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### Partner Preferences of the Intellectually Gifted

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## Partner Preferences of the Intellectually Gifted

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*To date, hardly anything is known about the partner preferences of the intellectually gifted. The present study therefore examined the extent to which 354 gifted individuals judged 17 characteristics to be important in a (potential) partner and compared these ratings with those obtained from a community sample ( $n = 554$ ). Among other things, it was expected that, among the gifted, a (potential) partner's high intelligence would be judged to be more important than among participants from the general community. It was also expected that single gifted individuals would judge a potential partner's high intelligence to be more important than gifted individuals involved in intimate relationships. Most of our predictions were supported, and results are discussed.*

**KEYWORDS** *gender, giftedness, partner preferences, relationship status*

In general, high intelligence is a desired asset. Individuals with a high IQ are more creative, earn more money, are healthier, and live longer lives (e.g., Batty, Shipley, Gale, Mortensen, & Deary, 2008). An individual with an IQ of 130 and above is usually considered to be “gifted” (e.g., Hollinger &

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Kosek, 1986; Lubinski, Benbow, Webb, & Bleske-Rechek, 2006). Terman (Terman & Oden, 1959), one of the first to study the gifted, showed that individuals who were identified at age 10 as intellectually gifted evolved by mid-life into relatively well-adjusted, productive adults (see also Freeman, 2006). More recent research on gifted individuals has restricted itself mainly to the study of gifted children and adolescents. A possible explanation for the scarce studies among gifted adults is that gifted people only form a small part of the general population (about 2%) that is not easy to detect. Gifted adults are not simply those individuals who excel in school or career: Due to, among other things, boredom, many gifted individuals are underachievers rather than overachievers (e.g., Ford, Grantham, & Milner, 2004). As a result, the only reliable way to trace and select gifted adults is to measure individual IQ scores on a standardized intelligence test, an investment many researchers may not be willing to take.

### Partner Preferences of the Intellectually Gifted: The Importance of Intelligence

Not surprisingly therefore, to date no studies have yet examined issues concerning the romantic relationships of the gifted, such as their partner preferences. This, however, is relevant because there are strong indications that gifted individuals differ from others in their preferences for a partner. According to the “similarity-attraction hypothesis,” the more similar two individuals are, the higher the attraction between them (e.g., Byrne, 1971; Byrne & Nelson, 1965). It is usually reassuring and comforting to meet others who are like us. Similar others do not only validate our beliefs about the world and ourselves but also facilitate harmonious interactions, reducing the risk of conflicts and disagreements (e.g., Morry, 2005; Rusbult, Kumashiro, Kubacka, & Finkel, 2009). Studies have indeed found overwhelming support for the similarity-attraction hypothesis: People often have mates who are similar to themselves in, for instance, physical attractiveness, attachment style, political and religious attitudes, socioeconomic background, level of education (e.g., Klohnen & Luo, 2003; Luo & Klohnen, 2005), and personality characteristics such as extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience (e.g., Dijkstra & Barelds, 2008; McCrae et al., 2008). Homogamy has also been found for intelligence: Individuals prefer, and usually select, partners with a similar IQ. Previous studies have, for instance, found spousal correlations of between .37 (Bouchard & McGue, 1981) and .41 (Jensen, 1978) for standardized IQ measures (see also Rushton & Nicholson, 1988).

In addition, several studies have shown partner similarity to promote couple well-being and to be positively related to relationship success (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Luo & Klohnen, 2005; Rusbult et al., 2009). Lay theory research shows that this knowledge is not restricted to scientists but is shared by the general public: In general, people perceive shared interests,

lifestyle, values, and traits to be important qualities for a spouse and a successful marriage (e.g., Gigy & Kelly, 1992; Morry, 2005). Likewise, dissimilarities in, for instance, age, values, interests, and personality are usually mentioned as the main reason for relationship breakup (e.g., Amato & Previti, 2003). For instance, in The Netherlands, where the present study was conducted, almost 40% of the divorcees report mismatches in personalities as the major cause of their break-up (De Graaf, 2006). Based on the similarity-attraction hypothesis we therefore expected the intellectually gifted, compared with other people, to more strongly value a potential partner's high intelligence (Hypothesis 1). We expected this to be true in absolute terms but also in relative ones. That is, we expected that, among the gifted, a high intelligence would rank higher as a desirable partner characteristic than among other people (Hypothesis 2).

Differences in partner preferences between gifted and nongifted people are also likely to occur with regard to partner characteristics other than intelligence. In general, gifted people value their intellectual capacities more than their social ones (Burdick, Kreicker, & Klopfer, 1981; Southern & Plant, 1968); have been found to be less extraverted, agreeable, and emotionally intelligent (Dijkstra, Barelds, Ronner & Nauta, in press); and often feel "different," experiencing problems relating to other people (Freeman, 2008; Landau & Weissler, 1993). In summary, the scarce studies on this topic suggest that gifted people have a somewhat more inward oriented personality than others (Dijkstra et al., under review). As a result, based on the similarity hypothesis, one might expect gifted people to attach less value to a (potential) partner's social competence. We therefore expected the gifted to find characteristics reflecting social competence, such as "easygoing" and "kind," to be less important than other people (Hypothesis 3). Again, we expected this to be true in both absolute and relative terms. We therefore also expected, among the gifted, partner characteristics reflecting social competence to rank lower as desirable partner characteristics than among other people (Hypothesis 4).

In addition to the motive of similarity, partner preferences may also be affected by other drives, such as the search for a mate who contributes to survival and fitness (e.g., Buss, 1994). In general, women place higher value than men on a potential partner's social status and future financial prospects, of which intelligence is an important predictor (Buss, 1994; De Raad & Doddema-Winsemius, 1992). Therefore, we expected women to attach more value to a (potential) partner's intelligence than men (Hypothesis 5).

However, for intellectually gifted people it may not be easy to find someone who is as (at least as) intellectually gifted as themselves. Only 2% of the population can be considered intellectually gifted (Lubinski, Benbow, Webb, & Bleske-Rechek, 2006). As a consequence, gifted individuals have to select a partner from a relatively small pool of eligible candidates. Because, as noted, women can be expected to place higher value than men on a

(potential) partner's intelligence, especially gifted women may have to settle for a less intelligent partner. This may result in cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), that is, a negative affective state that results from the discrepancy between cognition and behavior (here, the importance placed on high intelligence and the reality of having a mate who is not as intelligent as hoped for). According to dissonance theory, individuals are motivated to reduce this negative affective state by, for instance, changing their attitudes or decreasing the importance of one of the dissonant elements. As a result, it can be expected that gifted individuals committed in an intimate relationship will place less importance on a partner's high intelligence than single gifted individuals (Hypothesis 6). For the reasons mentioned above, we expected this difference to be larger among gifted women than among gifted men (Hypothesis 7).

### The Present Study

The present study examined the issues described above by studying the partner preferences of both single gifted individuals and gifted individuals in a committed relationship, comparing the preferences of individuals from a general community sample.

Recapitulating, we tested the following hypotheses:

1. Gifted individuals place more value on a (potential) partner's high intelligence than other people.
2. Among the gifted, a high intelligence is ranked higher as a desirable partner characteristic than among other people.
3. The gifted find partner characteristics related to social competence, such as "easygoing" and "kind," less important than others.
4. Among the gifted, partner characteristics reflecting social competence are ranked lower as desirable partner characteristics than among other people.
5. Women attach more value to a (potential) partner's high intelligence than men.
6. Single gifted individuals place more value on a (potential) partner's high intelligence than gifted individuals who are committed in an intimate relationship.
7. The difference in hypothesis 6 is larger among women than among men.

As noted before, intellectually gifted adults are not easy to locate: To reliably select gifted adults, one needs to measure potential participants' IQ scores on a standardized intelligence test. As early as 1968, Fogel, however, invited researchers in need of participants with a high IQ to consider studying the members of the society of Mensa, a ready-made population of highly intelligent individuals, representing all levels and fields of endeavor.

To become member of Mensa individuals need to score higher than 98% of the general population on a standardized intelligence test. Today, Mensa has some 100,000 members in 100 countries throughout the world. To date, scholars involved in 24 studies took up Fogel's invitation (e.g., Bessou, Tyrrell, & Yziquel, 2004). The present study also did, recruiting members of the Dutch branch of the Mensa society.

## METHODS

### Participants and Procedure

The present study was part of a larger study on relationships among the gifted. Gifted participants were recruited through newsletters of Mensa and Mind in Development (both organizations for the gifted) and, to participate in the present study, asked to visit the website of Mensa where a link was posted to the present, online study. A total of 354 heterosexual Mensa members completed all online questionnaires used in the present study: 171 men (48%) and 183 women (52%). At the time of the present study, 241 of them were involved in a committed relationship. A control group was recruited by a professional data collecting agency hired by the Open University of the Netherlands. The control group, from the general community, consisted of 558 heterosexual participants in total, 277 men (49%) and 281 women (51%); 444 of these participants were involved in a committed relationship at the time of the present study. Mean age was 40.18 (standard deviation = 10.44; range, 17–71) in the gifted sample and 43.57 (standard deviation = 12.52; range 18–72) in the control group (age was restricted to a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 72 years). In the control group 43% of participants had received a low level of education, 34% a medium level of education, and 23% a high level of education (i.e., bachelor degree or higher). In the gifted group 1% of participants had received a low level of education, 26% a medium level of education, and 73% a high level of education.

### Partner Preferences

Participants were asked to rate the importance of 17 characteristics in a (potential) partner. These characteristics were assessed on five-point scales, ranging from "not important" (1) to "extremely important" (5). Fifteen characteristics were derived from the work of Buss and Barnes (1986, p. 568; see also De Raad & Doddema-Winsemius, 1992): *kind*, *understanding*, *exciting personality*, *intelligent*, *physically attractive*, *physically healthy*, *mentally healthy*, *easygoing*, *creative*, *highly educated*, *wants children*, *good earning capacity*, *good heredity*, *good housekeeper*, and *religious*. The Buss and Barnes (1986) characteristic *healthy* was split into two: *physically healthy* and *mentally healthy*. In addition, *kind* and *understanding* were used as

separate characteristics (combined in Buss & Barnes, 1986). The characteristic *highly educated* was adapted from the original characteristic *college graduate* (which is too specific in the present research context). In addition, the characteristic that was originally framed as *likes children* was changed into *wants children*. Finally, because of our assumption that people seek similar mates, we added the characteristics *is similar to you* and *is your opposite*. In our view, in particular the characteristics *kind*, *understanding*, and *easygoing* reflect a partner's social competence.

## RESULTS

A multivariate analyses of variance was conducted using the 17 partner characteristics as the dependent variables, and gender (male vs. female), giftedness (Mensa vs. control group), and relationship status (involved in an intimate relationship vs. single) as the independent variables. This analyses revealed three significant multivariate main effects of, respectively, gender [ $F(17, 888) = 6.39$ ], giftedness [ $F(17, 888) = 14.39$ ], and relationship status [ $F(17, 888) = 2.63$ ; all  $p < .05$ ]. Univariate analyses showed that gifted and nongifted individuals attached different values to a (potential) partner's kindness, high intelligence, physical health, desire for children, amiability, level of education, good earning capacity, good heredity, good housekeeping qualities, religiousness, similarity, and dissimilarity [all  $F(1, 904)$  range from 4.29 for oppositeness to 66.90 for intelligence; all  $p < .05$ ].

In support of Hypothesis 1, it was found that the gifted thought it was more important to find or have a partner of high intelligence than participants from the control group [ $F(1, 904) = 66.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. In support of Hypothesis 3, the gifted were also found to judge *kind* [ $F(1, 904) = 5.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ] and *easygoing* [ $F(1, 904) = 47.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ] as less important than individuals from the control group. However, the characteristic *understanding*, which may also be seen as a characteristic related to social competence, was not rated differently by the gifted and the control group [ $F(1, 904) = 1.85$ ,  $p = \text{ns}$ ]. In addition, whereas the gifted more highly valued the characteristics *highly educated* [ $F(1, 904) = 12.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ] and *is similar to you* [ $F(1, 904) = 6.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ], participants from the control group more highly valued *physically healthy* [ $F(1, 904) = 12.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ], *wants children* [ $F(1, 904) = 28.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ], *good earning capacity* [ $F(1, 904) = 33.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ], *good heredity* [ $F(1, 904) = 30.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ], *good housekeeper* [ $F(1, 904) = 20.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ], *religious* [ $F(1, 904) = 7.77$ ,  $p < .01$ ], and *is opposite to you* [ $F(1, 904) = 4.29$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Univariate analyses also showed that men and women differed in the characteristics *understanding*, *intelligent*, *physically attractive*, *physically healthy*, *mentally healthy*, *creative*, *wants children*, and *good earning capacity* (all  $F > 5.37$ , all  $p < .05$ ). Mean scores by gender, giftedness, and relationship status are listed in Table 1.

**TABLE 1** Mean Importance Ratings of Partner Characteristic as a Function of Giftedness, Gender, and Relationship Status

	Gifted				Control group			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Single	Involved	Single	Involved	Single	Involved	Single	Involved
Kind	4.35 (0.52)	4.35 (0.68)	4.28 (0.79)	4.47 (0.69)	4.47 (0.59)	4.41 (0.68)	4.47 (0.61)	4.58 (0.64)
Understanding	4.27 (0.70)	4.24 (0.69)	4.48 (0.76)	4.56 (0.56)	4.31 (0.60)	4.43 (0.58)	4.46 (0.63)	4.61 (0.63)
Exciting personality	3.06 (1.27)	3.31 (1.02)	3.48 (1.02)	3.51 (1.16)	3.60 (0.78)	3.57 (0.97)	3.37 (0.89)	3.39 (1.02)
Intelligent	4.29 (0.76)	4.02 (0.97)	4.52 (0.56)	4.34 (0.68)	3.64 (0.96)	3.76 (0.82)	3.80 (0.78)	3.82 (0.92)
Physically Attractive	3.67 (0.94)	3.77 (0.84)	3.44 (0.85)	3.45 (1.01)	3.89 (0.71)	3.56 (0.86)	3.65 (0.74)	3.60 (0.92)
Physically healthy	3.57 (0.76)	3.51 (0.96)	3.42 (0.94)	3.16 (0.97)	3.71 (0.76)	3.78 (0.95)	3.52 (0.88)	3.70 (1.03)
mentally healthy	4.12 (0.83)	4.25 (0.76)	4.53 (0.64)	4.26 (0.68)	4.24 (0.77)	4.12 (0.85)	4.26 (0.74)	4.25 (0.78)
Easygoing	3.55 (0.91)	3.57 (0.90)	3.65 (0.80)	3.30 (0.99)	3.84 (0.71)	3.94 (0.72)	4.04 (0.65)	4.01 (0.80)
Creative	3.39 (0.98)	3.20 (1.05)	3.37 (0.95)	3.12 (1.09)	3.31 (0.97)	3.47 (0.88)	2.93 (1.03)	3.22 (1.06)
Wants children	1.95 (1.17)	2.31 (1.27)	2.06 (1.30)	2.93 (1.56)	2.53 (1.49)	2.92 (1.41)	2.81 (1.61)	3.40 (1.51)
Highly educated	3.00 (1.00)	2.93 (1.22)	3.09 (1.20)	3.11 (1.21)	2.53 (1.24)	2.69 (1.10)	2.91 (1.18)	2.71 (1.15)
Good earning capacity	1.96 (0.87)	1.98 (0.98)	2.31 (0.96)	2.01 (1.00)	2.29 (0.94)	2.41 (0.98)	2.74 (0.93)	2.64 (1.04)
Good heredity	2.57 (1.29)	2.26 (1.13)	1.98 (1.03)	2.24 (1.16)	2.49 (1.16)	2.68 (1.12)	2.77 (1.02)	2.87 (1.11)
Good housekeeper	2.04 (0.98)	2.13 (1.07)	2.20 (1.03)	2.26 (1.04)	2.27 (1.10)	2.59 (1.13)	2.55 (1.21)	2.50 (1.07)
Religious	1.39 (0.81)	1.66 (1.20)	1.55 (1.07)	1.55 (1.13)	1.76 (1.13)	1.81 (1.07)	1.80 (1.18)	1.74 (1.13)
Is similar to you	2.39 (1.24)	1.98 (1.12)	2.46 (1.13)	2.18 (1.06)	1.98 (1.10)	1.99 (0.97)	2.07 (1.03)	2.14 (1.03)
Is opposite to you	2.33 (1.09)	2.18 (1.16)	2.28 (1.03)	2.21 (1.02)	2.47 (1.08)	2.44 (1.03)	2.42 (1.13)	2.36 (1.05)

Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

In support of Hypothesis 5, women were found to value an intelligent partner more than men [ $F(1, 904) = 8.57, p < .01$ ; see also Table 1]. In addition, women, compared with men, thought it was more important for a partner to be understanding [ $F(1, 904) = 19.79, p < .001$ ], mentally healthy [ $F(1, 904) = 5.55, p < .05$ ], to want children [ $F(1, 904) = 10.87, p < .001$ ], and to have good earning capacity [ $F(1, 904) = 12.25, p < .001$ ], whereas men, compared with women, thought it was more important that a partner was physically attractive [ $F(1, 904) = 7.35, p < .01$ ], physically healthy [ $F(1, 904) = 6.60, p < .01$ ], and creative [ $F(1, 904) = 5.38, p < .05$ ]. In addition, univariate analyses showed that single individuals differed from individuals involved in intimate relationships in the degree to which they attached value to the characteristics *wants children* [ $F(1, 904) = 23.77, p < .001$ ] and *is similar to you* [ $F(1, 904) = 5.17, p < .05$ ]: individuals in relationships attached more value to a partner's desire to have children and less to a partner's degree of similarity (also see Table 1).

In addition, three significant multivariate two-way interaction effects emerged of, respectively, gender by giftedness [ $F(17, 888) = 2.37, p < .01$ ], gender by relationship status [ $F(17, 888) = 1.69, p < .05$ ], and giftedness by relationship status [ $F(17, 888) = 2.33, p < .01$ ]. Univariate effects for giftedness by gender revealed that especially gifted men attached relatively low value to a (potential) partner's exciting personality [ $F(1, 904) = 10.29, p < .001$ ]. In addition, whereas gifted women attached relatively low value to a (potential) partner's good heredity, women from the control group attached relatively high value to this characteristic [ $F(1, 904) = 9.29, p < .001$ ; also see Table 1]. The univariate interaction effect between gender and giftedness on the characteristic *intelligent* did not reach significance [ $F(1, 904) = 1.76, p = \text{ns}$ ]. Although the multivariate effect of gender by relationship status was significant, univariate analyses revealed no significant effects. Univariately significant effects of the giftedness by relationship status interaction were found for a partner's high intelligence [ $F(1, 904) = 4.78, p < .05$ ] and creativity [ $F(1, 904) = 8.15, p < .01$ ].

In support of Hypothesis 6, gifted, single individuals thought it was more important to find an intelligent partner than gifted individuals involved in a relationship (who still attached more value to high intelligence than people from the community sample). In addition, gifted, single people attached more value to a partner's creativity than gifted people with a relationship, whereas the opposite was found among individuals from the community sample (see Table 1). The three way interaction between gender, giftedness, and relationship status did not reach significance [ $F(17, 888) = 1.04, p = \text{ns}$ ], indicating that gifted men and women did not differ in the extent to which relationship status mattered to the importance they attached to a partner's high intelligence. Hypothesis 7 could therefore be rejected.

To test Hypothesis 2, we compared the mean rank scores for the 18 partner characteristics within the two samples (gifted and control) using

Kendall's  $W$ -test. Results showed that, among the gifted, *kind* and *understanding* (mean ranks did not differ significantly;  $W=0.00$ ,  $p=ns$ ) ranked highest, followed by *intelligent* and *mentally healthy* (the latter two mean ranks did not differ significantly;  $W=0.00$ ,  $p=ns$ ). *Easygoing* was next in the rank ordering, closely followed by *physically attractive*, *physically healthy*, and *exciting personality* (all  $W < 0.03$ ,  $p=ns$ ). Similar analyses in the control group revealed *kind* and *understanding* to be rank ordered highest (ratings did not differ significantly;  $W=0.00$ ,  $p=ns$ ), followed by *mentally healthy* and *easygoing*. Next, *intelligent* and *physically healthy* emerged as most important partner characteristics (ratings for the latter two did not differ significantly;  $W=0.00$ ,  $p=ns$ ). Thus, in support of Hypothesis 2, among the gifted intelligence ranked higher (behind *kind* and *understanding*) than in the control group (behind *kind*, *understanding*, *mentally healthy*, and *easygoing*). Hypothesis 4 could be refuted: The three partner characteristics reflecting social competence, that is, kind, understanding, and easygoing, did not rank order lower among the gifted than the nongifted. Thus, although the gifted judged characteristics reflecting social competence to be less important in a (potential) partner than others (see confirmation Hypothesis 3), they did not, more than others, find these characteristics to be less important than other partner characteristics.

## DISCUSSION

Our study was the first to systematically examine the partner preferences of the intellectually gifted. In line with our hypotheses, the present study showed that gifted individuals attached more value to a (potential) partner's high intelligence than others, both in absolute and relative terms, providing evidence for the assumption that, at least to some extent, individuals search for similarity in a partner. Also, our finding that two of the three partner characteristics reflecting social competence, that is, kind and easygoing, are less important to the gifted than to the nongifted and seems to support the similarity-attraction hypothesis. Thus, also among the gifted, people seem to look for a similar mate. Our finding that women, more than men, valued a (potential) partner's intelligence showed that similarity was not the only thing that mattered. Consistent with an evolutionary psychological line of reasoning, women attach more value to a (potential) partner's intelligence because intelligence is an important marker for (future) societal status. The fact that women also attached more value than men to a (potential) partner's earning capacity seems to further support this line of reasoning.

In addition, we found the gifted to attach more value to a potential partner's level of education, which makes perfect sense, and similarity to the self. Of course, we cannot be sure what exactly, in a potential partner, should be more similar in the eyes of the gifted. It is, however, not unlikely that the

gifted refer to similarity with regard to their intellect and giftedness. Previous research has shown that gifted individuals highly value their intellectual capacities (e.g., Burdick et al., 1981) and, due to their giftedness, often feel “different” from others (Freeman, 2008). More than others, they may therefore feel the need for a similar partner, someone who understands what it is like to be gifted.

It was also interesting that relationship status played a role in individuals’ partner preferences. Especially single gifted individuals placed a high value on a (potential) partner’s intelligence. As argued in the introduction section, single, gifted individuals may still have the goal (or hope) to find an attractive partner who is as intelligent as they are. In reality, this may be a difficult undertaking, because only a small portion of the population is intellectually gifted. Individuals may become involved in relationships with partners who are not as intelligent as they had initially hoped and, to reduce cognitive dissonance, downgrade the importance of intelligence as a result. An alternative explanation is that when involved in an intimate relationship, gifted individuals discover that a partner’s intellectual giftedness is not as important for a satisfactory relationship as they thought in advance. They may discover that, for instance, kindness, empathy, and emotional stability are much more important than intellectual giftedness in relationship functioning. If this explanation is true, gifted singles may delude themselves with the idea that a potential partner should be as intelligent as they are themselves, making it harder for themselves to find a suitable partner.

Our expectation that, among the gifted, especially women in committed relationships would have “lowered” their importance ratings of a partner’s high intelligence did not prove to be valid. Several explanations may account for this finding. It is possible that once they are involved in a committed relationship, gifted women also cope with cognitive dissonance in other ways than to downgrade the importance of a partner’s high intelligence, for instance, by positively biasing a less intelligent partner’s intelligence. It is also possible that gifted women are more selective in their partner choice than gifted men. That is, gifted men may more easily fall in love and/or accept a partner who is less intelligent than they are, whereas gifted women may be more willing to wait until they meet a partner with a minimum level of intelligence. As a result, gifted women involved in committed relationships may not experience more cognitive dissonance than gifted men and, as a consequence, not downgrade the importance of a partner’s intelligence more than men.

### Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

The present study is the first to examine the partner preferences of gifted individuals. In so doing, it contributes to our knowledge on giftedness and the potential problems gifted individuals may run into in the process of mate

selection. Of course, our study also suffered from several limitations. First, it is possible that members of Mensa are not entirely representative of the population of gifted adults. A strength, however, was that, nonetheless, our sample was quite heterogeneous in terms of age and educational level. Nonetheless, future studies need to cross-validate our findings, ideally in a population of gifted adults that are not necessarily member of Mensa. In addition, future research may follow-up the present study's findings and, for instance, examine the extent to which the different partner preferences of the gifted are differently related to the success of finding a suitable mate (when they are single) or relationship quality (when they have a mate). In sum, we hope our study inspires future studies to further explore the intimate relationships of the gifted, a group of people that, in our opinion, deserves much more attention from researchers than it has received to date.

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