

Review of: "The Intelligence of Nations. National IQs. Update 2023."

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This paper deals with the currently available datasets on national IQ scores published in various sources by Lynn, Vanhanen, Rindermann and Becker between 2002 and 2019. It is the intention of the author to show their high intercorrelations and to underpin the importance and usefulness of these datasets for explaining global inequalities, e.g. education and wealth.

The author did nothing fundamentally wrong. The history and development of the datasets is correctly described and the numbers were reproduced correctly. The basic method of correlation is reasonable for a start, however, high correlations at an aggregated level, especially at the cross-national, are nothing extraordinary and call for deeper investigation, e.g. multiple regressions and factor analyzes. These have already been done in two publications by Rindermann, one in German (2006) and one in English (2007), and should have been quoted.

There are also a few minor errors or inaccuracies:

[1] The author used the term "international student assessment studies". This is not wrong, however it would be correct to name them "international school assessment studies". Even if these studies actually measure student performance, the intention of these is to record the performance of schools or educational systems.

[2] Vanhanen's first name was Tatu, not "Tutu". Oddly enough, the form "Tutu" can be found in all sorts of sources, even scientific ones (e.g., Hunt, 2012). So maybe this is just an alternative spelling (unlikely) or an error reproduction. However, the form as it appears on the original sources is always Tatu.

[3] The author pointed to the very strong correlation between the dataset from Lynn and Vanhanen (2012) and Rindermann, which is to be expected since the latter is merely an adapted version of the former.

[4] In Table 2, the author gives mean national IQ scores calculated as the medians from the various datasets. This is a method that serves its purpose here and has also been used by Lynn and Becker (2019), however I would like to point out once again that using factor analyzes to estimate general factor scores would be a more appropriate way, since all variables measure the same theoretical construct and variances are inaccuracies of measurement rather than additional information.

Overall, the article is suitable as a good introduction and for raising awareness of this topic, but remains superficial and thus does not replace an in-depth study.

References:

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