

Smart People

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ABSTRACT

“Smart people” are often referred to individuals who demonstrate or possess a unique combination of exceptional cognitive abilities, creativity, critical (analytical) thinking skills, and adaptability that enables effective problem-solving skills across a wide range of domains, learning, and intellectual growth. What defines smart people also include types of intelligence, traits, behavior, neurological and psychological insights. “Smart” is often synonymous with “intelligence,” though it is a broader and more nuanced concept that includes emotional, creative, practical, and academic components. The paper looks into the subject-matter of smart people and their impacts on development and humanity in general.

KEYWORDS: *Smart people, cognitive abilities, critical thinking skills, adaptability, intellectual growth, learning, problem-solving, street smart, geniuses*

INTRODUCTION

“Smart people” are said to be individuals that are recognized for their exceptional intellectual abilities, problem-solving skills, creativity, and capacity for learning. Intelligence can take many forms – from mathematical and linguistic ability to emotional and social intelligence. While the term “smart” is often used casually, psychologists and researchers have studied intelligence more formally for over a century, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Smart people are sometimes called geniuses, but not always – the terms are not exactly the same. Being smart is common; being a genius is rare. All geniuses are smart, but not all smart people are geniuses.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SMART PEOPLE

Smart people are known to have been shaping history with their groundbreaking contributions to science, art, philosophy, and more.

Ancient to Classical Era:

1. Thales of Miletus (c. 624-546 BCE)
 - One of the first known philosophers and mathematicians.
 - Predicted a solar eclipse; believed that water was the fundamental substance of all matter [1].

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2. Pythagoras (c. 570-495 BCE)

- Famous for the Pythagoras theorem, but also deeply involved in metaphysics and mysticism.
- Founded a school that influenced both mathematics and philosophy [2].

3. Socrates (428-348 BCE):

He developed the Socratic Method, encouraged critical thinking and dialogue. His philosophy laid the groundwork for Western philosophy and remains influential in contemporary discussions of ethics and morality.

4. Aristotle (384-322 BCE)

- Systematized logic, biology, ethics, and politics.
- His influence persisted for over a millennium in both Islamic and Christian traditions [3].

Medieval Period

5. Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (980-1037)

- Persian polymath, physician, astronomer, and philosopher.
- Wrote The Canon of Medicine, a standard text in Europe for centuries [4].

6. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

- Integrated Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy.

- His work “Summa Theologica” remains a fundamental theological text [5].

Renaissance to Enlightenment

7. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

- A universal genius in art, anatomy, engineering, and hydrodynamics.
- Anticipated inventions like the helicopter and tank [6].

8. Pioneers in Science

- Isaac Newton (1643-1727): Developed laws of motion and universal gravitation, laid the foundation for classical mechanics. His work in mathematics and physics paved the way for future scientific breakthroughs.
- Albert Einstein (1879-1955): He revolutionized physics with the theory of relativity, transformed our understanding of space, time, and gravity. His famous equation $E=mc^2$ demonstrated the equivalence of energy and mass.
- Marie Curie (1867-1934): Pioneered radioactivity research, discovered elements polonium and radium. The first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Her work laid the foundation for advances in medical treatments and atomic physics [7].

Trailblazers in Mathematics and Computer Science

- Ada Lovelace (1815-1852): Considered as the world's first computer programmer, wrote algorithms for Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine. Her vision for machines that could manipulate symbols, not just numbers, was a groundbreaking leap in computer science.
- Emmy Noether (1882-1935): Made foundational contributions to abstract algebra and theoretical physics. Her work on Noether's Theorem links symmetries and conservation laws, remaining a cornerstone in modern physics.
- Alan Turing (1912-1954): Pioneered computer science and artificial intelligence, as shown in Figure 3, cracked the Enigma code during World War II. His legacy continues to shape the development of modern computing [7-9].

BENEFITS OF SMART PEOPLE

Smart people are people with high IQs (i. e. intelligence quotient) who can be associated with exceptional achievements in various fields, as shown in Figure 4.

Smart people bring numerous benefits to individuals, organizations, and the society at large. Some of these benefits include [10]:

1. Innovation: Smart people are often creative and can come up with new and innovative ideas to help grow businesses or solve complex problems.

2. Problem-solving: Smarter people can help identify problems and can proffer effective solutions to overcome them, making them valuable assets to teams.
3. Strategic thinking: Top talents can bring a strategic mindset to businesses, helping them to stay ahead of the competition and achieve long-term success.
4. Increased productivity: Smart people are often highly motivated and driven, leading to increased productivity and efficiency in the workplace.
5. Improved company culture: Smart individuals can help foster a positive and collaborative company culture, leading to happier employees and increased job satisfaction.
6. Learning opportunities: Working with smart people provides opportunities for growth and learning, allowing individuals to improve their skills and knowledge.
7. Networking: Smart people often have extensive professional networks that can benefit businesses and individuals alike.
8. Competitive advantage: By recruiting top talents, businesses can gain a competitive advantage in their industry and stay ahead of the curve.

Some of the common habits of smart people include the followings [11-13]:

- Critical or analytical thinking: Smart people challenge information, dig deeper, and ask questions to form well-informed decisions/opinions.
- Lifelong learning (i. e. they read a lot and often): Smart people commit to ongoing education, seeking new knowledge and experiences to expand their understanding.
- Curiosity and always want to learn: They are curious, asking questions, exploring new ideas, and seeking to understand how things work.
- Adaptability: They are flexible in their thinking, open to change, and able to adjust to new situations.
- Self-reflection: Smart people regularly reflect on their experiences, identify areas for improvement and solidifying lessons learned.
- Physical activity: They prioritize physical health, recognizing the connection between cognitive function and overall well-being.
- Creativity: Smart people fuel their creativity, challenging norms and seeking alternative solutions to problems.

- Staying calm and thinking before reacting.
- You talk to yourself to understand better.
- Enjoy spending time alone.
- Admit mistakes and learn from them (i. e. learning from failures).
- They surround themselves with smarter people.
- They check off their to-do list.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FACING SMART PEOPLE

It is known that smart people face unique challenges that impact their well-being and success. Some common challenges they face and potential/probable solutions are:

Challenges [14-16]:

1. Over-thinking and analysis paralysis: Smart people tend to overanalyze situations, leading to indecision and stress. This can hinder decision-making and cause unnecessary anxiety
2. Perfectionism and imposter syndrome: Intelligent individuals often set high standards for themselves, leading to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy despite their accomplishments. Notable examples were Maya Angelou, and Albert Einstein who reportedly expressed doubt about his own fame.
3. Existential angst: Deep introspection and contemplation can lead to existential crises and uncertainty about the meaning of life.
4. Social anxiety, isolation and alienation: Smart people may struggle to relate to others, feel like outsiders, or experience social anxiety, leading to feelings of loneliness. Examples are William James Sidis, Terence Tao (in early childhood).
5. High expectations: Intelligent individuals may feel pressure to live up to their own potential, leading to stress and anxiety about meeting expectations.
6. Mental health struggles: Increased rates of anxiety, depression, and even existential despair are more common among people with high cognitive capacity.
7. Underachievement and disengagement: Some intelligent individuals fail to meet their potential due to boredom, lack of structure, or institutional misfit (e. g., school systems), e. g. Richard Feynman noted disinterest in unchallenging coursework.
8. Asynchronous development (especially in children): Emotional, social, and intellectual development often occurs at different rates. A

child may solve calculus problems but struggle to relate emotionally to peers.

SOLUTIONS [17, 18]:

1. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills: Developing these skills can help smart people navigate complex problems and make informed decisions.
2. Embracing creativity: This will help stimulate innovative thinking to find new solutions.
3. Seeking feedback and learning from mistakes: Smart people can benefit from seeking feedback from their mistakes to improve their performance and satisfaction.
4. Building a support network: This involves surrounding themselves with supportive people who understand their unique challenges can help smart individuals feel less isolated.
5. Practicing self-care: Engaging in activities that promote physical and emotional well-being, such as exercise or mindfulness, can help smart people manage stress and anxiety.
6. Asynchronous development: The solution is by holistic education model.
7. Underachievement: Solution is by individualized education, enrichment.
8. Imposter syndrome: This can be solved through therapy, and reframing success.
9. Mental health struggles: Solution by support from gifted-awareness psychologists.

STREET SMART INDIVIDUALS

“Street smart” people possess practical knowledge and skills to everyday life, particularly in urban environments. This involves being aware of their surroundings, understanding social cues, and making sound judgments to stay safe and avoid trouble. One might describe “street smarts” as situational awareness plus social intelligence. They excel at reading people, adapting to new situations, and making quick decisions based on experience rather than solely relying on formal knowledge, as shown in Figure 5.

“Street smart” people have the following key characteristics such as: situational awareness, social intelligence, problem-solving, confidence, resourcefulness, adaptability, resilience and common sense. The combining of practical knowledge from street smarts with the analytical and theoretical expertise of academically smart individuals can lead to a well-rounded person capable of thriving in diverse circumstances. Different situations call for different types of intelligence, and having a balance

between both can be a powerful asset or added advantage [19, 20].

CONCLUSION

Being smart can be of significant advantage in many areas of life, but must be noted that intelligence is not a guarantee of success or happiness. It is crucial to develop self-awareness, humility, and a willingness to learn from mistakes in order to maximize the benefits of intelligence and mitigating its potential drawbacks.

More information about smart or intelligent people can be found in the books in [21-23].

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Figure 1. Theory of multiple intelligences

Source: https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=32f9ae821a1b1a5d&sxsrf=AE3TifOjWfkNigZssQEP

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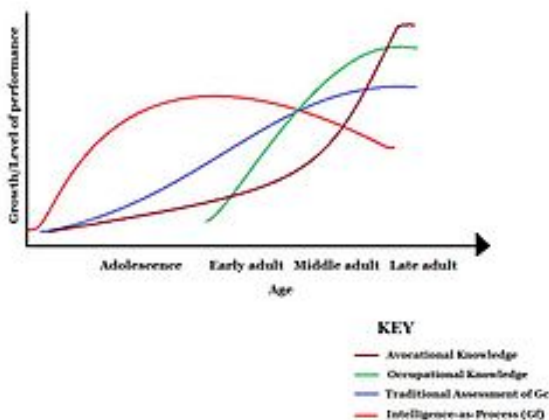


Figure 2. Human intelligence

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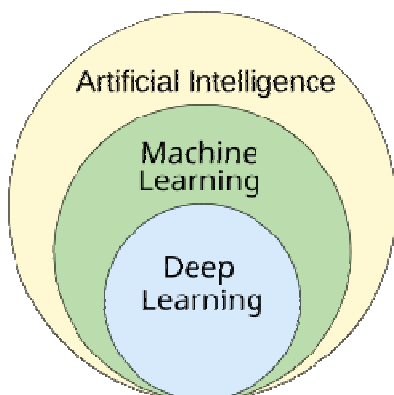


Figure 3. Artificial intelligence

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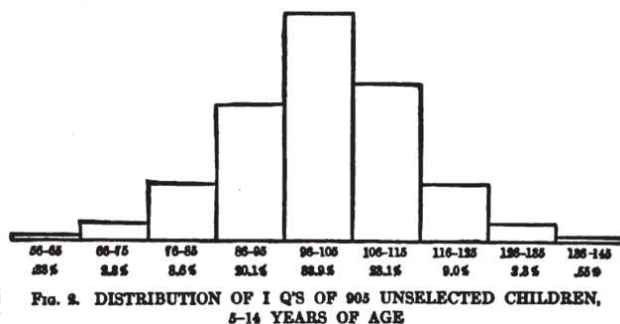


Figure 4. IQ Classification

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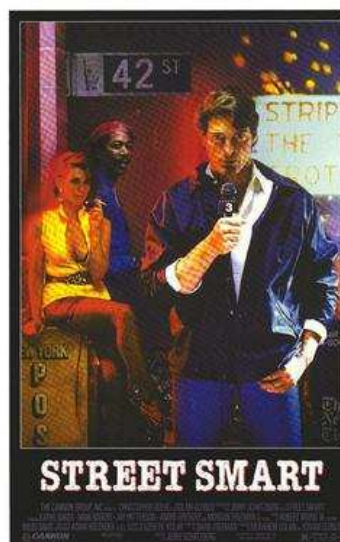


Figure 5. Street smart (film)

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