HUMAN INTELLIGENCE



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"....Reading the book is like taking a guided tour of the realm of human intelligence, with one of the field's most distinguished elder statesmen as your guide.... If you are interested in the advances that have been made in the science of human intelligence over the past 100 years, this book offers an indispensable guide.... Human Intelligence is destined to become a classic of human intelligence is a comprehensive book written on human intelligence, Human Intelligence is a comprehensive book that examines major research and theory in human intelligence in a scientifically rigorous yet comprehensible way.... well written and clear.... Human Intelligence can be used as a textbook in an advanced undergraduate or graduate course in human cognitive ability. It would be useful to researchers and scholars in psychology and related fields, as well as general readers, who want to know what researchers and

scholars in the field of human intelligence have been up to over the past 100+ years and where they are going. In short, if you are interested in the nature of human cognitive ability written by one of the field's leaders, this book is for you."

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This book is a comprehensive survey of our scientific knowledge about human intelligence, written by a researcher who has spent more than 30 years studying the field. It takes a non-ideological view of a topic in which, too often, writings are dominated by a single theory or social viewpoint. The book discusses the conceptual status of intelligence as a collection of cognitive skills that include, but also go beyond, those skills evaluated by conventional tests; intelligence tests and their analysis; contemporary theories of intelligence; biological and social causes of intelligence; the importance of intelligence in social, industrial, and educational spheres; the role of intelligence in determining success in life, both inside and outside educational settings; and the nature and causes of variations in intelligence across age, gender, and racial and ethnic groups.

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Most helpful customer reviews

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Overall a good book

By Lily Jan

Overall I think Professor Earl Hunt, from the University of Washington, wrote a commendable book summarizing the research on human intelligence in 507 pages. I think he achieved his stated objective of accepting a middle ground between the hereditarians and the environmentalists. I also agree this position is the most reasonable. However, I should like to emphasize several points in this middle position that may disturb the general public who may not be as familiar with psychometrics:

1. The hereditarians and the environmentalists both believe that intelligence is influence both by genetics and by environment. They just disagree on the percentages. The hereditarians claims 80% genetic influence while environmentalist claims close to 50% (even Nesbitt does not claim 0%).

2. While Hunt agrees that there are significant intelligence differences among different races, ranking the East Asians, European whites, Hispanics, Middle Easterners, South Asians, and Blacks in that order; he minimize the differences between the East Asians and European whites. He also let stand Lynn and Vanhanen's categories of "sharp IQ differences" (p.440) -- ENAMA (European-North American-North-East Asian), SAME (South American-Middle Eastern), and SASA (South Asian-sub-Saharan African) in that order. He states on page 422 "In summary, there is little doubt that IQ scores and educational data present a consistent ordering of the major racial/ethnic groups...."

3. While Hunt is somewhat critical of Lynn's methodology and his data on sub-Saharan Africa, he is not so critical of Lynn's data on more developed countries of the world and not critical of Lynn's conclusions. On page 440 he say "In spite of these concerns, Lynn and Vanhanen's conclusions about the correlations between IQ estimates and measures of social well-being are probably correct."

4. Hunt is a big fan of Rindermann's methodology and his results using TIMSS and PISA data. On page 442 he said "Rindermann first showed that there is a huge general factor for the "national cognitive skill," calculated across countries. The Lynn and Vanhanen estimates load heavily on this factor..... The centrality of this factor is amazing; the range of the loadings is from .97 to 1.0!" I.e. using different methodology from Lynn and Vanhanen, Rindermann came up with the same IQ differences across countries.

5. Hunt let stand Jensen, Lynn and Rushton's claims of racial differences in brain reaction time and in brain sizes. On page 433 he said "The arguments they propose, which are essentially identical, were well presented in a 2005 paper by Rushton and Jensen." East Asians have faster brain reaction time than European whites who have faster reaction time than blacks. East Asians have larger brain sizes than European whites who have larger brain sizes than blacks.

I do have one major closing criticism of Hunt namely his quick acceptance of a small lower verbal ability of East Asians compared to European whites while accepting a much larger superiority of East Asian's mathematical and visual-spatial reasoning abilities compared to European whites. I think he concedes that visual-spatial reasoning ability is not usually tested in IQ tests and this may be one of East Asians' stronger abilities. Hunt's verbal ability claim is contrary to his general claim that groups with higher IQ in one area tend to have higher IQ in other areas and his claim that both verbal and mathematic skills are dependent on g and East Asians tend to score higher than European whites in high g-loaded tests. His used the high school SAT score in the United States as evidence to support this verbal ability claims. He graphed "Asian" math scores for 2007 at around 578 and whites at 535 with "Asian" English score at 515 and white English score at 525. However:

1. More recent SAT scores actually showed "Asians" to be superior in English as well as mathematics when

compared to the national average in the United States.

2. The "Asian" category includes pacific islanders and other Asians not just East Asians (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese).

3. 68% of Chinese Americans have Chinese spoken at home. Over 50% of Chinese Americans are not born in the United States. (I am using Chinese Americans because they are the largest East Asian group in the United States. The same can be said for Korean Americans and less so for Japanese Americans.) Therefore comparing English skills with white Americans would not be a fair comparison of verbal abilities. Additionally, the majority of Chinese American children spend every weekend in Chinese language schools, and therefore their time spent using the English language is further limited compared to American whites. The Chinese American children learn two languages and just testing English and call it "verbal ability", puts them at a disadvantage. For instance, one would not consider it a fair comparison of "verbal abilities" if we were to test Chinese language skills British or American children living in Shanghai and compare them with Chinese children living in Shanghai. Additionally, Chinese and Japanese Americans were originally chosen from the labor class in China and Japan to serve as laborers building the railroads and in Hawaiian plantations, and therefore are not representative of all East Asians. IQ of Chinese in California for instance, have been tested to be lower than Chinese in China.

4. When tested in their native languages as in the latest PISA (which was used by Rindermann to estimate IQ and was much lauded by Professor Hunt) testing of 15 year-olds, the verbal abilities of East Asians are clear. The top ranked 5 countries out of 64 countries tested in the PISA reading comprehension part and their comparative scores are:

OECD average......500

I completely agree with Hunt that "...individuals should be as free as possible to choose their social roles, within the limits of their own capacity, and that other people should respect those choices." Further, I believe that society should help each individual to achieve their maximum potential no matter what his IQ may be.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

A Fantastic Survey of the Field

By Zeldock

Earl Hunt, a professor emeritus of psychology at Univ. of Washington, has written seven books and numerous papers on learning and intelligence. "Human Intelligence" is an exceptionally well done survey of the state of research on intelligence. Hunt is a patient teacher and a wise and experienced guide though the thickets.

The book is divided into eleven logically arranged chapters. He starts with a discussion of the concept of intelligence and how it has been defined. He next describes the main tests that have been used to measure intelligence and gather data. That is followed by several chapters on theories of intelligence, moving from psychometric theories (i.e., conventional-test-based theories) to more speculative and controversial ones.

Next we learn about research on brain function and the genetic bases of intelligence, followed by the environment's impact on intelligence. His tenth chapter examines evidence that high IQ is useful in real life (it is!). And then he deals with the mother of all controversies, "The Demography of Intelligence."

The book is packed with tables and charts, which is the main reason why I bought the dead-tree version instead of getting it on my beloved Kindle. Being more of a word person than a numbers person, I greatly appreciated his (mostly) clear explanations of statistical approaches. He thankfully does not assume that the reader is already conversant with statistics or genetics. Another strength of the book is his ability to pick out flaws in experimental design. He's very ready to follow the data wherever it leads (but no farther) and keeps policy discussion to a minimum, which is clearly flagged.

I'm grateful that a veteran such as Hunt took the time to give us this map of the territory.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A balanced expert account

By Dr JA Thompson

Earl Hunt has written a very well informed and balanced account of the intelligence literature. I would recommend it as a reference work of quality, serving as a benchmark of fair-minded analysis. He is does not shrink from chastising those who adopt unwarranted extreme positions, and does not equivocate when finally coming to a judgment.

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