**International Wisdom Summit**, **October 11, 2021**

Flash Talk Program

**Afternoon Session | 11:55am-12:40pm EDT**

**Mind the Gap: Wisdom Attenuates a Male Bias Toward Gender Pay-Gap Denialism**

Anna Dorfman, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Justin Brienza, University of Queensland, Australia

Ramona Bobocel, University of Waterloo, Canada

*We conducted two preregistered studies to examine the existence of a male bias toward gender pay-gap denialism, and wise reasoning (non-directional reasoning characterized by epistemic humility, perspectivism, and contextualism) as a moderator of the phenomenon. We found in both studies males with weaker wise-reasoning engaged in denialism, whereas males with stronger wise-reasoning did not. We conducted the studies prior to (time 1 of Study 1) and during the COVID-19 pandemic (time 2 of Study 1; Study 2), a societal event with disproportionate economic effects on women. Study 1, using a pre-post design revealed significantly stronger denialism pre-lockdown (i.e., the moderating role of wise reasoning attenuated in time 2). Findings document a male bias toward gender pay gap denialism and suggest i) wisdom may counteract denialism, and ii) societal events highlighting systemic inequalities may induce wisdom and reduce self-centered reactions that undermine support for fairness and positive societal change.*

**What Dumbledore and Gandalf Have in Common: Wise Exemplars in Books, Films, and Video Games**

Imke Harbig, University of Klagenfurt, Austria

*In the first study investigating people’s perceptions of wisdom in fictional characters, 126 participants completed an online survey of characters from literature, movies, series, or video games whom they perceived as wise. The 191 nominations included 90 different characters. Dumbledore, from the “Harry Potter” series, was nominated 50 times; Gandalf, from “Lord of the Rings”, was nominated 32 times. Only about one fifth of the nominated characters were female. Content analysis of participants’ reasons for their nominations identified a broad spectrum of characteristics and behavioral traits including supporting others, managing emotions, in-depth knowledge, and their appearance. The scene most frequently named as indicative of extraordinary wisdom was Dumbledore’s self-sacrifice for the sake of the common good. Findings on wisdom-related characteristics and developmental factors showed much overlap with other research on both implicit and explicit wisdom conceptions, but also some aspects specific to fictional characters.*

**Enacted Phronesis (Practical Wisdom) in Medical Practitioners**

Sabena Y. Jameel, University of Birmingham, England

*Phronesis is morally orientated practical wisdom. Medicine is an inherently moral practice. This PhD research identified a gap in the published psychological and philosophical literature in relation to the empirical study of wisdom exemplars. The research used the Ardelt three-dimensional wisdom scale on a group of UK based family medicine practitioners (n=211). The clinicians with outlier scores were identified. Biographic narrative interviews were conducted. The transcripts were analyzed using Wengraf’s Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method. Summary statements were formulated which re-presented the doctors’ character and life. These statements have been used successfully in medical education teaching exercises. The transcripts also underwent corpus linguistic analysis to identify key themes in the doctors thought processes. Dealing with uncertainty appeared to be one of the key differentiators. The research resulted in the development of an analogy-based theory, the Fish school theory of practical wisdom. It presents phronesis as an integrated ecological process.*

**University Students’ Descriptions of Their Wise Solutions**

Elina Paananen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Eeva Kallio. University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Päivi Tynjälä, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

*This study examined, mainly from the perspective of personal wisdom, university students’ descriptions of situations where they found they had made a wise solution or acted wisely. The data comprised the responses of 220 university students to open-ended questions related to wisdom, which were part of the student survey. The data was analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis, and quantitatively as well. The most frequent main themes of wisdom situations were related to shaping and determining one’s life path and various coping strategies in studies and life. Other themes included helping and consideration for others and dealing with negative events. The explanations of wisdom dealt with the consequences and process of actions. The reported forms of wisdom were categorized as autonomy and assurance, knowledge and flexibility, and empathy and support. There were also responses that did not indicate either any concrete situation, explanations or form of solutions involving wisdom.*

**Wise Negotiation Through Exposure to Diversity and Perspective-Taking Capability**

Prarthana Saikia, Indian Institute of Technology, India

Ankita Sharma, Indian Institute of Technology, India

*We define wise negotiation where all parties feel heard and understood, and interests are balanced. This work in progress examines 'if perspective-taking and exposure to diversity influence people's way of negotiating.' The methodology follows mix method of the questionnaire (SAWS, Perspective Taking, diversity, and HEXACO), negotiation scenario, and monetary negotiation game. Here we present the quantitative analysis of questionnaires and monetary negotiation game for 60 participants. The specific question answered here is whether wisdom, perspective taking, personality, and diversity explain the balancing interest in the game. Wisdom and agreeableness (personality dimension) were found to positively predict (and explain 18.5% percent of variance) perspective-taking. Logistic regression analysis suggests that wisdom, perspective-taking, and interaction positively predict balancing the interest in the negotiation game. We are furthering the work on more participants and analysis of protocol for strategies people use in negotiation, prediction of negotiation, and mediating/moderating role of wisdom in perspective-taking and negotiation.*

**Translational Relation of Wisdom and Transformational Leadership: Exploring Conceptualization and Predictions**

Abhishek Sharma, Saradar Patel University of Police Security and Criminal Justice, India   
Ankita Sharma, Indian Institute of Technology, India

*The premise of the present work is that 21st Century Leadership should be oriented toward being inclusive, and of service, to organizations and the greater good. This study theorizes and tests a mediation model in which diversity and dispositional characteristics predict transformational leadership (TL) and wisdom mediates direct relationships. The data on personality, wisdom, diversity, TL, and interview schedules were recorded on standardized tools from 375 student participants. It was found that wisdom, diversity, openness, extraversion, and honesty-humility were significant predictors of TL. Finally, wisdom significantly mediated the relationship between diversity, dispositional characteristics, and TL. Qualitative analysis showed overlap in the major themes in the subjective definition of wisdom and wise leader. The core pattern among the themes was related to a holistic approach that does not put benefit before people, does not place undue emphasis on making money as the sole aim, and the transformative power to solve problems.*

**Wisdom Resources as a Protection Against conspiracy Beliefs?**

Andreas Scherpf, University of Klagenfurt, Austria

*Belief in conspiracy theories is thriving during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research suggests a general conspiracy mentality as a key predictor of individuals’ inclination to believe and spread such false beliefs (Imhoff & Bruder, 2014), yet there is little research on protective factors against conspiracy beliefs. This study investigated whether wisdom-related resources might be such a protective factor. Participants (n=482) completed the Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire, the MORE Wisdom Resource Scale, and the Brief-Wisdom-Screening Scale. Results showed that CMQ scores are correlated to dogmatic thinking, an aversion towards new experiences and new approaches to life challenges, and low reflectivity concerning one’s own life. Conspiracy mentality was also related to attitudes towards compulsory COVID-19 vaccination and voluntary social distancing. Relationships were not particularly strong, however, suggesting that wisdom is not a strong protective factor and/or self-report measures are suboptimal for assessing wisdom in this context.*

**Association of Resting-State Neural Activities with Wise Advising from a Second- or Third-Person Perspective: an fMRI Study**

Yanbin Zheng, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Guang-heng Dong, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Harley Glassman, University of Toronto, Canada

Chenli Huang, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Ran Xuan, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Chan S. Hu, Southeast University, China

*Background: Advice-giving is a common theme of wisdom in daily life. An electroencephalogram study indicated that resting-state neural oscillations on the frontal lobe were associated with wise advising from a second- but not a third-person perspective. We hypothesized that resting-state neural activity should be associated with wisdom performance (i.e., applying metacognition for reasoning and problem-solving) as a function of psychological distance.*

*Methods: Fifty-five participants provided advice on various life dilemmas using either a second- or a third-person perspective after taking a resting-state fMRI scan.*

*Results: Participants felt a significantly smaller psychological distance when advising from the second- than the third-person perspective. Wise advising was associated with the precuneus and anterior cingulate cortex resting-state activities, yet only that from the second person perspective was associated with the medial prefrontal cortex.*

*Conclusion: Different mental activities (e.g., self-reflection) during daily rest may contribute to wisdom performance from different psychological distances.*

**Evening Session | 7:30-8:15pm EDT**

**Symbolic Leadership Paying Wellbeing Dividends: An Assessment of Perceptions Regarding How Leaders Respond During Crises**

Svea Staby, University of Queensland, Australia

Justin Brienza, University of Queensland, Australia

Bernard McKenna, University of Queensland, Australia

Ali Intezari, University of Queensland, Australia

*Societal crises (e.g., pandemic) take a toll on wellbeing. Leaders can buffer their people through wise actions (e.g., mandates and policies). But they may also serve a symbolic function wherein mere perceptions of leaders’ wisdom imbues followers with resilience through crises. We examined this proposition in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. One cross-sectional study revealed that US citizens’ perceptions of their leaders as wise (i.e., personality trait) and being wise (wise reasoning) related positively to their wellbeing, both concurrently and reflectively mid-pandemic. We addressed Study 1 limitations (e.g., response bias; causality) in another longitudinal study: the more US citizens believed US President Trump to be wise (trait rating) at the height of the pandemic (Mid-June, 2020), the higher their subjective wellbeing, both before (September) and after the presidential election (November), regardless of objective outcomes. We discuss the symbolic function of leadership and implications for wisdom theory.*

**Generativity in Informal Life Review: Discovering Life Lessons and Wisdom in Naturalistic Intergenerational Conversations**

Patricia D. Chilton, University of Arizona, USA

Cindy B. Woolverton, Houston V.A., USA

Elizabeth Glisky, University of Arizona, USA

Matthew Grilli, University of Arizona, USA

Matthias Mehl, University of Arizona, USA

*The theory of generativity suggests that older adults should inherently feature life lessons in naturalistic conversations with younger adults. Little though, is known about the process of these conversations, and to what extent they convey wisdom characteristics. This project examined 15 conversations between 10 college students and 5 older adults to (1) develop a coding scheme and procedure to examine life lessons in intergenerational conversations, and (2) investigate whether wisdom characteristics are embedded into life lessons. On average, each older adult referenced 4 life lessons (SD = 2) per conversation, which were coded for the following constructs: meaning making, personal growth, emotional valence, wisdom characteristics, life lesson type, and autobiographical memory type. Exploratory analyses suggest life lessons are inherently integrated into naturalistic intergenerational conversations, and that reflectivity is the most frequently expressed wisdom characteristic. This supports previous research identifying reflectivity as key to wisdom, and to the process of generativity.*

**Limited Compassion Mindsets Also Limit Moral Expansiveness: An Example of How Beliefs About Emotions can Influence Moral Outcomes**

Izzy Gainsburg, Harvard University, USA

Julia Lee Cunningham, University of Michigan, USA

*People vary in their moral expansiveness--the degree to which feel moral obligation or concern for more socially distant entities. Given that many global problems are partially the result of insufficient moral expansiveness, it is important to understand factors that influence moral expansiveness. Despite, this little research has explored predictors of moral expansiveness or how to increase it. In this presentation, we propose one potential factor influencing moral expansiveness: people's beliefs about whether compassion is a limited resource. Across three studies, we show that people vary in their beliefs about whether compassion is a limited resource, that these beliefs can be changed through exposure to persuasive messaging, and that limited compassion mindsets reduce moral expansiveness by inducing tradeoff thinking (i.e., the belief that compassion for some entities means less for others). These results demonstrate the role that folk theories can have on emotional experience and moral beliefs.*

**Most Wisdom Researchers are Interested in Sagehood, not Wisdom**

Juensung Kim, University of Toronto, Canada

*Grossmann, Dorfman, and Oakes (2020) have argued that research on wisdom using person-centered self-report metrics is fundamentally flawed, and has contributed to much theoretical confusion in the field. The present argument grants that Grossmann and colleagues are methodologically correct if wisdom is considered an occurrent, rather than dispositional, capacity, which Grossmann and colleagues have elsewhere argued that it is (Brienza et al., 2018; Grossmann, Gerlach, & Denissen, 2016). Following from this point, we argue that the consequence of this position is that most psychological wisdom researchers should not be understood to be studying wisdom. The pertinent research question is not to examine what enables an average person to reason wisely in specific conditions, but rather, to examine what enables an exceptional person to reason wisely in nearly all conditions. In short, the majority of wisdom researchers are not interested in studying wisdom; rather, they are interested in studying sagehood.*

**Generating a Theory of Wisdom Development in Medicine**

Jordan D. Millhollin, University of Chicago, USA

Wei Wei Lee, University of Chicago, USA

Nic M. Weststrate, University of Illinois Chicago, USA

James N. Woodruff, University of Chicago, USA

*Psychological research suggests that disorienting experiences have the potential to foster wisdom. The emotional nature of working in medicine could provide a rich environment for the development of wisdom, although this has remained unexplored. This mixed methods study combined in-depth, semi-structured interviews (N = 17) with a quantitative assessment of wisdom (Ardelt, 2003) in order to understand how physicians define wisdom and to identify factors perceived to support its development through medical education and practice. Through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), we found that physicians viewed wisdom as a complex, beneficial quality that goes beyond mere technical knowledge and promotes patient-centered care. After a difficult event, wisdom was believed to be fostered through mentorship and modeling, debriefing with peers, and private self-reflection. Barriers to wisdom development included a culture opposed to emotion and openness about mistakes. This research provides a basis for testing wisdom-promoting interventions in medical education.*

**Adaptive vs. Maladaptive Coping in the Face of Trauma**

Melanie Munroe, University of Toronto, Canada  
Helen Wuisse Chan, University of Toronto, Canada  
Neeti Sharma, University of Toronto, Canada   
Michel Ferrari, University of Toronto, Canada

*Research has shown that experiencing a traumatic event can lead to increased wisdom, yet the ways in which survivors cope needs to be further explored. The purpose of this study was to understand individual coping profiles in dealing with traumatic events, and whether they predict wisdom. Participants were 111 trauma survivors who completed a survey on coping and wisdom. A latent profile analysis revealed five profiles: adaptive, non-copers, multifaceted, maladaptive, and average copers. In comparison to the adaptive copers, maladaptive coping was predictive of lower levels of wisdom. Including coping styles in trauma assessments may inform the design of interventions for individuals at risk for PTSD. Clinicians can incorporate wisdom teachings into mental health care to promote the use of adaptive coping. Interventions may yield positive mental health outcomes and help trauma survivors engage in posttraumatic growth following the event.*

**Intergenerational Dialogue and Wisdom Narratives**

Zachary T. Swanson, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA  
Jill Shelton, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA   
Ruth Walker, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA  
Ralph Hood, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA  
Khushi Dhruv, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA  
Andrea Martinez, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA

*At the heart of wisdom research is the promise of fostering wisdom across individuals and groups through dialogue. Intergenerational dialogue (ID), or communication across generations is one of the most historically represented modes of wisdom transference. Gaining a better understanding of the unique value and benefits of intergenerational relationships is a potentially beneficial direction of wisdom research. As part of a service-learning project, students (N = 25) engaged in two semi-structured interviews with older adults (55+) to inform research on the potential benefits of ID. We assessed changes in prosocial behavior, generativity, ageism, and well-being in a pre-post survey design, and also asked open-ended questions focusing on the benefits of ID. Interestingly, 8 out of 22 (36.4%) younger adults noted wisdom as a key benefit of ID, compared to 1 of 21 (.05%) older adults. Through these findings we advocate for ID as a potential new paradigm for wisdom research.*

**Better the Two Devils You Know, Than the One You Don’t: Predictability Influences Judgments of Moral Character**

Alexander C. Walker, University of Waterloo, Canada

Martin Harry Turpin, University of Waterloo, Canada

Igor Grossmann, University of Waterloo, Canada

Jonathan A. Fugelsang, University of Waterloo, Canada

Michal Bialek, University of Wroclaw, Poland

*Evaluating the moral character of others is important for our social well-being. It is important to accurately distinguish between trustworthy cooperators and those most likely to cause us harm. How do people assess the moral character of others? In the present work, we examine the role that perceptions of predictability play in judgments of moral character. Across multiple studies, we find evidence of a moral preference for more predictable immoral actors. Most notably, participants judged agents described as performing an immoral action (e.g., assault) for no reason as less predictable and less moral than agents performing the same immoral act, along with an additional immoral act (e.g., a bank robbery), for a well-understood immoral reason. Overall, our findings suggest that in an effort to manage uncertainty (a feature often attributed to wisdom) and facilitate cooperation with trustworthy—as opposed to unreliable—individuals, people discount the morality of unpredictable others.*