

Marriage Dynamics and Gender Disparities: A Critical Analysis of High-IQ Women's Challenges in Contemporary Society

Yimeng Wu

Chinese International School, Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

In today's society, high-IQ women encounter intricate challenges in marriage, affecting their careers, income, and personal contentment. This essay delves into how societal norms, wage dynamics, and family obligations contribute to potential setbacks for these women. Post-family formation, adherence to traditional gender roles can lead to wage reductions, steering high-IQ women towards prioritizing family duties over career progression. This shift often results in income loss and missed opportunities. Balancing work and family responsibilities can heighten stress and job dissatisfaction, impacting marital dynamics. Power imbalances within marriages influence job satisfaction and stress levels, complicating partner selection for high-IQ women. By examining mate preferences and the obstacles faced in finding compatible partners, the need for societal changes to empower women in marriages is underscored. Advocating for policies supporting working mothers and challenging gender norms can promote true gender equality and empowerment.

Introduction

A study conducted by Dr. ChangHwan Kim and Arthur Sakamoto reveals a significant shift in the dynamics of the marriage market, particularly concerning the role of women. Their findings indicate that the advantage women once held in the marriage market prior to 2010 has diminished (Kim & Sakamoto, 2017). Additionally, research investigating the marital rates of individuals with high intellectual capabilities reveals intriguing gender disparities. For each 15-point increase in IQ, the likelihood of getting married increases by around 35% for men but decreases by around 58% for women (Taylor et al., 2005). While the rise of social norms and the erosion of traditional gender roles have undeniably contributed to women's increased independence and subsequent decline in marital rates, these factors only provide a superficial explanation.

This essay explores the underlying evolutionary and social-economic reason behind the decline in marital rates among high-IQ women and the correspondent increase among high-IQ men extends beyond mere independence, highlighting the unnecessary, unworthy, and uncompromising status of women within the institution of marriage.

Unnecessary to Get Married

High-IQ women are slowly distancing themselves from marriage because it is no longer deemed an essential survival need in life. The increasing financial independence of women has made them self-reliant, rendering marriage unnecessary. This choice and behavior pattern can be explained by the Maslow's Hierarchy Needs.

This psychological theory provides insights into individuals' needs and priorities, illustrating a pyramid structure from the bottom to the top: physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). There is a huge difference in needs between women and men in marital relationship. Women tend to

prioritize the lower survival needs, while men have secured the economic foundation to achieve self-esteem and self-actualization (Buss, 1989).

From a sociocultural perspective, women faced significant wage disparities historically. The average earnings for year-round, full-time workers over 14 were \$4,713 for men and \$3,008 for women in 1950 (Concannon, 2024). However, the cost of living in 1950 was approximately \$15,000 (Schwartz, 2020). With a \$1,705 wage gap, women in the past had to rely on men to access status, money, and resources to meet their physiological and safety needs. In contrast, men tend to shift their focus towards higher levels of needs rather than being limited to lower-level needs. Therefore, the act of providing survival resources to women in a marital relationship brings them a sense of fulfillment in higher-level needs.

Besides, it is worth noting the potential correlation between IQ and the fulfillment of higher-level needs. High IQ often indicates exceptional information processing abilities, rapid learning aptitude, and adeptness in handling unfamiliar and complex situations. These competencies play a crucial role in achieving career success (Bergman et al., 2014). Research suggests that higher IQ scores are associated with increased income; for every point increase in IQ test scores, individuals tend to earn an additional \$202 to \$616 annually (Zagorsky, 2007). Moreover, individuals with high IQs during adolescence are more likely to secure prestigious occupations such as top managers, employers, or professionals, leading to higher socioeconomic status and greater income (Bergman et al., 2014).

Consequently, the impact of high IQ extends to both men and women, enabling them to fulfill their needs without relying on their partners and allowing them to aspire to higher levels of self-actualization. The change in traditional gender roles has empowered high-IQ women to meet their own needs independently, making marriage seem unnecessary and superfluous. On the other hand, high-IQ men who are financially stable can more easily provide their partners with lower-level needs, thereby enabling those partners to pursue higher levels of self-actualization more extensively.

Unworthy to Get Married

Besides, it is important to recognize that marriage holds value beyond its practical aspects. Unfortunately, the high expenses associated with marriage, often make it financially unsustainable and seemingly not worth the investment, significantly affecting their marriage decisions.

Women, made to fulfill traditional gender roles, can end up leaving their work behind, resulting in the end of their own careers. They are often expected to fulfill domestic responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking, and grocery shopping once they enter marriage. These additional duties, responsibilities, and increased workload at home can inevitably lead to lower productivity in the workplace, resulting in reduced wages (Sayers, 2011). Moreover, women are less likely to receive promotions and salary raises after marriage, as their focus often shifts toward family matters. This wage reduction, combined with the burden of bearing children, frequently leads women to exit the workforce once they are married (Sayers, 2011). The financial costs associated with marriage and the subsequent gendered division of labor can create significant challenges for women, forming just the initial layer of the opportunities they may lose upon entering marriage.

Furthermore, women still bear most of the disadvantages associated with raising children. Ideally, children, as a product of marriage, should involve an equal distribution of responsibilities between both parents. However, mothers must bring their youngest child everywhere for 3-4 years within the reproductive period due to the child's constant need for feeding and comfort. Maternity leave exists to benefit women, but it usually turns into something detrimental to their job opportunities; extended unpaid maternity leave can pressure women into voluntarily quitting their jobs after giving birth. The decision to leave the labor force may also have long-term negative effects if they choose to return to work after the break. Although many mothers still aspire to work, societal expectations of women as "good mothers" have constrained women into this identity by emphasizing breastfeeding their children and deprioritizing work, resulting in a decrease in salary (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012).

If women attempt to leave home to work, they would have to "abandon" their newborn infants to a wet nurse or grandparents. Early maternal separation can result in a series of traumatic emotional reactions, during which the child engages in an anxious period of calling and active search behavior, followed by a period of declining behavioral responsiveness (Hofer, 2006). This disincentive can make it even harder for women to leave the family for work.

High-IQ women may experience greater losses in terms of career opportunities and income during marriage due to a combination of factors, including societal expectations, wage reductions, and the impact of family responsibilities.

To begin with, high-IQ women who conform to traditional gender roles after starting a family may still encounter wage reductions, similar to other women in society. This could result in them no longer being the primary high earners within the family. Therefore, they might choose to fully dedicate themselves to their family responsibilities, leading to a significant loss of the opportunities and income they once earned or had the potential to earn. Moreover, wage reductions and occupational sacrifices can exacerbate the income loss for high-IQ women in marriage, especially when combined with the decision to have children. High-IQ women on maternity leave effectively contribute to increased financial losses for their companies since they are often highly paid or hold positions of high value within the organization.

Consequently, they are more likely to experience elevated levels of stress and pressure in their workplace, leading to a higher likelihood of quitting their jobs. Additionally, long-duration breastfeeders, exhibit significantly higher levels of educational attainment compared to short-duration breastfeeders and formula-feeders (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). This further reduces their work hours, resulting in a more substantial salary loss compared to women with average earnings.

Furthermore, high-IQ women whose wages did not decline after marriage can still cause dissatisfaction in the household due to the inequality of "power" distribution. In this context, power held by high-IQ women in the family is defined as individuals' ability to impose their will on others, influenced by the resources and prestige associated with social positions (Weber, 1946). Research by Stith et al. shows that men exhibit higher levels of demoralization, sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness-helplessness when they share household chores. Perceptions of non-traditional, reversed gender roles cause negativity in men (Stith et al., 2004). As the wife becomes employed, men's negative emotions increase, and with employment and high-income being characteristics of high-IQ women, this leads to a higher likelihood of divorce. Marriage dissolution results in a dramatic regression in wages if they are the higher-tier earners in the family. Recovery occurs in the fifth year, with the income ratio increasing from .45 recently post-divorce to .50, which isn't a huge increase. Full recovery usually takes ten years for women. This suggests the unworthiness of marriage, where its cost doesn't match its utility, causing high-IQ women to lose interest in marriage and resulting in the unlikelihood of high-IQ women being married (Holden & Smock, 1991).

Uncompromising to Get Married

Despite high-IQ women's perspectives on marriage itself, it is crucial to examine their role within the marital market and the challenges they face in finding suitable partners. High-IQ women often encounter difficulties due to their selectivity and limited choices.

Understanding the characteristics prioritized by each gender is relevant in this context. Research analyzing personal ads, where individuals have limited space to specify their preferences, reveals that women tend to prioritize economic requirements, while men focus more on physical characteristics (Pawlowski, 2002). As a summary, overall women prioritize socioeconomic status, men tend to lean towards selections through physical attractiveness.

High-IQ women are keenly aware of their value in the marriage market and leverage their attractiveness during mate selection. Middle-class women, who in this context represent the high-IQ segment. They possess higher education and greater physical attractiveness, theoretically making them highly desirable marriage partners (Elder, 1969). An Observation made upon American fashion models "They are pretty, they know it, and they prefer activities that allow them to take advantage of their beauty" (Campbell, 1967). The rewards associated with feminine

attractiveness condition women to utilize their advantage during dating and mate selection, leading them to prioritize partners who possess similar characteristic- attractive and smart. However, this selectivity can create a mismatch with the mate preferences of men, who may value physical attractiveness more than high intelligence in a long-term partner (Meltzer et al., 2014).

Women's preference on men makes marriage tangible for high-IQ men. Women overall place a greater premium on intelligence in their long-term partners compared to men (Jonason et al., 2019). High-IQ men, with greater access and a wider range of choices, may still compromise a combination of intelligence and attractiveness for a woman solely based on physical appearance. Pure attractiveness serves as an esteem-boosting resource, and the feeling of being needed also contributes to self-esteem. The combination of intelligence and financial stability further enhances the desirability of high-IQ men in the marital market compared to regular-IQ men who's less likely to display these properties. Consequently, high-IQ men may encounter less competition when seeking a partner, making it relatively easier for them to find a spouse.

Discussion

To sum up, the reasons why the marital rates among the high IQ women group decline while the high IQ men increase can be associated to the complex interplay of the evolutionary, social, and economic perspectives. Taking all the factors into consideration, the high IQ women tend to value the marriage as unnecessary, unworthy, and difficult to compromise.

While significant improvements have been made in changing gender inequalities, such as the gender wage gap, it is also important to empower women within marriage to alleviate the common fears experienced by unmarried, successful women. This essay believes that in the current social environment, it is not the best choice for high-IQ women to get married since it comes with various disadvantages directly linked to unproportional value and utility rate. But, to make sure women are not discouraged from pursuing marriage,. We should focus on promoting policy adjustments and creating a supportive environment for them. By improving maternity leave benefits and increasing support for paternity leave, we can make sure that mothers are not left alone in their journey. Additionally, it is essential for men to embrace the reality that women can excel as primary earners in the family, challenging traditional gender roles. These efforts will contribute to the true empowerment of women.

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