

10 ways in which Japanese men want to outperform their girlfriends

TOKYO —

Ideally, a romantic partnership should be just that: a partnership in which you and your beloved pool your respective strengths to build collective happiness, start a family, and/or fight crime together. But things don't always work out like that Corinthians line asserting that love does not boast, which leads us to a survey by Japanese Internet portal R25 and polling organization I Research.

In the survey, 200 Japanese men between the ages of 20 and 39 (all of whom either currently have a girlfriend or had one in the past) were given a list of 22 items, and asked to pick three areas in which they absolutely don't want to be surpassed by the woman they're dating. Each respondent's top choice was given three points, his second two, and his third one.

Let's take a look at which selections ended up in the top 10.

10. Number of past sexual partners (28 points) Some Japanese women don't want a guy with too much romantic experience, but a number of this survey's respondents said they'd feel awkward with a girlfriend with a more extensive between-the-sheets resume.

9 (tie). Work position/title (30 points)

To clarify, this choice wasn't about who's actually better at doing their job, just who has the higher rank in the corporate hierarchy of where they work.

8 (tie). Muscular strength (30 points)

7. Driving skill (33 points)

In many countries, driving (as in the everyday, public road variety) is considered a simple can/can't kind of capability. But in Japan, where many people pass their driver's license test, then spend years without getting behind the wheel again thanks to convenient public transportation, the ability to drive smoothly and calmly is seen as a special skill beyond just getting from Point A to Point B. With cars being a traditionally masculine area of interest, many of the survey respondents don't want their girlfriend be the better driver.

6. Overall physical fitness (43 points)

5. Wealth of knowledge (48 points)

4. Ability to think/understand quickly (61 points)

Japan often divides the concept of "intelligence" into two categories: education/accumulated knowledge, and the ability to quickly grasp or develop new concepts. Combining the two would have given 109 points to the answer "I don't want my girlfriend to be smarter than me."

3. Savings (87 points)

While the attitude is becoming more relaxed in recent years, Japanese society still puts a lot of pressure on men to be the breadwinners for their family. "A man's worth is totally dependent on his financial situation," commented one 32-year-old survey respondent regarding his desire to have the higher bank balance.

2. Work ability (106 points)

Likewise, many of the men who were polled said they wouldn't want their girlfriend to be better at her job than they are at theirs, seeing a correlation between a man's workplace performance and his respectability.

1. Earnings (246 points)

With all this talk of economics and finances, it's not surprising to see it culminate in the top choice being the amount of money a man earns compared to his girlfriend. There's a little more than just macho pride at play here, though.

In Japan, it's relatively common for a woman to quit her job after childbirth, either because of personal preference or a lack of flexible work options or childcare avenues. As such, in many relationships there's an unspoken understanding that if things lead to marriage and children, at some point the husband is going to be asked to shoulder the load in providing for the household. "Money is an extremely important resource in taking care of a family," stated one 26-year-old respondent, so at least in his case, there's a bit of selflessness mixed in with his desire to outperform his sweetheart in this area.

Source: Yahoo! News Japan/R25 via Otakemu

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