

Gifted without work

An exploring study
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gifted
adults
foundation



Gifted adults & work: themes

- Being different; no connection; communication problems; not knowing own talents; bore-out; bullying
(Practice based articles, case-studies, books)
- What is a good supervisor for the gifted?; conflicts at work; experiences at work; where is your red button at work?; burn-out
(Studies with articles and reports)



A decorative background consisting of several overlapping circles in various colors including yellow, green, blue, and purple, arranged in a vertical line on the left side of the slide.

No research on gifted adults without work

- Only stories of gifted without work
- What are the contributing factors for getting into this situation and for staying without work? Is there a relation with giftedness?

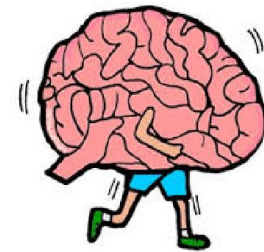
Arguments to study gifted without work

Negative implications of being without work

- Personal sorrow, lower wellbeing
- Loss of talents for society

Implications of knowledge

- Explain to the gifted
- Explain to employers, psychologists etc.
- Lessons for teachers and parents



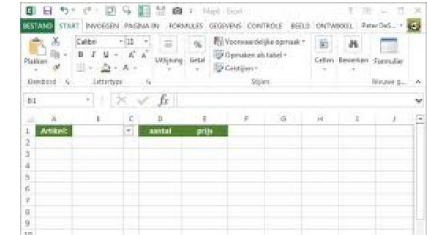
Inventarisatie

Starting end of 2013, now about 300

Questionnaire (June 2014)

Quantitative and qualitative

- General information (age etc)
- Reasons for losing their jobs
- Reasons for not finding (new) work
- Needs in relation to finding work
- Open space for personal experiences



Respondents

- N = 174 (72% response)
- In upper IQ range
- Women : men = 58% : 42%
- Average age: 46 years
- Education: >70% college/ university
- Experience in paid work: n = 160
- Average time without work: 45 months (max 389 months)



Compared to people without work in general:
higher age, higher educated

Experience of current situation in general

- Quite negative (70% bad or moderately bad)
- When positive: already back to work

Specifications:

- Want to contribute to society
- Want financial stability
- Want contacts with peers
- Bored
- Frustrated
- Angry



Top 5 (out of 14) factors for becoming jobless

	Factor	Explanations
1	Respondent self	Mental health, perfectionism, hypersensitivity, no meaning
2	Level of the work	No challenge, frustrating
3	Colleagues	Bad fit, colleagues feel intimidated/ jealous, not understood.
4	Supervisor	No understanding, conflict, threatening for supervisor, supervisor does not function well
5	Content/ type of work	Too much routine, underachievement

Relationship with giftedness

- Not recognised gifted as a child, not understood as a child, not having learned to deal with giftedness
- Expectations from others too high
- Education: not enough, not learned to study, underachieving
- Too much routine, boredom
- No fit with the work and organisation
- Communication with supervisor and colleagues difficult, conflicts

Top 5 (out of 14) factors for staying without a job

	Factor	Explanations
1	Respondent self	Physical barriers, unable to work, burn-out, depression, bore-out, mad because of procedures, negative characteristics of giftedness
2	Labour market	Overqualified, competition in lower paid jobs, age, no acceptance of people who think autonomous
3	Content/ type of work	Work is boring, stressful, pressure on achievement, no fit
4	Education	Not enough education, too highly educated, too broadly educated
5	Private circumstances	Giving care to gifted children, financial situation

Special: Selection procedures and committees

Relationship with giftedness

Experiences during application:

- Procedures, communication
 - Not wanting to play an act
 - Being different
 - Education, see next
- *Negative experiences lead to mental health problems*

Education: what did respondents say?

- 1) Many unfinished educations and courses; lack of diplomas
 - 2) Much selfeducation to high levels, without diplomas
 - 3) Too highly educated
 - 4) Wide variety of diplomas and experience (perceived as weird)
- *Negative experiences also lead to mental health problems*



Quotes: Meaning of work

I get energy while working together with others on a meaningful goal.

Collaboration gives inspiration.

Work gives me social contacts.



Quotes: What went wrong

I never had work on my level and I had often conflicts with supervisors.

I do not have the right education

I do not understand what goes wrong in job interviews



Quotes: What went well?

Every time I did get hired, I later learned that there was a gifted person in the selection committee



Quotes: What do I need?

Coaching or counseling to help in

- *Improving my job interviews*
- *Determining my talents*
- *Starting my own business*
- *Networking*

Money for

- *Education*
- *Starting my own business*

Traineeship to get back into the labor market

Top 3 needs of respondents

1. Coaching

- Sell yourself
- Self-knowledge and insight
- Self-confidence
- Analysis of talents
- Deminishing fear of failure

+ Coaching on the job

2. Networking (is also a coaching need)

3. More (relevant) education

Attention in media in The Netherlands January 2017



Nationwide newspaper

‘One third of gifted without work’

Trouw, 4 – 1- 17



Regional newspaper

‘Charwoman reading Plato’

Leeuwarder Courant, 6 – 1 - 17



‘Being smarter than your boss is not always easy’
Website Dutch broadcasting, 4 – 1 - 17

Television

Two/ three minutes in one of the main prime time news broadcasts.

Topic in several other programs.



Questions and points for discussion?

1. What did you learn from the results?
2. What can you use in your work with gifted adults and/or children?
3. New studies, research questions?



Thanks for your attention!



English summary of the Dutch report:

<https://ihbv.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/20170406-Summary-of-report-Very-smart-and-without-work.pdf>

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