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George Clooney Effect? High-Earning Women Want Older, More Attractive Partners, Research Finds

Psychologists have found that George Clooney may be even luckier than previously thought. Research at the University of Abertay Dundee discovered that as women become more financially independent, they want an older, more attractive male partner.

Studies have previously found that women place greater emphasis on whether a man can provide for them, while men place more importance on good looks. The new study revealed that as women earn more and become more independent, their tastes actually change.

The finding suggests that greater financial independence gives women greater confidence in choosing their partner. Instinctive preferences for material stability and security become less important, physical attractiveness becomes more important, and the age of partner women pick also increases.

Lead researcher Dr Fhionna Moore, a psychology lecturer at the University of Abertay Dundee, said: "Previous research shows that men place greater importance on physical attractiveness when picking a partner, whereas women focus much more on whether someone can provide material resources".

"We'd assumed that as women earn more, their partner preferences would actually become more like those of men, with a tendency towards preferring younger, more attractive partners rather than those who can provide and care for children".

"However, the preferred age difference did not change as we'd expected -- more financially independent women actually preferred even older men. We think this suggests greater financial independence gives women more confidence in partner choices, and attracts them to powerful, attractive older men."

The study was conducted online with 3770 heterosexual participants, who were asked questions about their background and personal situation, and their level of financial independence. 1851 women and 1919 men took part in the research.

Participants ranked a series of criteria such as physical attraction, financial prospects and sense of humour in order of importance, with these results matched against their income and financial independence.

"The behaviour of men and women does become more similar as women earn more, but only in terms of the importance of physical attraction," Dr Moore added. "But the similarities stop there: greater income makes women prefer even older men, and men prefer even younger women."

The popular stereotype of powerful women adopting male patterns of behaviour is strongly questioned by these new results.

Instead, as women become more independent it seems they have the confidence to pick partners from a wider age range -- and are much more confident in making physical attraction their number one consideration.

The research is published in the latest online issue of the journal *Evolutionary Psychology*.

The above story is reprinted from materials provided by University of Abertay Dundee.