

# Exploring Wisdom in the Korean Elderly: A Q Methodology Study

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**Purpose** The purpose of this study is to analyze the subjectivity of wisdom in the Korean elderly.

**Methods** Q-methodology was used. The 33 selected Q-statements from each of the 41 participants were classified into a shape of normal distribution using a 9-point scale. The collected data were analyzed using the Analysis Software for Q-Technique.

**Results** Four types of wisdom for research participants of Korean elderly were identified. Type I is experience-oriented action type; Type II is emotion-oriented sympathy type; Type III is human relationship-oriented consideration type; and Type IV is problem solution-oriented insight type.

**Conclusion** The results of this study indicate that different approaches to health and nursing care for elders can be recommended based on the four types studied. [*Asian Nursing Research* 2011;5(2):128–140]

**Key Words** aged, methodology, test wiseness

## INTRODUCTION

While previous studies on the elderly have largely been conducted with an emphasis on the negative aspects of their aging process, studies with a focus on other positive aspects can also contribute to a better understanding of an overall development of the aging process. Williamson (2002) asserted that old age is not merely a period evoking a negative sense. While “aging” is suggestive of an overall decline, it also embraces the notion of development and maturity (Rowe & Kahn, 1998; Vaillant & Mukamal, 2001). In old age, people tend to endure more, better control themselves and be more receptive to other’s sentiments. Although cognitive and sensory functions do deteriorate with age, it is also true that other elements such as wisdom come with age.

Wisdom is a mental function which help discern the way things ought to be or tell good from bad. It embraces positive qualities such as self-integration and maturity, judgment, skills of getting along with others and a better understanding of life; it is viewed as a key to successful human development (Ardelt, 2000). Wisdom makes it possible to approach challenges and life problems in an integrative and total manner (Baltes, Glück, & Kunzmann, 2002; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003). At the same time, since experience is an essential factor of wisdom, it takes a long time to develop wisdom, so some emphasize that wisdom is related especially to old age (Ardelt, 2000; Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999).

Ardelt (1997) found that wisdom affects the level of satisfaction in the life of the elderly, more so



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than physical health, socioeconomic position, physical environment and social relationships. Ardel's subsequent studies confirmed that wisdom during the latter half of one's life positively affects overall satisfaction, physical health and family relationships (Ardelt, 2000). Commenting on such results, Ardel asserted that wisdom is an important variable helping to predict successful aging. Since the wise elderly cope with changes in life better, they would remain satisfied regardless of the objective environments they face (Ardelt, 2000). Accordingly, the concept of wisdom needs to be regarded from a positive perspective, and basic work of identifying the type of wisdom found in the Korean elderly in particular should be applied while nursing them.

In their study, Jason et al. (2001) proposed to clarify factors of wisdom and estimate how well the 38 items derived from qualitative interviews and literature describe the extent to which a person is wise. Paulhus, Wehr, Harms and Strausser (2002) asked participants to name the people whom they considered to be wisest. However, no study has been reported in Korea which clarified the category of wisdom by utilizing a Q approach.

Traditional wisdom in Western Europe originating from Greece emphasized rational and analytical thinking as well as advances in technology aimed towards becoming more productive, while devaluating emotional and intuitive aspects as obstructive to clear thinking. On the other hand, while oriental interpretation of wisdom is all too often ambiguous, it inclines towards embracing much wider meanings by stressing noncognitive aspects (J. I. Kim, 2006). Wisdom in the East is not understood through inference based on a cognitive structure, but through intuitive and personal experience. It is believed in the East that wisdom is acquired through meditation and direct observation of wise and elderly personalities and teachers.

In Korean psychology, it was asserted that seeing wisdom as an integrative concept of successful aging could be an important factor for a positive change (Lee & Cho, 2007). In this study we explored wisdom in late adulthood and identified the possible meanings of wisdom from the perspective of older persons in contemporary Korean society.

This study was based on two assumptions: (a) wisdom in late adulthood is closely related to the value system of a given society, and (b) wisdom in late adulthood is developed through the life experience of each individual, and thus the subjective meanings of wisdom differ from person to person.

To clarify and classify the phenomena of wisdom in late adulthood, the following questions were considered:

- (a) How do old adults achieve their own wisdom throughout their life experiences within their individual contexts?
- (b) How can we classify old adults' understanding of wisdom in late adulthood based on a frame of reference of achieving wisdom throughout the life span?

## METHODS

### *Outline of the Q Approach*

Q-methodology was used to assess and delineate the frame of reference in achieving wisdom throughout the life span of old adults. Q-methodology encompasses a distinct set of psychometric and operational principles that, when conjoined with specialized statistical applications of correlation and factor analysis techniques, provides researchers with a systematic and rigorously quantitative means of examining human subjectivity (Chang et al., 2008; Cordingley, Webb, & Hillie, 1997; H. K. Kim, 2008).

In this methodology, participants are given a set of statements and asked to sort them using a predetermined pattern that approximates a flattened normal curve. Participants are asked to indicate a preference for or agreement with one statement over the other on a scale from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. It is not unusual for participants to make quick decisions regarding some statement but to struggle with others that they feel have only slight or subtle differences. Because the Q-sorting technique requires them to make these subtle distinctions by arranging their statements into a forced distribution of scores, this research tool helps quantify

the subjective understanding that participants have about the concept under investigation.

Q-methodology is a powerful tool for exploring the perspectives and beliefs of a person, and Q-sorting gives participants significant control in deciding what it is about an issue or phenomenon that is important to them (Cordingley et al., 1997).

### **Sampling method**

#### ***Delineation of a Q-Population***

A total of 128 Q populations were extracted through the process of collective expert discussions, literature research dealing with previous studies, open questionnaires and in-depth interviews designed to extract opinion statements. In a group discussion in which experts participated, the cases relating to wisdom in the fields of philosophy, religion study, Korean literature, sociology, political science, economics, engineering and medical science were analyzed. Data were collected, by utilizing open questionnaires from September 2008 to October 2008, involving 50 adults aged 50 years or over sampled at random from a specified area. After asking them to think about what wisdom and being wise meant, the adults were asked to respond to the following: "What are the words or images that come to mind when you think of wisdom?" "Who are the people that you have met that you associate with wisdom, and "What do you think their features are?" "Describe specifically a situation in which you think you were wise." "Describe specifically a situation in which you regretted that you were not wise." "Why do you think you need wisdom in life?" "What do you think you have to do to lead a life of wisdom?" "What are the factors obstructive to a life of wisdom?"

#### ***Selection of the Q-sample***

To select Q-samples, the initial 128 opinion statements which were derived from literature research, group discussions, open questionnaires, and individual interviews placed in 128 Q populations were read aloud repetitively until the wisdom of the elderly has been categorized and classified. Then, they were reviewed and revised by three professors of psychiatry, social welfare science, nursing science, and one

expert on the Q methodology to remove redundant concepts and finally to select 33 Q samples.

#### ***Selection of the P-sample***

Since, unlike in a quantitative study, in a Q methodology the person is the variable, samples were extracted based on the minor sample theory (H. G. Kim, 1992). In this study the participants sampled were taken from a variety of fields of actual life including housewives, company employees, doctors, nurses and the elderly aged 65 years or over, thus creating P samples made up of 41 participants. In this study, Q-Sample is obtained from participants aged 50 years and over and P-Sample included various ages from 24 to 72. This study has taken into consideration the fact that with the opinion statements of Q samples numbering 33 this sample seems ideal (H. K. Kim, 2008; Stephenson, 1982).

#### ***Q-sorting***

The distribution chart of Q samples was prepared based on the Q methodology where 33 opinion statements are divided on a 9-point scale depending on the importance of his or her own opinion, and forced to be distributed in such a way that it may be close to a regular distribution. As for the sorting of Q samples, they were first of all read, divided into three parts of affirmative (+), neutral (0) and negative (-), and the participant was asked to select the one he/she felt is most affirmative (or most negative) one by one out of the opinion statements. The reasons for deciding on the four statements, two each at either ends, were written down while interviewing.

Participants were asked to put down in writing personal features prior to the Q classification process. It took 30–40 minutes for a person to fill out the questionnaire.

#### ***Data analysis***

A program for implementing factor analysis for the Q-Technique (PCQ version 2.1; Stricklin, 1987–1996) was used to produce correlations and perform factor analysis based on the sorts completed by the P-samples. Factors are operant combinations of similar people (i.e., combinations of people who sort items in similar and correlated ways).

On average, the standard deviation and standard score of the 33 opinion statements were collated item by item. Then factors of the 33 statements were analyzed with the aid of a principal component factor analysis method with the P-sample as an axis. For the type, factors were entered in various forms with an Eigenvalue of 1.0 or over as a standard, and the one considered to be the best outcome was selected.

In order to analyze and describe subjectivity about the awareness of wisdom of the elderly type by type, we described features type by type based on the statements where participants indicated their affirmative or negative consents, and analyzed and explained those items in particular where the difference between the standard score of specific items concerning individual statement items and the average standard scores of the remainder items stood out. At the same time, in interpreting features of each type, we have taken into consideration opinions at both extremes, as observed and interviewed in the process of the Q classification, and demographic and sociological background, and the like.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study was approved by the institutional review board at the university medical center (CR-08-059-PRO-02-R), and all the information gathered was treated confidentially and anonymously. All participants were assured that the information would never be used for any purpose other than this study. A letter providing information about the study and explaining the rights of participants as subjects as well as providing instructions on how to participate in the study were distributed to participants, and these rights were reiterated verbally before data collection. An individual's participation in the study was taken to indicate their consent.

## **RESULTS**

### **Formation of the Q type**

A Q factors analysis of subjectivity as regards wisdom utilizing PCQ program yielded four factors and four types. The four factors accounted for 37.16%

of the total variation. As for the variation of each type, the first type was computed to be 17.63%, the second 9.22%, the third 5.49%, the fourth 4.82%, respectively. The first type that showed an explanatory power at 17.63% could be the type that best explains the participant's recognition of wisdom (Table 1). A review of the interrelationships between the types indicates that the interrelationships did not correlate, suggesting that each type is independent (Table 2). The samples of the statements and standard scores type by type are shown in (Table 3).

### **Features by type and interpretations**

Participants were composed of 41 persons, namely, 14, 9, 10 and 8 persons from the first, second, third and fourth type respectively. The higher a person's scores is in the factor weight within each type, the better prototype (or ideal) that person is considered within the type he or she belongs to, thereby best representing that type (Table 3).

Here are the types of the participant's awareness of wisdom yielded by the foregoing method of analyzing:

### **Type I: Experience-oriented action type**

There were 14 (8 male and 6 female) belonging to the first type, of the 41 participants who joined the project, spread out evenly. As for their final educational

**Table 1**

<i>Eigenvalues, Variance and Cumulative Percentage</i>				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Eigenvalues	6.3133	3.9589	2.2170	1.918
Variance (%)	17.63	9.22	5.49	4.82
Cumulative	17.63	26.85	32.34	37.16

**Table 2**

<i>Correlation Among Types</i>				
Type	I	II	III	IV
I				
II	.260			
III	.388	.256		
IV	.182	-.341	.333	

**Table 3**  
Types, Weights, Demographic Characteristics for P-Samples

Type	Participant no.	Factor weight score	Gender	Age	Education	Religion	Spouse	Members of family	Score of perceived health status	Financial activity
1 (n = 14)	1	0.2435	Male	24	University	Christian	No	2	9	No
	3	0.4923	Male	32	High school	Catholic	Yes	6	10	Yes
	6	0.9865	Male	45	University	Buddhism	Yes	3	9	Yes
	10	0.3389	Male	53	High school	Buddhism	Yes	5	7	Yes
	11	0.5971	Male	54	University	Catholic	Yes	3	8	Yes
	15	0.2962	Male	60	University	None	Yes	1	8	Yes
	16	0.5154	Male	64	High school	Buddhism	Yes	2	8	Yes
	17	0.3882	Male	65	High school	Buddhism	Yes	6	6	Yes
	20	0.2755	Female	27	University	Catholic	No	0	8	Yes
	21	0.8402	Female	22	University	Catholic	No	0	8	No
	31	0.5009	Female	51	University	Christian	Yes	5	8	Yes
	34	0.6728	Female	55	High school	Buddhism	Yes	4	6	Yes
	38	0.3235	Female	63	Middle school	None	Yes	2	6	No
	39	0.3222	Female	70	High school	Catholic	No	4	6	No
2 (n = 9)	4	0.1651	Male	37	University	Christian	Yes	2	9	Yes
	14	0.3292	Male	58	University	None	Yes	3	9	Yes
	23	0.1303	Female	33	University	Christian	No	2	8	No
	24	0.5983	Female	34	University	None	No	5	8	No
	30	0.5649	Female	50	High school	Buddhism	Yes	5	8	No
	35	0.7633	Female	56	University	Christian	Yes	4	9	Yes
	36	0.4632	Female	61	High school	Christian	Yes	6	7	Yes
	37	0.3196	Female	62	High school	Catholic	Yes	7	4	Yes
3 (n = 10)	40	0.9115	Female	72	Elementary school	Christian	No	0	1	No
	8	0.1629	Male	50	University	None	Yes	4	7	Yes
	9	1.1587	Male	52	University	Buddhism	Yes	4	8	Yes
	19	0.8887	Male	70	University	None	No	0	5	No
	22	0.3396	Female	23	University	Catholic	No	4	7	Yes
	27	0.5544	Female	40	University	None	Yes	2	10	Yes

Table 3 (continued)

Types, Weights, Demographic Characteristics for P-Samples										
Type	Participant no.	Factor weight score	Gender	Age	Education	Religion	Spouse	Members of family	Score of perceived health status	Financial activity
	28	0.6401	Female	47	High school	Catholic	Yes	4	7	Yes
	29	0.4910	Female	49	University	Catholic	Yes	3	8	Yes
	32	0.3065	Female	54	University	Catholic	Yes	3	8	Yes
	33	0.3101	Female	54	University	Christian	No	0	7	Yes
	41	0.5806	Female	72	Elementary school	Buddhism	Yes	2	5	No
4 (n=8)	2	0.8533	Male	25	University	None	No	1	7	No
	5	0.5107	Male	47	University	Buddhism	Yes	1	9	Yes
	7	0.2989	Male	48	University	Buddhism	Yes	1	8	Yes
	12	0.3170	Male	55	High school	None	Yes	4	5	Yes
	13	0.5038	Male	58	University	Catholic	Yes	1	8	Yes
	18	0.1695	Male	66	Middle school	Christian	Yes	6	4	No
	25	0.5330	Female	37	University	None	No	3	7	Yes
	26	0.7392	Female	39	University	Buddhism	Yes	1	8	Yes

profiles, seven persons were university graduates and six high school graduates. Over half of them stated that they are religious and have spouses.

Participants that fell into type I were all youth aged 24 years or over, mostly healthy and economically active. They stated that a wise elderly person feels rewarded in doing his or her best at a given job, analyze human relationships through life's experience, and act after thinking about himself or herself deeply. Hence we named this group the "experience-oriented action type."

#### ***Type II: Emotion-oriented sympathy type***

There were 9 of the 41 participants (2 male and 7 female) falling into the second type. Female participants conspicuously outnumbering the male participants. Their educational profiles showed 5 university graduates, 3 high school graduates and 1 elementary school graduate. Most of them were religious, with churchgoers accounting for over half the number.

They indicated that a wise man or woman is the one who does his or her job with pleasure, feel rewarded by putting love into practice, and has a deep consideration for others while also sympathizing with them. We named this group the "emotion-oriented sympathy type."

#### ***Type III: Human relationship-oriented considerate type***

The total number of subjects falling into type III was 10 persons (3 male and 7 female). As for their educational profiles, most of them were university graduates. Most of them were religious, four of them being Catholics and married, and were engaged in economic activities.

Participants that fell into type 3, most of whom were engaged in economic activities stated that a wise elderly man or woman would maintain his/her composure while being considerate with the other party, respected other's opinions and complied with nature's order. This type earned the name "human relation-oriented considerate type."

#### ***Type IV: Problem solution-oriented insight type***

There were 6 (4 male and 2 female) of a total of 41 participants who fell into type IV. Six of them were

university graduates, with over half the number being religious. Three were Buddhists, most of them had spouses and multiple family members and were engaged in economic activities.

Most of the participants falling into type 4 were university graduates and stated that a wise elderly man or woman would grasp the problem on hand vividly and weigh the real situation he or she faces precisely and consider the matter deeply before making important decisions. This earned type IV the name "problem solution-oriented insight type."

For details of the questions and responses of each group, refer to Tables 4 and 5.

## **DISCUSSION**

Helson and Wink (1997) measured wisdom by means of the practical wisdom scale (PWS) and the transcendent wisdom rating (TWR), which revealed that wisdom as measured by means of the PWS was related to leadership, initiative, sympathy and productivity, and wisdom as measured by means of TWR was related to openness, to experience, intuition and productivity. Ardel (2003) conceptualized wisdom as the integration of the cognitive component, reflective component and affective component, based on concepts of Clayton and Birren (1978). Ardel (2004) suggested that the cognitive factor includes the desire to get the facts about an individual's internal matter or human relationships with others, and to get a deeper understanding of life. The reflective factor includes the sense to examine oneself, self-recognition, insight into oneself, and capability to review phenomena and incidents from other standpoints, through which people overcome the limits of their subjective propensity. The affective factor includes sympathy to others and pity for them. At the same time, Ardel (2003) observed that continuous self-examination and self-recognition help view matters and incidents objectively, and help one not to be overwhelmed by negative emotions, by taking into consideration all possible perspectives. Ardel went on to state that this process weakens self-centeredness and induces

**Table 4**  
*Q-Samples and Z-Scores According to Types*

No	Q-Statement	Z-score			
		I (n = 14)	II (n = 9)	III (n = 10)	IV (n = 8)
1	Wisdom comes from experience	0.5	1.5	-0.1	1.2
2	I am satisfied with my best life	0.2	1.1	-0.1	-0.5
3	I grasp the situation and solve an raised problem	-1.0	-0.9	-1.1	0.9
4	When things go wrong, there are certain to be solutions	-0.5	0.2	-1.6	-0.1
5	I give important things a deep consideration	1.6	-0.9	0.3	1.1
6	I know when to go ahead and when to step back by weighing the situation well	0.4	-1.6	0.1	1.5
7	I know there are some who do not like me	-0.4	-1.2	-1.6	-1.4
8	I feel full of happiness in my life	-0.9	0.7	1.0	0.5
9	If you say something assertively out of impatience, you get things to go wrong	-1.6	-1.6	-1.2	0.1
10	I do not interferes in other people's business	-1.5	-1.5	0.2	-0.2
11	I can control my anger.	0.7	0.0	0.5	-0.2
12	I try to understand a person in a difficult situation	0.7	0.5	-0.2	0.8
13	It is I that know my weaknesses best	0.4	-1.8	-0.5	0.5
14	I try to live without avarice	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.3
15	I try to forget painful things as soon as I can, and stick to the life's realities faithfully	-0.4	-1.1	-0.2	1.2
16	I know the situation I am in well	-0.5	0.0	1.0	-0.2
17	I let out my emotions frankly	0.1	0.1	0.3	-1.4
18	I do my best in the given job	2.2	1.7	0.0	-0.8
19	When a problem arises, I derive consensus through conversation	1.4	-1.3	0.2	0.8
20	I make much of human relationships and stay faithful	1.7	0.2	1.1	-0.6
21	I make an action when I judge the event is right	-0.1	-0.2	-1.0	0.4
22	Before I make an important decision, I listen to what others have to say about it	-0.4	-1.1	1.0	1.9
23	I feel rewarded in what I am doing now	1.0	0.4	-0.1	-0.2
24	I caution myself against saying an impolite word by which other people can be hurt	-0.4	1.0	-0.2	-0.4
25	When a problem arises, I try all I can to get it solved	-0.2	-0.3	2.1	2.0
26	When I see miserable ones, I feel painful at heart	-1.0	-0.1	-2.1	-2.4
27	When I am considerate with others, I feel good	0.3	1.2	1.4	-0.9
28	I am happy when I am doing what I like, trivial as it may be	0.8	1.4	-0.1	-0.1
29	I follow my intuition closely	-1.8	-0.3	-1.5	-0.9
30	I feel at ease when I have a faith	-1.3	1.2	0.4	-0.9
31	I feel rewarded when I put love into practice	0.6	1.2	1.3	-1.0
32	I feel at ease when I have forgiven the other party	0.4	0.6	1.6	0
33	When I get upset and speak out, I feel much better	-1.6	0.2	-1.1	-1.3



Table 5

Descending Array of Z-Scores ( $> \pm 1$ ) and Item Descriptions for Each Type

Type	Q-Statement	Z score
I		
18	I do my best in the given job	2.20
1	Wisdom comes from experience	1.72
5	I give important things a deep consideration	1.61
19	When a problem arises, I derive consensus through conversation	1.43
23	I feel rewarded in what I am doing now	1.01
26	When I see miserable ones, I feel painful at heart	-1.01
3	I grasp the situation and solve an raised problem	-1.02
30	I feel at ease when I have a faith	-1.29
10	I do not interferes in other people's business	-1.52
9	If you say something assertively out of impatience, you get things to go wrong	-1.57
33	When I get upset and speak out, I feel much better	-1.61
29	I follow my intuition closely	-1.82
II		
28	I am happy when I am doing what I like, trivial as it may be	1.67
27	I feel happy when I am considerate with the other party	1.52
30	I feel at ease when I have a faith	1.41
31	I feel rewarded when I put love into practice	1.22
2	I am satisfied with my best life	1.12
24	I caution myself against saying an impolite word by which other people can be hurt	1.00
22	Before I make an important decision, I listen to what others have to say about it	-1.07
15	I try to forget painful things as soon as I can, and stick to the life's realities faithfully	-1.08
7	I know there are some who do not like me	-1.15
19	When a problem arises, I derive consensus through conversation	-1.25
10	I do not interferes in other people's business	-1.50
9	If you say something assertively out of impatience, you get things to go wrong	-1.57
6	I know when to go ahead and when to step back by weighing the situation well	-1.58
13	It is I that know my weaknesses best	-1.82
III		
20	I make much of human relationships and stay faithful	2.05
32	I feel at ease when I have forgiven the other party	1.64
27	When I am considerate with others, I feel good	1.41
31	When I put love into practice, I feel rewarded	1.31
22	Before I make an important decision, I listen to what others have to say about it	1.01
16	I know the situation I am in well	1.00
3	I grasp the situation and solve an raised problem	-1.09
33	When I express how I feel when I am upset, I feel free	-1.12
9	If you say something assertively out of impatience, you get things to go wrong	-1.22
29	I make much of my intuition	-1.53
4	When things go wrong, there are certain to be solutions	-1.59
7	I know there are some who do not like me	-1.64

IV		
25	When a problem arises, I try all I can to get it solved	1.97
22	Before I make an important decision, I listen to what others have to say about it	1.90
6	I know when to go ahead and when to step back by weighing the situation well	1.53
15	I try to forget painful things as soon as I can, and stick to the life's realities faithfully	1.20
5	When making an important decision, I consider the matter deeply	1.11
33	When I express how I feel when I am upset, I feel free	-1.27
7	I know there are some who do not like me	-1.36
17	I let out my emotions frankly	-1.44
26	When I see miserable ones, I feel painful at heart	-2.36

more intuition, and sympathetic understanding of oneself, of others, the world and the nature. The foregoing review shows that while each study differs in the concept of wisdom, the composite concept of wisdom is multi-dimensional and diverse (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Wisdom is a concept dating back to a long time ago which has been addressed in philosophical and religious literature. The core of this concept as expressed in literature portrays itself as the integration between perfect utopian knowledge, and the mind (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2003; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). A lexical definition of wisdom in the West based on ancient Greece and Christendom tradition indicates that wisdom is "experience, knowledge and the power to put them into use; prudence and common sense" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). It is also defined as "What is truthful, right, or understanding of what is lasting, common sense, discreetness and good judgment" (American Heritage Dictionary, 2001).

Our findings show that the Oriental wisdom differs from the Western wisdom when compared with the three dimensions of wisdom as suggested by Ardel (2003), namely, cognitive, reflective and affective dimensions. Our findings confirmed that while the Western wisdom mainly values cognition, for the Korean elderly, experience and emotion were more important types of wisdom. Cognitive dimension in wisdom, which expresses itself as the ability to understand life, emerged as factors common to all the studies (Ardelt, 2003; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2003; Montgomery, Barber, & McKee, 2002).

The "emotion-oriented sympathy type" and "human relation-oriented considerate type" as suggested by

this study are consistently close, responding positively to the following "I am happy when I do what I want to however trivial it may be." "I feel pleasant when I am considerate with others," "I feel at ease in heart when I have a faith." This means that these types show sympathy, a sense of pity, positive feeling and action toward others.

However, while the reflective dimension suggested by Ardel (2003) does not manifest itself clearly in this study, such statements as "I know the situation I face well," "I don't overly cling to what cannot be changed" and "I seek advice from others before I make an important decision" are suggestive of a reflective attitude. The fourth type "problem solution-oriented insight type" addressed in this study seemingly explains the reflective dimension suggested by Ardel (2003). The Ardel's (2003) reflective dimension means doing reflective thinking by looking at incidents and phenomena from diverse standpoints to develop self-recognition and self-insight, a prerequisite to the development on the level of cognitive dimension. Reflective thinking includes the ability to take a variety of points of view, not blaming others or surrounding conditions for the present situation one faces.

However, the "experience-oriented action type" is a lower factor which is not included in the three dimensions of wisdom suggested by Ardel (2003). The reason this type is included in this study is that the maintenance of physical functions or level of activities is emphasized with the advent of new gerontology (Rowe & Kahn, 1997), based on the concept of "successful aging" or "productive aging" as addressed in the recent gerontology.

Studies on wisdom include professional knowledge about life (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000) and a study conceptualized by means of integrative thinking (Labouvie-Vief, 1990), where the study was conceptualized by social characteristics such as outstanding understanding, judgment, communicating skills and social humility. Oriental interpretations of wisdom are inclined to embrace much wider meanings by often emphasizing noncognitive domains. Wisdom of the Orient is understood not by inference of the cognitive structure but by intuition and personal experiences. Oriental teachings do not emphasize intellectual learning leading toward transformational and integrative wisdom, and object to the assertion that wisdom is acquired through logic and analytic pursuit. Instead, it is believed that wisdom is acquired by directly observing wise and old people and teachers (J. I. Kim, 2006). Comprehensive wisdom of the Orient means reflective understanding acquired through experience, and stresses cognitive, emotional, intuitive areas and human relationships on an equal basis. Seen from this standpoint, elucidation of the type of wisdom of the elderly in this study is significant in that wisdom in the Orient features the type of wisdom where cognition, emotion, intuition and the like are all integrated into one, and that experience and emotion are perceived as more important than cognition.

As characteristics of the elderly change and are being diversified with time, the type of wisdom they are expected to possess will manifest itself diversely. Important factors that characterize wisdom of the elderly in the West and Korea may well manifest themselves in reflections upon the historical situation they face throughout life and the cultural values they cherish. Therefore, wisdom should justifiably be understood in view of cultural values and historical experience.

While no studies are domestically available on which to conduct further comparative and analytic studies, a Q concept-based study related to successful aging similar in concept to wisdom is that by Bak (2006). Bak's study, which analyzed the type of awareness of successful aging utilizing a Q approach with the participation of 300 persons as P samples,

categorized types of aging into the following types: The type satisfied with reality and the stabilization-oriented type, the type overcoming realities through faith, the type directly coping with realities and relationships, health-conscious and the welfare-oriented type. At the same time, the development of tools measuring the meaning of life of the elderly named 8 factors as meaningful factors of life: "self-awareness and reception," "promise of life," "purpose of life," "love of family," "awareness of roles," "yearning for the future," "devotion," and "experience of love." A study on the development of tools measuring the sense of self-integration of the Korean elderly (Chang et al., 2007) listed three factors including "mature human relationship," "greedless life" and "satisfactorily accepted life."

This present study categorized wisdom of the Korean elderly into "experience-oriented action type," "emotion-oriented sympathy type," "human relationship-oriented considerate type," and "problem solution-oriented insight type," and analyzed and described characteristic features of wisdom of the elderly type by type, and confirmed the subjective structure of wisdom of the elderly.

The foregoing findings indicate that since the type of wisdom of the elderly differs depending on the experience throughout his or her life and personality traits, those engaged in the nursing and human services need to differentiate, contributing to positive reinforcement of self-confidence through a personalized approach tailored to the type of the elderly person in question.

This paper provides a better understanding of the contribution of wisdom in late adulthood. The understanding of types of wisdom helps to plan old adults' nursing. At the same time, this study, which is significant in that it highlighted the concept of wisdom from the perspectives of a positive aging process, is expected to be utilized as a basic procedure for healthful, productive and integrative old age-related programs.

Based on the foregoing findings on the type of wisdom of the elderly classified in this study, here are our suggestions: (a) Repetitive subsequent studies are in order so that the type of wisdom of the

elderly may be further generalized and standardized. (b) The type of wisdom of the elderly as differentiated from that of Western Europe should be understood so that wisdom measuring tools for the Korean elderly may be developed, and nurses may enhance the self-esteem and courage of their elderly patients.

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