2021 International Wisdom Summit Survey

Preliminary results

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# Wisdom and morality

## Forced choice responses (n = 120)

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Chart, treemap chart

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X^2 df P(> X^2)

Likelihood Ratio 37.379 4 1.5050e-07

Pearson 31.305 4 2.6524e-06

Phi-Coefficient : NA

Contingency Coeff.: 0.284

Cramer's V : 0.296

**Almost half a sample indicated that morality is necessary for wisdom (and more than half of the professors), but not vice versa. A quarter of the sample viewed morality as a precursor to wisdom, whereas some participants indicated these constructs are unrelated.**

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## Open-ended responses (subset: n = 52)

Dimensions

* (FRMW) Functional relationship: morals=> wisdom. Morals is in service of wisdom. Morals is the driver that leads to outcome (Wisdom).
* (FRWM) Functional relationship: wisdom=> morality. Wisdom is in service of morality. Wisdom is the driver that leads to outcome (Morality).
* (FRJF) Functional relationship where both morality and wisdom serve a joint function: they can be independent from each other, but they both contribute towards a specific life goal (e.g., common good).
* (TRMW) Taxonomic relationship: morality is part of wisdom.
* (TRWM) Taxonomic relationship: wisdom is part of morality.
* (TRHOC) Taxonomic relationship: wisdom and morality are branches of a higher order category (e.g., breaststroke and butterfly are both swimming styles). This code applies even if the person initially says that there is no (functional) relationship between wisdom and morality.
* (PR) Probabilistic relationship: X can guide / often guides Y (with X and Y being either morality or wisdom). In other words: if you have X, you will have higher chance of having Y because X can guide/often guides Y. But it’s not a given. For example, if the person states that X fosters or motivates Y, there may be a higher chance that Y will occur, even though it is not an absolute certainty.
* (DR) Deterministic relationship: X requires/ought to promote Y (with X and Y being either morality or wisdom) or X is sufficient for Y and when X is present, Y will (always) follow.
* (FM) (1) Fixed/ Universal versus (2) malleable/ context-dependent relationship/association (0 = not applicable). This also applies to individual features. If both morality and wisdom are viewed as universal/fixed, their relationship by default will also be fixed (i.e., coded as 1). If one of the two features is context-dependent, it will be by definition a malleable/context-dependent relationship as well (i.e., coded as 2). If participants refer to malleability/evolution of relationship of morality and wisdom, it would be a 2. If participants state that morality and wisdom are unrelated, it will be coded as 0. Check forced-choice responses to see if participants mention them not to be related (in which case participants will not select any forced choice response son the prior question).
* PROCESS-MECH Theme: Wisdom as a process allowing moral action/outcome (even if not always). In other words, wisdom is a tool or a mechanism that allows us to achieve moral outcome/action. It is not about lifelong journey of life experiences leading to later-life development of moral character.
* PROCESS-LIFE Theme: Wisdom as a life-long/experiential process (of accumulating life experiences), which consequently contribute to cultivation of moral character (e.g., compassion, humility). It is not about situation-specific decisions concerning moral action.
* CONSTRUCT Theme: Constructivism – morals as a set of culturally-bounded rules/norms and wisdom as discerning how/when to apply them and/or to implement these rules/norms.

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**View of the relationship of morality and wisdom as malleable and context-dependent dominates. Further, scholars are more likely to view wisdom to be in the service of/the *probabilistic (not deterministic)* driver of morality, rather than vice versa (though explicit mentioning of wisdom as a mechanism was rare). A few participants mentioned the taxonomic relationship between wisdom and morality, though about 13% mentioned morals to be a part of wisdom.**

# Wisdom and culture

## Forced choice responses (n = 100)

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In total, **most frequently selected** characteristics of wisdom were open-mindedness/consideration of diverse perspectives, pursuit of truth and epistemic humility, followed by experiential knowledge, sympathy/compassion, seeing insight and meaning, as well as context-sensitivity. **Least frequently** selected features were declarative knowledge and humor.

Table

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Declarative knowledge was chiefly selected as a **non-universal**. In contrast, seeking insight& meaning and uncertainty management, followed by balance of diverse interests) were most frequently selected **existential universals**. Open-mindedness/consideration of diverse perspectives and context-sensitivity, along with pursuit of truth were most frequently chosen **functional universals**, whereas experiential knowledge and sympathy/compassion were considered to be **accessibility universals**.

## Weighted ranking

Lower score = higher position

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## Open-ended responses (subset: n = 71)

* Absolute relativism – definition of what is wisdom as culture-dependent, can only be understood through the eyes/experiences of the insider (emic).
* Universalism - Same set of mental processes, just the expression/manifestation varies (e.g., due to different emphasis in socialization), outsider viewpoint on the relationship of culture and wisdom. Culture is a moderator of expression (etic).
* Morally bounded relativism: Wisdom has both universal and culture-specific components. In particular, moral features of wisdom are culture-bound. Only give it a 1 *if* there are instances of relativism with respect to morality **BUT ALSO** the person is mentioning other (non-moral) features of wisdom being universal.
* Wisdom as a cultural competence.

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Most scholars see the relationship between wisdom and culture in relativist terms. At least one third views wisdom as a form of cultural competence.

# Common wisdom model

# Familiar with the model (*n* = 36 out of 134)

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