroticism scale is consisted by having negative emotions such as fear, sadness, excitement, anger, feelings of guilt, feelings of permanent and pervasive frustration. Since the destructive excitement influences on person and environment compatibility, people with high scores in these scales may have irrational beliefs, less ability to control impulses and the weaker degree of adaptation to others and show the mental pressure conditions. People who have lower scores in neuroticism index are emotionally stable people. These people are usually quiet, with a uniform and comfortable mood and can easily face with difficult situations and the mental pressure conditions (Haghshenas, 2006). People with high neuroticism are at risk of some psychiatric disorders. Studies also show that happiness and life satisfaction are associated with neuroticism (McCrae and Costa, 1980). On the other side, wise men also have some positive traits such as maturity and integrated personality, skills in superior judgment of difficult life issues, and the ability to adapt to changes in life (Kramer, 2000; Sternberg, 1998; Assmann, 1994). Wisdom has a positive effect on women life satisfaction, physical health, and quality of family relationships. On the other hand, positive aging is appeared as one of the important predictors (Ardlet, 2000). In addition, wisdom predicts life satisfaction better than objective conditions of life (Ardlet, 1997). In other words, emotional stability is necessary to cope effectively with the uncertain conditions, and patience in the face of unpredictable issues or lack of control. Emotional stability also helps that decisions are not made by influence of emotions such as anger or fear to the space got ready for wise behavior.

The second finding of study shows a positive relationship between wisdom and agreeableness. In other words, if a person gets higher scores in agreeableness, will get higher scores in wisdom. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and all traits of agreeableness apart from the characteristic humility (Trust, frankness, compassion, companionship, understanding others), but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of trust and compassion are able to express wisdom variance to 27%. Agreeableness index focuses on interpersonal tendencies. Agreed person is essentially altruistic, sympathizes with others and is willing to help them and believes that others have the same relationship with him. In comparison, self-centered disagreed person suspects other intention and likes competition more than cooperation. This index inclines to more positive aspects of social and mental health (Haghshenas, 2006). In terms of interpersonal; it seems that the wise men help others through the manifestation of integrated knowledge in a way without grandstanding (Halliday and Chandler, 1986; Yung, 2001). They help people by advising them, so that others can make their own practical solutions. One of the benefits of the interaction with these people is that increases understanding of the other. From this perspectives, the wisdom is at the service of growth and other developments (Lystr, 1996, according to Kramer, 2000). the wisdom requires good intentions and is used for self and others well-being (Balts & Staudinger, 2000). Some characteristics such trust, goodwill, ability to forgive others and humility are necessary to achieve.



In fact, agreeableness index provides the emotional conditions of doing rational behavior such as helping the growth and development of others, giving some advice and contributing to the welfare of others.

In other words, an intellectual curiosity and introversion (Halliday & Chandler, 1986) depth-oriented (Sternberg, 1985) are components of wisdom, because if a person remains openness and continues to receive information and new experiences, it is possible to refine and update his knowledge and insight. The openness index provides a good platform for rational behavior.

The third finding of research shows the positive relationship between wisdom and openness to experience. In other words, if a person gets higher scores in openness index, will also get higher scores in wisdom. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and 3 traits of openness (practices, ideas and values), but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of practices and values are able to express wisdom variance to 15%. The open people are curious about inner experiences and the world around; their life is full of experiences. People with low scores have conventional and conservative behavior. They understand common cases better than rare cases (Haghshenas, 2006). Openness to experience plays an important role in wisdom.

Another finding of this study shows a positive relationship between wisdom and extroversion index. In other words if a person gets higher scores in extroversion index, will also get higher scores in wisdom. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and 4 traits of extraversion (gregariousness, self-assertiveness, positive emotions, intimacy), but after implementation of backward regression, just 3 traits of gregariousness, self-assertiveness and positive emotions are able to express wisdom variance to 26%. Extroversion index refers to the willingness of the individual to be positive, self-assertive, energetic and intimate. Extroverts are outgoing and sociable (Haghshenas, 2006). Extraversion and most of all the positive emotions are associated with happiness and life satisfaction (McCrae & Costa, 1980). Interpersonal skills (Halliday & Chandler, 1986) are one of the components of wisdom. The wise are social, intimate, optimistic and decisive. Having these traits provides a reasonable basis for behaviors and decisions.

At the end, we consider to conscientiousness index, however, this index has been removed but shows positive correlation with wisdom. There is a positive correlation between wisdom and 4 traits of conscientiousness (Competence, strive to succeed, self-control, cautious in decision-making), but after implementation of backward regression, just two traits of competence and cautious in decision-making are able to express wisdom variance to 22%. The conscientiousness index briefly examines two major features of controlling impulses and desires and implementing plans in behavior to achieve goals. Inability to impulses and desires represent high neuroticism in youth. People with high scores are punctual and reliable and those with low scores generally do not show enough accuracy to do things and are not consistent and insistent to achieve their objectives. The competency refers to one's feelings to his abilities, wisdom, tact, the impact on the environment. The qualified people see themselves ready to face with the problems of life. Caution in decision-making also refers to careful thought before the act (Haghshenas, 2006).

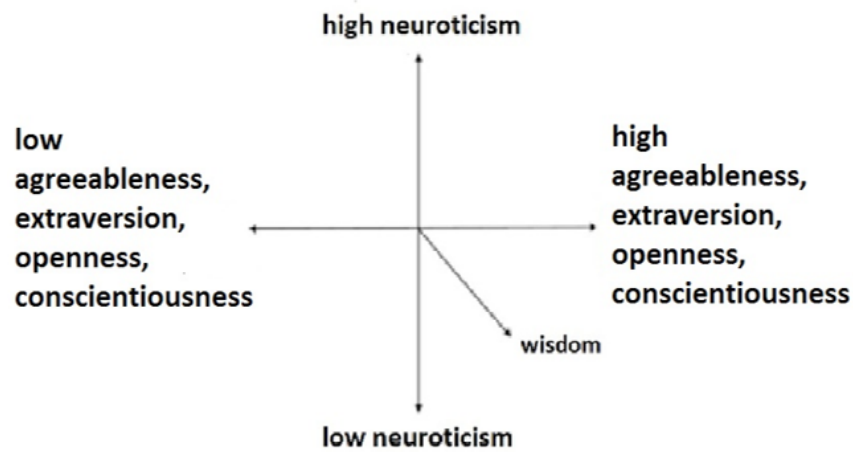


Figure 1. The predictive model of wisdom

Wisdom requires tact, dealing with life difficult problem and thinking before action. Above, we examined the relationship between wisdom and big five personality factors. But as we know the wisdom is referring to integration. These traits and factors can not define and predict wise behavioral one, but this is possible when they came together and integrated. In above findings, one pattern (Figure 1) can be seen. The wise person has emotional stability and is altruist, capable, introvert, and decisive. Integration of these attributes will provide a platform for wise behaviors and decision.

At the end of the study, we point out some limitations. There are different questionnaire to measure wisdom that each of them is theoretically made based on different components as well as character. In this study, wisdom three-dimensional test and NEO Five Factor Inventory were used, so using questionnaires that measure wisdom and personality with different components is recommended. In this study, age, sex, education variables are not considered so it is suggested that the impact of other moderator variables to be considered in other investigations. Results show the position of wisdom psychometrics. There is a significant overlap between wisdom and the character sizes. Regarding to the importance of internal and external factors associated to wisdom, understanding these factors will contribute to a better understanding of wisdom structures.

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