

Poisoned with defective theories, Kanazawa Insults Others “Mentally Retarded”

“Would my conscious allow me to settle down while you massacre my people using mustard gas and explosives!” uttered an Ethiopian martyr monk and church leader when he was ordered by Mussolini’s soldiers to be silent during the Ethio-Italian war. [1] Since the information about the controversial Satoshi Kanazawa’s research work [2] leaked, I hear the cry of Africans from Sierra Leon to Ethiopia and from Libya to South Africa. This ran me into insomnia last night and I looked at his research paper. I decided to say some words about the study and to the potential master of eugenics, Kanazawa. Although I don’t think I captured all sorts of flaws introduced in this study, I identified the following fatal errors from the start.

Kanazawa

Definition Problem: As Strydom and Du Plessis pointed out; there is no consensus on definition of intelligence. [3] Intelligence has been defined in many different ways at different times. In 1905, Binet and Simon defined intelligences as the ability to judge well, to understand well and to reason well. In A decade later, Terman described intelligence as the capacity to form concepts and to grasp their significance. In nineteen thirties, Wechsler defined intelligence as the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with the environment. In the mid nineteen eighties, Gardner defined intelligence as the ability or skill to solve problems or to fashion products which are valued within one or more cultural settings. Each and every definition has its own unsettled problems. [3, 7, 8] Still some other people like Kanazawa think wealthier people are more intelligent than others. Further they intend to conclude that because the wealthy people are intelligent, they tend to be more cautious about their health than the poor. Therefore, what is intelligence? Who is intelligent? The poor philosopher Socrates or the wealthiest rulers of Greece who killed him? The broke Spinoza with torn pockets or the wealthy church leaders and government officials who were chasing him? A scientist who smokes two packs of cigarette a day or a house wife who despises smoking? Tony Blair who supports the puppet dictators in Africa or destitute African professors who die in dictators’ jails? Can Kanazawa define intelligence for us?



There is tremendous uncertainty on intelligence quotient (IQ) as well. [3, 8, 10] How is IQ measured? What is the sensitivity and specificity of IQ? Is there a Golden Standard Test to assess the validity of IQ? If there is no consensus on definition of intelligence, do we know what we actually are measuring? What part of intelligence? Does a valid universal way of measuring IQ in a very complex socio-cultural matrix exist?

Assumption problem: It looks that Kanazawa believes in Savanna Theory not only from the bottom of his heart but also from the center of his bone. [1] The Savanna Theory is related to the South African palaeoanthropologist Raymond Dart who discovered the Taung skull in 1925. [4, 5] What this theory in simple terms, asserts is that early hominids (perhaps Lucy and her neighbors), were faced with lack of forest. To overcome this problem our ancestors went to the Savanna (grass land) and adapted themselves to that environment. However, as it was mentioned in Kanazawa’s paper [1] for a man to learn this adaptation measures, the exposure (for example, shrinkage of the forest) has to occur at the early developmental stage of the brain. One can derive from this assertion that Africans who are deprived of any kind of modern technology during their early brain developmental stage will remain stupid or idiots no matter what! Recommending “googling” the critics of Savanna Theory, I will leave the judgment about the plausibility of this theory to the readers.

Data Collection Problem: Kanazawa admits borrowing secondary data from different places. He borrowed the IQ data from Lynn (Northern Ireland) and Vanhanen (Finland) Table-1. According to him, IQ was directly measured only in eleven Sub-Saharan African Countries and the rest was predicted using prediction methods Kawakawa tried to show that the IQ measurement was valid by analyzing the directly and indirectly measured data separately. It is true that no method of measurement is perfectly accurate or precise. However, one has to ask how the samples were drawn, and how the results of the sample IQ’s were translated in to national average. Whether IQ measures general intelligence or not is another story. For the moment, let’s assume it does. Most IQ tests include both verbal and written tests. How valid will be the IQ test in Sub-Saharan countries where almost all sense organs of the people are turned dysfunctional by dictator rulers who are supported by major powers of the world? In addition to that, IQ measurement is not entirely objective. Our daily life proves how people are prejudiced towards one another irrespective of educational status. Therefore, to what extent should we believe the validity of the IQ measurements of Lynn and Vanhanen? What about the possibility of differential misclassification errors in the IQ measurement?

Table-1. Lynn and Vanhanen: National IQ's in Sub-Saharan Countries

Country	National IQ
Cameron	70
Central African Republic	68
Ethiopia	63
Ghana	71
Kenya	72
Malawi	71
Mali	69
Namibia	72
Niger	67
Nigeria	67
Rwanda	70
Siera Leone	64
South Africa	72
Tanzania	72
Uganda	73
Zambia	77
Zimbabwe	66

Intentional insult or lack of common sense? We understand Kanazawa borrowed the data from others. However, he failed to relate the computer generated data (table-I) to the objective reality on the ground. Whether it valid or not, here is one way of classifying mental retardation based on IQ. Table-2.

Table 2. Welchler Adult Intelligence Scale

Class	IQ
Profound	Below 20
Sever	20-34
Moderate	35-49
Mild	50-69
Borderline	70-79

Kanazawa provided only the mean IQ. I did not find any of the other measures of dispersion. If you look at the average IQ of most Sub-Saharan Counties most of them lie below 72. Table-1 That means majority of the Sub-Saharan Country people are suffering from profound, sever, moderate, mild and borderline mental retardation. Is that so? I wonder how Africans' build up the Pyramids of Egypt, the Castle of Aksume and Fasiledus, the monasteries of Lalibela and Lake Tana in Ethiopia. I wonder how this mentally retarded brain developed the Ethiopian alphabet and the Ethiopian Calendar! It looks Kanazawa is excited just because the computer provided him with profoundly flawed thicker effect estimates and smaller p-values. It is obvious that these statistical measures are just a bit part of causal association.

The Confounding Problem: For those of you who are not familiar with confounding variable, in simple terms, it is a factor the affects the outcome of interest. For a variable to be a confounder, it hast to be related to both the independent variable (in this case IQ) and the dependent variable (in this case life expectancy). It looks that Kanazawa is obsessed

only with GDP, IQ and economic inequality. What about other factors, which are related to both IQ (whatever it may be) and life expectancy? All sorts of disease conditions, cultures, traditions, not to mention, lack of freedom of speech, the scars of colonialism, slavery and other inhuman atrocities that Africans experienced for centuries?

Flaws in the Discussion: Kanazawa stated in his discussion "... there appears little that education can do significantly with the general intelligence of the population." Even if we assume we have clear definition of general intelligence, can any one buy this argument? When they test for IQ, don't they ask for words? Don't they ask to write something or play certain kinds of games? Are not these things something we acquire through learning? In fact IQ directly measures (if it measures any thing at all) what we have already learned not what you are going to learn in the future.

Conclusion: Kanazawa immersed himself in the ocean of shaky psychological theories. He started from unsettled definitions. He asked a eugenic question. Then he borrowed invalid measurements and tried to answer his question. He ignored confounding factors in the design and analysis stage. Therefore, the results of his study can be explained only with one word: **bias!**

A Call to Humanitarian Scholars

Einstein did not develop $E = mc^2$ formula to create weapons of mass destruction. Neither the French Alfred Binet developed IQ measurements for the purpose of Eugenics in the early 20th century. However, as we misuse the legacy of Einstein to produce weapons that kill innocent people in the world, we are manipulating the works of Binet to discriminate [6, 7], and to facilitate atresia of certain segments of the world population. History teaches us that the Nazis misused the Idea of IQ and suggested to destroy "inferior" humans, retarded people, and any one with genetic defects. [3] More than half a century later, Kanazawa emerged with another idea. He claims that in certain parts of the world people die early because they are mentally retarded. Further, he asserted that education couldn't significantly alter the general intelligence. Should he remain unchallenged? Is the 21st Century the revival time of Eugenics?

A Message to Scholars of Africa and African Origin

African Americans usually say "to understand the complex problems of blacks, you have to turn black first". No one knows why Africans are dying sooner more than you do! No one knows how the African farmers are brilliant better than you do! No one understands why the African people are suffering from famine, ill health, civil wars, and other cursed conditions under the sun more than you do! No one understands why Africa is still caged with in the yoke of dictatorship better than you do! There is an African adage, which goes "on the top of goiter, there comes a swollen parotid from mumps". At the top of all these problems, here comes the theory of Kanazawa. How long should the African people suffer from all these? Do we have any thresh hold for hearing these types of degrading comments while we consider ourselves as humans? You think the children of Africa back home or anywhere else could strive to succeed after they read the findings of Kanazawa in the online free encyclopedia? I cordially request Scholars of African origin to examine Kanazawa's paper; evaluate the Lynn and Vanhanen's IQ measurement methods thoroughly and speak up against these wrong conclusions. I believe Kanazawa should be liable for deep psychological trauma he installed at the minds of the current and coming African generations. Most of us agree that we don't have that many legitimate governments in our continent. I challenge the humanitarian civil society, lawyers, religious leaders and non-governmental organizations and others to speak up against this racist intent.

Although the sun rises early in our continent, we are forced to wake up late. Martin Luther King once said, "We don't have to live like we are forced to live". We don't have to listen to the curses that they want us to listen, either.

References:

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Belayneh Abate

November 10, 2006. The author can be reached at abatebelai@yahoo.com