

3 Research Predictions

The goal of the present study is to investigate the multi-faceted nature of wisdom within an experimental person perception paradigm. The study tries to extend present research on perceptions of wisdom by using an ecologically valid, video-based experimental approach (see McArthur & Baron, 1983) and by specifying the contextual variables (i.e., an advice-giving context). Participants watched silent videos of an interaction between an advice-giver and an advice-seeker. Afterwards they read a brief response of the advice-giver and were asked to form an impression of the advisor's level of wisdom.

The study investigates the influence of three *personal characteristics* (Predictions 1 to 3b) – an advisor's chronological age, wisdom-related knowledge, and empathic listening behavior – and the influence of two experimental variations addressing *impression formation processes* (Predictions 4a to 5b) – wisdom-cueing and repeated exposure – on wisdom attributions. Table 3 gives an overview of the research predictions.

Table 3

Overview of Research Predictions

Characteristics of a Wise Advice-Giver

1. Advice-givers who express a high level of wisdom-related knowledge in their advice are perceived as being wiser than advice-givers who demonstrate a lower level of wisdom-related knowledge.
2. Advice-givers who listen in an empathic, positive way are evaluated as being wiser than advice-givers who listen in a non-empathic, negative way.
3. Higher levels of wisdom are attributed to older compared to younger advice-givers.

Wisdom Cueing Facilitates Recognition of Prototypical Characteristics

- 4.a Participants who are instructed to think about wisdom can better differentiate between advice-givers who show *all three* prototypical wisdom features (an older target with high level of wisdom-related knowledge and positive listening behavior) and advice-givers who lack one of these features than participants in the non-cueing condition.
- 4b. Participants in the wisdom cueing condition can better differentiate between advice-givers who show *none* of the three selected prototypical wisdom characteristics (i.e., a younger target with low level of wisdom-related knowledge and negative listening behavior) and advice-givers who demonstrate only one of the prototypical features than participants in the non-cueing condition.

Repeated Exposure to Enhance Ease of Recognition of Wisdom-Relevant Knowledge

- 5a. Wisdom-attributions increase with repeated exposure to the material for advisors who demonstrate a high level of wisdom-related knowledge.
 - 5b. Wisdom-attributions decrease with repeated exposure to the material for advisors who express a low level of wisdom-related knowledge.
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3.1 Three Characteristics of an Advice-Giver

The first set of predictions addresses the role of three advice-giver characteristics in perceptions of wisdom: (1) level of wisdom-related knowledge reflected in the advice, (2) empathic quality of his or her nonverbal listening behavior, and (3) his or her chronological age.

3.1.1 Wisdom-Related Knowledge

The advice-giver's level of wisdom-related knowledge is reflected in the response the advice-giver provides to an advice-seeker's life problem. Two response texts are used. One text reflects a high and the other text reflects a low level of wisdom-related knowledge (following the criteria of the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm). A main effect is expected for the effect of the manipulation of the level of wisdom-related knowledge (see Prediction 1).

Prediction 1: Advice-givers who demonstrate a high level of wisdom-related knowledge in their advice are perceived as being wiser than advice-givers who express a lower level of wisdom-related knowledge.

3.1.2 Empathic Listening Behavior

The advice-giver's listening behavior is manipulated in a video that shows an interaction between an advice-seeker and the advisor. The advice-giver's listening behavior is either empathic and positive (characterized by permanent eye-contact,

forward trunk lean, frequent nods, and concerned and interested facial expressions) or non-empathic and negative (as indicated by rare eye-contact, backward trunk lean, no nods, uninterested facial expressions, and away-behaviors). A main effect for the empathic quality of listening behavior is predicted (see Prediction 2).

Prediction 2: Advice-givers who listen in an empathic, positive way are evaluated as being wiser than advice-givers who listen in a non-empathic, negative way.

3.1.3 Age of Advice-Giver

The third characteristic of an advice-giver that is experimentally manipulated is the advice-giver's chronological age. Older (60-67 years) and younger (25-30 years) actors played the role of the advice-giver. A main effect was expected for the effect of the advice-giver's age on attributions of wisdom (see Prediction 3).

Prediction 3: Higher levels of wisdom are attributed to older advice-givers compared to younger advice-givers.

3.2 Processes of Impression Formation

The second set of predictions addresses impression formation processes involved in attributions of wisdom to a specific person: The effect of the cueing of the general concept of wisdom and the effect of more experience with an advisor as simulated through repeated exposure to the same material.

3.2.1 Recognition of Prototyp- Relevant Characteristics: Wisdom Cueing

This study investigates the influence of activated prior knowledge (i.e., wisdom-cueing) on wisdom attributions. Half of all participants are asked to think about wisdom and wise persons prior to viewing the stimulus material. It is expected that cueing the concept of wisdom increases the sensitivity towards the prototypical configuration of the wisdom-related features and facilitates the recognition of the three selected prototypical facets of a wise advisor in a specific person.

Prediction 4a: Participants who are instructed to think about wisdom are more sensitive to the prototypical configuration of wisdom-relevant cues: They can better differentiate between advice-givers who show three prototypical wisdom features (an older target with high level of wisdom-related knowledge and positive listening behavior) and advice-givers who lack one of these features than participants in the non-cueing condition.

Prediction 4b: Participants in the wisdom cueing condition can better differentiate between advice-givers who show none of the three prototype relevant characteristics (i.e., a younger target with low level of wisdom-related knowledge and negative listening behavior) and advice-givers who possess only one of the prototypical features than participants in the non-cueing condition.

3.2.2 Facilitating Recognition of Wisdom-Related Knowledge: Repeated Exposure

The last prediction addresses the change of wisdom attributions as participants have the chance to process the wisdom-relevant features more frequently. The repeated exposure to the material represents a „simulation“ (see Baltes & Goulet, 1971; Lindenberger & Baltes, 1995) of long-term experience with an advice-giver. While nonverbal personal characteristics, such as an advisor’s age and nonverbal listening behavior, are easily processed and immediately used for wisdom attributions, verbal characteristics, such as the level of wisdom-related knowledge expressed in an advice, may need more time to be processed. It was expected that repeated exposure would facilitate the recognition and use of the advisor’s wisdom-relevant knowledge as a cue for wisdom attributions: The effect of wisdom-related knowledge is expected to be magnified as participants have the opportunity (across 4 trials) to process the information more frequently.

Prediction 5a: Wisdom-attributions increase over repeated exposure for advisors who demonstrate a high level of wisdom-related knowledge.

Prediction 5b: Wisdom-attributions decrease over repeated exposure for advisors who express a low level of wisdom-related knowledge.