

# An inductive qualitative research on the assessment center experiences of gifted adults

Master's thesis



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## Preface

This research was conducted as a completion of the Master Business Administration (specialization: Innovation & Entrepreneurship) at Radboud University (Nijmegen). Several persons have provided me with practical and academical support to this master's thesis. I would firstly like to thank my supervisor Dr. Alain De Beuckelaer for giving me the opportunity to write a thesis about giftedness, bringing me into contact with Dr. Noks Nauta, and providing me with valuable feedback throughout the process of writing my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Noks Nauta for her help in the recruitment of respondents for my research by placing an online announcement on the website, Facebook page, and LinkedIn groups related to the Gifted Adults Foundation (*Instituut Hoogbegaafdheid Volwassenen*), and her valuable feedback and suggestions that have contributed to the quality of this research. Lastly, I would like to thank the nine gifted respondents for their time and collaboration in allowing me to interview them. This master's thesis was awarded with a 9.

## Abstract

Prior research on giftedness points out that gifted adults can be of great value for organizations as their typical characteristics allow them to provide unique and significant contribution to innovation in organizations (Nauta & Ronner, 2008; Corten, Nauta & Ronner, 2006). It therefore is important for organizations to properly recognize the characteristics and talents of gifted adults during a personnel selection process. Despite the growing popularity of the assessment center (AC) method, no prior studies have investigated how gifted adults experience an AC or whether an AC is a valid method for the selection of gifted job applicants. The present study provides insight in what and how typical characteristics of gifted adults influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with nine gifted adults, after which the obtained data was analyzed and coded using an inductive analysis approach (Thomas, 2006). The inductive data analysis of the transcripts resulted in the following five categories that influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC: *'artificial/role play'*, *'need for authenticity'*, *'need for autonomy'*, *'different way of thinking'*, and *'not being understood'*. The present study contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, the present study contributes to the research on personnel selection methods by adopting an applicant/participant perspective on a popular personnel selection method (i.e., the AC). Second, the present study contributes to research on giftedness and research on gifted individuals without work (Emans, Visscher & Nauta, 2017) by examining how gifted adults experience an AC.

*Keywords:* gifted adults, giftedness, assessment center

## General introduction

Over the past decades, much research attention has been paid to personnel selection methods. The focus of personnel selection research was mainly on developing selection tests that maximized prediction of job performance, and a large majority of the studies adopt an organizational perspective<sup>1</sup> on the selection process (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Anderson, Lievens, Van Dam & Ryan, 2004). One such personnel selection method is the assessment center (AC); a place where a group of – typically six to twelve – individuals participate in a variety of exercises or techniques designed to measure predetermined qualities or dimensions (Furnham et al., 2008; Oliver et al., 2014; Moses, 1977). An AC is a popular and widely used tool in organizations for evaluating and selecting job candidates, as well as for identifying strengths and weaknesses for developmental purposes (Lievens, Tett & Schleicher, 2009; Krause, Kersting, Heggstad & Thornton, 2006; Furnham, Taylor & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; Howland, Rembisz, Wang-Jones, Heise & Brown, 2015; Spector, Schneider, Vance & Hezlett, 2000; Moses, 1977). Although there is great variety in the design of this personnel selection method, ACs typically consist of several exercises in which trained assessors observe and evaluate participants' interpersonal and problem solving skills and behavior (Oliver, Hausdorf, Lievens & Conlon, 2014; Spector et al., 2000; Lievens et al., 2009). Exercises that are commonly part of the AC include a leaderless group discussion, a team preparation and presentation, an *in-basket exercise*<sup>2</sup> and personality and intelligence tests, most of which are performed under

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<sup>1</sup> Research with an *organizational perspective* on the selection process, as opposed to an *applicant/participant perspective*, focuses on 'hard' validity and utility criteria, such as construct validity and predictive validity of a personnel selection method. According to an 'educated guess' made by Anderson and colleagues, less than 5% of all published studies into personnel selection (until 2004) adopt an applicant/participant perspective on personnel selection methods (Anderson et al., 2004).

<sup>2</sup> In an *in-basket exercise*, the participants of an AC assume the role of a key manager in a simulated business organization, and read and respond in writing to items that could appear in a manager's in-box.

time pressure. Whilst some of the abovementioned exercises require primarily cognitive problem-solving skills, other exercises require primarily personal characteristics or 'soft skills', also known as interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills refer to social sensitivity, listening, working with others, communication and relationship building (Lievens & Sackett, 2012). Although these interpersonal interactions are the mainstay of most AC exercises, little research has been conducted on how these interactions affect participants' behavior and performance (Oliver et al., 2014).

Participants' scores in ACs are commonly based on ratings of a number of behaviorally defined dimensions as they are assessed in several exercises (Lievens et al., 2009). These AC dimension ratings are typically combined into a single overall assessment rating (OAR), which is used for decision-making (Thornton & Gibbons, 2009). Although there is considerable discussion in the AC literature about whether ACs indeed effectively measure the dimensions they are designed to measure (Meriac, Hoffman & Woehr, 2014), plenty of researchers have demonstrated that AC dimension ratings predict several criteria that are important for effective functioning in organizations, such as career advancement, performance potential and training performance (Spector et al., 2000). Arthur, Day, McNelly, and Edens (2003) introduced a framework in which observed AC dimensions are organized into six overarching categories. The categories Arthur and colleagues propose are: (i) problem solving, (ii) influencing others, (iii) consideration/awareness of others, (iv) communication, (v) organizing and planning, and (vi) drive (Arthur et al., 2003; Meriac et al., 2014). Arthur et al.'s framework has been widely adopted by psychology and management scholars in the fifteen years since the study's publication (Meriac et al., 2014; Bowler & Woehr, 2006; Meriac, Hoffman, Woehr & Fleisher, 2008; Dilchert & Ones, 2009).

Research has shown that creative individuals<sup>3</sup> may well be at a disadvantage in team work with colleagues not of their own choosing, or when confronted with imposed constraints (e.g. time-pressure) on given tasks (Sijbom, Anseel, Crommelinck, De Beuckelaer & De Stobbeleir, 2017; Heylighen, 2007; Berliner, 2011; Byron, Khazanchi & Nazarian, 2010), both of which are important parts of an AC (Berliner, 2011; Byron, Khazanchi & Nazarian, 2010). One specific group of such creative individuals may be gifted adults, since gifted adults possess greater creative potential than adults with average intelligence (Corten, Nauta & Ronner, 2006; Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008; Heylighen, 2007; Lovecky, 1986). Although there is no single generally accepted definition of giftedness and all gifted adults are – by definition – unique, they do share certain typical characteristics. Some of the typical characteristics that correspond to giftedness include (i) the ability to handle complex cases and think ‘out of the box’, (ii) being autonomous, curious and passionate by nature, (iii) being sensitive and emotional, characterized as ‘intensely alive’, and (iv) possessing great creative potential (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008; Corten et al., 2006). Another interesting characteristic of gifted adults as reported by professionals is that they often do not feel at home in groups, as a result of which they tend to keep a low profile with regard to their ideas and wishes, occasionally leading to under-performance (Corten et al., 2006). Gifted adults can also be perceived as difficult to approach, or not particularly social (Nauta & Corten, 2002). The unique characteristics of gifted adults can sometimes lead to difficulties or pitfalls at work. Some of the pitfalls gifted adults encounter at work are (i) communication problems with colleagues due to their ability to think and react relatively quickly, and (ii) difficulties with routine work, regularly leading to boredom (Corten et al., 2006). Besides, gifted adults commonly ignore or

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<sup>3</sup> Creativity can be defined as the production of ideas, solutions, or products that are novel (i.e., original) and appropriate (i.e., useful) in a given situation (Amabile, 1996).

don't understand the importance of authority and status, and often fail to take up their rightful position, if that is required, for example, in projects (Corten et al., 2006). Furthermore, conflicts with supervisors and/or colleagues and burnout are reported as problems related to gifted adults' experience at work (Van der Waal, Nauta & Lindhout, 2013; Elshof, 2016). However, gifted adults can be of great value for organizations as their typical characteristics allow them to provide a unique and significant contribution to innovation in organizations<sup>4</sup> (Nauta & Ronner, 2008; Corten et al., 2006). It is important for organizations that the characteristics and talents of gifted adults are properly recognized during a personnel selection process, since a lot of innovative talent might go unnoticed otherwise. According to an estimation made by Corten and colleagues, about 20-40%<sup>5</sup> of all gifted adults are not working in a position appropriate to their abilities (Corten et al., 2006). The fact that the assumption by some professionals is, that a considerable percentage of the gifted adults has not found an appropriate place in society could partially be caused by the fact that choosing a career path is a big challenge for gifted adults, especially when the gifted adult is a *multipotential person*<sup>6</sup>, meaning that he/she may be capable of success across a diversity of areas as a result of his/her multiple strengths and interests (Rinn & Bishop, 2015). However, one could speculate that another reason why many gifted adults struggle to find an appropriate working place is that gifted adults face difficulties or are at a disadvantage in

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<sup>4</sup> Corten and colleagues (2006) presented a list of specific contributions that gifted individuals can make to the innovation process in an organization. This list is presented in Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> This value is an 'educated guess' on the part of the authors.

<sup>6</sup> Fredrickson (1979) defines a *multipotential person* as "any individual who, when provided with appropriate environments, can select and develop any number of competencies to a high level" (p. 268). In their study on career indecisiveness of adolescents of high intellectual ability, Jung and Young (2017) define *multipotentiality* as "a high level of capability and interest in multiple areas" (p. 723). Achter and colleagues suggest that the issue of multipotentiality does not apply to a majority of gifted individuals; their quantitative study points out that only 4.8% of all gifted individuals can be considered a multipotential person (Achter, Benbow & Lubinski, 1997). In earlier research, multipotentiality was assumed to be a critical factor that often leads to difficulties in making career decisions for gifted individuals (Emmett & Minor, 1993).

personnel selection methods like an AC. In a study conducted by Emans and colleagues, 174 gifted adults<sup>7</sup> who are involuntary without work were interviewed about possible factors related to giftedness and the process of losing a job and the incapacity of finding a new job (Emans, Visscher & Nauta, 2017). In this study, some respondents made the suggestion that standard personnel selection methods do not seem to have been developed for gifted individuals, and that their multifacetedness, creativity and diverse set of capacities are therefore not properly appreciated (Emans et al., 2017). Furthermore, 52 per cent of the respondents indicated that job application procedures play a role in regard to their incapacity of finding a job (Emans et al., 2017). However, no prior studies have investigated how gifted adults experience an AC or whether an AC is a valid method for the selection of gifted job applicants.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it is important to investigate what and how typical characteristics of gifted adults influence how gifted adults participate in an AC. The results of this study can help in gaining an understanding of how both the interpersonal and the (cognitive) problem-solving aspects affect the behavior and performance of participants in an AC. Also, the results of this study can lead to recommendations on how to improve an AC in such a way that this personnel selection method is better suited to recognize the unique talents and abilities of gifted adults. The research aim of the present study is exploring what and how typical characteristics of gifted adults influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. The general introduction ends here. In the following section, background literature on the AC method and giftedness will be explicated, which will result in the formulation of propositions (i.e., expected research outcomes).

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that 50 out of the 174 respondents are self-proclaimed gifted (Emans et al., 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Both *Web of Science* and *Google Scholar* were searched with the keywords 'giftedness assessment center', 'giftedness assessment centre', 'gifted assessment center', and 'gifted assessment centre'. *Web of Science* showed a total of 28 results. None of the 28 results was relevant. *Google Scholar* showed no relevant results on the first 10 pages of the results for each keyword.

## Theoretical background

The present study is aimed at exploring what and how typical characteristics of gifted adults influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. First, theoretical backgrounds on the AC method and giftedness will be provided, which will result in the formulation of research propositions.

### *Assessment center: history and development*

Before describing in more detail what the AC method entails and what validity issues play a role in the AC literature, the history and development of the AC will be briefly explained, to place this personnel selection method in its historical context. The AC has its origin approximately 75 years ago, in World War II, although some early references to the concept of an AC can be seen in the work of German psychologists in the early 1900s (Lance, 2008; Woodruffe, 1995; Moses, 1977; Howland et al., 2015). During World War II, both the British and the American army made use of the AC method for the selection of military officers as well as for identifying and selecting officers who could successfully undertake hazardous intelligence-gathering missions – so-called spies or secret agents (Moses, 1977; Howland et al., 2015). In the American army, the AC method was developed by a group of psychologists, led by Dr. Henry Murray of the Harvard Psychological Clinic, and included leaderless group exercises, objective selection tests, and personal interviews by three assessors (Lance, 2008; Woodruffe, 1995; Moses, 1977). The success of the AC method first led to its widespread adoption throughout the army, after which the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) began to use the AC method in the 1950s in their Management Progress Study (Lance, 2008; Woodruffe, 1995; Moses, 1977). The Management Progress Study was a longitudinal

research project in which a large sample of young business managers in the telephone business was followed throughout their career, with the purpose of tracing their growth and development (Moses, 1977). An AC was developed to determine the initial effectiveness of the sample of business managers, and consisted of a three and a half day process in which a team of specially trained managers and psychologists rated the business managers on 25 management qualities or dimensions, including decision making, leadership and advancement motivation (Moses, 1977; Lance, 2008). Shortly after AT&T made use of the AC in the Management Progress Study, organizations like IBM, General Electric, and Caterpillar Tractor began adopting the AC method, and the AC was – and still is – being used both for the selection of management personnel and to decide upon people’s readiness for promotion and their potential to develop further (Lievens et al., 2009; Krause et al., 2006; Howland et al., 2015; Moses, 1977; Woodruffe, 1995; Arthur et al., 2003; Lance, 2008). Currently, an estimated 50.000 ACs are in operation worldwide (Howland et al., 2015).

### *The assessment center method*

An AC can be thought of as both a place and a process. As mentioned in the general introduction, an AC is a place where a group of – typically six to twelve – individuals participate in a variety of exercises or techniques designed to measure predetermined qualities or dimensions (Furnham et al., 2008; Oliver et al., 2014; Moses, 1977). However, an AC can also be seen as a process designed to provide standardized and objective conditions of evaluation (Moses, 1977). Seen as a process, an AC consists of three aspects or components. The first component consists of a list of qualities or dimensions related to the characteristics sought in the position or job level in question. In 2003, Arthur and colleagues published a paper in which

they investigate the criterion-related validity<sup>9</sup> of AC dimension ratings (Arthur et al., 2003; Meriac et al., 2014). That is, Arthur and colleagues made use of meta-analysis to examine the ability of AC dimension ratings to predict job performance (Arthur et al., 2003; Lievens, Dilchert & Ones, 2009). In order to organize AC dimensions into seven overarching categories, they studied 34 articles that reported a total of 168 (different) AC dimensions (Arthur et al., 2003). The seven primary categories Arthur and colleagues proposed were (i) problem solving, (ii) tolerance for stress/uncertainty, (iii) influencing others, (iv) consideration/awareness of others, (v) communication, (vi) organizing and planning, and (vii) drive (Arthur et al., 2003; Meriac et al., 2014). However, *tolerance for stress/uncertainty* was removed due to heterogeneity among the associated dimensions, since the primary 168 AC dimensions that were being combined into the *tolerance for stress/uncertainty* dimension category were very different constructs, and were heterogeneous in nature, especially when compared with the other six dimension categories (Arthur et al., 2003; Meriac et al., 2014). The removal of the *tolerance for stress/uncertainty* dimension category resulted in a six-dimension framework, that has been widely adopted by psychology and management scholars<sup>10</sup> (Meriac et al., 2014; Bowler & Woehr, 2006; Meriac et al., 2008; Dilchert & Ones, 2009). Arthur and colleagues found criterion-related validities<sup>11</sup> between .25 and .39 for all six AC dimensions, indicating

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<sup>9</sup> Criterion-related validity is the correspondence between a test measure and one or more external criteria (that is/are expected to show a strong or weak correlation with the test measure), usually measured by their correlation, and is often divided into *concurrent* and *predictive* validity (Drost, 2011). *Concurrent validity* measures how well a particular test correlates with a previously validated measure, whereas *predictive validity* refers to the ability of a test to predict performance on a criterion measure administered at a later point in time (Drost, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Although Arthur et al.'s six-dimension framework has been widely adopted, Meriac and colleagues argue that "despite its popularity, Arthur et al.'s framework was not based on an a priori model of the managerial skills and performance domain, empirical research has not investigated its fit to the available data, and this model has never benefited from a large-scale comparison to alternative models." (Meriac et al., 2014, p. 1270).

<sup>11</sup> The *validity coefficient* indicates the height of the correlation between the predictor (i.e., the AC dimension rating) and an external variable (i.e., subsequent job performance), and is reported as a number between 0 and 1 (Thornton & Gibbons, 2009). The larger the validity coefficient, the better is the AC dimension able to predict subsequent job performance. Generally, however, the validity coefficient of a single predictor (i.e., one single AC

that AC dimension ratings are valid predictors of job performance (Arthur et al., 2003). This is in line with many other scholars, who have consistently indicated that ACs demonstrate sound predictive validity (Gaugler, Rosenthal, Thornton & Bentson, 1987; Hermelin, Lievens & Robertson, 2007; Meriac et al., 2008; Krause et al., 2006).

The second component of an AC consists of a series of exercises or techniques designed to provide information to evaluate the abovementioned qualities or dimensions. One crucial benefit of AC exercises is that instead of merely getting a generic sense of one's behavioral tendencies, these exercises can be systematically designed to evoke certain behaviors within critical job-relevant situations (Oliver et al., 2014; Schollaert, 2011). Therefore, one of the main advantages of ACs compared to other personnel selection methods is that assessors have the opportunity to observe actual behavior in a simulated work setting, also referred to as a 'high-fidelity' simulation (Schollaert, 2011). As mentioned in the general introduction, AC exercises require both cognitive problem-solving skills and 'soft skills', also known as personal characteristics or interpersonal skills (Oliver et al., 2014; Spector et al., 2000; Lievens et al., 2009). A distinction can be made between two dimensions of interpersonal skills, namely (i) building and maintaining relationships (e.g., helping and supporting others), and (ii) communication/exchanging information (e.g., informing others and gathering information) (Lievens & Sackett, 2012). Typical exercises that require primarily interpersonal skills include a leaderless group discussion, role plays, and oral presentations (Woodruffe, 1995; Oliver et al., 2014). Exercises that focus more on cognitive problem-solving skills include in-basket exercises and intelligence tests (Spector et al., 2000; Oliver et al., 2014; Woodruffe, 1995).

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dimension rating) rarely exceeds .60, since a single AC dimension rating cannot perfectly predict subsequent job performance.

The third and final component of an AC is the staff of assessors. The role of the specialized and trained staff of assessors is to administer the assessment process as well as to interpret the observed behaviors (Oliver et al., 2014; Moses, 1977). To assure the quality of the AC, assessors must be able to assimilate a great deal of information rapidly and be relatively free of personal biases (Moses, 1977).<sup>12</sup> Since the staff of assessors is one of the most critical components of an AC, organizations commonly put a lot of effort in the selection and training of adequate assessors (Moses, 1977).

### *The validity of assessment centers*

Over the past 30 years, various scholars have tried to assess and compare the validity of several assessment methods such as interviews, cognitive ability tests, and ACs (Furnham et al., 2008; Krause et al., 2006; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Meriac et al., 2014). Many of these scholars place ACs above other methods in terms of their predictive validity, since AC dimension ratings have been found to be predictive of several criteria that are important for effective functioning in organizations, including salary progress, training performance, career advancement, and performance potential (Anderson & Cunningham-Snell, 2000; Krause et al., 2006). The predictive validity of an assessment method is of great importance for organizations, since use of personnel selection methods with increased predictive validity leads to increases in employee's learning of job-related skills, an increase in employee's output (in terms of percentage) and increased monetary value of output (Schmidt & Hunter,

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<sup>12</sup> Research by Melchers and colleagues indicates that the quality of the assessors' evaluation impairs as the number of participants that have to be observed increases (Melchers, Kleinmann & Prinz, 2010). Furthermore, Woehr and Arthur found that psychologists who serve as assessors provided better measurement of AC dimensions than managerial assessors (Woehr & Arthur, 2003). Bartels and Doverspike (1997) examined the relationship between assessor personality and AC rating leniency, and reported that assessors who score high in sensitivity, intelligence, and stability tended to be more lenient in their AC ratings.

1998). However, Furnham, Taylor, and Chamorro-Premuzic (2008) dispute the predictive validity of ACs, since ACs are commonly tailor-made and therefore particularly relevant and applicable to the group of individuals tested and the job being advertised. According to Furnham and colleagues, tailor-made ACs only have *face validity*<sup>13</sup> and not *predictive validity*, since “assessment centers (frequently) are commissioned by organizations in the belief that their face validity and relationship to the job analysis-based requirements of the job must mean they are valid” (Furnham et al., 2008, p. 182). Therefore, Furnham and colleagues argue that the predictive validity of ACs is assumed, not investigated or empirically established (Furnham et al., 2008). However, various scholars have empirically assessed the predictive validity of ACs and have consistently found that ACs demonstrate sound predictive validity (Gaugler et al., 2004; Hermelin et al., 2007; Meriac et al., 2008; Krause et al., 2006; Spector et al., 2000; Arthur et al., 2003).

ACs are often referred to as the *Rolls Royce* of selection methods, since they are very expensive in terms of money, time and effort compared to cognitive ability, intelligence or personality tests (Schollaert, 2011). Therefore, a potential concern involves the extent to which AC ratings make an incremental (i.e., unique) contribution to the prediction of future job performance – or other relevant criteria – over more economical and less complex assessment methods (Meriac et al., 2008; Dayan, Kasten & Fox, 2002; Spector et al., 2000). That is, do AC ratings show incremental variance over and above – for instance – a cognitive ability test? Various scholars have assessed this *incremental predictive validity* of AC ratings, and whereas some studies did not find AC ratings to have incremental predictive validity over

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<sup>13</sup> Face validity refers to the degree to which an assessment or test subjectively appears to measure the variable or construct that it claims to measure (Drost, 2011). Since face validity is a *subjective* judgment, it is often seen as a weak form of validity (Drost, 2011).

cognitive ability (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998), most scholars did find AC ratings to provide unique contribution to the prediction of future job performance beyond cognitive ability and personality tests (Schmitt, 1977; Krause et al., 2006; Goldstein, Yusko, Braverman, Smith & Chung, 1998; Goffin, Rothstein & Johnston, 1996; Dayan et al., 2002).

Although ACs have demonstrated to be decent predictors of future job performance (i.e., predictive validity) and provide unique contribution to the prediction of job performance beyond simpler assessment methods (i.e., incremental predictive validity), the AC method has been criticized repeatedly for not being able to demonstrate that it actually measures the set of predetermined dimensions that it is supposed to measure (i.e., construct-related validity) (Lance, 2008; Sackett & Dreher, 1982; Lievens & Conway, 2001; Bowler & Woehr, 2006; Lievens & Christiansen, 2012; Arthur, Day & Woehr, 2008). Sackett and Dreher (1982) investigated the construct-related validity of ACs by assessing both the *convergent* and *discriminant* validity of AC dimension ratings. One would expect that in a valid AC, ratings of the same dimension across different AC exercises would be highly correlated (i.e., convergent validity)<sup>14</sup> and ratings of different dimensions would be correlated to a much lesser extent within a specific AC exercise (i.e., discriminant validity) (Thornton & Gibbons, 2009; Schollaert, 2011). However, Sackett and Dreher (1982) found precisely the opposite pattern: low correlations among ratings of a single dimension across exercises (i.e., weak convergent validity) and high correlations among ratings of different dimensions within the same exercise (i.e., weak discriminant validity). Since the publication of Sackett and Dreher's study in 1982, many other scholars have likewise shown that the convergent and discriminant validity of AC dimension

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted, however, that one cannot expect the convergent validity of AC dimension ratings to be extremely high, since AC exercises are not designed to be parallel 'tests' and many AC dimensions cannot be regarded to be stable personality traits (Lance, 2008).

ratings are typically weak (see Lievens & Christiansen, 2012; Lievens & Conway, 2001; Bowler & Woehr, 2006, for large-scale reviews). In line with the consistent criticism on the construct-related validity of AC dimension ratings, Lance (2008) even proposes to remove dimensions entirely from the scoring and interpretation of ACs, since “postexercise dimension ratings substantially reflect the effects of the exercises in which they were completed and not the dimensions they were designed to reflect” (Lance, 2008, p. 84). That is, Lance (2008) argues that ACs do not measure dimensions but situationally specific exercise performance, and therefore suggests that AC researchers should view exercises as work samples and should assign overall performance scores for each exercise, rather than attempting to rate different predetermined dimensions (Lance, 2008). Some authors that suggest not to entirely remove AC dimensions point at previous research that has shown that *both* dimensions and exercises accounted for variance in AC performance (Arthur, Day & Woehr, 2008; Lievens & Conway, 2001).

### *Giftedness*

In this section, giftedness will be further elaborated upon, resulting in five research propositions. Until about 15 years ago, hardly any attention was paid to gifted adults (Van der Waal et al., 2013; Overzier & Nauta, 2013; Rinn & Bishop, 2015). It was generally thought that gifted adults are so smart that they do not need any help. But before describing the problems gifted adults may encounter, the concept of giftedness has to be set forth. There is no generally accepted definition of giftedness. Traditionally, giftedness was measured in terms of intelligence only, and any person who scored at least 130 (or above the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile; i.e., the upper 2% of the population) on a validated intelligence (or: IQ) test was labelled *gifted* (Heylighen, 2007). However, *high intelligence* and *giftedness* are not identical, although many

authors do not make any difference between these concepts (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). High scores on an intelligence test merely give a strong indication of giftedness, but certainly do not define and/or explain what giftedness entails (Heylighen, 2007). Giftedness is a complex psychological construct, and several scholars have made characterizations and/or models regarding the personality traits that correspond to giftedness (Lovecky, 1986; Shavinina, 1995; Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008; Heylighen, 2007). The giftedness model that is highlighted in the present study is the Delphi-model of giftedness<sup>15</sup>, presented by Kooijman-van Thiel in 2008. Apart from describing a gifted individual, this model analyzes giftedness from the basic premise that a gifted individual is in contact with society, and therefore takes into account the usability of giftedness in daily life (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). In order to characterize giftedness in a model, a national consensus trajectory was carried out in the Netherlands in 2006 and 2007 regarding what a group of 20 experts precisely consider the key elements of 'giftedness' (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). These experts consisted of people who are themselves gifted and who also deal with gifted individuals in their work, including career coaches, psychologists, a psychiatrist and occupational health physicians (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). The Delphi method<sup>16</sup> was used as research tool, since this technique is suited to obtain the most reliable consensus of a group of experts on a certain topic (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). In the resulting Delphi-model of giftedness, which tries to represent both the inner self of the gifted individual as well as society, a gifted individual is described as "a quick and intelligent

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<sup>15</sup> The Delphi-model of giftedness (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008) is presented in Appendix B.

<sup>16</sup> The *Delphi method* is a research method that aims at structuring a group communication process, in which a group of individuals – experts in a certain field – deal with a complex problem in order to reach consensus about – for example – what they consider to be 'giftedness' (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). The *Delphi method* (research method) should not be confused with the *Delphi-model of giftedness* (the resulting model that characterizes giftedness).

thinker, who can handle complex cases. Independent, curious, and passionate by nature [sic].  
A sensitive and emotional person, intensely alive.” (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008, p. 69).

In addition to the Delphi-model of giftedness, the Gifted Adults Foundation (IHBV<sup>17</sup>) presented a leaflet in 2014 in which qualities and pitfalls for gifted individuals during work are presented (IHBV, 2014; the qualities and pitfalls are presented in Table 1). It should be noted that the pitfalls mentioned in the table below occur mainly when there is a lack of balance between or within the different facets<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> *Instituut Hoogbegaafdheid Volwassenen*; located in Delft, The Netherlands.

<sup>18</sup> Both the Delphi-model of giftedness and the table that depicts qualities and pitfalls for gifted individuals at work (Table 1) distinguish between inner and interactive *facets* of giftedness. These facets represent either *inner* or *interactive* aspects of giftedness. *Thinking, being, and feeling* are labelled inner facets, since these aspects of giftedness involve the gifted individual’s inner self, whereas *observing, wanting, and doing* are labelled interactive facets, since these aspects of giftedness concern interaction between the gifted individual and the rest of society.

Table 1 – Qualities and pitfalls at work of gifted individuals (IHBV, 2014)

<b>What is giftedness?</b>	<b>Qualities at work</b>	<b>Pitfalls at work</b>
<u><i>Inner and interactive facets</i></u>		
A very high IQ (thinking)	Quick overview, quick expertise	Judges too fast, skips steps
Independent; autonomous (being)	Independent	Very headstrong, conflicts
Intensely alive; sensitive (feeling)	Nuanced	Too emotional
Sensory sensitivity (observing)	Sees a lot	Oversensitive to stimuli
Ambitious and curious (wanting)	Driven and curious	Unstoppable
Creative (doing)	Creative, innovative	Does many unnecessary things
<u><i>Interplays</i></u>		
Creative	Creative, innovative	Has no direction
Intense	Deeply involved	Does not know own limits
Quick	Fast, learns new things quickly	Loses contact with others
Complex	Good overview	Gets stuck on details

Whereas the Delphi-model of giftedness analyzes the gifted individual by considering *inner* and *interactive* facets, both Shavinina (1995) and Heylighen (2007)<sup>19</sup> describe giftedness on the basis of four personality traits that distinguish gifted individuals from individuals with average intelligence. These personality traits will now be described and supplemented with additional research findings aimed at further characterizing and conceptualizing giftedness. It should be noted that some of the traits or characteristics will be more developed in the one than in the other, since each gifted individual is – by definition – unique. Each of the four personality traits will be followed by – one or more – propositions (i.e., expected research outcomes), resulting in a total of five propositions.

The first personality trait that is described by both Shavinina (1995) and Heylighen (2007) is a *high level of cognitive ability*. Their high level of cognitive ability allows gifted individuals to excel at reasoning and problem-solving and to connect seemingly unrelated phenomena by thinking ‘out of the box’ (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007; Corten et al., 2006; Lovecky, 1986). They also quickly grasp abstract and complex concepts, since their general comprehension is far advanced (Heylighen, 2007). Furthermore, gifted individuals are characterized by an unusual curiosity and a wide variety of deeply significant strong interests, which, together with their rich and vivid imagination and their capacity to connect and integrate phenomena, gives them a remarkable creativity (Corten et al., 2006; Shavinina, 1995, Heylighen, 2007; Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). Despite the positive aspects of a high level of cognitive ability, communication problems with colleagues – or participants in an AC – can arise. These

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<sup>19</sup> The characterizations of giftedness made by Shavinina (1995) and Heylighen (2007) are used as a guideline in the theoretical elaboration on giftedness, since both authors characterize giftedness on the basis of the same four personality traits. However, several other authors are referred to as well, to get a more thorough comprehension of the concept.

communication problems are partly caused by gifted individuals' ability to think and react more quickly than non-gifted individuals (Corten et al., 2006). Other people can have difficulties to really understand gifted individuals, what can reinforce gifted individuals' feeling of 'being different', especially when a gifted individual was not recognized as gifted during childhood and does not associate problems in communication with others with giftedness (Heylighen, 2007; Corten et al., 2006). Additionally, gifted individuals commonly experience difficulties with regard to making connection with others (e.g., participants in an AC), generally do not feel at home in groups, and are typically seen as introverts (Overzier & Nauta, 2013; Corten et al., 2006; Heylighen, 2007). One could speculate that these aspects of giftedness contribute to gifted individuals' communication problems in an AC, since interpersonal interactions are paramount in ACs. This first personality trait leads to the first proposition (i.e., expected research outcome) of the present study:

***Proposition 1:*** *Gifted adults experience communication problems with other participants and problems concerning making connection to other participants in an AC, due to their ability to think and react more quickly than non-gifted individuals.*

The second personality trait that Shavinina (1995) and Heylighen (2007) relate to giftedness is a *high level of perceptiveness and emotional intensity*. Gifted individuals show an excellent sense of observation and perception, and are often sensitive to minor changes in the environment (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007). Besides this sensory sensitivity, gifted individuals commonly also possess a high emotional perceptiveness, which allows them to quickly recognize and identify feelings and emotions of their interaction partners (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007). Therefore, gifted individuals tend to be very compassionate and have

great empathy for other people (Heylighen, 2007). Due to their high emotional perceptiveness, gifted individuals tend to undergo intense feelings and experiences (i.e., emotional intensity) (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007). According to Kooijman-van Thiel (2008), this personality trait is characterized by the fact that gifted individuals are sensitive and emotional, characterized as 'intensely alive'. Another aspect of this personality trait is that gifted individuals are able to see several 'layers' of a person simultaneously (Lovecky, 1986). In the study on gifted adults without work conducted by Emans and colleagues, some respondents indicated that job application procedures can be difficult for them since they have problems with participating in what they perceive as a role play (i.e., the job application procedure – in this case an AC) (Emans et al., 2017). One could argue that gifted individuals' high level of perceptiveness leads to difficulties with regard to 'selling themselves' in an AC (i.e., displaying the best version of themselves), since they perceive the procedure as a fictitious and artificial role play. Furthermore, gifted individuals typically strongly value honesty and integrity (Heylighen, 2007), have a highly developed feeling for justice (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007), and do not allow themselves to be put under social pressure (Corten, Nauta & Ronner, 2006), which could explain why gifted individuals have objections to participate in – what they perceive as – a fictitious and artificial role play (i.e., an AC). This second personality trait leads to the second proposition of the present study:

***Proposition 2:*** *Gifted adults' high level of perceptiveness leads to gifted adults experiencing difficulties with regard to 'selling themselves' in an AC, since they may perceive the AC as a fictitious role play, which they have objections against.*

The third personality trait Shavinina (1995) and Heylighen (2007) mention is *high intrinsic motivation*. Gifted individuals often have a high intrinsic motivation to achieve excellence, and they pursue excellence with great passion and a great deal of energy (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007). Once gifted individuals are interested in a certain topic, they are persistent and have a long attention span, a characteristic described by Heylighen as “an overwhelming desire to know and understand” (Heylighen, 2007, p. 6). A downside of such high intrinsic motivation and ambition is the hang for perfectionism<sup>20</sup> (Heylighen, 2007). Gifted individuals may demand such high standards from the finished piece of work that it may never get realized (Heylighen, 2007). Not only do gifted individuals tend to set high standards for themselves, they also can have unrealistic appraisals of other people, expecting them to tackle problems the same way or with the same ease as they themselves would do, but that might just be above the head of a non-gifted individual (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007). This personality trait leads to the third proposition of the present study:

***Proposition 3:*** *Gifted adults are at a disadvantage in time-constraint AC exercises because of their hang for perfectionism, since their persistence and creativity is being constrained by time.*

The fourth personality trait described by Shavinina (1995) and Heylighen (2007) is a *high level of independence and non-conformism*. Since gifted individuals possess a great intrinsic motivation and are driven by their own goals rather than those imposed by society, gifted

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<sup>20</sup> Perfectionism can be defined as striving for “high standards of performance which are accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations of one’s own behavior” (Frost, Marten, Lahart & Rosenblate, 1990, p. 450). However, it should be noted that several authors distinguish between positive and negative aspects of the psychological construct of *perfectionism*. For example, Bransky and colleagues make a distinction between *enabling perfectionism* that empowers individuals and *disabling perfectionism* that cripples individuals (Bransky, Jenkins-Friedman & Murphy, 1987). In line with this categorization, Hamachek (1978) distinguishes *normal perfectionism* (i.e., perfectionism marked by striving to attain a standard of excellence) from *neurotic perfectionism* (i.e., striving for standards that cannot be met and the fear of making mistakes).

individuals tend to be very independent and autonomous (Heylighen, 2007; Shavinina, 1995). They commonly have a preference for working alone, due to the fact that social interaction – and working with non-gifted individuals – can be frustrating to gifted individuals as a result of their ability to think and react more quickly than non-gifted individuals (Heylighen, 2007). Besides, gifted individuals are generally *non-conformist*, which means that they generally prefer to reach their own understanding of an issue rather than to accept the view or opinion of a higher authority or intellectual establishment (Corten et al., 2006; Heylighen, 2007). As a result of their non-conformism, gifted individuals may disregard common social rules, such as not criticizing others publicly (Lovecky, 1986). Another downside of non-conformism is that gifted individuals may feel different and out of step with society, resulting in a sense of being alone in the world (Heylighen, 2007). Furthermore, gifted individuals will generally not be shy to express their reasoning if their conclusions run counter to the accepted conclusion in for instance a leaderless group discussion in an AC, which might lead to conflict and/or frustrations. Another psychological aspect of giftedness is that gifted individuals often do not feel at home in groups (Corten et al., 2006). As a result, gifted adults participating in an AC might keep a low profile with regard to their ideas, which can be described as ‘diving behavior’ (Corten et al., 2006). This personality trait leads to the fourth and fifth proposition of the present study:

***Proposition 4:*** *Gifted adults’ typical preference for working alone, independence, and non-conformism lead to gifted adults having difficulty in AC exercises such as a leaderless group discussion or a team preparation and presentation, since in that setting they cannot independently use their high level of cognitive ability and creativity to find the best solution to a problem.*

**Proposition 5:** *Gifted adults' typical characteristic of not feeling at home in groups and preference for working alone leads to gifted adults keeping a low profile with regard to their ideas and wishes (i.e., diving behavior) and under-performance in AC exercises.*

## **Methodology**

The research aim of the present study is exploring what and how typical characteristics of gifted adults influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. Based on literature on giftedness and the AC method, five propositions have been formulated that describe expected research outcomes. Qualitative research is employed to examine the formulated propositions. Semi-structured interviews have been designed and conducted, after which the obtained data was analyzed and coded using an inductive analysis approach (Thomas, 2006). In this section, the recruitment and characteristics of the respondents will be described, after which the data collection and data analysis will be further elaborated upon.

### *Respondents*

Data was collected by interviewing 9 gifted adults, which were recruited by an online announcement (see Appendix C for the announcement) placed on the websites, Facebook pages and LinkedIn groups of both the Gifted Adults Foundation (IHBV) and [www.ikbenhoogbegaafd.nl](http://www.ikbenhoogbegaafd.nl)<sup>21</sup>. Two selection criteria were upheld in the online announcement. First, the respondent had to be gifted<sup>22</sup>. Second, the respondent had to have participated in

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<sup>21</sup> [www.ikbenhoogbegaafd.nl](http://www.ikbenhoogbegaafd.nl) is a Dutch website founded by a gifted adult (Willem Wind) that focuses on news, literature, research, personal experiences, and numbers on giftedness. The website has around 700 weakly visitors.

<sup>22</sup> The respondents were asked why they perceive themselves gifted. Three types of answers were given. First, some respondents indicated that they had done a validated IQ test, which resulted in a score of at least 130.

at least one AC. However, since only six people responded to the announcement that had participated in at least one AC, three gifted adults were interviewed that did not have participated in an AC and therefore did not meet the second criteria. The interviews with the three gifted respondents that had not participated in an AC were used to get a better understanding of the characteristics that correspond to giftedness. In the table below (Table 2), the characteristics of the interviewed respondents are presented. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, the names of the respondents are not presented in the study.

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Second, some respondents stated that they are a member of Mensa, which is an international organization for (mostly) gifted individuals. Third, some respondents indicated that they recognize themselves in (most) characteristics of giftedness. Table 2 summarizes why each respondent perceives him- or herself gifted.

Table 2 – Characteristics of the respondents

Respondent	Sex	Age	Nationality	Number of ACs <sup>23</sup>	Why does the respondent perceive him-/herself gifted?
1	Male	51	Dutch	–	Recognizes characteristics giftedness
2	Male	36	Dutch	2	Member of Mensa
3	Female	43	Belgian	3	Recognizes characteristics giftedness
4	Male	52	Belgian	–	Recognizes characteristics giftedness
5	Male	45	Dutch	3	IQ test score at least 130
6	Female	33	Belgian	1	Recognizes characteristics giftedness
7	Female	46	Dutch	1	Recognizes characteristics giftedness
8	Male	55	Dutch	–	IQ test score at least 130
9	Male	47	Dutch	2	Recognizes characteristics giftedness

#### *Data collection*

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews via Skype with each of the respondents between November 2017 and January 2018. The semi-structured interview method fits well with the research aim of the study, since semi-structured interviews are well suited for the exploration of experiences and perceptions of the respondents regarding their participation in an AC, whilst enabling probing for more information or clarification of particular answers (Barriball & While, 1994). Since the data was collected by interviewing

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<sup>23</sup> The number indicates the number of times the respondent has participated in an AC. When the respondent has not participated in an AC, a dash is included in the table.

human respondents, some ethical considerations were taken into account. Before the interviews took place, each respondent was informed about the aim of the research and the type of questions the respondent could expect. The respondents were also asked for permission to record the interview, and were informed that their anonymity would be guaranteed, that their answers would only be used for scientific purposes, and that the interview would take about 45 minutes. Furthermore, the usage of Skype allowed the respondents to remain in a safe environment (i.e., their homes), without the interviewer entering their personal space (Hanna, 2012), and the respondents were given the opportunity to choose when they wanted the interview to take place. A more practical advantage of the usage of Skype was that no money and time had to be spent on travelling.

An interview guide of 20 open-ended questions (see Appendix D for interview guide) was made before the interviews, to make sure every topic mentioned in the five formulated propositions would be covered during the interview. However, the semi-structured interview method allowed to follow relevant topics that distracted from the interview guide (Barriball & While, 1994). Therefore, not every open-ended question mentioned in the interview guide has been asked in the same order during each interview. In fact, since three respondents did not participate in an AC, some questions from the interview guide had to be skipped during the interviews with those respondents. However, the six respondents that had participated in an AC were asked the same questions, using – nearly – exactly the same words, to ensure that any differences in the answers would not be due to the questions asked, which increases the reliability – or: replicability – of the study.

Each interview started with a brief introduction of the research and three general questions, after which the topics mentioned in each of the five propositions were asked about in the interview. To increase the validity of the study, the questions were stated in a neutral way (i.e., no leading questions), to avoid a possible bias of directing the answers provided by the respondent that would support the formulated propositions. The interviews took between 35 and 60 minutes, and were transcribed within a week after the interview. To avoid possible misrepresentations on the part of the interviewer with regard to what the respondent had stated during the interview, the transcript was sent to the corresponding respondent, and each respondent was given the opportunity to make adjustments to the transcript. Two respondents made adjustments to the transcript, and the adjustments are used in the study, strengthening the validity of the study.

### *Data analysis*

The transcripts (see Appendix G for the coded transcripts) were analyzed and coded after all the interviews were conducted. An inductive analysis approach was used to analyze the transcripts (Thomas, 2006). With an inductive analysis approach, detailed readings of the transcripts are used to develop categories<sup>24</sup> through interpretations made by the researcher (Thomas, 2006; Hsieh & Cannon, 2005). The data analysis started with reading the transcripts from beginning to end, whilst underlining and highlighting the most relevant passages in each transcript considering the five propositions. Subsequently, a keyword or short phrase was written next to each highlighted passage in the transcripts, using – or summarizing – the respondent's words. This process is known as open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). After the

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<sup>24</sup> In qualitative data analysis, a category refers to a key theme or concept that is derived from the data (Thomas, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

process of open coding, a list was compiled including all the 233 different codes that were appointed to passages in the transcripts (see Appendix E for the list of open codes). Next, the codes were organized into seven categories by combining codes that represented the same concept or theme (i.e., axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014)). The seven categories that resulted from this process of axial coding were *'artificial/role play'*, *'need for authenticity'*, *'thinking quicker'*, *'need for autonomy'*, *'different way of thinking'*, *'adjusting behavior'*, and *'not being understood'*. However, the seven categories were compared and similarities and relationships between the open codes were found. The categories *'thinking quicker'* and *'adjusting behavior'* were removed in the process of selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The category *'thinking quicker'* was removed since this category focused more on the typical characteristics of giftedness and was less relevant in light of how the gifted adults experienced the AC. Furthermore, the open codes that were appointed to *'thinking quicker'* showed similarities with the open codes that were appointed to *'different way of thinking'*. Therefore, the open codes that were first appointed to *'thinking quicker'* were merged into the category *'different way of thinking'*. The category *'adjusting behavior'* was removed since this category was related to the category *'not being understood'* and the open codes that were appointed to each of the two categories overlapped. The five remaining categories are *'artificial/role play'*, *'need for authenticity'*, *'need for autonomy'*, *'different way of thinking'*, and *'not being understood'* (see Appendix F for coding scheme). In the next section, the results will be discussed on the basis of these five categories.

## Results

The inductive data analysis of the transcripts resulted in five categories that influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. Each of these categories will now be explained and reflected upon. Quotes from the transcripts are displayed to exemplify and clarify the results. The quotes have been translated in English. However, the original (Dutch) quote is shown as well, to preserve the authenticity of the quotes.

### Category 1: Artificial/role play

Five out of the six respondents that have participated in an AC reported that they perceive an AC as artificial or as a fictitious role play. The respondents that perceive an AC as artificial argue that an AC is too limited to show their creativity and high level of cognitive ability. Some of the respondents even stated that since an AC is an artificial setting, they will not get the job anyhow, and that from now on, they refuse to apply for a job where an AC is part of the selection procedure.

Original quote:

*“En dan is het natuurlijk: je hebt minder informatie vooraf. Dus het is allemaal een beetje gekunsteld. Want ik weet hoe een normale werknemer erin zou staan die.. ja die komt in een situatie, doet zijn trucje en that's is. Ja ik neem als het even kan neem ik de afgelopen vijf jaar aan informatie mee, van: nou, die persoon zit er zo en zo in.” (...) “Dus die hele voorgeschiedenis heb je niet bij zo'n assessment, dus je kan ook niet echt laten zien wat je wel kan, omdat je die informatie mist, omdat het een kunstmatige situatie is.” (Respondent 2)*

English translation:

*“And then, of course: you’ve got less information beforehand. So everything is somewhat fabricated. Because I know how a normal employee would face it.. yes he would face such a situation, do his trick and that’s is. But I consider the past five years of information, like: well, that person is in it like this and this.” (...)* *“So you don’t have all that information in such an assessment, so you cannot show what you are capable of, because you don’t have that information, since it is an artificial setting.”* (Respondent 2)

The next quotes show how the gifted respondents perceive an AC as a role play or game, in which their quick comprehension of new information leads to boredom or frustration.

Original quote:

*“Ik denk dat je als hoogbegaafde, omdat je die enorme snelheid hebt van informatie verwerken.. en.. ik ben op een gegeven moment ook gewoon klaar met zo’n game of.. weet je, dan denk ik: jongens, we zijn toch uitgespeeld met zijn allen?” (...)* *“Nou ja, voor mij is het wel echt een les geweest om niet in een procedure te stappen die er zo uitziet.” (...)* *“Dat doe ik dus gewoon niet meer.”* (Respondent 7)

English translation:

*“I think that a gifted person, since you possess that enormous speed of processing information.. and.. at some point, I’m also just done with such a game.. you know, at such a moment I think: guys, we are done playing this game now, right?” (...)* *“Well, for me it has really been a lesson to not enter in a procedure that looks like that anymore.”* (Respondent 7)

This quote shows that the interviewed gifted adults can easily get bored or frustrated in an AC, due to their high level of cognitive ability. The feeling of boredom or frustration subsequently leads to the perception of an AC as a game or fictitious role play, which some respondents have reported as unpleasant, tiring and/or difficult.

Original quote:

*“Een assessment is een kunstmatige situatie, dus is er ook sprake van een dubbele bodem. Dus ga je de baan niet krijgen. Als iemand mij nu nog zegt, van: ja we gaan assessment van je afnemen, ja dan zeg ik van nou: mag ik dat dan ook van jou? Nou, dus.. dus.. het is gewoon geen optie.”* (Respondent 5)

English translation:

*“An assessment is an artificial setting, so there is also a hidden agenda. Meaning that you won't get the job. If someone tells me now: well, you are going to participate in an assessment, then I respond: well, can I get an assessment of you as well then? Well, so.. so.. it is just not an option.”* (Respondent 5)

In this quote, the respondent mentions that participating in an AC is not an option, since an AC is too artificial, and in such an artificial setting there clearly is a hidden agenda. In summary, the interviewed gifted adults frequently perceive an AC as an artificial, fictitious role play, in which they cannot fully use their high level of cognitive ability. Besides, gifted adults' quick comprehension of new information easily leads to boredom or frustration. Furthermore, the interviewed gifted adults experience their perception of an AC as artificial as unpleasant,

difficult and/or tiring, and – in some cases – decide to not enter a selection procedure anymore, in which an AC is part of the procedure.

### Category 2: Need for authenticity

All interviewed gifted adults reported that they strongly value honesty and integrity, and that they have a high need for authenticity. Not only do they have a high need for authenticity, the respondents have significant difficulties in situations where they feel authenticity is missing or hidden agendas play a role, which is illustrated in the next quote.

Original quote:

*“Maar zodra mensen een verborgen agenda hebben; sociaal niets verifiëren bij degene die tegenover hun zit of een heel ander doel hebben of weet ik veel wat, ja dan valt de hoogbegaafde heel vaak buiten de boot.”* (Respondent 5)

English translation:

*“But as soon as people have a hidden agenda; do not verify anything socially with the person who is sitting in front of them or have a completely different goal or I don’t know what, then gifted people very often fall by the wayside.”* (Respondent 5)

The respondents often sense when an AC is not authentic, and unclear interests play a role. The interviewed gifted adults report that it is unpleasant when they are in a situation that is not authentic. The next two quotes illustrate these insights.

Original quote:

*“Ik heb het niet altijd door op het moment zelf, maar meestal wel, allez.. ook in een één op één gesprek, maar waarover gaat dit gesprek nu eigenlijk? Want het gaat niet over mijn competenties, het gaat niet over mijn expertise. Het gaat over iets anders. En dat voel ik vaak, het gaat niet.. hetgeen wat we hier doen dat is niet de reden. Je hebt daar andere belangen, en dingen achter. En dat voel ik heel snel aan.” (...) “Omdat je niet vanuit authenticiteit met elkaar in gesprek gaat. En dat het niet transparant is, het is niet transparant.” (Respondent 3)*

English translation:

*“I do not always notice it at the moment itself, but often I do, well.. also in face-to-face conversations, what is this conversation really about? Because it is not about my competencies, it is not about my expertise. It is about something else. And I sense that regularly, it is not.. what we are doing here is not the goal. There are other interests, and things behind this. And I sense that very quickly.” (...) “Because you are not having a conversation that is based on authenticity. And that it is not transparent, it is not transparent.” (Respondent 3)*

Original quote:

*“Alleen je ziet.. en dan kom je op die authenticiteit. Bij mij gaat het altijd goed als er geen belangen in het spel zijn. Zo gauw er weer belangen in het spel zijn ga je dus onderzoeken wat die belangen zijn. En dan blijken die belangen gewoon niet coherent te zijn met de intentie. Dat is ook de zuiverheid van hoogbegaafdheid. Je kunt alleen maar altruïstisch zijn naar de ander als je weet dat de ander zijn intentie zuiver is.” (Respondent 8)*

English translation:

*“But you see.. and now we get to that authenticity. For me, it always works well when no interests are involved. As soon as interests are involved you are going to investigate what those interests are about. And then, those interests turn out not to be coherent with the intention. That is also the pureness of giftedness. You can only be altruistic towards the other when you know that the other person’s intention is pure.”* (Respondent 8).

The interviewed gifted adults feel unpleasant in an AC when they perceive the AC as not authentic, and experience physical and mental barriers to perform at their best in such a situation. For the respondents, it is very hard to deny that unpleasant feeling when interests are not pure. The next quote illustrates the physical trigger to be honest, which is related to the need for authenticity.

Original quote:

*“Maar er zit wel een fysieke trigger om eerlijk te blijven. Ik kan niet liegen. Ik wil niet liegen. En dat voel je, je voelt het fysiek; je hoort de stemmetjes in je. ‘Wat doe je nou?’ Als ik echt zou blijven liegen, dan maak ik mezelf onzeker, en klein, en.. dat doet iets met mij. Dus doe ik het niet.”* (Respondent 9)

English translation:

*“But there is a physical trigger to be honest. I cannot lie. I don’t want to lie. And that’s what you feel, you feel it physically; you can hear the voices whispering. ‘What are you doing?’ If I would really keep on lying, I become insecure, and small, and.. that affects me. So I don’t do it.”* (Respondent 9)

In summary, the interviewed gifted adults strongly value honesty and integrity, and have a high need for authenticity, which makes it harder for them to perform at their best in an AC when they feel unclear interests or hidden agendas play a role. When a respondent perceives a situation as not authentic, he or she experiences physical and mental barriers to perform at his or her best, and the unpleasant feeling that arouses is hard – if not nearly impossible – to deny.

### Category 3: Need for autonomy

The respondents consistently stated that they have a high need for autonomy and independence, although most of them enjoy working with others as well. Gifted adults tend to do things in their own way, and in correspondence with a structure they create themselves. All of the respondents recognized the characteristic of non-conformism, and the respondents repeatedly reported that they often – if not always – create an own opinion or vision on a certain topic.

Original quote:

*“En bij het rollenspel zelf; ik communiceer liever vrij, op mijn eigen manier en niet in zo’n keurslijf.” (...) “Dan zal ik mij irriteren aan het tempo en aan hoe de dingen gaan.” (Respondent 6)*

English translation:

*“And in the role play itself; I prefer to communicate in a free manner, in my own way and not in such a straitjacket way of communicating.” (...) “Then, I will get annoyed by the tempo and by how things are going.” (Respondent 6)*

This quote shows how one of the respondents experienced the role play in the AC as too limited and structured. When AC exercises are too limited or structured, the high need for autonomy of the interviewed gifted adults when completing a task is not met. In line with their high need for autonomy, the respondents enjoy situations in which they do not have to work by the book (i.e., outside the box). The next quote illustrates this insight.

Original quote:

*“Ik heb laatst ook weer een gesprek gehad waarin werd gezegd: wij doen dingen ook buiten het boekje; we kunnen het boekje ook volgen maar we kunnen nog meer.” (...) “En dat vind ik leuk: niet alleen dat stomme boekje doen, maar zelf ook nadenken. Maar toen was de feedback: ja we nemen je niet aan, want we willen toch graag dat je het meer volgens het boekje doet.. Dan denk ik van ja, haha, hoor je nou wat je zegt?” (Respondent 2)*

English translation:

*“Recently I had a conversation in which I was told: we also do things outside the box; we can follow the book but we can do more.” (...) “And that is what I enjoy: not just by the stupid book, but to think for yourself as well. But then, the feedback was: well, we do not hire you, because we would like you to do things more by the book.. At that moment I think: haha, can you hear what you’re saying yourself?” (Respondent 2)*

Non-conformism is an important factor that relates to gifted individuals’ high need for autonomy. The interviewed gifted adults prefer to reach their own understanding of an issue, and typically perform better when they can decide for themselves what to do, and how to do it. The next two quotes support this insight.

Original quote:

*“Ik zal alles doen wat ik kan doen. En of dat nu binnen die regeltjes past of niet, ja dat is dan jammer, ik zal wel zorgen dat het past aan het einde van de rit, haha.” (...) “Ik denk algemeen genomen: het procedurele van zo’n zaak.. dat dat niet bevorderlijk is voor hoogbegaafden. We hebben het nodig om onze eigen structuur aan de dingen te geven. En op onze eigen manier de dingen te verwerken en uit te voeren. Dat er een kader is, is wel goed, maar.. en dat zit net zozeer in assessment centers als in trainingen als in school, als in de hele bedrijfscontext, dus ja. Dat is het grootste punt, denk ik. Dat spreekt tegen die autonomie, he.. Ik kan wel zeggen dat als ik het wel moet doen op de manier die van mij gevraagd wordt, het qua output veel minder zal zijn dan van iemand die niet hoogbegaafd is.” (Respondent 6)*

English translation:

*“I will do everything I can. And whether that is in correspondence with those rules or not, that’s too bad, I will make sure it fits and the end of the road, haha.” (...) “In general: I think the whole procedure of such a case.. that is not favorable for gifted people. We have a need for creating our own structure. And doing and processing things in our own way. The fact that there is a framework, is quite good, but.. and that’s the same thing for assessment centers as for trainings as in school, as in the whole business context, so yes. That is the main point, I think. That contradicts that autonomy.. I can say that when I have to do it in a way that is imposed, the output will be much worse compared to someone who is not gifted.” (Respondent 6)*

Original quote:

*“Dat is het grote verschil: ik ben geen taakgerichte medewerker. Ik voel zelf wel wat er moet gebeuren. Dus ik drijf op inspiratie, niet op motivatie van je moet dit of je moet dit. Nee, dat maak ik zelf wel uit.” (...) “Je moet mij uitdagingen geven en dan kom ik over twee maanden wel terug. Dus ik hoef mij niet te conformeren aan mijn takenpakket; nee, ik doe wel wat de organisatie verder brengt. Dus ik verzin het zelf. Daartoe ben ik in staat, dat is mijn talent. Dus ik conformeer me wel aan jouw vraag, alleen wel op mijn manier.” (Respondent 8)*

English translation:

*“That’s the main difference: I am not a task-oriented employee. I can feel for myself what needs to be done. So it is inspiration that drives me, not motivation like: you must do this or you must do that. No, I will decide that for myself.” (...) “You have to challenge me and then I will come back in two months. So I don’t have to conform myself to my tasks; no, I will do whatever brings the organization further. So I make it up myself. That is what I am capable of, that is my talent. So I do conform myself to your request, but I do it in my way.” (Respondent 8)*

In summary, the interviewed gifted adults’ high need for autonomy and independence influences how they experience and perform in an AC, since the respondents commonly experience AC exercises as being too limited or structured, which constraints gifted individuals’ preference for situations in which they do not have to work by the book (i.e., outside the box). Also, the respondents prefer to reach their own understanding of an issue, and perform better when they can decide for themselves what to do, and how to do it, both of which typically are not the case in an AC. One respondent even indicated that when she is

obliged to do things in a specific way – for instance in an AC – her output will be considerably worse compared to a non-gifted individual.

#### Category 4: Different way of thinking

Gifted individuals are known for their high level of cognitive ability (Shavinina, 1995; Heylighen, 2007). The interviewed gifted adults reported that they do not only think and process information faster than non-gifted adults, they think in a fundamentally different way. Some respondents have characterized this way of thinking as holistic or integral.

Original quote:

*“Nou, die ander, zeg maar, die heeft dan het voordeel het niet te overzien, dus het gewenste antwoord te geven. Maar het gewenste antwoord geeft vaak niet het doel van het bedrijf weer. Daar zit een heel groot verschil in. Dus als je het holistisch bekijkt ga je het foute antwoord geven. En dan heb je het beter gedaan dan de vraag.”* (Respondent 5)

English translation:

*“Well, the other person, let’s say, has got the advantage of not being able to oversee it, so he will give the right answer. But typically, the right answer does not display the goal of the organization. That is a big difference. So when you approach it in a holistic way, you will give the wrong answer. And then, you have outperformed the question.”* (Respondent 5)

This quote illustrates how this fundamentally different way of thinking influences the way one of the respondents performs in an AC. By applying a holistic or integral way of thinking, the respondent is not able to answer questions or complete tasks in the way the assessors expect

him to deal with them. However, contrary to assessors' belief, this does not mean that the gifted individual has given the wrong answer or completed the task incorrectly. The interviewed gifted adults' different way of thinking affects how they experience an AC in two more ways. First, since the respondents are able to think quicker than the other participants, they get bored easily. Second, the respondents tend to adjust their behavior – not always effectively – or simply do not perform as good as they are capable of. The next quotes illustrate these two insights, respectively.

Original quote:

*“Ik heb in teams dat ik op een gegeven moment mij begin te vervelen. Omdat ik allang in mijn hoofd bij de finish ben, en zij zijn nog net gestart.” (...) “Maar ik verveel me wel heel snel in teams. En het scheelt als je een aantal slimmere mensen om je heen hebt. Ja dan is dat wel lekker.” (Respondent 9)*

English translation:

*“In teams, I get bored easily. Because when I am already at the finish in my head, the rest has only just begun.” (...) “But I get bored very rapidly in teams. And it does make a difference when you have got a few more intelligent people around. Yes, that is nice.” (Respondent 9)*

Original quote:

*“Ja, want ik ben natuurlijk veel sneller dan de rest.” (...) “Dat wordt niet begrepen. Omwille van de democratie en omwille van de lieve sociale vrede, dan, dan stop ik maar.” (Respondent 5)*

English translation:

*“Yes, because obviously, I am a lot quicker than the rest.” (...) “And that is not being understood. To just keep social peace and maintain democracy, I, I just stop then.”*

(Respondent 5)

Since the interviewed gifted adults get bored easily in an AC and their superior way of thinking is not appreciated or being understood, the respondents get the idea that their level is too high for the job that they apply for, what makes it harder for them to perform at their best in an AC. The next quote illustrates this insight.

Original quote:

*“En ik denk dat dat ook een van de problemen van zo’n assessment is. Er zit een kader omheen; van: we willen iemand aannemen voor een soort junior-functie, en als iemand dan op een hele andere manier denkt en meer op directourniveau zit, dan heb je het niet goed gedaan, want je bent geen junior consultant. Nee, maar dan komt er ook niet uit dat er misschien wel meer in zit.” (...) “En in dat bedrijf waar ik het net over had, dat assessment.. ik had wel het idee dat de vice president ofzo, dat die een beetje op het niveau zat waarin ik het zeg maar als zijn baas zou kunnen proberen. Maar dat is dan niet.. ja dat lukt gewoon niet. Dus dat is heel raar, want iemand heeft heus wel door dat je slimmer bent, alleen dan.. ik ben dan 10 jaar jonger en je hebt niet de functie om iemand aan te sturen, zeg maar. Dus dat klopt op een aantal punten gewoon niet. En ja het is moeilijk om daar op een goede manier mee om te gaan.”* (Respondent

2)

English translation:

*“And I also think that that is one of the main problems of such an assessment. There is a framework around it; like: we want to hire someone for some kind of junior job, and if someone thinks in a fundamentally different way and is more at executive level, then you have done it incorrectly, because you are not a junior consultant. No, but then it is not clear that there might be more in it, neither.” (...)* *“And in that organization I was talking about earlier, that assessment.. I did have the feeling that the vice president, that he was more or less on the level on which I could try to be his boss. But that is not.. that just doesn’t work. So that is very strange, because they obviously notice that you are more intelligent, but.. I am 10 years younger and you are not in the position to manage someone, let’s say. So that just doesn’t fit. And yes, it is hard to deal with that in a correct manner.”* (Respondent 2)

Furthermore, some respondents mentioned that they come across as arrogant and/or threatening in an AC, due to their high level of cognitive ability and the fact that the other participants don’t really understand them.

In summary, the respondents think in a fundamentally different way, characterized as holistic or integral. Thinking holistically or integrally, the interviewed gifted adults struggle to answer questions or complete tasks in an AC in the way the assessors expect them to do, resulting in assessors interpreting the respondents’ answers as wrong or irrelevant. Furthermore, the interviewed gifted adults easily get bored in an AC, due to their ability to think and process information very rapidly. The interviewed gifted adults tend to adjust their behavior in an AC or simply do not perform as good as they are capable of (i.e., under-performance), since they are not understood otherwise. Subsequently, the respondents get the idea that they are

simply too smart for the job they applied for, what makes it difficult for them to perform at their best in an AC. Besides, their high level of cognitive ability leads to the fact that gifted individuals regularly come across as arrogant and/or threatening.

#### Category 5: Not being understood

The interviewed gifted adults consistently reported that their giftedness is not being recognized by the assessors in an AC. Therefore, their typical characteristics and the behavior that is a result of those characteristics is not being understood by the assessors, or simply being labeled as not fitting the job requirements, since gifted adults typically do not complete tasks by the book. Furthermore, some respondents stated that they feel like they are different or strange. The next two quotes illustrate these insights.

Original quote:

*“Ja, het is het idee anders te zijn en dat eigenlijk niet willen.” (...) “Je wilt eigenlijk toch die ander uitdagen, omdat je weet hoe het werkt waarschijnlijk. En ja, dan word je al heel gauw niet begrepen hoor.” (...) “Ja, dan krijg je uiteindelijk alleen maar een groot vraagteken tegenover je. Of dan.. ze kunnen je niet in een hokje duwen, ze snappen niet waar je bij hoort.”*

(Respondent 1)

English translation:

*“Yes, it is the idea of being different, but not wanting that actually.” (...) “You actually want to challenge the other person, probably because you know how things work. But then, you’re not being understood.” (...) “Yes, you eventually only get a big question mark in front of you. Or..*

*they cannot put you in a box, they don't understand to which category you belong."*

(Respondent 1)

Original quote:

*"En ik denk dat het in veel assessments daar om te doen is. Dat je jezelf laat zien; hoe je intuïtief op iets zou reageren. Maar omdat, ja, je soms zo snel bent en ook nog eens veel meer ziet van: oh ja jij wilt die reactie uitlokken, ja haha dat gaan we dus nou even net niet doen. Dus dan geef je een andere reactie, waarvan zij denken: als dat de intuïtieve reactie is die terug komt; dat klopt niet volgens het boekje. Het is ook geen intuïtieve reactie; het is een bewust beredeneerde reactie maar dat gaat zo snel dat de ander niet meer doorheeft.. ja dat kan niet. Dat moet intuïtief zijn maar dan past het nergens en dan is het ongewenst gedrag." (...) "En überhaupt de mogelijkheid dat je iets kan wat niet in het boekje staat, dat bestaat niet voor ze." (Respondent 2)*

English translation:

*"And I think that's the point in a lot of assessments. That you show who you are; how you would intuitively react to a situation. But since, yes, sometimes you are so fast and you often see: oh yes, you are trying to provoke that reaction, well haha, then we are just not going to do that. So then you give another reaction, of which they think: if that is the intuitive reaction we get back; that's not by the book. And in fact, it is not an intuitive reaction; it is a very deliberate reaction, but it all goes so fast that the other just doesn't get it.. that's not possible. It has to be intuitive but in that case it doesn't fit anywhere and then it is inappropriate behavior." (...) "And just the possibility that you are capable of something that is not by the book, that doesn't exist for them." (Respondent 2)*

In accordance with the fact that their giftedness is not being recognized by the assessors, all the respondents reported that it is unavoidable for them to – consciously – adjust their behavior in an AC, and they cannot freely be themselves. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that assessors are deliberately looking for certain behaviors or characteristics that a job applicant – in the assessor’s perception – should demonstrate in an AC.

Original quote:

*“Dus dat ze een bepaalde visie binnenstappen, dat willen ze zien.” (...) “Want dat voel ik wel vaak he, ze willen iets van u, maar ze willen niet alles.” (...) “Ze willen niet alles, denk ik. Ik kan bepaalde dingen, omdat ik dit ben. En dat voel ik wel vaak, dat ze u, ja, ze willen iets, en dan knippen ze uw vleugels af en stoppen ze u in een kooitje. Maar zo werkt het niet.” (...) “Maar ja, dat wordt heel rationeel benaderd. Dat is een checklist, en daar en daar moet je aan voldoen. En als dan niet.. dan vliegt ge in de vuilbak.” (Respondent 3)*

English translation:

*“So they have a certain vision, that is what they want to see.” (...) “Because I sense that very often, you know, they want something from you, but they don’t want everything.” (...) “They don’t want everything, I guess. I can do certain things, because this is who I am. But I sense that very often, that they, they want something and then they cut off your wings and put you in a little cage. But it doesn’t work like that.” (...) “But, they approach that very rationally. It is a checklist, which you have to meet. And if not.. they throw you in the garbage can.” (Respondent 3)*

This quote illustrates the perception by the respondents that assessors have a certain idea or concept of how participants in an AC should ideally behave and perform. When the gifted adult does not meet that idea or concept, which some respondents refer to as a kind of checklist, their behavior is labelled as not fitting the job requirements, and the chances of the gifted adult being positively evaluated diminishes. The next quote illustrates how the atypical characteristics of the interviewed gifted adults regrettably lead to the lack of recognition and appreciation from the part of the assessors.

Original quote:

*“Misschien zijn ze wel een beetje raar, maar misschien heb je goud in je handen, maar als jij niet weet dat dat ook goud is; het lijkt alsof er wat modder om zit. Ja dan ga je het niet herkennen en dan gooi je het weg. En dat is ook voor zo’n bedrijf ontzettend zonde.”*

(Respondent 2)

English translation:

*“Maybe they indeed are a bit strange, but maybe you got gold in your hands, but when you don’t know that that can be gold as well; it seems like there is some dirt on it. Yes, then you won’t recognize it and you will throw it away. And that is so unfortunate for such an organization as well.”* (Respondent 2)

Several respondents mentioned they can only show a small part of themselves during an AC, what gives them an unpleasant or depressing feeling, since they feel like they are not allowed to freely be themselves. The more discrepancy between the inner self and the behavior

assessors in an AC are looking for, the more uncomfortable the respondents feel. The next quote illustrates this insight.

Original quote:

*“In die zin dat je inderdaad maar een deeltje van jezelf kan laten zien. En dat deeltje wat in dat doosje past, dat kun je laten zien als je wilt.” (...) “Maar op het moment dat iedereen tevreden is ben je zelf niet tevreden. Dan voel je van: er is hier ook een deeltje van mij wat misschien veel groter is, wat aan het doodgaan is.” (Respondent 6)*

English translation:

*“In that sense that you can only show a small part of yourself. And that small part that fits in that little box, that is what you can show if you want.” (...) “But as soon as everyone is satisfied, you are not satisfied yourself. Then, you feel: there is also a small part of me that maybe is much bigger, but that is slowly dying.” (Respondent 6)*

Apart from the fact that giftedness is not being recognized by the assessors during an AC, some respondents reported that their behavior is compared to ‘normal’ behavior (i.e., behavior that is not in line with the atypical characteristics of gifted adults). In the next quote, the respondent states that only one assessor ever noticed he was dealing with a gifted job applicant, and the respondent expresses how that recognition allowed him to truly be himself, finally.

Original quote:

*“Ik heb pas één keer in mijn leven meegemaakt dat een assessor (...) in de gaten heeft: hee, hier speelt het thema hoogbegaafdheid.” (...) “En dat was een bevrijding, want dan kun je jezelf écht zijn en dan maakt het ook veel meer mogelijk. Terwijl die andere keren wordt er alleen maar naar gedrag gekeken en wordt dat dus vergeleken met gedrag waar ik mij niet in thuis voel. Helaas. Want ik word vergeleken zeg maar met een normale groep mensen, maar dat werkt niet altijd.” (Respondent 9)*

English translation:

*“I have only experienced once in my life that an assessor (...) noticed: hey, giftedness plays a role here.” (...) “And that was a relief, because then you can really be yourself and that makes so much more possible. Whereas in the other occasions, they only focus on behavior and that behavior is being compared to behavior I don’t feel at home with. Unfortunately. Because I am being compared to a group of normal people, let’s say, but that doesn’t work, usually.” (Respondent 9)*

In summary, the interviewed gifted adults’ behavior in an AC is often being labeled as not fitting the job requirements, since their giftedness and the typical characteristics that correspond to giftedness are not being recognized by the assessors and their behavior is compared to ‘normal’ behavior. The respondents consistently feel the need to adjust their behavior in an AC, since they do not meet the idea or concept of appropriate or preferred behavior the assessors hold in mind otherwise. The interviewed gifted adults therefore feel like they cannot truly be themselves in an AC and show their abilities, which is an unpleasant and depressing feeling.

## Discussion

In this section, the conclusions and implications of the present study will be discussed. Furthermore, potential limitations of the present study will be discussed and future research suggestions will be presented.

### *Conclusions and implications*

The research aim of the present study is exploring what and how typical characteristics of gifted adults influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. Based on literature on giftedness and the AC method, five propositions have been formulated that describe expected research outcomes. Qualitative research resulted in five categories that influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. The five predetermined propositions will now be evaluated and connections will be made to the five categories that resulted from the inductive data analysis of the transcripts.

***Proposition 1: Gifted adults experience communication problems with other participants and problems concerning making connection to other participants in an AC, due to their ability to think and react more quickly than non-gifted individuals.***

The first proposition is not supported by the results. The two categories that resulted from the qualitative research that are related to the first proposition are '*different way of thinking*' and '*not being understood*'. Gifted adults think in a fundamentally different way, and struggle to answer questions or complete tasks in an AC in the way assessors expect them to do. Furthermore, their ability to think and process information rapidly easily leads to boredom during an AC, and sometimes leads to the fact that gifted adults come across as arrogant

and/or threatening. Gifted adults often feel like they cannot truly be themselves in an AC, which is an unpleasant and depressing feeling. However, the results do not support the idea that gifted adults' ability to think and react more quickly than non-gifted individuals lead to communication problems with other participants or problems concerning making connection to other participants in an AC.

***Proposition 2: Gifted adults' high level of perceptiveness leads to gifted adults experiencing difficulties with regard to 'selling themselves' in an AC, since they may perceive the AC as a fictitious role play, which they have objections against.***

The second proposition is not supported by the results. The respondents described a different process. The two categories that resulted from the qualitative research that are related to the second proposition are '*artificial/role play*' and '*need for authenticity*'. Gifted adults frequently perceive an AC as an artificial, fictitious role play, in which they cannot fully use their high level of cognitive ability. Gifted adults experience their perception of an AC as artificial as unpleasant, difficult and/or tiring, although the results do not support the idea that it is gifted adults' high level of perceptiveness that leads to gifted adults experiencing an AC as artificial. Gifted adults have a high need for authenticity and often perceive an AC as not authentic, which causes physical and mental barriers for the gifted adult to perform at his or her best. Although gifted adults do perceive an AC as a fictitious role play which they have objections against, and experience difficulties with regard to 'selling themselves' (i.e., displaying the best version of themselves), the results do not support the idea that gifted adults' high level of perceptiveness causes the perception of an AC as a fictitious role play.

**Proposition 3:** *Gifted adults are at a disadvantage in time-constraint AC exercises because of their hang for perfectionism, since their persistence and creativity is being constrained by time.*

The third proposition is not supported by the results. The category that resulted from the qualitative research that is related to the third proposition is *'need for autonomy'*. Gifted adults have a high need for autonomy and independence and commonly experience AC exercises as being too limited or structured, which constraints gifted adults' preference for situations in which they do not have to work by the book (i.e., outside the box). Besides, gifted adults prefer to reach their own understanding of an issue, and tend to perform better when they can decide for themselves what to do, and how to do it, both of which typically are not the case in an AC. However, the results do not indicate that gifted adults are at a disadvantage in AC exercises due to the fact that these exercises are time-constraint.

**Proposition 4:** *Gifted adults' typical preference for working alone, independence, and non-conformism lead to gifted adults having difficulty in AC exercises such as a leaderless group discussion or a team preparation and presentation, since in that setting they cannot independently use their high level of cognitive ability and creativity to find the best solution to a problem.*

The fourth proposition is partially supported by the results. The two categories that resulted from the qualitative research that are related to the fourth proposition are *'need for autonomy'* and *'different way of thinking'*. The results support the idea that gifted adults have a high need for independence, and that non-conformism is a characteristic that is related to giftedness. Although many respondents indicated that they appreciate working alone, they also reported that they enjoy working together, and that they need both. The results indicate that gifted adults perform better in situations in which they do not have to work by the book

and can decide for themselves what to do, and how to do it. Hence, the idea that gifted adults' typical preference for independence and non-conformism leads to gifted adults having difficulty in AC exercises is supported by the results. However, a preference for working alone did not result from the qualitative research and therefore cannot be related to gifted adults' performance in an AC.

***Proposition 5: Gifted adults' typical characteristic of not feeling at home in groups and preference for working alone leads to gifted adults keeping a low profile with regard to their ideas and wishes (i.e., diving behavior) and under-performance in AC exercises.***

The fifth proposition is not supported by the results. The two categories that resulted from the qualitative research that are related to the fifth proposition are '*not being understood*' and '*need for autonomy*'. Gifted adults consistently feel the need to adjust their behavior in an AC, since their typical characteristics and behavior do not meet the idea or concept of appropriate or preferred behavior the assessors hold in mind. This continuous adjusting of behavior makes gifted adults feel like they cannot truly be themselves in an AC. Furthermore, gifted adults experience AC exercises as being too limited or structured, and cannot perform at their best in an AC, since their need for autonomy and independence is not met. However, the results do not support the idea that gifted adults do not feel at home in groups or have a preference for working alone. Therefore, it cannot be stated that these two characteristics lead to gifted adults keeping a low profile with regard to their ideas and wishes and under-performance in AC exercises.

Earlier research on giftedness points out that gifted adults can be of great value for organizations as their typical characteristics allow them to provide unique and significant

contribution to innovation in organizations (Nauta & Ronner, 2008; Corten et al., 2006). It therefore is important for organizations to properly recognize the characteristics and talents of gifted adults during a personnel selection process. A large majority of the studies in personnel selection research adopt an organizational perspective on the selection process, in which 'hard' validity and utility criteria are focused on, whereas only around 5% of all published studies into personnel selection (until 2004) adopt an applicant/participant perspective on personnel selection methods (Anderson et al., 2004). Despite the growing popularity of the AC method, no prior studies have investigated how gifted adults experience an AC or whether an AC is a valid method for the selection of gifted job applicants. The present study contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, the present study contributes to the research on personnel selection methods by adopting an applicant/participant perspective on a popular personnel selection method (i.e., the AC). Second, the present study contributes to research on giftedness and research on gifted individuals without work (Emans et al., 2017) by examining how gifted adults experience an AC. In the study conducted by Emans and colleagues, gifted individuals without work stated that standard personnel selection methods do not seem to have been developed for gifted individuals, and that their typical characteristics are therefore not properly appreciated (Emans et al., 2017). The conclusions in this study support these insights, and point out five categories that influence the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC. In a personnel selection process, these five categories can help assessors and recruiters in recognizing behavior that corresponds to giftedness. When a gifted job applicant is recognized as gifted during an AC, he or she will feel more free to behave in a – for him or her – natural way, and assessors will not automatically label the gifted job applicant's behavior as not appropriate or not fitting the job requirements, which increases the chances of the gifted job applicant getting a positive

AC evaluation and – eventually – getting a job offer. Furthermore, the findings from the present study are useful for managers in managing gifted employees. To enable gifted employees to provide a unique and significant contribution to innovation in an organization, managers should keep in mind that gifted employees typically have a preference for situations in which they do not have to work by the book (i.e., outside the box), prefer to reach their own understanding of an issue, and tend to perform better when they are given the freedom to decide for themselves what to do, and how to do it. Keeping in mind gifted employees' need for autonomy and independence, need for authenticity, and different way of thinking, managers will also be better able to understand the feelings – and possible frustrations – of gifted employees, which will decrease gifted employees' feeling of not being understood.

### *Limitations*

Some limitations of the present study should be acknowledged. First, six out the nine respondents are self-proclaimed gifted. These respondents indicated that they recognize most of the typical characteristics that correspond to giftedness, although these respondents have not been diagnosed by a psychological or medical professional and/or have not taken a validated intelligence test. However, it should be noted that a high score on an intelligence test merely gives a strong *indication* of giftedness (Heylighen, 2007). Second, in examining how gifted adults experience an AC, no comparison has been made to how non-gifted adults experience an AC. By interviewing non-gifted adults about their experiences in an AC too, a comparison could have been made between the experiences of gifted and non-gifted adults. For the present study, time was too limited to achieve the research aim by interviewing non-gifted adults that have participated in an AC, too. However, a comparison between the experiences of gifted and non-gifted adults could more precisely point out the specific

characteristics of gifted adults that influence their experience and performance in an AC, and possibly strengthen the conclusions of the present study. Third, the number of respondents is not as high as was aimed for, since only six respondents were found that have actually participated in an AC. However, *data saturation* was reached in the present study, since in the last two interviews no new additional data were found that could lead to the development of a new category concerning the way gifted adults perform in, and experience, an AC (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles & Grimshaw, 2010). Fourth, seven out of the nine respondents that were interviewed responded voluntarily to the online announcement. Therefore, a possible bias could exist in the sample, since gifted adults may have responded to the online announcement that have had bad experiences in an AC and therefore wanted to participate in the present study and share their story.

#### *Future research*

The present study promotes some important future research suggestions. As already referred to in the limitations section, a qualitative research on how non-gifted adults experience an AC should be conducted to compare the experiences of non-gifted adults to the conclusions of the present study. Furthermore, awareness considering giftedness amongst assessors and recruiters should be increased, so that they are better able to recognize gifted job applicants. Future research could address this problem by examining how awareness amongst assessors and recruiters considering giftedness could most effectively be increased. On a more general level, future research should combine and integrate different psychology and personality theories to reach a more complete and thorough definition of giftedness, with less emphasis on behavioral characteristics. For example, future research could try to define or characterize giftedness by combining and integrating the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Furnham,

1996), Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration (Dabrowski, 1966), the Big Five personality dimensions (Barrick & Mount, 1991), the Rose of Leary (Leary, 1957), and the Delphi-model of giftedness (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008).

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## Appendix A

Corten, Nauta, and Ronner (2006) presented a list of specific contributions gifted employees can make to the innovation process in an organization (p. 8). The list is presented below.

Table 3 – Contributions to innovations (Corten et al., 2006, p. 8)

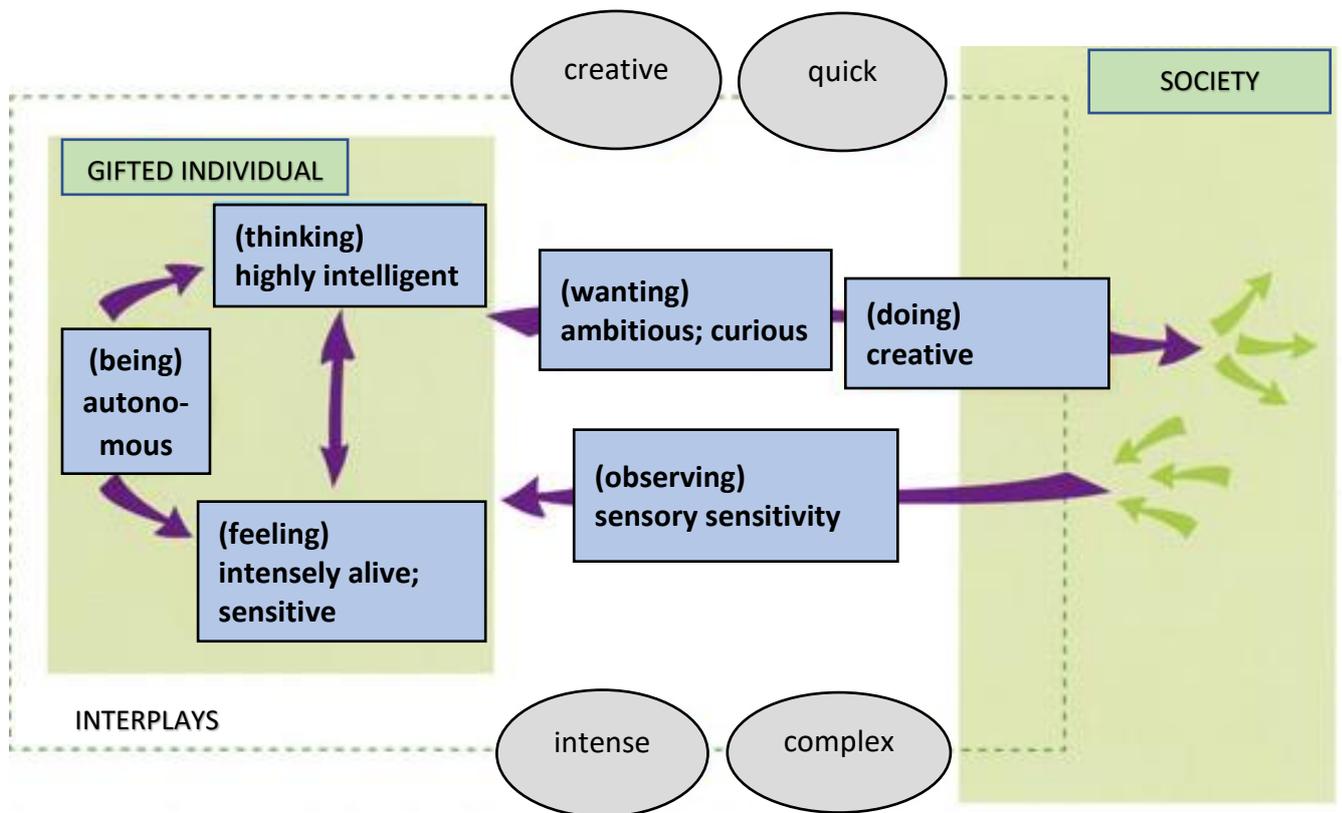
### Contributions made to innovations by the gifted individual

- The gifted individual can easily identify the relationships between goals, mission and assignments.
- The gifted individual has the ability to focus intensely on the content. Arguments based on content are key. Habits, traditions and social pressure are quickly spotted. If these seem to be in conflict with the content, they are discarded as being irrelevant.
- Thinking 'out of the box' is second nature to them.
- Switching between one's own professional area and other disciplines is no problem at all.
- The opinion of a formal authority does not weigh any heavier than the opinion of another party.
- Information from others is checked against one's own experience or against other information.
- The gifted individual has a high degree of commitment and passion.
- Existing protocols, structures and approaches are only followed if they appear to be effective and are well-founded. A customized solution is sought for each individual situation, often when this has not been requested. 'Standard problems' are also approached in this way.

## Appendix B

The Delphi-model of giftedness (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008) is presented below. The basic principle of the Delphi-model of giftedness is that the gifted individual (represented in the left green block, labeled 'gifted individual') is in contact with society (represented in the right green block, labeled 'society'). In this model, *thinking, being, and feeling* are characterized as 'inner facets' and are placed in the left block (representing the 'gifted individual') of the model, whereas *observing, wanting, and doing* are labelled 'interactive facets' of giftedness and are placed in the right block (representing 'society') of the model (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). Besides these inner and interactive facets, the Delphi-model distinguishes four 'interplays', which refer to the nature and interaction between the inner and interactive facets (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008). These interplays are labeled *creative, quick, intense, and complex*. One headed arrows in the model represent a flow of incentives, whereas double headed arrows represent a mutual influence between two inner facets.

Figure 1 – Delphi-model of giftedness (Kooijman-van Thiel, 2008, p. 64)



*Note: both the inner and interactive facets are depicted in the blue rectangles. The grey ellipses represent the four interplays.*

## Appendix C

The online announcement that was placed on the websites, Facebook pages and LinkedIn groups of both the Gifted Adults Foundation (IHBV) and [www.ikbenhoogbegaafd.nl](http://www.ikbenhoogbegaafd.nl) is presented in Dutch below.

### **Oproep onderzoek naar ervaringen van hoogbegaafden met assessment centers**

*Hier is weer een oproep voor een interessant onderzoek waar het IHBV nauw bij betrokken is, het thema stond al langer op ons wensenlijstje:*

Mijn naam is Mario Hulshof en ik ben student Bedrijfskunde (Master Business Administration; specialisatie Innovation & Entrepreneurship) aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. In het kader van mijn afstudeerscriptie doe ik onderzoek naar hoe hoogbegaafde individuen een (in groepsverband uitgevoerd) assessment center ervaren. Voor dit onderzoek ben ik op zoek naar hoogbegaafde individuen die ervaring hebben met deelname aan een assessment center en mee willen werken aan een interview van rond de 45 minuten via Skype/Facetime. Kort gezegd is een assessment center een selectiemethode waarbij een groep kandidaten (voor selectie- of promotiedoeleinden) bij elkaar geplaatst wordt en in groepsverband een aantal opdrachten (rollenspellen, groepsdiscussies etc.) moet uitvoeren. Alle respondenten blijven in mijn onderzoek anoniem; ik vermeld enkel leeftijd en geslacht van de respondenten. Indien u ervaring heeft met deelname aan een assessment center en mee wilt werken aan mijn onderzoek, kunt u contact met mij opnemen via: [mario\\_hulshof@hotmail.com](mailto:mario_hulshof@hotmail.com).

## Appendix D

The interview guide that was used during the interviews is presented in Dutch below.

### Inleiding

Bedankt voor uw deelname aan dit (semigestructureerd) interview. Mijn naam is Mario Hulshof en in het kader van mijn studie Bedrijfskunde doe ik onderzoek naar hoe hoogbegaafde individuen een assessment center ervaren. Ik ga u daarom een aantal vragen stellen over uw ervaringen omtrent het deelnemen aan een assessment center. Dit interview zal naar verwachting rond de 45 minuten duren. Uw antwoorden worden enkel gebruikt voor onderzoeksdoeleinden, en u blijft in het onderzoek anoniem. De antwoorden die u tijdens dit interview geeft zullen door mij worden getranscribeerd, waarna u de uitwerking van dit interview krijgt in te zien en in de gelegenheid wordt gesteld uw antwoorden waar gewenst aan te passen.

### Topic list

De volgende onderwerpen zullen in het interview aan bod komen:

- Uw ervaring(en) bij deelname aan het assessment center
- Persoonlijkheidseigenschappen van hoogbegaafdheid
- Interactie met andere deelnemers aan het assessment center

Bovenstaande tekst zal voorafgaand aan het interview aan de hoogbegaafde verstrekt worden. Onderstaande vragen krijgen de hoogbegaafden voordat het interview plaatsvindt niet in te zien. Bij onderstaande vragen zal – waar nodig – doorgevraagd worden. Het doel van

de interviewvragen is om de in de scriptie geformuleerde proposities te toetsen. Deze proposities worden niet met de respondenten gedeeld.

Algemene/inleidende vragen:

### **Vraag 1**

Wat is uw leeftijd en hoe weet u dat u hoogbegaafd bent?

*Dit is een inleidende vraag en dient ertoe te achterhalen wat de leeftijd van de respondent is en waar de respondent zijn hoogbegaafdheid op baseert.*

### **Vraag 2**

Hoe vaak heeft u deelgenomen aan een assessment center? Waarom nam u deel aan het assessment center?

*Dit is een inleidende vraag en dient ertoe een indruk te krijgen van hoeveel ervaring de hoogbegaafde heeft met een assessment center.*

### **Vraag 3**

Uit welke opdrachten bestond het assessment center? Was er bij bepaalde opdrachten sprake van tijdsdruk? Zo ja, bij welke opdrachten?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe een indruk te krijgen van de inhoud van het assessment center. Het tweede deel van de vraag dient ertoe inzicht te verkrijgen in hoeverre er in het assessment center sprake was van tijdsdruk.*

Vragen met betrekking tot propositie 1: *“Gifted adults experience communication problems with other participants and problems concerning making connection to other participants in an AC, due to their ability to think and react more quickly than non-gifted individuals.”*

#### **Vraag 4**

In hoeverre moest u tijdens het assessment center communiceren met andere deelnemers aan het assessment center? Bij welke opdrachten was er sprake van communicatie met andere deelnemers?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe in kaart te brengen of – en in welke mate – de hoogbegaafde tijdens het assessment center met andere deelnemers aan het assessment center moest communiceren.*

#### **Vraag 5**

Hoe heeft u de communicatie met andere deelnemers aan het assessment center ervaren?

*Bij deze vraag probeer ik op een neutrale manier te vragen hoe de hoogbegaafde de communicatie met andere deelnemers aan het assessment center heeft ervaren. Bij deze vraag zal worden doorgevraagd naar positieve en negatieve ervaringen met betrekking tot de*

*communicatie met andere deelnemers. Na deze vraag zal ik meer specifiek ingaan op de eigenschappen van hoogbegaafdheid die terugkomen in de eerste propositie.*

### **Vraag 6**

Uit literatuur omtrent hoogbegaafdheid blijkt dat hoogbegaafden sneller kunnen denken en reageren dan mensen met een gemiddelde intelligentie. Herkent u zich in deze eigenschap?

*In deze vraag wordt getoetst of hoogbegaafden zich herkennen in de eigenschap van het sneller kunnen denken en reageren dan mensen met een gemiddelde intelligentie.*

### **Vraag 7 (indien vraag 6 bevestigend wordt beantwoord)**

U herkent zich in het beeld dat hoogbegaafden sneller denken en reageren dan mensen met een gemiddelde intelligentie. Speelde deze eigenschap een rol in het assessment center?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe te toetsen of – en in welke mate/op welke manier – het feit dat hoogbegaafden sneller denken en reageren een rol speelde in het assessment center. Deze vraag wordt niet gesteld indien op vraag 6 ontkennend wordt geantwoord.*

### **Vraag 8**

Maakt u makkelijk een connectie met anderen? En hoe gaat dat als u zich in een (nieuwe) groep mensen begeeft?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe te toetsen of de hoogbegaafde zich herkent in de volgende eigenschappen: het lastig een connectie maken met anderen en zich niet thuis voelen in een groep. Om te voorkomen dat de hoogbegaafde respondent gestuurd wordt om een antwoord te geven dat overeenkomt met de genoemde eigenschappen, worden in deze vraag de eigenschappen niet expliciet benoemd.*

**Vraag 9 (indien vraag 8 bevestigend wordt beantwoord)**

U herkent zich in het feit dat hoogbegaafden soms moeite hebben om een connectie te maken met anderen en/of zich doorgaans niet thuis voelen in een groep. Speelden deze eigenschappen voor u een rol tijdens het assessment center?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe te toetsen of bovengenoemde eigenschappen een rol spelen bij de communicatie en/of omgang met anderen in een assessment center. Bij deze vraag zal doorgevraagd worden naar concrete ervaringen naar aanleiding van het verkregen antwoord op vraag 8, waardoor deze vraag tijdens het interview mogelijk in andere bewoordingen gesteld zal worden.*

Vragen met betrekking tot propositie 2: *“Gifted adults’ high level of perceptiveness leads to gifted adults experiencing difficulties with regard to ‘selling themselves’ in an AC, since they may perceive the AC as a fictitious role play, which they have objections against.”*

**Vraag 10**

Zou u zichzelf als meer of minder opmerkzaam en oplettend beschouwen dan gemiddeld?

*In deze vraag wordt getoetst of de hoogbegaafde zich herkent in het beeld dat hoogbegaafden over een hoge mate van opmerkzaamheid/oplettendheid beschikken.*

### **Vraag 11**

In een onderzoek onder hoogbegaafden zonder werk gaven bepaalde respondenten aan dat zij bij sollicitatieprocedures moeite hebben om 'het toneelstuk mee te spelen' en dat vragen en opmerkingen worden doorzien. Heeft u dat gevoel weleens ervaren tijdens een assessment center?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe te toetsen of de hoogbegaafde een assessment center als een toneelstukje ervaart en of hij/zij vragen en opmerkingen doorziet. De eventuele link met opmerkzaamheid wordt in deze vraag achterwege gelaten, om te voorkomen dat de hoogbegaafde te veel gestuurd wordt om een antwoord te geven dat overeenkomt met propositie 2. Ook bij deze vraag zal gevraagd worden naar concrete ervaringen.*

### **Vraag 12**

Met welke eigenschappen denkt u dat het te maken heeft dat u een assessment center als een toneelstuk kunt ervaren? Heeft dit volgens u specifiek te maken met hoogbegaafdheid?

*In deze vraag wordt getracht erachter te komen waarom een hoogbegaafde een assessment center als een toneelstuk kan ervaren en of dit in relatie staat met hoogbegaafdheid.*

Vragen met betrekking tot propositie 3: *“Gifted adults are at a disadvantage in time-constraint AC exercises because of their hang for perfectionism, since their persistence and creativity is being constrained by time.”*

### **Vraag 13**

Uit literatuur blijkt dat hoogbegaafden doorgaans neigen naar perfectionisme, maar dat perfectionisme zowel positief als negatief kan uitwerken. Zou u zichzelf als perfectionistisch omschrijven?

*Deze vraag dient om te toetsen of de hoogbegaafde zich herkent in het beeld dat hoogbegaafden doorgaans neigen naar perfectionisme. Indien dit het geval is, zal in de volgende vragen worden gevraagd welke rol dit speelt bij een assessment center.*

### **Vraag 14 (indien vraag 13 bevestigend wordt beantwoord)**

In hoeverre speelde uw neiging tot perfectionisme een rol bij het assessment center? Speelde hierbij tijdsdruk bij opdrachten een rol?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe te toetsen welke invloed de neiging tot perfectionisme heeft op het assessment center. Het tweede deel van de vraag ziet op de eventuele invloed van tijdsdruk tijdens de opdrachten. Vragen 13 en 14 dienen ertoe – indirect – propositie 3 te toetsen, waarbij creativiteit en doorzettingsvermogen/volhardendheid niet expliciet worden genoemd, om de respondent niet te veel te sturen in zijn antwoorden.*

Vragen met betrekking tot propositie 4: *“Gifted adults’ typical preference for working alone, independence, and non-conformism lead to gifted adults having difficulty in AC exercises such as a leaderless group discussion or a team preparation and presentation, since in that setting they cannot independently use their high level of cognitive ability and creativity to find the best solution to a problem.”*

**Vraag 15**

Werkt u doorgaans liever alleen of samen met andere mensen? Waarom?

**Vraag 16**

Uit literatuur omtrent hoogbegaafdheid blijkt dat hoogbegaafden doorgaans een neiging hebben tot ‘non-conformisme’ (liever zelf tot een mening/oplossing komen dan de heersende opinie volgen). Herkent u dit bij uzelf?

*Bovenstaande twee vragen dienen ertoe te toetsen of de hoogbegaafde zich herkent in de volgende eigenschappen: een voorkeur hebben voor zelfstandig werken en non-conformisme. Indien deze vragen bevestigend beantwoord worden, kan in de volgende vraag doorggevraagd worden welke rol deze eigenschappen spelen bij een assessment center.*

**Vraag 17 (indien vragen 15 en/of 16 bevestigend wordt beantwoord)**

Heeft uw voorkeur voor zelfstandig werken en/of ‘non-conformisme’ naar uw mening een rol gespeeld in het assessment center? Zo ja, in welk opzicht en bij welke opdrachten?

*Met deze vraag wordt propositie 4 getoetst.*

Vragen met betrekking tot propositie 5: *“Gifted adults’ typical characteristic of not feeling at home in groups and preference for working alone leads to gifted adults keeping a low profile with regard to their ideas and wishes (i.e., diving behavior) and under-performance in AC exercises.”*

### **Vraag 18**

Krijgt u als hoogbegaafde bij een assessment center naar uw mening genoeg de ruimte om uw kwaliteiten te laten zien?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe te toetsen of de hoogbegaafde zich wellicht beperkt voelt door de opbouw/inhoud van een assessment center. Als dit het geval is, zal hierop doorggevraagd worden.*

### **Vraag 19**

Heeft u bij een assessment center weleens het gevoel gehad dat u zich moest inhouden of aanpassen?

*Deze vraag dient ertoe propositie 5 te toetsen. Indien de respondent aangeeft dat hij/zij zich inderdaad heeft moeten inhouden of aanpassen zal hierop doorggevraagd worden. Er zal dan ook geprobeerd worden een link te leggen met eigenschappen van hoogbegaafdheid die hierbij een rol kunnen spelen.*

Afsluitende vraag:

**Vraag 20**

Heeft u nog overige opmerkingen over uw ervaringen bij een assessment center?

## Appendix E

The list of open codes is presented below. These codes were appointed to the highlighted passages in the transcript.

Table 4 – List of open codes

Niet begrepen/herkend	Machtspolitiek	Perfectionisme
Bagatelliseren/hoge standaard	Op ander niveau denken	Hoogbegaafden: minderheidsgroep
Inhouden	Sneller denken/reageren	Mismatch mentale model
Anders zijn	Sneller structuur zien	Sterk analytisch vermogen
Opmerkzaam	Management in moeilijke positie brengen	Neiging tot controle
Zelf een toneelstuk ervan maken	Voorkeur buiten boekje	Dingen op eigen manier doen
Niet begrepen worden	Te veel buiten boekje	Kan sociaal nog groeien
Uitdagen	Grote bedrijven: cultuur/minder feeling	Samenwerken: afhankelijk van met wie
Flauw/flauwekul	Niet volgens het boekje	Beter samenwerken met gelijken
Kinderachtig	Open ended assessment	Meer oplossingen zien
Voorkeur voor alleen werken	In hokjes denken	Snel schakelen op verschillende niveaus

Creativiteit/weerstand	Denkniveau	Denkniveau kan bedreigend overkomen
Jaloezie	Connectie maken: groepsafhankelijk	Kunstmatig (AC)
Stap vooruit zijn	Slimmer, maar niet in de positie om iemand aan te sturen	Buiten de kaders: niet goed
Linken leggen/combineren	Hoger niveau	Herkenning (hoogbegaafdheid)
Werken als zelfstandige	Sterk analytisch	Aanpassen
Niet in hokje te plaatsen	Snel doorzien dat reactie uitgelokt wordt	Gedoe/stom
Te snel/stap vooruit zijn	Snel doorzien politieke belangen	Afwachtend
Te snel gaan	Snel vragen doorzien	Coördineren
Aansluiting kwijt zijn	Politieke spelletjes snel doorzien	Competitief (AC)
Veel soorten hoogbegaafden	Niet volgens het boekje reageren: ongewenst gedrag	Snel denken
Typen hoogbegaafden	Te dominant	Stress
Voorkeur inhoudelijke gesprekken	AC te klein kader	Faalangst

Non-conformisme	Met gelijken: wél intuïtief reageren	Niet makkelijk connectie maken in een groep
Eigen mening	Dingen op een andere manier benaderen	Geen small talk
Dominant	Sociale ontwikkeling	Breed spectrum emoties
Achtergrond/niet direct op de voorgrond	Hoge mate van creativiteit	Zich anders voelen
Tijdsdruk	Laag niveau recruiters	Raar
Stap terug doen	Gedrag doorzien	Weerstand tegen term hoogbegaafd
Politieke spelletjes	Coaching/bewustwording zou helpen	Aanvoelen
Hoogsensitief	Zoeken is pijnlijk	Zelfreflectie
Niet passen in het verhaal	Belangen doorzien	Zich klein voelen
Niet authentiek	Niet transparant	Ze willen niet alles
In hokje duwen	Moet voldoen aan checklist	Gevoelig voor authenticiteit
Emotioneel en rationeel	Behoeftte aan samenwerken	Autonomie
AC: niemand voldoende ruimte	Conformereren	Ergens bij willen passen
Anders zijn/rariteit	Veel dingen aanvoelen	Soorten hoogbegaafdheid
Continu aanpassen	Buiten de kaders	Andere stem
Weerstand tegen literatuur hoogbegaafdheid	Behandeld vanuit een bovenpositie	Direct beeld van situatie

Situaties inschatten	Zien wat anderen niet zien	Arrogant overkomen
Woordkeuze aanpassen	Jezelf zien als standaard	Makkelijk connectie maken
Inzicht	Aanvoelen waar het om gaat	Aansluiting verliezen
Uitdagen: niet bedoeld als uitdagend	Zoeken naar inzicht/begrip	Behoeftte aan (ook) alleen werken
Ethiek	Rechtvaardigheid	Twijfelen aan zichzelf
Andere manier van denken	Niemand kan top-down naar opdracht kijken	Holistisch nadenken
Sneller: wordt niet begrepen	Integraal nadenken	Erdoorheen prikken: dan krijg je de baan niet
Holistisch	Goede antwoord geven op verkeerde vraag	Sociaal een overbrugging maken
Voorkeur voor werken in team	Opvallen in groep: baan niet krijgen	Valkuil
Respectloos	Afhankelijk van empathie medemens	Wordt niet herkend
De baan niet meer willen	Niet rationeel óf emotioneel	Dubbele bodem: baan niet krijgen
Dubbele bodem	Verborgten agenda	Buiten de boot vallen
Op eigen manier dingen doen	Toneelstukje	Gedrag voorspellen/inschatten
Te snel reageren	Connectie verliezen	Mankementen van anderen blootleggen

Soms moeilijk om gedrag aan te passen	Slecht in groepen	Ergeren aan tempo
Binnenvetter	Voorkeur alleen werken	Voorgevormde structuur: vermoeiend
Je kunt maar een deeltje van jezelf laten zien	Deeltje van jezelf is aan het doodgaan	Behoeftte aan eigen structuur
Minder goed presteren in voorgevormde structuur	Integraliteit	Holistisch werken
Ingewikkeld	Niet jezelf zijn	Een soort spel
Slecht in small talk	Observeren	Snel doorzien wat gaat scoren
Veel informatie: niet makkelijk	Jezelf geweld aandoen	Hoge verwachtingen
Nadruk op inhoud	Poppenkast: niks meer aan te redden	Solist in werken
Doelbewust op zoek naar bepaalde kwaliteiten	Gebrek aan empathisch vermogen	Game (AC)
Geduld opbrengen is ingewikkeld	Geen procedure met AC meer	Groepen vreemden: ingewikkeld
Snel hoofdlijnen zien	Groot empathisch vermogen	Door mensen heen kunnen voelen
Levellen	Intuïtie	Integraliteit

Existentiële	Altruïsme	Hiërarchie op basis van positie i.p.v. inzichten
Je kunt alleen altruïstisch zijn bij zuivere intenties	Ze willen je beheersen/controleren	Hoger niveau dan assessor
Intentie aanvoelen	Sollicitaties: dat wordt hem niet	Niet in hokje passen
Als bedreiging gezien worden	De hoogbegaafde ziet het volledige	Sterk zelfbewustzijn
Communicatie ervaren als traag	Sneller zijn dan de rest	Het traag vinden gaan
Contact missen/uit de verbinding	Uit de verbinding schieten	Sneller in analytisch vermogen
Verveeld raken	Impulsief/snel	Alleen gedragsmatige feedback
Niet als toneelstukje ervaren	Geen sociaal wenselijke antwoorden geven	Ze willen niet het oprechte antwoord
Hoogbegaafden niet allemaal hetzelfde	Interesse in mensen	Ergeren in teams
Moeite hebben met feedback	In teams: vervelen	Autisme
Makkelijker werken met gelijken	Eerlijkheid	Absolute moraal

Twee stappen vooruit lopen	Jezelf anders voor moeten doen	Als ik mijn oprechte vragen stel, kom ik niet binnen
Vergeleken met 'normale' groep mensen	Assessoren kijken te veel naar gedrag	

## Appendix F

The coding scheme is presented on the next page. The five categories that resulted from the data analysis are presented in the first column of the table. The codes that were appointed to passages in the transcripts are depicted in the second column. Exemplary passages from the transcripts that correspond to the different codes are presented in the third column.



## Appendix G

The coded transcripts are presented from the next page on. The transcripts are numbered, and the numbers correspond to the different respondents (see Table 2 for the characteristics of the respondents). Questions asked by the researcher are bold and are indicated with a 'V', whereas answers given by the respondents are indicated with an 'A'.