University of Groningen

Intimate relationships of the intellectually gifted

Dijkstra, Pieterneel; Barelds, Dick P.H.; Ronner, Sieuwke; Nauta, Arnolda P.

Published in:
Marriage & Family Review

DOI:
[10.1080/01494929.2016.1177630](https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1177630)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Dijkstra, P., Barelds, D. P. H., Ronner, S., & Nauta, A. P. (2017). Intimate relationships of the intellectually gifted: Attachment style, conflict style and relationship satisfaction among members of the Mensa society. *Marriage & Family Review*, 53(3), 262-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1177630>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Intimate Relationships of the Intellectually Gifted: Attachment Style, Conflict Style, and Relationship Satisfaction Among Members of the Mensa Society

Pieterneel Dijkstra, Dick. P. H. Barelds, Sieuwke Ronner & Arnolda P. Nauta

To cite this article: Pieterneel Dijkstra, Dick. P. H. Barelds, Sieuwke Ronner & Arnolda P. Nauta (2017) Intimate Relationships of the Intellectually Gifted: Attachment Style, Conflict Style, and Relationship Satisfaction Among Members of the Mensa Society, Marriage & Family Review, 53:3, 262-280, DOI: [10.1080/01494929.2016.1177630](https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1177630)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1177630>

Accepted author version posted online: 14 Apr 2016.
Published online: 14 Apr 2016.

[Submit your article to this journal](#)

Article views: 126

[View related articles](#)

[View Crossmark data](#)

Citing articles: 1 [View citing articles](#)

Intimate Relationships of the Intellectually Gifted: Attachment Style, Conflict Style, and Relationship Satisfaction Among Members of the Mensa Society

Pieterneel Dijkstra^a, Dick. P. H. Barelds^b, Sieuwke Ronner^c, and Arnolda P. Nauta^d

^aSocial Psychologist, Private Practice, Schildwolde, Netherlands; ^bDepartment of Psychology, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands; ^cMeriones Advies, Gouda, Netherlands; ^dGifted Adults Foundation (IHBV), Delft, Netherlands

ABSTRACT

To date relatively little is known about the intimate relationships of the intellectually gifted and the way they attach themselves to and handle conflicts with their intimate partner. The present study examined these issues by examining the relationship between attachment styles, conflict styles, and relationship quality in a sample of 196 adult members of the Mensa society. These results were compared with findings from a general community sample ($n = 145$). Results showed that, overall, Mensa members showed similar levels of relationship quality compared with the control sample but also tended to deal less constructively with conflicts and reported higher levels of fearful attachment. Analyses showed that the relations between relationship quality, conflict styles, and attachment were comparable in the two samples, with the exception of the role of fearful attachment in the relationship. Conflict styles mediated the relations between attachment and relationship quality in both samples. Results are discussed in light of the scarce knowledge on the intimate relationships of the gifted.

KEYWORDS

attachment style; conflict style; gifted adults; Mensa; relationship satisfaction

Introduction

Having a loving and fulfilling relationship with someone is one of the most important contributors of long-term happiness (Caunt, Franklin, Brodaty, & Brodaty, 2013). The relationship with an intimate partner (more than, for instance, relationships with friends or family members) makes individuals feel satisfied about their lives (Demir, 2010). Those who lack such a relationship or have intimate relationships of low quality may experience feelings of loneliness and depression and suffer from health problems, especially in response to stress (e.g., Croy & Steptoe, 2005; Hawkins & Booth, 2005). Considering the importance of intimate relationships to both mental and physical well-being, it is no surprise that many scholars have studied intimate relationships and the variables and processes that are associated with the quality of these relationships. In these studies, however, very little attention has so

far been paid to gifted adults (for a review see Rinn & Bishop, 2015), in other words, individuals with an IQ over 130 (see, for instance, Dijkstra, Barelds, Groothof, Ronner, & Nauta, 2012; Hollinger & Kosek, 1986).

According to Dijkstra et al. (2012) studies on the intimate relationships of gifted individuals are scarce because the most reliable way to trace and select gifted adults is to measure individuals' IQ scores by means of a standardized intelligence test. This would usually mean a great investment from researchers. Despite the fact that studying the intimate relationships of the gifted may be a relatively elaborate undertaking, it seems worthwhile to take the effort to study the gifted population. There are several reasons differences between gifted and nongifted individuals in their intimate relationships may be expected. First, there are several indications that gifted individuals have slightly different attitudes and beliefs about intimate relationships than people from the general population. As a consequence, they may experience their intimate relationships differently. Dijkstra et al. (2012), for instance, found that compared with other single men, gifted single men attached more value to a potential partner's educational level and intelligence and less to a potential partner's wish to have children and exciting personality. In addition, the gifted have been found to report lower levels of intimacy in their friendships, presumably because of their stronger instrumental orientation (Mayseless, 1993). This finding suggests that gifted individuals may deal differently with intimacy, possibly also in the context of the relationship with a partner. In addition, differences between gifted and nongifted individuals with regard to their intimate relationships may be expected because of gifted individuals' higher emotional sensitivity and relative difficulty in accepting criticism (e.g., Jacobsen, 1999). In addition, they may feel isolated or misunderstood, especially when others in their environment, for instance their partner, are not gifted (e.g., Tolan, 1994). Finally, gifted individuals have been found to have higher self-esteem, to have more positive attitudes toward female careerism (Roznowksi, Reith, & Hong, 2000), and to be more open to new experiences (Zeidner & Shani-Zinovich, 2011). All these characteristics have the potential to either reduce or enhance marital satisfaction among the gifted more so than among the nongifted (e.g., Perrone-McGovern, Boo, & Vanatter, 2012).

The present study set out to examine the quality of the relationships of gifted individuals engaged in an intimate relationship with a partner, comparing it with the quality of the relationships of individuals from the general community. In addition, the present study examined two potentially relevant variables related to relationship quality, again in both a sample of gifted individuals and a community sample. More specifically, we examined the extent to which both attachment styles and conflict styles are related to relationship quality among gifted individuals and individuals from a community sample. To date neither conflict styles nor attachment styles nor their relations with

relationship quality have been studied among gifted adults (see, for instance, Rinn & Bishop, 2015).

Attachment styles

According to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) children unconsciously develop a specific attachment style in response to the way they are treated by their caretakers. This attachment style is a relatively consistent way of responding to separation from a parent. The experiences in relationships with caretakers lead to the development of mental representations or “internal working models,” that is, a set of postulates about how close relationships operate, the extent to which one is worthy of love and support, and the extent to which others are dependable. Children who have caretakers who are always available to them and responsive to their needs when they are in distress will most likely develop a *secure attachment style*. They will view others as trustworthy, dependable, and helpful and develop a positive view of themselves. In contrast, children whose caretakers show rejection, a lack of responsiveness, or physical and emotional abuse are more likely to develop an *avoidant attachment style*, characterized by keeping distance from others and a cynical view of others as untrustworthy and undependable. Children whose caretakers respond inconsistently to their needs are more likely to develop a *pre-occupied attachment style*, characterized by a strong desire to be close to others, combined with a fear that others will not respond to this desire. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) later distinguished two types of the avoidant attachment style. First, individuals may desire intimate relationships with others but avoid them because they are afraid of being hurt (the *anxious attachment style*). Second, individuals may genuinely prefer freedom and independence to closeness with others (the *dismissing attachment style*).

According to attachment theory, the effects of childhood attachment relationships extend into adulthood. Individuals tend to attach themselves to an intimate partner the way they attached themselves to their parents when they were children. Consistent with this line of reasoning, several studies have shown attachment styles to be associated with relationship quality, with partners with a secure attachment style reporting the highest relationship quality and highest levels of commitment (e.g., Besharat, 2003; Hammond & Fletcher, 1991; Pistole, 1989; Sprecher & Fehr, 2011). In contrast, individuals with a preoccupied attachment style perceive more conflict in their relationships, tend to be relatively jealous, lack anger control, report a tendency for conflicts to escalate in severity, and are ineffective support givers, whereas dismissively attached individuals show high hostility and escapist responses during conflict and are more likely to sulk in an attempt to get support from their partner (e.g., Besharat, 2003; Buunk, 1997; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992). To date very little is known about the attachment styles of gifted adults and

the role their attachment styles play in their intimate relationships. The present study examined gifted individuals' attachment styles and their relations with relationship quality, comparing these relationships with those found among other individuals.

Conflict styles and relationship quality

Conflict is natural and inevitable in intimate relationships. Whether dyadic conflict has negative or positive consequences for relationship maintenance and satisfaction depends on the way conflicts are handled (Bertoni & Bodenmann, 2010). This is even more important than the content of the conflict (e.g., Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002). In addition to studying the relationship between attachment styles and relationship quality among the gifted, the present study therefore also examined the relations between relationship quality and conflict styles. Conflict styles are ways of handling interpersonal conflict. Several studies have shown that two dimensions of conflict resolution can be distinguished (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1994; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). The first dimension is concern for the self and refers to the degree (low or high) to which someone, during conflict, is focused at satisfying his or her own needs. The second dimension is concern for others and refers to the degree (low or high) to which someone, during conflict, is focused at satisfying the needs of others. On the basis of these two dimensions, five conflict styles can be distinguished (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1994; Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). Whereas the *integrating* conflict style combines a high concern for others and a high concern for self, the *dominating* conflict style combines a low concern for others and a high concern for self. In addition, the *obliging* conflict style combines high concern for others and low concern for self, whereas the *avoiding* conflict style combines a low concern for others and a low concern for self. Finally, a fifth conflict style, *compromising*, refers to way of handling conflict by showing intermediate concern for both others and self (see Figure 1; adopted from Rahim, 1983, p. 369).

Research on conflict resolution in marriage suggests that the integrating and compromising conflict styles are positive ways of handling conflict,

Figure 1. Conflict styles according to Rahim (1983).

because they are characterized by negotiation, compromise, and constructive problem solving. In contrast, the dominating conflict style can be seen as a negative way of handling conflict, because it may be accompanied by offence and emotional pressure. Finally, the avoidant and obliging conflict styles may become problematic when used too frequently (Bertoni & Bodenmann, 2010).

Research using the five conflict styles described above seems to support this line of reasoning. For instance, Greeff and De Bruyne (2000) showed that among couples from a suburban Black community in South Africa, both husbands and wives who primarily adopted an integrating conflict style reported highest marital satisfaction. In contrast, those who primarily adopted a dominant conflict style reported lowest marital satisfaction. Likewise, in a sample of Taiwanese individuals, Cheng (2010) found positive correlations of about .40 between the integrating, compromising, and obliging conflict styles and marital satisfaction. In this sample the dominating and avoidant conflict styles were not related significantly to relationship satisfaction. Finally, Pistole (1989) found that partners who were highly satisfied with their relationship more often used the integrating and compromising conflict styles than partners who were less satisfied with their relationship. As is the case with regard to attachment styles among gifted adults, little is known so far about the way gifted individuals handle conflicts in their intimate relationships and the way conflict styles are related to relationship quality among the gifted. The present study examined gifted individuals' attachment styles and their relations with relationship quality, comparing these relationships with those found among other individuals.

Conflict styles as mediators of the relation between attachment styles and relationship quality

In addition to studying the relations between attachment styles and conflict styles and relationship quality among the gifted, we also examine a mediation model in which the relationship between attachment styles and relationship quality is mediated by conflict styles. In other words, we suggest that attachment styles affect an individual's style of resolving conflict, which subsequently affects relationship quality. In general, it is assumed that attachment styles are expressed during stressful situations, of which dyadic conflicts are an example. During interpersonal conflicts individuals' attachment styles are assumed to be activated and expressed in the way individuals deal with those conflicts, in other words, in individuals' conflict styles (e.g., Baptist, Thompson, Norton, Hardy, & Link, 2012; Cann, Norman, Welbourne, & Calhoun, 2010; Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Shi, 1999). These conflict styles may in turn affect the intimate relationship. Support for a comparable—but not similar—mediation model among the nongifted was reported by Cann et al. (2010), who found that the relationships between the attachment

dimensions of anxiety and avoidance and relationship satisfaction were mediated by certain conflict styles. For the avoidance dimension, for instance, they found that as participants were lower on avoidance, they were more likely to use the obliging and integrating styles of conflict resolution and less likely to use the dominating style of conflict resolution, which then predicted greater relationship satisfaction.

Whereas Cann et al. (2010) examined a mediation model using two attachment dimensions as independent variables, the present study examined the four attachment styles distinguished by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) as independent variables. Although the use of dimensions of attachment, rather than attachment styles, may have its advantages, in this case we find the distinction between four attachment styles clearer and more informative than the use of two attachment dimensions, particularly because no studies have yet examined the prevalence of these four attachment styles among gifted adults.

Present study

As noted before, intellectually gifted adults are not easy to identify. In response to this difficulty, Fogel (1968) invited researchers in need of gifted participants to consider studying members of the society of Mensa. Mensa consists of a population of highly intelligent individuals, representing all levels and fields of endeavor. To become member of Mensa, individuals have to score, on a standardized intelligence test, higher than 98% of the general population. Today, Mensa has some 100,000 members in 100 countries throughout the world. To date, several scholars have followed Fogel's suggestion (e.g., Bessou, Tyrrell, & Yziquel, 2004). The present study did the same, recruiting members of the Dutch branch of the Mensa society (see also Dijkstra et al., 2012). In addition, to better interpret our findings among the gifted, we included a control group of Dutch individuals from the general community who were engaged in an intimate relationship and who were not identified as gifted. In sum, the present study examined the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: To what degree do gifted individuals in committed relationships differ from other individuals in committed relationships in terms of perceived relationship quality, conflict styles and attachment styles? (RQ1)
- Research Question 2: To what degree are attachment styles, conflict styles and relationship quality related among gifted individuals in committed relationships? To what extent do the relationships between these variables differ from those found among other individuals in committed relationships? (RQ2)
- Research Question 3: To what extent are the relations between attachment styles and relationship quality mediated by conflict styles? (RQ3)

Methods

Participants and procedure

The present study was part of a larger study on relationships of the gifted. Gifted participants were recruited through newsletters of Mensa. Members of Mensa were invited to visit the website of Mensa, where a link was posted to the present online study. A condition for participation was that the potential participant was involved in a committed intimate relationship at the time of the study and also a member of Mensa. A total of 196 heterosexual Mensa members completed all online questionnaires used in the present study: 97 men (age $M = 44.0$, $SD = 10.4$, range 18–66) and 99 women (age $M = 38.9$, $SD = 8.6$, range 23–59). In addition, a heterogeneous community sample of 145 heterosexual participants (63 men, age $M = 50.2$, $SD = 11.5$, range 20–74, and 82 women, age $M = 39.6$, $SD = 9.5$, range 18–56) was used as control group. Data from 192 participants from the general community (no Mensa members) were initially collected by the authors by means of online advertisements, but 47 participants had to be removed from this sample because they had indicated not being in a committed intimate relationship at the time of the study. As a result, these participants also did not complete all relevant questionnaires (i.e., the relationship measures). As a control question, the participants from the community sample were asked if they were a member of Mensa or had otherwise been officially identified as being gifted. This did not apply to any of the participants from this sample.

In the Mensa sample, 47.1% of the participants had an IQ ranging between 130 and 139, 41.2% an IQ ranging between 140 and 149, and 11.8% an IQ of 150 or higher. For the control sample, we did not have estimations of IQ available. Educational level in the Mensa sample was higher than in the control sample: $\chi^2(7) = 32.41$, $p < .001$ (Table 1). In the control sample, there were clearly more participants with an intermediate vocational education than in the Mensa sample, whereas in the Mensa sample, there were clearly more participants with a Master's degree or PhD than in the control sample. Based on the mean IQ levels for people with different educational levels in The Netherlands (e.g., Luteijn & Barelds, 2004), the mean IQ of the control sample can be estimated to be roughly equal to 108. Although this would be higher than the

Table 1. Educational level of the two samples.

	Mensa	Control
Lower vocational education	.5%	.0%
Intermediate vocational education	5.6%	24.1%
Higher general secondary education	7.7%	11.0%
Pre-university secondary education	6.1%	6.2%
Higher vocational education	34.2%	31.7%
University Bachelor degree	5.6%	5.5%
University Master degree	31.6%	16.6%
PhD	8.7%	4.8%

population mean of 100, this would still be considerably lower than in the Mensa sample. The mean overall length of the relationship (both samples combined) was 12 years ($SD = 10.4$). The relationship duration was not significantly different between the two samples [univariate $F(1, 341) = 0.05, > p$]. We also tested whether the distribution of males and females was significantly different between the two samples. This was not the case [$\chi^2(1, 341) = 1.22, > p$]. Finally, the present study was approved by the ethical committee of the Department of Psychology at the University of Groningen.

Instruments

Dutch Relationship Questionnaire

A 20-item abridged version of the Dutch Relationship Questionnaire (DRQ; Barelds, Luteijn, & Arrindell, 2003) was used as a measure of relationship quality. The DRQ is a multidimensional instrument for the assessment of relationship quality (cf. Barelds & Dijkstra, 2009). The full-length DRQ consists of 80 true or false items distributed over five subscales (independence, closeness, identity, conflict resolution, and sexuality). These subscales can be summed to obtain an overall relationship quality score. Examples of items are “My partner and I agree on most things” and “I am content with our sex life.” For brevity reasons, the present study used an abridged version of the DRQ, consisting of the 20 items that were found to have the highest item-remainder correlations in a sample of 329 married or cohabiting participants (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2007; the correlation between the full scale and the abridged version was $r = .89$). Validity of the DRQ-20 was supported by its large correlations with, for example, the Interactional Problem Solving Inventory (Lange, 1983) and the Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg, 1997). The items of the DRQ-20 were NOT assessed on a five-point scale, but on a two-point scale (0 = disagree, 1 = agree). Cronbach’s alpha of the DRQ-20 in the present study was .86 for the gifted sample and .90 for the community sample.

Relational Interaction Satisfaction Scale

In addition to the DRQ-20, we measured relationship satisfaction by means of the Relational Interaction Satisfaction Scale (RISS; Buunk, 1990). The eight items of this scale assess to which extent the interaction with the partner is experienced as being rewarding. An example item is “I feel happy when I’m with my partner.” Possible answers in the present study range from 1 = never to 5 = very often. In the present study, alpha of the RISS was .91 for the gifted sample, and .90 for the control sample.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II

For the assessment of conflict styles the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (Rahim, 1983; also see Rahim & Magner, 1994) was used.

This scale consists of 28 items that are answered on a five-point Likert scale. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II measures the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict that were discussed before: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. The instrument was originally developed to measure how an organizational member handles conflicts with his or her supervisor, subordinates, or peers. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II has recently also been used in the context of an intimate relationship. Examples of items are “I try to investigate an issue with my partner to find a solution acceptable to us” and “I exchange accurate information with my partner to solve a problem together.” Cronbach’s alphas in the present study ranged between .70 (compromising) and .89 (avoiding) for the gifted sample and between .73 (compromising) and .85 (avoiding) for the community sample.

Relationship Questionnaire

For the assessment of attachment styles the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) was used. The Relationship Questionnaire is a single item measure that contains four descriptions of attachment patterns in adult relationships (secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing). Participants were asked to indicate on a seven-point scale the extent to which each of these four descriptions applies to them. In the present study, a version of the Relationship Questionnaire was used that refers to attachment in close relationships. In addition to providing scores regarding the applicability of each of the four attachment style descriptions, participants also indicated which of the four descriptions fitted them best. Although we did not intend to measure attachment styles categorically, answering the latter question should minimize order effects when rating the applicability of the four attachment styles. We did not use the categorical variable (which was administered first) for examining the present study’s research questions.

Results

First, to examine whether the Mensa sample differs from the community sample in terms of perceived relationship quality/satisfaction, conflict styles and attachment styles (RQ1), the mean scores on these variables were computed for both groups separately (Table 2). Differences were tested by means of analyses of variance. A multivariate significant sample effect was found [$F(11, 327) = 3.19, p < .001$]. There were, however, no univariate significant differences between the two groups with regard to the relationship measures. With regard to attachment styles and conflict styles, some significant differences were found. The Mensa sample, on average, perceived the fearful attachment style to be more applicable to them than the individuals from the community sample. In addition, the Mensa sample reported engaging less

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for attachment styles, conflict styles, and relationship ratings for the Mensa sample and the control sample.

	Mensa		Control				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i> (1, 340)	<i>p</i>	η^2
Attachment style							
Dismissing	4.21	1.93	4.16	2.02	.06	.811	.00
Preoccupied	3.57	1.74	3.74	1.75	.79	.374	.00
Fearful	3.89	1.86	3.38	1.93	6.14	.014	.02
Secure	5.28	1.62	5.26	1.61	.01	.910	.00
Conflict style							
Integrating	27.37	5.33	29.65	4.20	18.13	.000	.05
Avoiding	15.48	6.21	13.18	5.36	12.78	.000	.04
Dominating	15.08	4.18	15.06	4.47	.00	.963	.00
Obliging	19.05	4.08	18.50	3.89	1.57	.212	.01
Compromising	13.42	2.85	14.41	2.98	9.80	.002	.03
Relationship ratings							
RISS	28.57	5.19	29.00	5.01	.60	.439	.00
DRQ-20	14.78	4.45	15.48	4.76	1.95	.163	.01

often in the integrating and compromising and more often in the avoiding conflict styles. These were all small to medium effects.¹

Next, we examined the relations among attachment styles, conflict styles, and relationship quality and satisfaction (RQ2). For this purpose, correlations were computed between these variables separately for the two samples (Table 3). In addition, to examine whether the relations found for the Mensa sample are significantly different from the relations found for the community sample, tests for independent correlations were conducted. The correlations for the two samples are generally quite similar. There are mostly small correlations between attachment styles and conflict styles in both groups. With regard to attachment styles and the relationship variables, several significant relations were found. Strong positive relations were found in both groups between the integrating conflict style and the relationship measures (r 's $\geq .505$). The avoiding conflict style was consistently negatively related to the relationship measures, and quite consistent positive relations were found in both groups between the compromising conflict style and the relationship measures.

With regard to the attachment styles and relationship quality/satisfaction, some interesting differences were found between the two samples. The most striking difference was found with regard to the fearful attachment style, for which significant and moderate negative relations with relationship quality/satisfaction were found in the community sample but not in the Mensa sample. These correlations were significantly different ($p < .01$) between the two samples. In addition, in the Mensa sample, the dismissing attachment style was related (–) significantly to relationship quality/satisfaction, whereas in the community sample the preoccupied (–) and secure (+) attachment styles were related significantly to relationship quality/satisfaction. The differences between these correlations in the two samples were, however, not significant ($p > .01$).

Table 3. Correlations between attachment styles, conflict styles, and relationship ratings for the Mensa sample and the control sample.

	Dismissing	Preoccupied	Fearful	Secure	Integrating	Avoiding	Dominating	Obliging	Compromising	RISS	DRQ-20
Attachment style											
Dismissing	1	-.211	.093	.105	-.072	.069	.173	-.120	-.155	-.109	-.084
Preoccupied	-.322*	1	.179	-.208	-.166	.142	.046	.202	-.145	-.236*	-.261*
Fearful	-.038	.113	1	-.413*	-.148	.213	.237*	.203	-.025	-.361*	-.337*
Secure	-.067	-.056	-.446*	1	.161	-.155	-.164	-.005	.018	.259*	.278*
Conflict style											
Integrating	-.169	-.005	-.097	.159	1	-.432*	-.014	.146	.377*	.558*	.608*
Avoiding	.195*	.072	.245*	-.190*	-.419*	1	.080	.253*	.031	-.268*	-.380*
Dominating	.176	-.017	-.115	.006	-.031	-.077	1	.090	.002	-.217*	-.271*
Obliging	-.099	.175	.141	-.071	.129	.348*	-.177	1	.261*	.043	-.049
Compromising	-.067	.028	-.021	.150	.513*	-.001	.085	.132	1	.195	.236*
Relationship ratings											
RISS	-.209*	-.059	-.008	.157	.505*	-.331*	-.174	.096	.267*	1	.793*
DRQ20	-.188*	-.080	-.044	.176	.519*	-.479*	-.110	-.101	.204*	.760*	1

Note. Correlations for the Mensa sample below the diagonal, correlations for the control sample above the diagonal. Correlations in bold are significantly different ($p < .01$) between samples (tests for independent correlations).

* $p < .01$.

Table 4. Mediation analyses results for the Mensa sample.

	<i>c</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>c'</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>ab</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI*
RISS							
Dismissing	-.563	.003	-.181	.290	-.382	.001	-.714, -.175
Preoccupied	-.177	.409	-.192	.296	.014	.910	-.233, .288
Fearful	-.021	.916	.157	.373	-.178	.146	-.439, .081
Secure	.505	.029	.177	.379	.328	.014	.089, .683
DRQ-20							
Dismissing	-.432	.009	-.116	.410	-.317	.003	-.537, -.122
Preoccupied	-.204	.268	-.122	.417	-.082	.474	-.288, .141
Fearful	-.106	.539	.161	.262	-.268	.017	-.553, -.043
Secure	.483	.014	.142	.388	.342	.005	.090, .624

Note. *The confidence interval applies to the bootstrap estimates of the *ab* paths.

Finally, we examined whether the relations between attachment styles and relationship quality/satisfaction are mediated by conflict styles (RQ3). For this purpose we used the SPSS (version 22) macro developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). All five conflict styles were entered simultaneously as mediators of the relations between the four attachment styles (entered separately) and relationship quality/satisfaction. Analyses were conducted separately for the DRQ-20 and the RISS and for the two samples. Results are summarized in Tables 4 (Mensa sample) and 5 (community sample). To help interpret the results listed in these tables, Figure 2 shows the mediation model that was examined.

Significant mediation effects were found in both groups. In the Mensa sample, the conflict styles significantly and consistently mediated the relations between the dismissing and secure attachment styles and relationship quality/satisfaction. When looking more closely at the results for the individual conflict styles, it was found that these mediation effects could be consistently attributed to the integrating and avoiding conflict styles (for interpretation of these effects see Table 2). In the control sample from the general community, significant and consistent mediation effects were found for the relations between fearful and secure attachment and relationship quality/satisfaction.

Figure 2. Model of conflict styles as mediators of the relations between attachment styles and relationship quality/satisfaction.

Table 5. Mediation analyses results for the control sample.

	<i>c</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>c'</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>ab</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI*
RISS							
Dismissing	-.270	.193	.096	.588	-.174	.182	-.461, .064
Preoccupied	-.675	.004	-.418	.042	-.257	.084	-.613, .039
Fearful	-.936	.000	-.668	.000	-.269	.041	-.552, -.031
Secure	.806	.002	.444	.042	.362	.018	.059, .742
DRQ20							
Dismissing	-.198	.315	.006	.972	-.204	.141	-.521, .089
Preoccupied	-.709	.002	-.349	.051	-.360	.020	-.656, .049
Fearful	-.833	.000	-.437	.007	-.396	.004	-.667, -.121
Secure	.824	.001	.415	.029	.409	.012	.088, .779

*The confidence interval is for the bootstrap estimates of the *ab* paths.

In these cases, the mediation effect could be consistently attributed to the integrating and dominating conflict styles. Together, these results show that the relations between attachment styles and relationship quality/satisfaction are partially mediated by conflict styles in both samples but also that the results are slightly different between the two samples.

Discussion

The present study examined the intimate relations of gifted individuals, comparing them with the intimate relationships of individuals not identified as gifted. Our first aim was to examine differences in relationship quality, attachment styles, and conflict styles between gifted and nongifted individuals. Results showed that on two measures of relationship quality and satisfaction gifted and nongifted individuals involved in an intimate relationship did not differ: both reported about equally satisfying relationships. Both samples did, however, differ in their conflict and attachment styles. With regard to conflict styles, the gifted sample reported engaging less often in integrating and compromising and more often in avoiding. Correlational analyses showed that in both groups integrating and compromising were positively related to relationship quality, whereas avoiding was negatively related to relationship quality. These findings suggest that gifted individuals show a somewhat lower ability to constructively deal with conflicts in their intimate relationship, by engaging relatively little in those conflict styles that help handle conflicts constructively, and relatively often using a conflict style that may potentially damage their relationship. A possible explanation for the finding that relative to others, gifted individuals tend to avoid conflicts more often is that, in general, gifted individuals show more intensity in their feelings (Jacobsen, 1999) and are relatively more emotionally sensitive (Alias, Rahman, Majid, & Yassin, 2013; Daniels & Piechowski, 2008). In general, high emotional sensitivity is accompanied by behavioral inhibition in an attempt to reduce and avoid the stress caused by these intense feelings (Aron, Aron, & Jagiellowicz, 2012). In the case of a looming conflict, this may cause gifted individuals

to avoid the conflict rather than to deal with it openly by, for instance, integrating and compromising.

Despite the fact that the gifted appeared to handle their conflicts somewhat less constructively than others, in the present study relationship quality among the gifted was not lower than in the control group. A possible explanation is that the relationships of the gifted benefit from a relationship source that relationships of other individuals do not benefit from, and that was not assessed in the present study. This relationship source may compensate the potentially negative effect of conflict styles on relationship quality. A possibility is that the gifted are more successful at finding a similar partner, for instance with regard to intelligence. In general, actual and perceived similarity between partners has been found to be related positively to relationship quality (see for instance Russell & Wells, 1991), presumably because similarity promotes shared emotional experiences and is accompanied by less disagreement (e.g., Gonzaga, Campos, & Bradbury, 2007). Dijkstra et al. (2012) found that the gifted more highly value high intelligence in a (potential) partner than other individuals. As a result, the gifted may put more effort in finding a mate with a similar level of intelligence, resulting in more homogenous relationships. Indirect evidence for the relatively strong strive for assortative mating among the gifted was found by Benbow, Zonderman, and Stanley (1983) who studied the parents of the gifted. Because IQ is highly heritable (e.g., Bouchard, 2004), the parents of the gifted have a relatively high probability also to have a high IQ. Benbow et al. (1983) found that these parents resembled each other significantly more than other parents, suggesting a higher level of assortative mating among (parents of) the gifted. Another explanation is that gifted individuals may indeed less constructively deal with relationship conflicts when these conflicts occur but have these conflicts less frequently in their relationships than other individuals. The relatively scarce conflicts that do occur may have little impact on their evaluations of their relationships. Indirect evidence that the gifted may experience fewer conflicts in their relationships was given by Schapiro (2006) in a sample of gifted adolescents. In this study gifted individuals were found to be more task-oriented than other-oriented, an orientation that was found to be accompanied by less conflict in their relationships with peers. In addition, if gifted individuals are indeed more successful when it comes to assortative mating, they may experience less conflicts and disagreement in their relationship because of smaller differences in opinion, intelligence, personality, and/or lifestyle. Because the present study did not assess how often individuals experienced conflict in their relationship but only how they dealt with those conflicts once they occurred, we cannot be certain that gifted individuals indeed experience less conflicts in their intimate relationships.

Relative to other individuals, the gifted individuals in our sample also perceived the fearful attachment style to be more applicable to them. In other

words, more than the participants from the community sample, they feared rejection and hurt as a possible consequence of emotional disclosure and intimacy. A possible explanation may again lie in their relatively high levels of emotional sensitivity and excitability (Alias et al., 2013; Daniels & Piechowski, 2008). As a consequence, gifted individuals may feel threatened more easily and experience fear in response to situations that involve emotional intimacy. In line with previous studies, the present study found moderate relations between fearful attachment and relationship quality among participants from the community sample. Among the gifted, however, this was not the case: As gifted individuals were more fearfully attached, they did not report lower relationship quality. This finding suggests that the higher levels of fearful attachment among the gifted are not (necessarily) problematic with regard to relationship quality, as it is among other individuals. A possible explanation is that the gifted have learned to cope with their emotional sensitivities and fears, among which their fear of emotional intimacy, and that, as a consequence, their fear of emotional intimacy no longer directly affects the quality of their relationship. This does not mean, however, that fearful attachment does not affect relationship quality at all. It still may do so in an indirect way.

To more accurately examine the relations between conflict styles, attachment styles and relationship quality we also tested a mediation model. More specifically, we examined the extent to which the relations between attachment styles and relationship quality would be mediated by conflict styles, separately for gifted individuals and individuals from the community sample. Among the gifted the relationship between the dismissive and the secure attachment styles on the one hand and relationship quality on the other hand was mediated by conflict styles. In other words, whereas the dismissive attachment style negatively affected relationship quality by leading individuals to engage in less constructive conflict styles (particularly less integrating and more avoiding), the secure attachment style positively affected relationship quality by leading individuals to engage in the more constructive conflict styles (particularly more integrating and less avoiding). Among participants from the community sample a somewhat different pattern emerged. A secure attachment style positively affected relationship quality through more constructive conflict styles (particularly more integrating and less dominating), which is quite comparable with what was found for the gifted. In addition, however, the fearful attachment style negatively affected relationship quality in the community sample, through the use of less constructive conflict styles (particularly less integrating and more dominating). It must be noted, however, that in this sample (in most cases) the relations between attachment styles and relationship quality were only partially mediated by conflict styles.

Overall, it must be noted that many relations between relationship quality, conflict styles, and attachment styles were quite similar for the gifted group and for the community sample. Only the relations between fearful attachment

and relationship quality differed significantly between the two samples. It therefore seems that the two samples show more similarities than differences with regard to relationship processes that involve conflict styles, attachment styles and relationship quality.

Strengths, limitations, and future research

The present study is the first to study the role of conflict styles and attachment styles in the intimate relationships of gifted individuals and therefore contributes to our knowledge on giftedness, the processes that play a role in the intimate relationships of gifted individuals, and on potential strengths and weaknesses of these relationships. A first and important limitation of the present study is that members of Mensa are probably not representative of the total population of gifted adults. A strength of the present study, however, was that the Mensa sample was quite heterogeneous (in terms of age, relationship duration, and educational level) and that the present study also included a community sample that facilitated the interpretation of our findings among the gifted. Nonetheless, future studies need to cross-validate our findings, ideally in a representative population of gifted adults. Future studies may also investigate why fearful attachment seems to play a different role in the intimate relationships of the gifted and what factors may cause the relationships of the gifted to be as good as they are, despite gifted individuals' inclination to engage less often in those conflict styles that may benefit their relationship, particularly the integrating and compromising styles. Uncovering the factors that both in negative and positive ways affect the intimate relationships of the gifted may help relationship counselors develop counseling strategies that more closely meet the needs of gifted individuals and the problems they experience in their intimate relationships. In addition, insight in the strengths of gifted individuals' relationships may uncover unique relationship-enhancing processes that may inspire relationship counselors to develop new techniques or interventions for helping enhance nongifted couples' relationship functioning. In conclusion, we hope that future studies will further explore the intimate relationships of the gifted, a group of people that, in our opinion, deserves more attention from researchers than it has received to date.

Note

1. Because the two samples differed in their educational level, we also conducted an additional MANOVA in which educational level was entered as an additional between subjects variable. The multivariate main effect of educational level was not significant, nor was the sample $\times$ educational level interaction ($F_s < 1.20$, $p_s \geq .139$). We therefore only report the results that are not controlled for educational level.

References

- Alias, A., Rahman, S., Majid, R. A., & Yassin, S. F. M. (2013). Dabrowski's overexcitabilities profile among gifted students. *Asian Social Science*, 9, 120–125. doi:[10.5539/ass.v9n16p120](https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n16p120)
- Aron, E. N., Aron, A., & Jagiellowicz, J. (2012). Sensory processing sensitivity: A review in the light of the evolution of biological responsivity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 16, 262–282. doi:[10.1177/1088868311434213](https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868311434213)
- Baptist, J. A., Thompson, D. E., Norton, A. M., Hardy, N. R., & Link, C. D. (2012). The effects of the intergenerational transmission of family emotional processes on conflict styles: The moderating role of attachment. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 40, 56–73. doi:[10.1080/01926187.2011.575030](https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2011.575030)
- Barelids, D. P. H., & Dijkstra, P. (2007). Love at first sight or friends first? Ties among partner personality trait similarity, relationship onset, relationship quality, and love. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 24, 479–496.
- Barelids, D. P. H., & Dijkstra, P. (2009). Positive illusions about a partner's physical attractiveness and relationship quality. *Personal Relationships*, 16, 263–283. doi:[10.1111/j.1475-6811.2009.01222.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2009.01222.x)
- Barelids, D. P. H., Luteijn, F., & Arrindell, W. A. (2003). *Handleiding Nederlandse relatie vragenlijst (NRV) [Manual Dutch relationship questionnaire (DRQ)]*. Lisse: Swets en Zeitlinger.
- Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A test of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61, 226–244. doi:[10.1037/0022-3514.61.2.226](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.61.2.226)
- Benbow, C. P., Zonderman, A. B., & Stanley, J. C. (1983). Assortative marriage and the familiarity of cognitive abilities in families of extremely gifted students. *Intelligence*, 7, 153–161. doi:[10.1016/0160-2896\(83\)90025-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-2896(83)90025-9)
- Bertoni, A., & Bodenmann, G. (2010). Satisfied and dissatisfied couples: Positive and negative dimensions, conflict styles, and relationships with family of origin. *European Psychologist*, 15, 175–184. doi:[10.1027/1016-9040/a000015](https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000015)
- Besharat, M. A. (2003). Relation of attachment style with marital conflict. *Psychological Reports*, 92, 1135–1140. doi:[10.2466/pr0.92.3.1135-1140](https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.92.3.1135-1140)
- Bessou, A., Tyrrell, J., & Yziquel, M. (2004). Parcours scolaire et professionnel de 28 adultes dits surdoués [Educational and career pathways of 28 gifted adults]. *Neuropsychiatrie de l'Enfance et de l'Adolescence*, 52, 154–159. doi:[10.1016/j.neurenf.2004.01.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neurenf.2004.01.008)
- Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. (1964). *The managerial grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Bouchard, T. J. (2004). Genetic influence on human psychological traits. A survey. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13, 148–151. doi:[10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00295.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00295.x)
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment. Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Loss*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Buunk, B. P. (1990). Relational interaction satisfaction scale. In J. Touliatos, B. F. Perlmutter, & M. A. Straus (Eds.), *Handbook of family measurement techniques* (pp. 106–107). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Buunk, B. P. (1997). Personality, birth order and attachment styles as related to various types of jealousy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 23, 997–1006. doi:[10.1016/s0191-8869\(97\)00136-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0191-8869(97)00136-0)
- Cann, A., Norman, A. M., Welbourne, J. L., & Calhoun, L. G. (2010). Attachment styles, conflict styles and humour styles: Interrelationships and associations with relationship satisfaction. *European Journal of Personality*, 22, 131–146. doi:[10.1002/per.666](https://doi.org/10.1002/per.666)
- Caunt, B. S., Franklin, J., Brodaty, N. E., & Brodaty, H. (2013). Exploring the causes of subjective well-being: A content analysis of peoples' recipes for long-term happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14, 475–499. doi:[10.1007/s10902-012-9339-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9339-1)

- Cheng, C. C. (2010). A study of inter-cultural marital conflict and satisfaction in Taiwan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34, 354–362. doi:[10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.04.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.04.005)
- Cropley, M., & Steptoe, A. (2005). Social support, life events and physical symptoms: A prospective study of chronic and recent life stress in men and women. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 10, 317–325. doi:[10.1080/1354850500093365](https://doi.org/10.1080/1354850500093365)
- Daniels, S., & Piechowski, M. M. (2008). *Living with intensity: Understanding the sensitivity, excitability, and emotional development of gifted children, adolescents, and adults*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Demir, M. (2010). Close relationships and happiness among emerging adults. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 11, 293–313. doi:[10.1007/s10902-009-9141-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-009-9141-x)
- Dijkstra, P., Barelds, D. P. H., Groothof, H. A. K., Ronner, S., & Nauta, A. P. (2012). Partner preferences of the intellectually gifted. *Marriage & Family Review*, 48, 96–108. doi:[10.1080/01494929.2011.628779](https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2011.628779)
- Fogel, M. L. (1968). Mensa society. *American Psychologist*, 23, 457. doi:[10.1037/h0020802](https://doi.org/10.1037/h0020802)
- Gonzaga, G. C., Campos, B., & Bradbury, T. (2007). Similarity, convergence, and relationship satisfaction in dating and married couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 34–48. doi:[10.1037/0022-3514.93.1.34](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.1.34)
- Greeff, A. P., & De Bruyne, T. (2000). Conflict management style and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 26, 321–334. doi:[10.1080/009262300438724](https://doi.org/10.1080/009262300438724)
- Hammond, J. R., & Fletcher, G. J. (1991). Attachment styles and relationship satisfaction in the development of close relationships. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 20, 56–62.
- Hawkins, D. N., & Booth, A. (2005). Unhappily ever after: Effects of long-term, low-quality marriages on well-being. *Social Forces*, 84, 451–471. doi:[10.1353/sof.2005.0103](https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2005.0103)
- Hollinger, C., & L., Kosek, S. (1986). Beyond the use of full scale IQ scores. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 30, 74–77. doi:[10.1177/001698628603000206](https://doi.org/10.1177/001698628603000206)
- Jacobsen, M. E. (1999). Arousing the sleeping giant: Giftedness in adult psychotherapy. *Roeper Review*, 22, 36–42. doi:[10.1080/02783199909553995](https://doi.org/10.1080/02783199909553995)
- Lange, A. (1983). *De Interactionele Probleem Oplossings Vragenlijst (IPOV) [The Interactional Problem Solving Inventory (IPSI)]*. Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Luteijn, F., & Barelds, D. P. H. (2004). *Groningen intelligence test 2 (GIT-2): Manual*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Harcourt.
- Mayseless, O. (1993). Gifted adolescents and intimacy in close same-sex friendships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 22, 135–146. doi:[10.1007/bf01536649](https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01536649)
- Perrone-McGovern, K. M., Boo, J. N., & Vanatter, A. (2012). Marital and life satisfaction among gifted adults. *Roeper Review*, 34, 46–52. doi:[10.1080/02783193.2012.627552](https://doi.org/10.1080/02783193.2012.627552)
- Pistole, M. C. (1989). Attachment in adult romantic relationships: Style of conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 6, 505–512. doi:[10.1177/0265407589064008](https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407589064008)
- Pistole, M. C., & Arricale, F. (2003). Understanding attachment: Beliefs about conflict. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 81, 318–328. doi:[10.1002/j.1556-6678.2003.tb00259.x](https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2003.tb00259.x)
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods*, 40, 879–891. doi:[10.3758/brm.40.3.879](https://doi.org/10.3758/brm.40.3.879)
- Rahim, M. A. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 368–376. doi:[10.2307/255985](https://doi.org/10.2307/255985)
- Rahim, M. A., & Magner, N. R. (1994). Convergent and discriminant validity of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II. *Psychological Reports*, 74, 35–38. doi:[10.2466/pr0.1994.74.1.35](https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1994.74.1.35)
- Rinn, A. N., & Bishop, J. (2015). Gifted adults: A systematic review and analysis of the literature. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 59, 213–235. doi:[10.1177/0016986215600795](https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986215600795)

- Roznowski, M., Reith, J., & Hong, S. (2000). A further look at youth intellectual giftedness and its correlates: Values, interests, performance, and behavior. *Intelligence*, 28, 87–113. doi:[10.1016/s0160-2896\(99\)00032-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-2896(99)00032-x)
- Russell, R. J., & Wells, P. A. (1991). Personality similarity and quality of marriage. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 12, 407–412. doi:[10.1016/0191-8869\(91\)90057-i](https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(91)90057-i)
- Schapiro, M. (2006). Competitive goal orientations, friendship quality, and friendship stability in gifted and nongifted adolescent friendships. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 67, 463.
- Shi, L. (1999). Conflict resolution in romantic relationships: An examination of adult attachment and early attachment experience. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 60, 1903.
- Simpson, J. A., Rholes, W. S., & Nelligan, J. S. (1992). Support seeking and support giving within couples in an anxiety-provoking situation: The role of attachment styles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62, 434–446. doi:[10.1037/0022-3514.62.3.434](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.62.3.434)
- Sprecher, S., & Fehr, B. (2011). Dispositional attachment and relationship-specific attachment as predictors of compassionate love for a partner. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 28, 558–574. doi:[10.1177/0265407510386190](https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407510386190)
- Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., & Whitton, S. W. (2002). Communication, conflict and commitment: Insights on the foundations of relationship success from a national survey. *Family Process*, 41, 659–675. doi:[10.1111/j.1545-5300.2002.00659.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2002.00659.x)
- Sternberg, R. J. (1997). Construct validation of a triangular love scale. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 27, 313–335. doi:[10.1002/\(sici\)1099-0992\(199705\)27:3<313::aid-ejsp824>3.0.co;2-4](https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1099-0992(199705)27:3<313::aid-ejsp824>3.0.co;2-4)
- Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1978). Comparisons of four instruments measuring conflict behavior. *Psychological Reports*, 42, 1139–1145. doi:[10.2466/pr0.1978.42.3c.1139](https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1978.42.3c.1139)
- Tolan, S. (1994). Discovering the gifted ex-child. *Roeper Review*, 17, 134–138. doi:[10.1080/02783199409553642](https://doi.org/10.1080/02783199409553642)
- Zeidner, M., & Shani-Zinovich, I. (2011). Do academically gifted and nongifted students differ on the big-five and adaptive status? Some recent data and conclusions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51, 566–570. doi:[10.1016/j.paid.2011.05.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.05.007)