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# Preteen Children Tend To Associate 'Brilliance' With Males, Study Finds

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On Jul 25, 2022

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Children have stereotyped beliefs that “glare” is a masculine quality, and this belief grows stronger with age, up to age 12, researchers from Singapore and the United States have reported.

The study, led by NTU Singapore in collaboration with New York University, was published in the scientific journal *Child development* in May 2022. It concerned 389 Chinese Singaporean parents and 342 of their children aged 8 to 12.

Tests were conducted to measure the extent to which parents and their children associate the concept of genius with men, and to examine the relationship between parents and their children's views.

The study defined genius as an exceptional level of intellectual ability and the results showed that children are just as likely to associate genius with men as their parents.

This belief was stronger in older children and stronger in those children whose parents held the same view.

While previous research into gender stereotypes has suggested that the idea that giftedness is a male trait can emerge around age six, it was not known until now if and how this stereotype changes over childhood.

Lead author of the study, Assoc. Prof. dr. Setoh Peipei of NTU's School of Social Sciences, said the Singapore-based study is the first to identify that the tendency to associate genius with men (also known as the "glare equals men" stereotype is strengthened by the lower grades). school years and reaches the level of faith seen in adults by age 13.

"Stereotypical views of how boys are smarter than girls can take root in childhood and become a self-fulfilling prophecy," says Prof. Setoh. "For girls, this can cause them to doubt their abilities, limiting their ideas about their interests and what they can achieve in life."

"Our research work shows that parents also need to be involved in policies and school programs to effectively combat the gender stereotypes of children from an early age," she added.