The Relationship Between Wisdom and Well-being: A Multiple Well-being Orientations Perspective [Postprint]

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Abstract

Wisdom and happiness are universal human pursuits. The positive correlation between wisdom and eudaimonia well-being is widely recognized by researchers. However, the relationship between wisdom and hedonia well-being remains a subject of debate. From the perspective of wisdom development, scholars have proposed the positive personality development view and the developmental process view to conduct more in-depth theoretical investigations into the relationship between wisdom and well-being. Integrating Chinese culture and the research progress on wisdom and well-being, this paper proposes a developmental level view: as an individual' s level of wisdom development continuously improves, there are differences in the sources, duration, and impacts on physical and mental health of their well-being. Future research should prioritize addressing two key issues: (1) selecting and developing appropriate measurement instruments for wisdom and well-being; and (2) clarifying the causal relationship between wisdom and well-being.

Full Text

Preamble

The Relationship Between Wisdom and Well-Being: A Perspective Based on Multiple Orientations to Well-Being

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Abstract: Wisdom and well-being are universal human pursuits. Researchers generally recognize the positive correlation between wisdom and eudaimonic well-being. However, the relationship between wisdom and hedonic well-being

remains debated. From the perspective of wisdom development, scholars have proposed the positive personality development perspective and the developmental process model to theoretically explore the relationship between wisdom and well-being in greater depth. Based on Chinese culture and recent advances in wisdom and well-being research, this article proposes a developmental level model: as wisdom development levels increase, the sources, duration, and impact on physical and mental health of individual well-being vary. Future research should focus on two key issues: (1) selecting and developing appropriate measurement tools for wisdom and well-being, and (2) clarifying the causal relationship between wisdom and well-being.

Keywords: wisdom; well-being; positive personality development perspective; developmental process model; developmental level model
Classification Code: B848

As living standards continue to rise, people' s pursuit of a better life has intensified, making well-being a focal point in psychological research. The field primarily adopts two perspectives: hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ward & King, 2016; Yang Qian, Cheng Wei, He Wenjie, Han Buxin, Yang Zhaoning, 2016). The hedonic perspective defines well-being as individuals' pleasurable experiences and positive cognitive evaluations of life, measured by indicators including the balance of positive and negative emotions and life satisfaction (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2003). Positive and negative emotions represent subjective experiences of life quality, while life satisfaction reflects overall cognitive appraisals of life quality (Diener et al., 2003). The eudaimonic perspective argues against equating well-being with superficial pleasure, emphasizing deeper dimensions such as self-growth, life meaning, self-potential, and excellence (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 1993). Eudaimonic well-being also encompasses social and moral fulfillment, referring to individuals' commitment to the shared well-being of self, others, and society (Keyes, 1998; Law & Staudinger, 2016). Measurement tools for eudaimonic well-being typically incorporate elements of psychological and social well-being (Ryff, 1989; Keyes, 1998).

Researchers have focused on key factors influencing well-being. Initial attention to external factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, and age, and later to internal factors like self-esteem and the Big Five personality traits, have failed to yield convincing conclusions (Ardelt & Jeste, 2016). Without identifying the key factors affecting well-being, efforts to enhance well-being cannot make substantial progress. In wisdom research, scholars focus on the functions of wisdom. If wisdom offers little benefit for human development and the pursuit of a happy life, then studying and pursuing wisdom loses its justification (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Wisdom serves as both the goal and means for humans to live a happy life (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). Confucius once asserted, "The wise enjoy life; the benevolent live long." Wisdom, happiness, and longevity are universal human pursuits. Academic debate about the relationship between wisdom and well-being has

never ceased. Timely review of this relationship holds at least two significances: (1) exploring the primary variables affecting well-being to provide insights for enhancing individual well-being and building a happy society; (2) reviewing the latest developments to identify future research directions and advance interdisciplinary research. This article first introduces definitions and measurements of wisdom, then comprehensively reviews empirical research and theoretical developments concerning the wisdom-well-being relationship, and finally proposes a developmental level model of this relationship. Two future directions are suggested: (1) selecting and developing appropriate measurement tools for wisdom and well-being, and (2) clarifying the causal relationship between wisdom and well-being.

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1 The Definition and Measurement of Wisdom

Wisdom is a complex concept with multiple definitions, none of which has gained universal academic consensus. The most widely cited definitions and measurement tools include the Berlin Wisdom Model (BWM), the Balance Theory of Wisdom, the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Model, the H.E.R.O.(E.) Model of Wisdom, and Self-Transcendence Wisdom (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Ardelt, 2018; Sternberg, 2013; Webster, Weststrate, Ferrari, Munroe, & Pierce, 2017; Levenson, Jennings, Aldwin, & Shiraishi, 2005). This article summarizes previous research based on these frameworks.

1.1 The Definition of Wisdom

The Berlin Model conceptualizes wisdom as important and practical expert knowledge and judgment about life, including good intentions that consider the well-being of both self and others (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). Sternberg (1998, 2013) defines wisdom as using intelligence, creativity, and knowledge under the guidance of positive ethical values to balance intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal well-being, as well as short-term and long-term well-being, thereby achieving adaptation to, shaping of, and selection from environments to ultimately realize the common good.

Ardelt (2003, 2018) views wisdom as a personality trait integrating three dimensions: cognitive, reflective, and affective (benevolence). Reflection involves thinking from multiple perspectives, refraining from blaming others and circumstances, accurately perceiving and effectively regulating emotions, accepting reality, and forgiving self and others. The cognitive dimension involves dialectically viewing reality, recognizing self-limitations, and acknowledging life' s unpredictability and uncertainty. Benevolence involves compassion and kindness toward all people—the motivation to enhance others' well-being.

Webster (2010) defines wisdom as individuals' capacity and willingness to apply important life experiences to promote positive development in self and others. Capacity refers to decision-making, problem-solving, or other intellectual forms; willingness refers to the desire to take wise action; application refers to actual behavior. Wisdom integrates five key characteristics: Humor, Emotion Regulation, Reminiscence/Reflectiveness, Openness, and Experience. As the English initials form the word H.E.R.O.(E.), this model is recently called the Heroic Theory of Wisdom (Webster et al., 2017).

Levenson et al. (2005) equate wisdom with self-transcendence, where individuals no longer rely on external characteristics (material possessions, social roles, achievements, reputation, relationships) to demonstrate self-existence, but instead focus on interiority and spirituality, strongly sensing connectedness between past and future. Self-transcendence also refers to dissolving boundaries between self and others to achieve unity, gaining compassion, profound cognitive abilities, and self-integration.

Recent scholarship has summarized wisdom definitions from research perspectives and components. Staudinger and Glück (2011) distinguish between general wisdom and personal wisdom based on first-person and third-person perspectives. General wisdom refers to wisdom displayed when individuals provide advice for others' complex problems, as in the Berlin Model. Personal wisdom refers to wisdom displayed when individuals solve their own complex problems, as in the three-dimensional wisdom theory, heroic theory, and self-transcendence theory.

Regarding wisdom's composition, these definitions converge on the view that the alloy of good character and intelligence constitutes wisdom' s essence. Based on this, researchers have proposed the "Integration of Morality and Talent" theory of wisdom, conceptualizing wisdom as a comprehensive psychological quality of integrating virtue and talent that individuals acquire through experience and practice based on their intelligence and knowledge (Chen Haobin & Wang Fengyan, 2013). Once possessing this quality, individuals can view life and people insightfully and wisely. When facing complex problem situations, they can, guided by conscience or motivated by good intentions, timely apply their intelligence to correctly understand the problem, then adopt correct, novel (often appearing flexible and clever), and preferably ethical means to solve problems efficiently, ensuring outcomes not only avoid harming legitimate interests of others and society but also permanently enhance well-being of others, society, or self, others, and society (Wang Fengyan & Fu Xurong, 2017). Wisdom naturally contains "goodness," distinguishing it from concepts like intelligence and creativity (Ardelt, 2003; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Sternberg, 1998; Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2015). In Chinese cultural contexts, examining ordinary people' s wisdom concepts confirms this view (Chen Haobin & Wang Fengyan, 2014; Li & Wang, 2017).

1.2 The Measurement of Wisdom

Two primary measurement paradigms exist: performance-based methods and self-report scales. The former mainly measures general wisdom, while the latter measures personal wisdom (Glück, 2017). Performance-based methods present problem-solving scenarios, ask participants to articulate their understanding and provide advice or solutions, then raters evaluate responses according to predetermined wisdom-related criteria (Smith & Baltes, 1990; Mickler & Staudinger, 2008; Grossmann, Na, Varnum, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2013). For example, the Berlin Model presents this scenario: "A 14-year-old boy or girl wants to run away from home immediately. Please think generally about what they might be thinking and what they should do" (Staudinger, Lopez, & Baltes, 1997). Rating criteria include five aspects: procedural and declarative knowledge, lifespan contextual knowledge, value relativism while acknowledging universal values, and recognition and effective management of uncertainty. The first two are basic components; the latter three are meta-components. Although performance-based methods are procedurally complex and unsuitable for large-sample testing, they offer relatively high measurement accuracy (Glück, 2017).

Self-report scales ask people to rate their agreement with statements about wisdom-related behaviors and manifestations in daily life, indirectly measuring wisdom (Ardelt, 2003; Webster, 2007; Levenson et al., 2005). Some argue self-report scales cannot effectively measure wisdom (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003). Ardelt (2004) counters that although standardized self-report scales cannot directly measure wisdom itself, wisdom can be indirectly measured through indicator variables of its core components. Several self-report wisdom scales exist, including the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS), Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS), and Adult Self-Transcendence Inventory (ASTI) (Ardelt, 2003; Webster, 2007; Levenson et al., 2005). Self-report methods are more suitable for large-sample testing but have slightly lower measurement accuracy (Glück, 2017).

2 Empirical Research on the Relationship Between Wisdom and Well-Being

To comprehensively collect literature, we searched the China National Knowledge Infrastructure and PsychINFO databases using titles and keywords including "wisdom," "wisdom and well-being," "wisdom and life satisfaction," "wisdom and positive emotion," "wisdom and negative emotion," "wisdom and psychological well-being," "wisdom and spiritual well-being," and "wisdom and spirituality." The search covered 1970-2018. Inclusion criteria were: (1) papers from formal journals, collections, and dissertations (excluding conference papers); (2) first-hand empirical reports (excluding secondary citations and theoretical reviews); (3) when dissertations were also published in formal journals, the journal version was used. Note that some researchers might not consider certain concepts as belonging to well-being, such as openness and psychological mindedness. We

included papers based on authors' definitions of well-being. Wisdom definitions and measurements followed the five aforementioned models; studies outside this scope were excluded. This yielded 22 eligible empirical reports.

2.1 Wisdom is Positively Correlated with Eudaimonic Well-Being

Aristotle believed humanity' s ultimate pursuit is eudaimonia—self-realization where individuals recognize their true value, actualize their potential and virtues, and ultimately achieve a flourishing, fulfilling, and vibrant life (Ryan & Martela, 2016). Based on this, researchers propose eudaimonic well-being, arguing that well-being should not be simplistically equated with pleasure but should focus on self-growth, life meaning, and self-value realization (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Martela, 2016; Steger, Kashdan, & Oishi, 2008). Law and Staudinger (2016) further argue that eudaimonic well-being should not only emphasize self-well-being but also consider others' well-being, ultimately achieving common well-being. Measurement tools for eudaimonic well-being often use Ryff' s (1989) Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), comprising six components: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. However, this tool relatively neglects the social and moral connotations of eudaimonia (only positive relations reflects social aspects). As social beings, humans must solve many social problems. Keyes (1998) proposed social well-being from an individual' s social nature, including social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence, and developed the Social Well-Being Questionnaire.

Research generally considers balancing interests of self, others, or society to achieve the common good as wisdom' s key feature (Ardelt, 2003; Kekes, 1995; Staudinger & Kunzmann, 2005; Sternberg, 1998; Webster, 2010; Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2015). Wise individuals value self-development, but this is not unlimited acquisition of material enjoyment, sensory stimulation, and power; rather, it involves gaining insight and self-growth while skillfully balancing self and others' well-being (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003). Like ordinary people, wise individuals desire happiness, but this happiness derives from self-growth, life meaning, and helping others (Webster, Westerhof, & Bohlmeijer, 2012).

Wisdom and eudaimonic well-being overlap conceptually, making a strong positive correlation unsurprising. Researchers often use eudaimonic well-being as predictive validity criteria for wisdom measures (Ardelt, 2003; Taylor, Bates & Webster, 2011). Although their content overlaps, the concepts are not interchangeable. Eudaimonic well-being emerges when individuals successfully apply wisdom to resolve existential dilemmas and conflicts in daily life (Law & Staudinger, 2016). Thus, wisdom also serves as a means to achieve eudaimonic well-being (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). For example, research finds self-reflection is a necessary wisdom component (Ardelt, 2003; Glück & Bluck, 2013; Law & Staudinger, 2016; Webster, 2003), through which individuals can achieve self-growth happiness (Weststrate & Glück, 2017a). Empirical evidence for the wisdom-eudaimonic well-being relationship appears in Table 1 .

2.1.1 Wisdom is Almost Unrelated to Hedonic Well-Being

A popular Western philosophical view holds that wise individuals, having penetrated human predicaments and self-limitations, cannot feel happy. For ordinary people, maintaining pleasant illusions about reality more easily yields happiness (Bergsma & Ardelt, 2012). Other researchers argue positive emotions importantly promote individual development (Fredrickson, 2001). Influenced by these views, Kunzmann and Baltes (2003) divided positive emotions into two types: pleasurable emotions (joy, pleasure, pride) and affective involvement (interest, vitality, excitement). While pleasurable emotions feel pleasant and comfortable, they may stem from blind optimism, weakening motivation and capacity to understand life meaning and human conditions, thereby hindering wisdom development (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003). Affective involvement motivates environmental exploration and enhances cognitive ability, facilitating wisdom development. Therefore, wise individuals may not experience many pleasurable emotions but have more self-involved emotions.

Mickler and Staudinger (2008) also argue that moderate positive emotions help self-reflection and wisdom acquisition, but beyond a certain level, their effect on personal wisdom development disappears. Additionally, they believe self-wise individuals excel at critical self-reflection, causing unpleasantness. Some research suggests that although major life setbacks (divorce, serious illness, loss of loved ones) accompany prolonged negative emotions, paradoxically, reflection on these setbacks promotes wisdom formation and development, linking wisdom with unhappiness (Weststrate & Glück, 2017a). Thus, acquiring wisdom is not easy or pleasant and requires certain costs. One study using ASTI to measure wisdom tracked war veterans' pre-discharge stress perception and its effect on wisdom ten years later, finding veterans who experienced moderate war stress scored higher in wisdom than those with low or high stress (Jennings, Aldwin, Levenson, Spiro, & Mroczek, 2006). Weststrate and Glück (2017b) asked participants to report how they dealt with major life setbacks and what life lessons they learned, finding that those who engaged in critical self-reflection to gain meaning and self-growth showed higher wisdom. Evidence supporting wisdom' s near-independence from hedonic well-being appears in Table 2 .

2.1.2 Wisdom is Moderately Positively Correlated with Hedonic Well-Being

Erikson viewed wisdom as an excellent quality formed in later life through successfully completing developmental tasks at each life stage, manifested as profound life understanding and detached concern when facing death (Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2014, p.137). In later life, wise individuals continue doing what they can, accept losses in social, physical, and psychological functions, and maintain relatively high life satisfaction. Influenced by this, Ardelt (1997) argued that although external factors (income, education, social status, physical health) somewhat maintain life satisfaction, wisdom is the most important factor. Especially for those facing life adversity without many external re-

sources, wisdom is needed to maintain positive affect (Ardelt & Edwards, 2016). Research finds the relationship between wisdom and positive emotion/life satisfaction is stronger in vulnerable groups (elderly, women, terminally ill patients) (Ardelt & Edwards, 2016; Bergsma & Ardelt, 2012). Therefore, findings showing wisdom unrelated to positive emotion and life satisfaction may result from selecting well-educated, high-status individuals with more resources to maintain well-being (Ardelt & Edwards, 2016).

Eudaimonic well-being (e.g., sense of control and purpose in life) plays an important role in how wisdom affects positive emotion and life satisfaction. Etezadi and Pushkar (2013) divided control into primary and secondary control: the former involves directly acting on the environment to gain control; the latter involves adjusting attitudes and perceptions to adapt to the environment. They argued that profound self-knowledge and ability to cope with external environments equip wise individuals with practical knowledge and enhanced problem-solving skills, thereby gaining stronger primary control. If primary control fails, tolerance for ambiguity and flexible attitudes enable wise individuals to develop effective secondary control strategies, avoiding frustration and self-doubt (Etezadi & Pushkar, 2013). Characteristics such as thinking from multiple perspectives, motivation to deeply understand self and world, and reflection enable wise individuals to 赋予 life affairs specific meaning and value (sense of purpose). Thus, wise individuals are also meaning-makers (Etezadi & Pushkar, 2013). Accumulated valuable life experiences help wise individuals effectively cope with aging challenges and gain control (Ardelt & Edwards, 2016). Wise individuals can also gain another sense of control by making care and gratitude life goals. Accepting and reflecting on life' s misfortunes, combined with higher control, helps them rediscover and reconstruct life goals and meaning (Ardelt & Edwards, 2016). Sense of control and purpose can enhance and maintain positive emotions (Etezadi & Pushkar, 2013). Evidence supporting this hypothesis appears in Table 2.

2.3 Summary and Evaluation

In summary, the positive correlation between wisdom and eudaimonic well-being is widely recognized. The relationship between wisdom and hedonic well-being remains debated, with moderate positive correlations mainly from self-report measures of personal wisdom (primarily 3D-WS and SAWS), while near-zero correlations mainly from performance-based measures of general wisdom (primarily Berlin Wisdom Model). This suggests measurement method and content differences may importantly cause inconsistent conclusions (Le, 2011; Zacher & Staudinger, 2018). First, many researchers question self-report wisdom measurement validity, citing three potential flaws: memory bias, inaccurate self-perception, and social desirability (Brienza, Fyh, Santos, Bobocel, & Grossmann, in press; Zacher & Staudinger, 2018). Moreover, using self-report methods to measure both wisdom and well-being simultaneously creates common method bias, which existing studies rarely test or control. These two points make it

difficult to rule out inflated positive correlations between wisdom and hedonic well-being. Second, performance methods measure general wisdom, while self-report methods measure personal wisdom (Staudinger & Glück, 2011). Researchers lack clear understanding and systematic empirical research on essential differences between general and personal wisdom (Zacher & Staudinger, 2018). Currently, no systematic theory explains differences in how general versus personal wisdom relate to well-being.

Beyond examining causes of inconsistent conclusions about wisdom and hedonic well-being, we should also address: (1) lack of cultural diversity in samples, with most from North America and Western Europe and few from other cultures; (2) relatively singular theoretical foundation and measurement tools for eudaimonic well-being, with most using Ryff' s psychological well-being theory or measures; (3) greater attention to social and moral connotations of well-being when examining the wisdom-well-being relationship, especially in collectivist cultures. For example, wise Chinese may feel happy due to social value and responsibility (Lu Luo, 2007; Zeng Hong & Guo Siping, 2012). Well-being is closely related to morality, yet few measurement tools emphasize moral connotations (Hirata, 2016). Morality is also central to wisdom (Sternberg, 2013; Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2015). Therefore, examining the well-being-wisdom relationship cannot neglect morality.

3 Theoretical Exploration of the Relationship Between Wisdom and Well-Being from the Perspective of Wisdom Development

The preceding sections introduced empirical research on wisdom and well-being, explaining results from respective theoretical standpoints. The positive personality development perspective and developmental process model break new ground by rethinking the wisdom-well-being relationship from a wisdom development perspective, advancing theoretical exploration.

3.1 The Positive Personality Development Perspective

Staudinger and Kunzmann (2005) divide individual personality development pathways into two types based on personality functioning: personality adjustment and personality growth, with the latter closely related to wisdom development.

Well-adjusted individuals possess high social competence, practical skills, and professional expertise, along with emotionally stable and trustworthy personality traits that increase with age (Law & Staudinger, 2016). Social maturity is personality adjustment' s key indicator, referring to adapting to social environment roles and norms to obtain sensory pleasure, power, and worldly achievement (Law & Staudinger, 2016). Big Five traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, and psychological well-being dimensions of self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and positive relationships fall under per-

sonality adjustment (Law & Staudinger, 2016). Good personality adjustment indicates satisfactory socialization processes and outcomes. When age-related physiological and psychological functional losses occur, well-developed practical skills and personality traits still help maintain and enhance positive emotions and life satisfaction, but this has little to do with wisdom development (Law & Staudinger, 2016).

Personality growth involves gaining insight into self, others, and the world; complex emotion regulation abilities; and moving beyond egocentrism to focus on others' interests and well-being. Big Five openness, psychological well-being dimensions of personal growth, purpose in life, and autonomy, and psychological mindedness are key personality growth indicators (Law & Staudinger, 2016; Staudinger & Kunzmann, 2005). Personality adjustment facilitates completing conventional socialization tasks along normal developmental paths. Personality growth requires creativity, pushing individuals onto unique developmental paths. Personality growth results in personal wisdom formation (Staudinger & Kunzmann, 2005). However, the personality growth or wisdom path is not smooth, requiring continuous breakthroughs of sociocultural environmental limitations and meeting various challenges. Therefore, hedonic well-being does not necessarily accompany personality growth or personal wisdom, nor is it wise individuals' ultimate pursuit (Law & Staudinger, 2016; Mickler & Staudinger, 2008).

3.2 The Developmental Process Perspective

Based on the positive personality development perspective, Weststrate and Glück (2017a) proposed the developmental process model of the wisdom-well-being relationship. They argue that deeply reflecting on personally experienced major life setbacks importantly drives wisdom development. Following such events, individuals may follow one of three developmental paths over time: the blissful ignorance path, the wisdom-and-well-being path, or the maladaptive path (see Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]).

Individuals on the blissful ignorance path experience short-term declines in positive emotion and life satisfaction after major setbacks but quickly use self-defense mechanisms to buffer the impact, returning positive emotion and life satisfaction to slightly above original levels. They do not deeply analyze but explain everything through existing meaning structures without forming new ones, thus not generating wisdom. Over time, these individuals gain no further benefits from traumatic events, such as well-being.

Individuals on the wisdom-and-well-being path also experience short-term declines in positive emotion and life satisfaction after adversity, but they willingly contemplate fundamental questions about life and the world, gain new understanding and insights, change original meaning structures, and increase wisdom levels. Over time, they increasingly benefit from adversity, with continuously improving positive emotions and life satisfaction.

The third path—maladaptive adaptation—describes those who, facing adversity, wallow in self-pity, lacking both effective adaptive capacity and motivation to gain life insights from adversity, ultimately gaining neither wisdom nor recovery, falling into a state of collapse. Over time, these individuals' positive emotions and life satisfaction remain chronically low.

3.3 Summary and Evaluation

The positive personality development perspective is the first theory examining the wisdom-well-being relationship from a wisdom development angle. However, it faces challenges. It implicitly views personal wisdom as the endpoint of personality growth, suggesting wisdom is a relatively stable personality trait. Yet current research shows wisdom possesses both relative stability and situational instability (Grossmann, 2017). If only considering wisdom' s relative stability, this criticism may not seriously trouble the perspective. But are personality growth and adjustment truly independent developmental paths?

Ardelt et al. (2018) argue that compliant and conservative people (personality adjustment) also show self-transcendence and benevolence (related to personality growth and wisdom); open people (personality growth) also pursue pleasure, worldly achievement, and power—contrary to Staudinger and Kunzmann' s (2005) predictions. Ardelt et al. (2018) found three, not two, personality development paths in 98 American males across 60 years: (1) young adult extraversion (personality adjustment) affecting later-life hedonic well-being; (2) young adult openness (personality growth) affecting later-life wisdom formation; (3) childhood life quality, adolescent academic and athletic performance, and young adult emotional stability (all personality adjustment) affecting midlife generativity and later-life wisdom (both personality growth outcomes) and hedonic well-being. Thus, balanced personality growth and adjustment importantly influence both wisdom and hedonic well-being (Ardelt et al., 2018).

The developmental process model is a newly proposed theory whose validity requires longitudinal data support. Its premise is that major, negative, abnormal life events (divorce, unemployment, death threats, abandonment) catalyze wisdom development (Weststrate & Glück, 2017a; Weststrate, Ferrari, Fournier, & McLean, 2018). But is this premise universally valid for wisdom development? First, positive life experiences may also promote wisdom development. In peak experiences of extreme happiness and oneness with the world, individuals gain profound insights into life meaning and worldview changes (Maslow, 1987, pp.366–381), which themselves manifest wisdom development. Webster (2007) argues both positive and negative major events promote wisdom development. Weststrate et al. (2018) also acknowledge many participants view positive events as wisdom-promoting, such as first childbirth. Second, wisdom may not only emerge from reflecting on personally experienced major events; observing or reading about others' experiences may also be effective. Observational learning is an important human learning mode that avoids losses and pain from mistaken efforts (Bandura, 2001, pp.47–144). Staudinger (2001) argues reflecting on one'

s own life experiences promotes personal and general wisdom, while reflecting on others' experiences promotes general wisdom. Additionally, sometimes major life setbacks result from individual foolishness; wise individuals may avoid these errors and thus not experience many major traumatic events (Sternberg, 2006; Grossmann et al., 2013).

Thus, considering life events' positive/negative valence and reflection' s direct/indirect nature, important life experiences can be divided into at least four types: personally experienced positive events, personally experienced negative events, indirectly learned positive events, and indirectly learned negative events. Currently, only the second type receives researcher attention (Jennings et al., 2006; Weststrate et al., 2018; Ardelt, 2005; Webster & Deng, 2015). If wisdom development can emerge from both major negative events and positive events or indirect experiences, does the wisdom-well-being relationship still follow the three paths shown in Figure 1? The relationship between wisdom development and life experiences themselves may be minimal; rather, how individuals interpret and cope with these events importantly influences whether wisdom can be generated or enhanced (Ardelt, 2005). Therefore, this article does not deny the developmental process model' s validity in explaining the wisdom-well-being relationship but points out that major traumatic events may be just one context for examining this relationship—a specific type under particular conditions. Examining the wisdom-well-being relationship under other contextual conditions may yield predictions different from the developmental process model.

4.1 A New Perspective: The Developmental Level Model

Based on the positive personality development perspective and the "Integration of Morality and Talent" theory of wisdom, we can construct a developmental level model of the wisdom-well-being relationship. The positive personality development perspective implicitly treats personal wisdom as the endpoint of personality growth without addressing that wisdom can exist at different hierarchical levels. The integration of morality and talent theory divides wisdom into small, medium, and great wisdom based on differences in moral and talent development (Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2014, pp.251-254). Considering wisdom' s relative stability, the personality growth process can also be viewed as wisdom development—from small to medium to great wisdom.

Some research suggests eudaimonic well-being is superior and more worth pursuing than hedonic well-being (Ward & King, 2016), indicating well-being also has hierarchical levels with qualitative differences between them. Recent research proposes that hedonic and eudaimonic well-being cannot exhaust all well-being content (Xu Xiaobo, Sun Chao, Wang Fengyan, 2017). Beyond physiological and psychological needs, individuals have spiritual needs. When individuals' awareness and understanding of self and world reach a state of forgetting both self and objects, experiencing inner tranquility, peace, meaning, value, hope, and strength, spiritual well-being emerges (Xu Xiaobo et al., 2017). Thus, from the

perspective of well-being sources, at least three distinct levels exist: well-being from material and physiological needs is the lowest level; from self-realization (including self-growth and social contribution) is the intermediate level; and from spiritual transcendence is the highest level. Emphasizing well-being' s hierarchical nature better reflects Chinese cultural understanding of well-being, which includes both sensual pleasure from basic needs and interpersonal satisfaction, rational pleasure from continuously improving moral cultivation to reach "benevolence," and transcendent pleasure from spiritual communion with heaven and earth and serene, harmonious nirvana (Zeng Hong & Guo Siping, 2012).

Since both wisdom and well-being are hierarchical, the integration of morality and talent theory suggests that wisdom development level differences correspond to well-being hierarchy levels. As intelligence and talent develop, individuals gain deeper understanding of self and world, gradually seeing through life' s illusions (Mckee & Barber, 1999), discovering life' s true value and authentic pursuits, while problem-solving abilities based on experience accumulation continuously improve. Meanwhile, as moral cultivation continuously improves, the individual "small self" continuously sublimates, gradually moving away from egocentrism to form a social "greater self" that can include more people (Yang Zhongfang, 2009, pp.312–334), ultimately reaching the "unity of heaven and humanity" state where self and universe become one (Levenson et al., 2005). Consequently, well-being sources also change. Specifically: (1) Individuals at lower wisdom development stages can somewhat discover that life' s true value lies in self-growth and social contribution but cannot completely 脱离 material pursuit. When facing conflicts between self and others/societal interests, though good problem-solving abilities help balance long-term and short-term well-being of self and others, their fundamental motivation is their own well-being due to limited moral cultivation. At this stage, they can obtain well-being from material need satisfaction and some self-growth. (2) Individuals at medium wisdom development levels have deeper life understanding and stronger motivation to pursue self-growth and social contribution. Continuously developing problem-solving abilities make them better at balancing self and others' /society' s long-term and short-term well-being, and due to improved moral cultivation, their fundamental motivation is contributing to others and society. At this stage, well-being mainly comes from pursuing noble life meaning and realizing social value. (3) Individuals at the highest wisdom development level have the deepest understanding of life and world, can transcend the dualism of self and objects, and reach a super-moral state of unity of heaven and humanity. The most fully developed problem-solving abilities make them best at balancing self and others' /society' s well-being, but their fundamental motivation is unrelated to self, others, or society because they have transcended the opposition between self and others/society. At this stage, well-being mainly comes from spiritual transcendence and freedom. Moreover, as wisdom continuously improves, well-being may manifest not only in fundamentally different sources but also in longer duration and greater promotion of physical and mental health, thereby more

positively affecting lifespan.

We can also derive the relationship between wisdom' s opposite and well-being from the integration of morality and talent theory. Wisdom' s opposite can be divided into below-normal morality and talent, and disharmonious morality-talent types, the latter including high morality-low talent and high talent-low morality types (Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2018). Those below-normal in both morality and talent have congenital intellectual disabilities, experiencing only very superficial well-being, perhaps limited to physical pleasure. They may have no clear consciousness of well-being, thus being neither happy nor unhappy. For high morality-low talent individuals, despite good intentions, lacking higher talent to solve complex problems may lead to good intentions producing bad outcomes or failing to solve problems successfully (Wang Fengyan & Zheng Hong, 2014, p.201), ultimately not contributing to or even harming self and others' well-being, causing unfortunate consequences. Since high morality-low talent individuals can solve routine daily problems, if they never encounter thorny complex problems or major life decisions, they can live stable, ordinary lives. High talent-low morality individuals may not obtain well-being or lasting well-being. Despite outstanding talent and good complex problem-solving abilities, insufficient moral cultivation and excessive focus on self-well-being prevent correct balancing of long-term well-being of self and others/society and discovery of life' s true value, ultimately harming long-term well-being of self, others, or society. Therefore, even if these individuals obtain temporary personal happiness, harming others' or collective interests may cause them long-term suffering. Existing research also shows that intelligence without prosocial motivation hardly yields happiness (Grossmann et al., 2013).

Chinese culture contains the saying "suffering a loss is a blessing."Zheng Banqiao stated: "Suffering a loss is a blessing—the full are near loss, the losing gradually gain. Loss to self benefits others, gaining external peace and internal tranquility; with both peace and tranquility, blessing lies therein." This saying influences some Chinese groups. Unfortunately, few truly analyze under what contexts "suffering a loss is a blessing" holds. From the integration of morality and talent theory, only when decision-making and problem-solving outcomes benefit long-term well-being of self, others, and society might this saying hold (Tang Hui, Zhou Kun, Zhao Cuixia, Li Shu, 2014; Zhao et al., 2018).

4.2 Future Research Directions

Future research on the wisdom-well-being relationship should focus on two aspects. First, selecting and developing appropriate measurement tools. From the developmental level perspective, examining their relationship requires tools that measure wisdom development levels and distinguish well-being hierarchy levels. Current wisdom measurement uses performance-based and self-report methods, but neither actually measures wisdom development levels (Chen Haobin & Wang Fengyan, 2013; Glück, 2017; Wang Yuling & Wang Fengyan, 2018). Developing wisdom development level measurement tools requires solving three key issues:

(1) What are the key indicators for measuring individual wisdom development levels? (2) How many specific stages exist in human wisdom development, and what are the specific manifestations of each stage? (3) Establishing wisdom norms to determine an individual' s wisdom development level position within a group. Second, developing well-being questionnaires that measure well-being source hierarchy and adapt to Chinese culture. Simply placing hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in the same framework may not effectively solve well-being integration problems. For example, debates persist about how to integrate different well-being types (Waterman, 1993; Ryan & Martela, 2016). Poor integration may result from existing measurement tools confusing differences in well-being sources, functions, and experiences (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Domestic well-being measurement tools are mostly revised from foreign established questionnaires. Some contain Western cultural values and are "maladapted" in China, such as Ryff' s psychological well-being questionnaire (Xing Zhanjun & Huang Liqing, 2004). Some measurement tools neglect cultural values (e.g., Diener' s 5-item life satisfaction questionnaire), which while making them more culturally universal, cannot reflect the influence of well-being concepts on well-being (Lu Luo, 2007). Spiritual well-being has not entered mainstream well-being measurement, as evidenced by existing mainstream well-being tools almost excluding spiritual well-being content (Proctor & Tweed, 2016). Therefore, examining the wisdom-well-being relationship should draw on foreign latest research to develop better culturally adapted well-being measurement tools, such as integrating three well-being perspectives based on well-being sources while emphasizing measurement of well-being experience intensity and duration.

Second, determining the causal relationship between wisdom and well-being. One view holds that well-being is an important psychological resource affecting wisdom development (Mickler & Staudinger, 2008); another view considers well-being as the outcome of wisdom development (Grossmann et al., 2013; Ardelt, 2016). Although both views have longitudinal data support (Ardelt, 2016; Ardelt et al., 2018; Wink & Helson, 1997), wisdom measurement mostly relies on self-report methods that cannot avoid substantial measurement error (Brienza et al., in press). Future research should address three aspects: (1) Conduct rigorous experimental studies. Experimental methods are most reliable for determining causality, such as designing intervention programs to enhance wisdom and comparing pre-post well-being differences. (2) Conduct long-term longitudinal studies. Besides physiological foundations, wisdom development requires long-term persistent practice (Wang Yuling & Wang Fengyan, 2018). Short-term longitudinal studies are not optimal for examining the wisdom-well-being relationship. (3) If conditions are limited, carefully sample when conducting short-term longitudinal studies. Wisdom develops rapidly during adolescence and early adulthood (Pasupathi, Staudinger, & Baltes, 2001), declines before age 45, then slowly increases after 45 (Brienza et al., in press). Some studies find wisdom slowly increases through adulthood, peaking around age 55, then slowly declines (Thomas et al., 2017; Webster et al., 2012). Short-term longitudinal studies may be more suitable with participants from adolescence

to early adulthood and middle age.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.