

Which groups of people tend to overestimate their IQ?

January 31 2023, by Bob Yirka



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Vaitsa Giannoul, a social scientist with European University Cyprus, has looked into the question of which group or groups of people tend to overestimate their own level of intelligence. The study is published in the

journal *Brain and Behavior*.

Giannoul begins by noting that intelligence in humans is difficult to assess, pointing out that different forms may exist. She also notes that in addition to the kind of intelligence that is most often identified with the label, there is also something she calls [emotional intelligence](#). And other factors may play a role, as well, such as memory. Thus, she concludes, any assessment of age group self-assessment of a person's IQ level must include such other attributes as well.

To conduct a self-estimated intelligence (SEI), assessment, Giannoul, chose to focus on stages of development. Which age group, she wondered, thinks they are smarter than other people, whether they actually are or not? To find out, she enlisted the assistance of two groups of people—one of those under the age of 65 and the other over 65.

The first group comprised "young" people (90 female, 69 male) while the second comprised "older" people (93 female, 59 male). Each of the [volunteers](#) took a survey to assess their SEI and learn more about other characteristics regarding their self-image, including memory and emotional maturity. Next, each took several [standardized tests](#) designed to measure their IQ.

In comparing SEI for each volunteer with their IQ test results, Giannoul discovered that two of the subgroups overestimated their SEI, one of which was surprising. The data showed that [young males](#) tended to overestimate their IQ by between 5 and 15 points on average, a finding similar to other studies.

More surprising was that [older women](#) also tended to overestimate their IQ. Giannoul also found that older women who viewed themselves as more attractive than average were the same women who tended to overestimate their IQ. This, she suggests, may indicate that for older

women, SEI might be related to the degree of self-confidence.

More information: Vaitsa Giannouli, Are sex differences in self-estimated intelligence an elusive phenomenon? Exploring the role of working memory, creativity, and other psychological correlates in young and older adults, *Brain and Behavior* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/brb3.2857](https://doi.org/10.1002/brb3.2857)

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