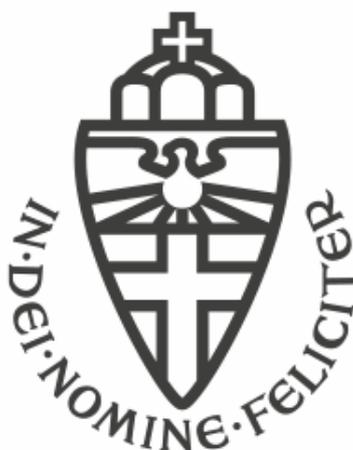


Career shock Covid-19 and its implications for perceived employability

The barriers and opportunities for employees to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock with regard to their perceived employability



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Abstract

The disruptive and extraordinary nature of the Covid-19 pandemic will most likely affect all types of work outcomes and could be experienced as a career shock. This research aims to discover to what extent employees experience the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock and whether this influences their perceived employability. Subsequently, it is examined which barriers and opportunities these employees have experienced in order to deal with this. With a qualitative design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen participants and next the gathered data was analysed using a template analysis. This revealed that ten participants experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock and that it affected the perceived employability for all of them in the form of growth or decline. Despite the fact that not all ten participants experienced all the characteristics of a career shock, it did influence their perceived employability. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that Covid-19 can be seen as a career shock for the majority and that it is more important to look at the career outcomes instead of just the characteristics. In particular the image and experience that participants have with the work field influences their perceived employability, both in the form of barriers (i.e. negatively) and opportunities (i.e. positively). This study makes an important contribution to the literature field of career shocks and perceived employability, that even without meeting all characteristics, an event can be experienced as a career shock that triggers a change in perceived employability.

Keywords: career shocks, perceived employability, home demands, work demands, home resources, work resources, HR bundles

Introduction

From the beginning of 2020 until now, the world is suffering from a pandemic called 'Covid-19' or 'coronavirus' (WHO, n.d.). In mid-March, the Netherlands went into the first 'intelligent lockdown' and measures were taken to counter this pandemic (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). Due to these measures the majority of workplaces came to a standstill while others were pushed to the limits of their capacity. This has, as a result, significantly altered the work environment and affected employees in all types of professions and will have a profound impact on people's careers (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020).

According to Kniffin et al. (2021), the impacts on employees and employers have been dramatic. For example, a decline in employment is inevitable, despite the many support measures taken by the Dutch government to maintain as many jobs as possible (UWV, 2020). Between the first Corona 'wave' in March and August 2020, the number of unemployed increased by more than 150.000 in the Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021). This is only work-related, but according to Saha et al. (2020) there is a lot more to it. Individuals are on the one hand worried about the direct consequences of possible infection, including lasting disabilities, worsening chronic illnesses or fear of death. On the other hand, measures to minimize the spread of the virus, like quarantining, social distancing, and organization closures with resulting layoffs, are a source of life disruptions and emotional stress (Saha et al., 2020).

Because of these impacts and its characteristics, Covid-19 can be seen as a career shock which affects all employees (Akkermans et al., 2020). It is therefore different from more common career shocks like having a child or losing a loved one. A career shock is a disruptive and extraordinary event that is caused by external factors outside the control of the individual and can be either positive or negative appraised (Akkermans et al., 2018). Akkermans et al. (2020) state that when applying these characteristics to current events, it is evident that the Covid-19 pandemic is a highly disruptive and extraordinary event and that such a career shock can have major impact on people's work and careers, as for many employees there is a (possible) loss of their job. Kniffin et al. (2021) and Kramer and Kramer (2020) build further on this and indicate that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, more employees will need to learn to work in ways far different than how they used to work. As the prediction is that many organizations will be restructured or disappear due to this ongoing pandemic, employees will be retrained or fired, and need to find new jobs or change the direction of their careers (Kniffin et al., 2021; Kramer & Kramer, 2020). Especially business services (including in particular the temporary employment sector and travel agencies), catering, culture, sports and recreation, floriculture and airline companies were hit hard (UWV, 2020). It can therefore be expected that

these events are likely to affect ones' perceived employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014). This concept of employability concerns the individual's perception of their opportunities of obtaining and maintaining employment (Blokker et al., 2019; Vanhercke et al., 2014) and has become one of the most important outcomes of contemporary careers (Wille et al., 2013). Employees should build and maintain their employability early in their careers (Bridgstock, 2009; Fugate et al., 2004), because it can be seen as the foundation of current and future opportunities in the labour market (e.g., Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). According to Akkermans et al. (2020), the impact this career shock will have on an individual and its career differs per person, which leads to the suggestion that the impact on individual employability also differs per person. This has to do with the dynamic interplay between contextual and individual factors, these factors will differ for people across career and life stages and there may be differences between short-term and long-term consequences for each person.

Scientific literature on career shocks, barriers and opportunities to deal with these shocks and their impacts on employability is still scarce (Akkermans et al., 2018; Blokker et al., 2019). Nonetheless, these shocks represent a key driver of transitions and career development (Akkermans et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2005). The literature needs empirical findings that could help the field in going forward as stated by Akkermans et al. (2018). With the current Covid-19 career shock (Hite & McDonald, 2020) still going on, there doesn't seem to be a better time to do this (Pak et al., 2020). Furthermore, Akkermans et al. (2020) indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic will have an impact on the opportunities of individuals. The economic, social-psychological, and health costs of these actions are likely to be immense (Kniffin et al., 2021). Therefore, the aim of this study is to research how employees perceive the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as a potential career shock with regard to their employability and which barriers and opportunities they experience. With regard to this, the following research question will be answered: *How do employees perceive the impact of the covid-19 pandemic as a potential career shock with regard to their employability and which barriers and opportunities do they experience in order to deal with this?*

This study aims to contribute to existing literature about career shocks (e.g., Akkermans et al., 2020; Blokker et al., 2019; Kniffin et al., 2021) and perceived employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014). The majority of recent career research was focused on the 'makeable career' but the major impact that career shocks may have on individual career trajectories was largely ignored (Akkermans et al., 2018). This "makeability" of careers means that as long as individuals make sure that they are proactive, competent, and employable, then this should result in career success. This approach has a lot of merits but overemphasizes the role of

individual control over one's career, therefore Akkermans et al. (2018) argue that career shocks should be considered much more in studies and practice as influential on contemporary careers. Blokker et al. (2019) suggest that future research should focus on exploring the concept of career shocks further and empirically examine its relationship with regard to career outcomes (cf. Akkermans et al., 2018). This study will contribute to the above literature by providing insights in the process through which employees perceive the influence of career shocks on their employability.

In a practical way this study has relevance for both employees and organizations by offering an understanding of how these abruptly emergent changes unfold. This will contribute by providing insights into what opportunities there are to respond as adequate as possible to the occurrence of a career shock, and which barriers should be taken into account. Subsequently, actions can then be taken to limit the negative impact as much as possible.

Theoretical framework

Perceived employability

The concept of employability was first used around 1955 (Versloot et al., 1998) and has attracted much attention from scholars, policy makers and practitioners. It has been studied in multiple disciplines like career research, education, management and psychology. Because of this a wealth of interpretations and measures arises across different disciplines (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2005) define employability as “the continuous fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competences” (p. 143), which can be seen as competence-based employability. According to Vanhercke et al. (2014) the concept of employability concerns the ability to be employed, which is defined as perceived employability. De Cuyper and De Witte (2011) and Vanhercke et al. (2014) define this as an individual's perception of its employment abilities to maintain their current job or to find a new job when this is needed in either the internal or external labour market. “The individual's perception of his or her possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment” (Vanhercke et al., 2014, p.594) is the definition of perceived employability that will be used in the current study. This definition is the most suited because it can be assumed that the individuals' perceptions of his or her possibilities with regard to obtaining and maintaining employment are most affected by the Covid-19 events (Akkermans et al., 2020; Blokker et al., 2019; Hite & McDonald, 2020).

Vanhercke et al. (2014) concluded that within this definition five aspects are important. The first aspect is that perceived employability is a subjective evaluation and therefore fitting

to the psychological notion of employability. One objective situation could possibly evoke different perceptions in people (Vanhercke et al., 2014). Second, perceived employability is concerned with ‘possibilities’ of employment (Berntson & Marklund, 2007) in the broadest sense. ‘Possibilities’ is a broad term because it can be seen as the integration of personal factors, structural factors and their interactions. Personal factors are connected with the person, whereas structural factors are connected to the level of the job (e.g. networks: Eby et al., 2003; Forrier & Sels, 2003; Griffeth et al., 2005; Ng et al., 2005), the organization (e.g. career development support: Ng et al., 2005) or the society (e.g. totality of jobs available: Forrier & Sels, 2003; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). The third aspect is focused on the interaction between personal and structural factors, which is unique to perceived employability and distinguished it from other related concepts in the field (e.g. self-efficacy). Fourth, as stated earlier, perceived employability refers to possibilities in employment, focused on the current employer (i.e. the internal labour market) or with another employer (i.e. the external labour market). This difference expresses perceived internal employability and perceived external employability (e.g. De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010; Eby et al., 2003; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). The fifth and last aspect regard the general term ‘employment’, which also concerns a focus upon both quantity (i.e. amount of jobs available) and quality (i.e. type of jobs available). According to Vanhercke et al. (2014), the approach of perceived employability provides an overall scan because it integrates all possible personal and structural factors, as well as their interactions. This provides information with regard to the individuals general feeling of perceived control over one’s career.

Career shocks

Throughout their (working) life individuals are likely to experience certain major events that will have an impact on their career paths (Hirschi, 2010). These events mostly appear unexpected (Akkermans et al., 2018). Events like this have been called chance events (Bright et al., 2005), serendipity (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996), happenstance (Miller, 1983) and career shocks (Seibert et al., 2013) in the literature. In this study, these types of events will be referred to as career shocks. The role of these so-called career shocks has long been acknowledged in career development (e.g., Roe & Baruch, 1967; Miller, 1983).

A career shock is defined as:

... a disruptive and extraordinary event that is, at least to some degree, caused by factors outside the focal individual’s control and that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one’s career. The occurrence of a career shock can vary in terms of

predictability and can be either positively or negatively valenced. (Akkermans et al., 2018, p. 4)

Examples of career shocks include unexpectedly losing your job, serious illness or a loved one passing away, what can be seen as negative shocks. Getting an unexpected promotion, receiving a bonus or an award and the birth of a child are examples of positive shocks (Akkermans et al., 2018).

According to Akkermans et al. (2020) and Hite and McDonald (2020) each of the aforementioned characteristics are relevant to the current ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, therefore it can be seen as a career shock. To deepen the definition further, the core characteristics will be clarified in the order in which they are specified in the above definition. To provide insight into why Covid-19 can be seen as a career shock (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020) it is also discussed how these characteristics refer to the event of Covid-19. The first characteristic is the disruptive and extraordinary nature of the event, this means that career shocks are events that are important and unusual to the person experiencing it (e.g. having a child or losing a loved one) (Pak et al., 2020). This is evident in the rare and extraordinary nature of the Covid-19 pandemic (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020).

Second, these shocks are contextual antecedents of career development that are outside of the individual's control as to their occurrence (e.g., Rojewski, 1999). According to Akkermans et al. (2018), this implies that such a career shock may be expected, but there is still a certain level of lack of control, either perceived or actual, over the shock and the effects it causes. Hence, Akkermans et al. (2018) note that the fact that the occurrence and consequences of a career shock are not under the individual's control is a key characteristic of such a shock, they are about more than just individual agency (e.g. even though having a child is often planned and desired, the consequences of this are not always foreseen). This applies to the Covid-19 pandemic given the fact that the event is outside the control of the individual (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020).

Third, fundamental to the definition of a career shock is the notion that shocks activate individuals to actively think about their career (Akkermans et al., 2018). For example, shocks "initiate psychological analyses" (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p. 51) and "trigger deliberation" (Seibert et al., 2013, p. 172). Building further on the idea that career shocks initiate a deliberate thought process, shocks can likely lead to changes in behaviour and therefore have an impact on the career of an individual (Akkermans et al., 2018). Rojewski (1999), Holtom et al. (2005) and Seibert et al. (2013) all pointed at this by underscoring the potential relationship between the

happening of a career shock and a following behaviour that changes the course of an individual's career. The fact that the Covid-19 pandemic is low in frequency but also low in controllability makes it likely to initiate such a deliberate thought process (Akkermans et al., 2018).

Fourth, the fact that career shocks can vary in the degree of predictability is also part of the definition. Even though for some big events the occurrence itself could be unexpected (e.g. getting fired from your job or losing a close relative), for other events, the occurrence could be predictable but still hold shocking effects (e.g. having a child or a contract terminated) (Akkermans et al., 2018). Having a child is a good example of this because even though having a child might be planned and wished for (i.e. usually there is a conscious expectation of wanting to have a child), the actual effects of this shock may have consequences not fully foreseen (e.g. giving birth could cause potential health issues for the mother or the child). Thus, even though career shocks are chance events in itself, they are different from each other in terms of "the degree of unexpectedness" (Akkermans et al., 2018, p. 4). The Covid-19 pandemic meets the criteria of being widely unpredictable because it was difficult to predict (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020) and no one really knows how the virus is going to develop further or how long it will be before a cure or treatment is available.

The fifth key attribute of a career shock is valence, this indicates that the more positively valenced a career shock is, the more positive the career outcomes will be, and vice versa. Therefore, differences can occur in the impact of a career shock on different individuals, according to how strongly the individual experiences the shock (Akkermans et al., 2018). It is also emphasized that when the valence of career shocks is operationally defined, it is important to understand that it is the experienced valence of the shock to the person itself that determines the categorisation, not the extent to which the event has positive or negative consequences for that person's career or organisation (Akkermans et al., 2018). Furthermore, intensely valenced career shocks are expected to expose stronger relationships with career outcomes and decisions (Akkermans et al., 2018). Morrell et al. (2004) found support that expected shocks are presumably to be more positive and personal, while negative shocks are more likely to relate to work. With regard to Covid-19, it might appear to be entirely negative because of potential job insecurity, emotional impact of social distancing, loss of income, and increased anxiety (Akkermans et al., 2020), however positive elements may also emerge (Hite & McDonald, 2020). Those positive outcomes include spending more time with family or loved ones and not having to commute (Akkermans et al., 2020), organizations discovering the added value of adopting new forms of technology to cater to more flexible work arrangements or the necessity

for employees or employers to upgrade skills and competencies, particularly with respect to the use of technology (Akkermans et al., 2020).

Although not explicitly mentioned in the definition, duration is also an important characteristic of a career shock. Within duration there is a difference between the duration of the shock event itself (e.g. an episode of illness is likely to take longer than receiving a promotion) and the duration of the consequences of it (e.g. coping with the consequences of a lay-off may take longer than coping with the consequences of being hired). According to Akkermans et al. (2018) it would seem that shocks that are longer in duration will have more effects, when all else held constant. However, the duration has potential interaction with other shock characteristics, because a very short but highly intense shock might have a stronger impact than a long but not very disruptive shock. In addition, is also the interplay between frequency and duration of the shock that is important, long shocks that also occur on a frequent basis might be especially impactful on career outcomes. This dimension also applies to the current Covid-19 event according to Hite and McDonald (2020), the fact that it is continuing for over one year now will have a lot of consequences for the lives and careers of a lot of people. These consequences include rising risks for small organizations without big reserves of financial capital, all employees that are facing changes in work protocols with regard to their safety, individuals out of work or on reduced work depleting savings and looking for other avenues as incomes and those employees who are still employed might review their short- and long-term career opportunities following their Covid-19 experience (Hite & McDonald, 2020).

The final important attribute, which is also not explicitly mentioned in the definition is the locus or source of the shock (cf. Morrell et al., 2004). According to Akkermans et al. (2018), the source could be interpersonal (e.g., sexual harassment or discrimination), family-related (e.g., pregnancy, divorce, death, illness), organizational (e.g., mass lay-offs), environmental (natural disaster) or geopolitical (e.g., war). Shocks could be classified as generic (in a way that they could affect anyone) or context- or population-specific (e.g., women getting pregnant).

Perceived employability and career shocks

The Work-Home Resources model (W-HR model) (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) is used to bridge the gap and to understand how and why career shocks influence one's perceived employability. The model depicts in detail how the two micro-systems of work and home influence each other. It describes the work-home conflict as a process wherein demands in one domain exhaust personal resources and hinder functioning and performance in the other domain. According to this model, individuals who are confronted with demands coming from

the home domain (e.g. family problems) lose personal resources as sleep, energy and attention. Subsequently, this lack in personal resources leads to impaired functioning and outcomes in the domain of work. This also happens in the opposite way, individuals who are experiencing a specific amount of home resources (e.g. pleasant home situation) will likely gain personal resources and this will result in positive work outcomes.

In line with the components from this model, the Covid-19 career shock is likely to impact the home and work demands that individuals are experiencing as Kniffin et al. (2021) expect that the social-psychological and health consequences will be profound for most people. According to this model, these home demands will impact one's personal resources, which subsequently influences the work outcomes (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), of which perceived employability is part (Blokker et al., 2019).

Barriers and opportunities

Building further on the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), possible barriers and opportunities with regard to one's perceived employability occur. Possible barriers are in line with what Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) call 'work and home demands' (i.e. contextual demands). These demands can be seen as possible barriers because they are stressors that individuals encounter in their work and home environment that affect their well-being and resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), such stressors may form a barrier to work outcomes such as perceived employability when a career shock occurs. They occur in both the home and work domain and the W-HR model provides a more informative view of what occurs when the work and home domains conflict with or enrich each other. These are overload demands (e.g. working overtime, many household chores, urgent care tasks), physical demands (e.g. lifting weights, care for the elderly, care for young children), emotional demands (e.g. dealing with an angry customer, conflicts at home, disappointments) and cognitive demands (e.g. writing a report, coordination of household and care tasks, multitasking). Possible opportunities are in line with what Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) indicate as 'work and home resources' (i.e. contextual resources and personal resources) and can be seen as possible opportunities because they are objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by a person or serve as a means of obtaining these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies. Individuals try to obtain, retain and protect resources and expend them to address the presence of a demand, or stressor. If this is unsuccessful, or if many resources must be invested, stress will develop (Hobfoll, 2002). These resources may represent an opportunity in terms of work outcomes such as perceived employability when a career shock occurs. Contextual resources

cover social support opportunities (e.g. advice from co-workers, understanding, love, respect from a friend), autonomy opportunities (e.g. control over work design, planning leisure time, allocating home tasks), opportunities for development (e.g. new tasks at work, attending courses, participating in sports, hobbies) and feedback opportunities (e.g. supervisor evaluation, open communication at home, reflection with friends). Personal resources include physical opportunities (e.g. health, physical energy, power, sleep), psychological opportunities (e.g. optimism, self-efficacy, focus, mental resilience), affective opportunities (e.g. mood, fulfilment, empathy, gratefulness), intellectual opportunities (e.g. skills, perspectives, knowledge, experience) and capital opportunities (e.g. time, money). Work-home conflict occurs in case demands in one domain deplete personal resources, resulting in diminished outcomes in the other domain. In contrast, they can also enrich each other in the form of work-home enrichment. This process occurs when resources in one domain replenish, or add to, individuals personal resource supply. Subsequently, performance in the other domain improves (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Additional resources that can also be classified with the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) as opportunities are the four bundles of HR practices suggested by Kooij et al. (2014). Pak et al. (2020) argued that if organizations were to respond to career shocks, it is possible that they could mitigate the potential negative effects of negative career shocks or reinforce potential positive effects of positive career shocks by “providing additional job resources and/or support for acquiring additional personal resources by offering HR practices” (Pak et al., 2020, pp. 4-5). These are developmental, maintenance, utilisation and accommodative practices. The first – developmental HR practices – (e.g., training) are aimed at helping employees to improve their performance (Pak et al., 2020). These developmental practices are an important work resource (Wheeler et al., 2013). Maintenance HR practices (e.g., health checks) could help employees to sustain their performance, despite the possible negative consequences of career shocks. Utilization HR practices (e.g., mentoring roles) aim at making use of the particular experience, knowledge and competences of the employee. These HR practices can change work demands in a way that they fit better with the current personal resources of employees (Kooij et al., 2014). The last practices, accommodative HR practices (e.g., demotions) are pointed at assisting employees to function at a lower work level when it is not possible anymore to regain former performance levels. By lowering those work demands, less strain will be put on the current resources of employees (Pak et al., 2020). According to Pak et al. (2020), those HR practices can help start a resource gain cycle.

However, there is not yet a solid picture of which barriers and opportunities are proven to be the most influential for dealing with the impact of a career shock on one's perceived employability. This study aims at providing further insights into this manner. Nevertheless, it can be suggested that when an employee experiences a career shock, work and home demands, and work and home resources can be seen as possible influential factors, but they are not an exhaustive list.

Methodology

Research design

The goal of this study was to acquire an in-depth understanding of how the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock influences perceived employability. The profound nature of these concepts prompts qualitative research to explore these concepts further (Bleijenbergh, 2015). By doing this, an in-depth understanding of the underlying barriers and opportunities to deal with this career shock could be provided and underlying thoughts and emotions could be traced (Lewis & Ormston, 2003). The research was conducted in an explorative way to collect rich data which contributed to a better understanding of the underlying process of how Covid-19 as a career shock relates to the perceived employability of employees (Myers & Myers, 2013). A mix of deductive and inductive approach was pursued. It was deductive because existing theory regarding career shocks and employability was used as a starting point for this research (Bryman, 2015) and inductive because the way of doing research has been deliberately 'left open' to discover new insights (Bleijenbergh, 2015). In-depth interviews were conducted in which participants reflected on their career with regard to their employability until the point of data collection.

Sample

For this study, fifteen participants were interviewed. To ensure a representative study, participants were chosen from different ages, educational levels, professions, sectors, family situations and gender. It was decided to focus on participants of all these different characteristics and not necessarily on one sector in particular in order to obtain the best possible representation of the Dutch work field. This was done by the use of purposive sampling, which is a form of non-probability sampling where the participants were selected based on their characteristics (Vennix, 2019). With this way of sampling, a balanced representation was achieved because it was possible to select who will participate in the interviews. Participants were selected from the network of the researcher (i.e. family, friends, colleagues). Table 1

describes the demographic characteristics of the participants. This shows their gender, age, function title, contract status, sector in which they work, and their level of education and family situation is featured.

Table 1
Characteristics Participants

Participant (n=15)	Gender	Age	Function title	Contract status	Sector	Level of education	Family situation
1	Female	25	Youth care worker	Fulltime	Healthcare	High	Lives with a roommate
2	Male	23	Disabled care worker	Fulltime	Healthcare	High	Lives with a roommate
3	Male	25	Recruiter	Fulltime	Business services	High	Living at home with parents
4	Female	55	GZ psychologist	Parttime	Healthcare	High	Married, two children
5	Male	57	Procurement manager	Fulltime	Electronics industry	High	Married, two children
6	Female	40	Economics teacher and publishing house employee	Fulltime	Education	High	Married, two children
7	Female	31	Team assistant	Parttime	ICT	High	Living with partner, no children
8	Female	41	Director of operations	Fulltime	Healthcare	High	Married, two children
9	Male	64	Customer relationship manager	Fulltime	ICT	Low	Married, one child
10	Male	62	Contractmanager	Fulltime	Business services	High	Married, one child
11	Female	22	Catering waitress	Parttime	Catering industry	High	Lives on her own in a student house
12	Male	26	Catering waiter	Parttime	Catering industry	Low	Lives with roommates
13	Female	31	Ambulance employee, GP post employee and nurse	Parttime	Healthcare	Low	Married, two children
14	Male	57	Demand planner	Fulltime	Pharmaceuticals industry	Low	Married, two children
15	Female	59	Risk specialist insurance	Fulltime	Finance	Low	Married, two children

Instruments

In this research a retrospective interview technique was used in semi-structured, timeline interviews in which participants were asked to reflect on their career from the beginning of 2020 until the present moment (Adriansen, 2012; Vennix, 2019). The interviews were conducted online (Vennix, 2019), because of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. According to Vennix (2019), an advantage of online interviews is that there are no geographical limitations. Disadvantages are that connection problems may arise that could disrupt the interview and that the participant could unilaterally end the interview without warning or

explanation. In order to take into account possible connection problems, an agreement was made with the respondent to take the interview in a place with a stable internet connection. If the participant, for whatever reason, felt the need to end the conversation, he or she was free to indicate this. However, this did not happen when conducting the interviews.

Before the interviews were conducted, participants received an informative email about the setup of the interview. When conducting the interviews, first, the participants were asked to give a summary of their resume and answer general questions. Second, the participants were introduced to the concept of employability and were asked to draw a trajectory of their employability over their working lifespan from the beginning of 2020 up until now. The drawings illustrate how the employability of the participant has developed up until now. The drawings were used as a starting point and provided insight into how the employability of participants has been shaped (Adriansen, 2012). Thereafter, they were asked to reflect on their drawings and to elaborate further by explaining in what way they have experienced the current career shock with regard to their employability. Third, they were asked about their experiences with regard to the barriers and opportunities they experienced with regard to their employability. Next, the participants were asked in which way they have perceived these barriers and opportunities. An extensive interview guide can be found in appendix 1. Since Pak et al. (2020) conducted a similar qualitative study, a modified version of their interview scheme was used as a guide to structure and design the interview.

To make sure the interviews were conducted in the right way and no information gets lost in translation, the interviews were conducted in Dutch since this is the main language of the participants and the researcher (Myers & Myers, 2013).

Data analysis

The interviews were coded and analysed using a template analysis (King & Brooks, 2016). Such a thematic analysis balances the relatively high degree of structure in the process of data analysis with the flexibility to adapt it to the needs of this research (Symon & Cassell, 2012). A set of preliminary codes was derived from the literature on perceived employability, career shocks and barriers and opportunities to initiate the analysis, this initial coding template can be found in appendix 2. The interviews with the participants were recorded and transcribed in Dutch using verbatim transcription, which contributes to the interpretation process as no data will get lost and misunderstandings will be reduced (Bleijenbergh, 2015).

The analysis of the collected data was performed in several steps. In the first step, all the interviews were coded using the initial coding template. The initial template was modified

along the way by inserting new codes when statements could not be accommodated by existing codes, and existing codes were redefined or deleted if they were redundant. This step can be seen as an iterative process in which constant change in codes took place depending on the data being analysed. In the second step, all the codes were summarized in a final coding scheme which was developed to provide a clear overview of all the important data, this final coding template can be found in appendix 3. In the third and final step, the codes were compared and examined at possible patterns and explanations.

Quality criteria and research ethics

Lincoln and Guba (1958) state that to assess the trustworthiness and ethics of this research, it is important to evaluate its worth. This was accomplished through meeting the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In this study, the criteria of credibility was met through the extensively use of member checking. After transcribing the interviews, a summary of the transcripts was presented to the participants to check whether they were correctly interpreted and documented. The criteria of transferability was met through providing a thick description, which means that the findings were described in great detail. With regard to the criteria of dependability, external audits, in the role of the thesis supervisor and group members, were involved to examine the process and product of the research. The last criteria of confirmability was assured through extensively explaining at each step in this study where the data comes from and how such data was converted into the presented findings. To further comply with research ethics, participants were assured of full confidentiality and anonymity before participating. This was ensured by not using the real names of the participants but describing them as 'participant 1' or 'participant 2'. These descriptions will be used throughout the full study. Furthermore, before taking part in the study, the participants were asked to sign a consent form so that the information that was gathered can be handled confidentially. After the interviews were conducted, they were kept informed of the further continuation of each part of the study. When this research study arrived in its final phase, it was first sent to the participants for a final check before the official submission, adjustments as a result of this check could then still be made. To ensure further confidentiality, the research was only shared with a few who were actually involved in its progress, such as the thesis supervisor, group members and the second reader. When the researcher conducted interviews with acquaintances, the role of the researcher was adequately be taken into account by being aware of the multiple roles that were present. This was taken into account by indicating to the participant in question prior to the interview that even if the researcher is known, they should

not regard this person as a known person but as a researcher and that it is a confidential interview in which everything can be said. When it was noted that during the interviews participants leaned too much towards the researcher in the role of acquaintance, they were called to account.

Results

Career shock Covid-19

According to Akkermans et al. (2018), a career shock is an event that is disruptive and extraordinary, caused by factors outside the individual's control that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career. A career shock can vary in the degree to which they are expected versus unexpected and can either be positively or negatively valenced. These characteristics are used to investigate whether the participants experienced Covid-19 as a career shock.

Disruptive and extraordinary

All fifteen participants stated that they experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as disruptive and extraordinary. The extent to which it was disruptive and extraordinary differed per participant from medium to high. When the participants were asked to what extent Covid-19 affected their daily life, scores were given between a 7 (lowest score given in terms of influence) and a 10 (highest score given in terms of influence). The majority experienced it as disruptive and extraordinary because the way of working or the work content has changed in a particular way due to Covid-19. For eleven participants, the way of working is different than before the Covid-19 pandemic. Working from home, or teleworking, is the biggest contributing factor in this, as this was the case for seven participants. A consequence of this is that they had little to no physical social contact with their colleagues anymore. A participant says the following about this: *"I no longer have to travel miles, but I also don't see people anymore, I only see people behind the laptop, I can't just drop by people and things like that. So that does have an impact, yes. I always sit in the same chair in the same room"* (Male, 57 years old, procurement manager). Another participant, who works as a teacher, had to teach a lot of her classes online these days, which is very different from the usual way of teaching, where you are in front of a class full of students. For seven participants the way of working is different because the content of the work has changed. Worth mentioning is that these are not all the same seven participants whose way of working has changed due to working from home. Especially for the participants who did not work from home, the content of the work changed considerably. One of these participants stated that Covid-19 has had this much influence on the content of her work because

her patient group is young people between 15 and 25 years old, and that this age category is particularly affected by Corona. According to her this patient group suffers much more from isolation, mood problems and from anxiety problems, so that has a lot of influence on the content of her work. Another participant indicates that her work on the ambulance has become a lot more intensive because she had to transport Corona patients in the ambulance who were much sicker than her normal patient group. Her work as a nurse in the rehabilitation department also became very different, because the regular care in this department was scaled down so that there was room and staff for the Corona patients. Because this work became heavier and because she started to feel more vulnerable due to contact with corona patients, she even quit her job and started somewhere else.

The home situation also changed for a few participants, in which the partner suddenly started working from home and in which the children could no longer go to school and sports so that they were at home most of the time. A participant says about this: *“I really felt like one of those ten-armed dolls sometimes, who is doing just about everything at once. Helping a child with arithmetic, making sure another child is in math class on time, teaching a class myself and answering all those students' questions or having mentor conversations on Thursdays and Fridays”* (Female, 40 years old, economics teacher and publishing house employee).

Caused by factors outside the individual's control (controllability) and the occurrence varies in terms of predictability

This characteristic was mentioned by ten participants from different age categories and sectors, the ambiguity and the lack of perspective was mainly mentioned as a reason for this. For one of them, this characteristic translated into the fact that so many ad-hoc decisions were made, especially at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that there was no clear policy. This, she said, led to uncertainty. She stated: *“Yes, that was mainly at the beginning of the Corona pandemic that so many ad-hoc decisions were made. No clarity and no clear policy and that demands quite a lot from staff and yourself. That uncertainty of ‘what should we do now?’ ‘How is this going and how is that going?’”* (Female, 31 years old, ambulance employee, GP post employee and nurse). Another younger participant who works in the catering sector mentioned that specifically the unpredictable nature of the event brought a lot of uncertainty. He said: *“That has been a shock effect like ‘okay what's going to happen?’ The unknown. How long will this take? Nobody actually knew what Corona was. It was first in distant China, then it was in Italy and then the first Corona case was in the Netherlands. Now there are more than 100 million infections worldwide and we have been living in chaos for a year. No one had foreseen that, of course”* (Male, 26 years old, catering waiter). However, a little perspective

emerged when this participant indicated that there was hope that the terraces would be allowed to open again on May 1, and that the work would look different again from that moment on. This perspective brought hope and that made the participant feel as if things were moving forward. He said about this: *“Let's hope that from May 1st at least the terraces can open again. That we can at least generate some turnover with the terrace when the weather is nice, but also that we can pick up our old work again. That also depends on how things are going because everything revolves around Corona numbers, but that is what I hope.”* (Male, 26 years old, catering waiter). This predominantly positive outlook also provided perspective for another participant who works as a teacher and as a publishing house employee. She first said the following about having to follow measures imposed by the government: *“The work has just changed a lot, we have actually just have been following measures for a year now. Because the measures from the government are really introduced from one day to the next. Which makes us suddenly have to send students home or suddenly do everything online or suddenly everything back to school, and then suddenly have everyone at one and a half meters back at school”* (Female, 40 years old, economics teacher and publishing house employee). Remarkable is that after she said this, she then stated that her work content has not changed in such a way and that the temporary nature of the pandemic offers perspective because when it is over, everything will go back to normal. This suggests that in terms of predictability she does see perspectives. She said the following about this: *“Because in that sense it has changed the work too little, so for now it seems very different to have to teach a lot online. So, it does make the work different for now, but I'm pretty sure that yes, in a few years or at least when the pandemic is over that there really won't be any difference in my work anymore”* (Female, 40 years, economics teacher and publishing house employee). In contrast to the previous participants, another participant indicated that he saw little perspective and underlined the unpredictable nature of the current events: *“Like I said, we have so little perspective. All kinds of things are said and then it is again not done by the government. The infections are too high to have easing, but you still have nothing to look forward to, so that makes it really difficult”* (Male, 23 years old, disabled care worker). Because there is no perspective when everything will return to normal, this participant ends up in a negative spiral. A different participant agrees with this unpredictability and mentioned that even though things got better in terms of work, she was missing out on perspectives which led to the fact that she no longer felt like doing anything. This subsequently resulted in her experiencing gloomy feelings. Although not explicitly mentioned by the other participants, it can logically be assumed that they experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as both unpredictable and unexpected, as it meets the criteria of being widely unpredictable and that

the rare and extraordinary nature of the event indicates that it is outside the control of the individual (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020).

Triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career

According to Akkermans et al. (2018), especially the notion that shocks activate people to actively think about their career is a fundamental characteristic of a career shock. However, only three participants have undergone such a thought process because of the (consequences of) the Covid-19 pandemic. The first participant that has gone through such a decisive thought process worked as a nurse and for the care ambulance and when at one point she had to start working on ambulance rides with Covid-19 patients and came into contact with Covid-19 patients in the rehabilitation department, she noticed that she began to have doubts about her work. She felt more vulnerable and was afraid of being infected and subsequently infecting her family. When at one point she had indeed become infected with the Covid-19 virus, she was 'completely done' with it and made the decision to start in a new job at the general practitioner post. The second participant, a 62-year-old contract manager, indicated that he has difficulties working from home full-time and that when this becomes the 'new normal' he has serious doubts about whether he wants to continue working this way for a few more years. The third participant worked as a freelance process designer in which she was engaged in designing, organizing, and facilitating creative processes and started during the ongoing pandemic in a new job for a permanent employer. She indicates that she would also have chosen this new job if the pandemic did not occur but that the thought of choosing stability during this period did play a role. She adds: *"I think I would still have made the choice if the pandemic did not play a role. But yes, you do take it into consideration, but that has not been decisive"* (Female, 31 years old, team assistant).

Among one other participant some doubts arise at some point, but not in such a way that it can be classified as a 'deliberate thought process'. This participant works in the hospitality industry and did indicate that she was afraid of having to look for a 'plan B' when the restaurant she worked at had to close, but that feeling soon evaporated when it turned out that her employer still had enough work for her. The other participants did not indicate that they have had certain thought processes with regard to their career. For most of them, this had to do with being satisfied with the job they currently have. One of them indicates that not only this satisfaction plays a role, but also the fact that he no longer has to work for long. He said: *"But even then I'm like 'yes I'm here so comfortably in my place' and everyone apparently thinks I'm so nice and great and good and wants to keep me, well then I'll stay those few years. Why would I change?"* (Male, 64 years old, customer relationship manager).

Positively or negatively valenced

Akkermans et al. (2018) state that valence is also a key attribute of a career shock. This indicates that the more positively valenced a career shock is, the more positive the career outcomes will be and the more negatively valenced the shock is, the more negative the career outcomes will be. According to how the individual experiences the shock, differences can occur in the impact of a career shock on different individuals. When operationally defining the valence of a career shock, it is the experienced valence of the shock to the person itself that determines the categorisation, not the extent to which the event has positive or negative consequences for that person's career or organisation (Akkermans et al., 2018). When taking this into consideration, all the fifteen participants experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as a negative event, even when it has had little negative effects on their career. Two participants clearly indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic causes psychological or emotional complaints. One of them mentioned that it limits her very much in the things she can do and that it strains her emotionally. This also applies to the second participant, who mentioned: *“Well... You hear it from a lot of people, don't you? Corona does develop real psychological complaints for people, and I have really suffered from that also. And that may not have hindered me that much at work, but it did make me feel less comfortable and I think that indirectly influenced my work as well”* (Female, 25 years old, youth care worker). In addition to the psychological or emotional complaints, the first participant also lost her mother to the effects of Covid-19, which contributes to the negative experience and highlights the disruptive nature of this shock. Another participant experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as negative because of the fear of getting infected. He is a kidney patient and was transplanted five years ago, so Covid-19 forms a serious threat to his health. He experienced a certain fear of getting infected and said the following about this: *“I was received a transplant almost five years ago, so I'm more vulnerable in that sense. And well, I actually was more or less locked up last year. I do go outside so now and then, but I avoid all the crowds and everything that has to do with Corona”* (Male, 62 years old, contractmanager). This fear was also experienced by four other participants. Furthermore, six participants indicate that lack of physical contact with colleagues contributes to the negative character of the shock. Another participant indicates on his turn that Covid-19 evokes negative feelings for him because he sometimes feels drained now. Especially the fact that he can't play sports contributed to this because he got a lot of energy from it. He said the following about this: *“Well, coincidentally last week, then I'm completely drained at the end of the week and then I wake up on Saturday and then I'm just mega tired even though I've slept for 12 hours. And then you just feel a bit of an empty shell. So, then I go for a little exercise or walk and*

slowly but surely it comes back but you just notice that you are super tired” (Male, 25 years old, recruiter).

Overview

After reviewing all of the characteristics of a career shock, it appears that there are only three participants who have experienced all of them. Nevertheless, that does not mean that only they have experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock. Seven other participants did not have the deliberate thought process concerning their career but did give high scores on the fact that it was disruptive and extraordinary, not controllable, not predictable, and negatively valenced. This implies that they experienced it as a partial career shock. Five other participants scored lower on these characteristics, and it can therefore be assumed that they did not experience the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock. Within these groups of participants, no patterns could be found, they were participants from different age groups, genders, educational levels and sectors, also some of them worked from home and some of them still worked at their work location.

Table 2

Rating Covid-19 as a Career Shock

Participant	Disruptive and extraordinary	Controllability	Predictability	Thought process concerning one's career	Valence	Full, partial or no career shock?
1	High	Low	Low	No	Negative	Partial
2	Medium	Low	Low	No	Negative	Partial
3	High	Not explicitly mentioned	Not explicitly mentioned	No	Negative	Partial
4	High	Low	Not explicitly mentioned	No	Negative	Partial
5	High	Not explicitly mentioned	Not explicitly mentioned	No	Negative	Partial
6	Medium	Low	Low	No	Negative	No
7	High	Low	Low	Yes	Negative	Full
8	Medium	Low	Not explicitly mentioned	No	Negative	No
9	Medium	Not explicitly mentioned	Not explicitly mentioned	No	Negative	No
10	High	Not explicitly mentioned	Not explicitly mentioned	Yes	Negative	Full
11	Medium	Low	Low	To some extent	Negative	No
12	High	Low	Low	No	Negative	Partial
13	High	Low	Low	Yes	Negative	Full
14	High	Low	Low	No	Negative	Partial
15	Medium	Not explicitly mentioned	Not explicitly mentioned	No	Negative	No

Impact Covid-19 on perceived employability

Based on the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) it was expected that, in line with the components of this model, the Covid-19 pandemic was likely to have an impact on the perceived employability of individuals. Perceived employability was explained to the participants as their image of their opportunities on the internal and external labour market. Ten participants indicate that their perceived employability changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For four of them, there was growth visible and for six of them this change was in the form of a decline. Five participants mentioned that their perceived employability did not change due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Growth in perceived employability

Five participants experienced growth in their perceived employability, but only four experienced this growth due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Three of those four participants are working in the healthcare sector. When looking at growth in perceived employability in relation to experiencing Covid-19 as a partial or full career shock, it can be stated that one participant experienced Covid-19 as a full career shock and three of them as a partial career shock. One of the participants who experienced it as a partial career shock explained that the Covid-19 pandemic showed her that her kind of work would always go on and on and that she has absolutely nothing to worry about. Furthermore, the image of the professional field she works in and the fact that there are many jobs available in this field positively influences her perceived employability. She mentioned: *“I always saw it from a positive point of view; I know you have a lot of jobs in healthcare. I never worried about that, and during Corona, perhaps even especially during Corona I noticed that 'this work will always continue'. So, I really saw that 'this won't stop' and I will not lose my job, because there is enough work in healthcare and I experienced that very much, especially during Corona”* (Female, 25 years old, youth care worker). A participant who did experience Covid-19 as a full career shock works in the same professional field and also emphasizes that she knows that people in healthcare will always be needed. According to her, this feeling has contributed enormously to her perceived employability. Another reason for growth cited by a participant working in healthcare, who experienced Covid-19 as a partial career shock, is that it has led to increasing requests for help from patients who experience negative psychological or emotional consequences. This increase in patients has contributed to the fact that her employer now allows her to help and speak with patients who normally do not belong to her patient group. Now that she is also gaining experience with this new patient group, her perceived employability grows. The trust her employer has given her with new task also contributes to the growth. Another participant who

experienced growth had a different reason for this. He explained that this feeling was based on the fact that he was already extremely skilled in working from home and all the digital set-ups that comes with that and that he thus had a 'head start' over others: *“It is due to the fact that I have already been fully trained in working together with parties in China, parties in America, so actually a global role, which I do from my laptop at home. And I already did that one or two days a week, but now I do it full-time and that is very attractive for employers because those are people who already know how it works and can therefore join right away”* (Male, 57 years old, procurement manager). A remarkable discovery was that a participant who worked in the catering sector experienced growth in her perceived employability during the Covid-19 pandemic, but not due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was because she had just returned from six months abroad during this period and saw around her that fellow students all found a job fairly quickly, while she was first told on her education as a gym teacher that there are only a few jobs available in the sector. She also indicates that her time abroad has changed her vision, so that she now sees things from different perspectives than she did before. With this distinctive vision she believes that she can distinguish herself in the work field, making her attractive for a possible employer.

Decline in perceived employability

Six participants experienced a decline in their perceived employability, these participants were of different age categories, sectors and educational levels. Two of them experienced Covid-19 as a full career shock and four of them as a partial career shock. Restraint and uncertainty in the work field due to Covid-19 was the most frequently cited reason for a decline in perceived employability, this was mentioned by five of them. One participant, who experienced a partial career shock, said the following about this: *“So in the beginning I was just confident that I could get a good job if [company name] fell through the cracks, but it is of course a lot more difficult when the entire economy is down”* (Male, 25 years old, recruiter). Another participant said: *“It was ‘on top’ before the Corona crisis. I could work anywhere; it was so busy, and they were looking for people everywhere. But that collapsed all at once”* (Male, 26 years old, catering waiter). A consequence of this uncertainty was for one of the participants that she was afraid that this would cause financial worries, she experienced Covid-19 it as a full career shock and used to work as a freelancer. She said: *“Well, the take back in hours because I was still a freelancer at the time and yes, that also causes money worries, or at least you are afraid that these worries will come. Most importantly, there was just less work for me to do, so that came all at once”* (Female, 31 years old, team assistant). But when this same participant is subsequently offered a job at one of the employers for whom she normally

did self-employed work, her perceived employability increases again. The 62 years old male contractmanager experienced Covid-19 as a full career shock and was the only participant who did not mention the restraint and uncertainty in the work field as the reason for his decline in perceived employability. He stated that he was more bothered with the resistance he felt to 'the new way of working'. He was not positive about working from home a lot and the lack of physical contact with colleagues, which can make finding a job in the future more difficult, if this becomes the 'new normal' for organizations.

No change in perceived employability

Four participants mentioned no difference in their perceived employability due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these participants were of different age categories, sectors and educational levels. All these four participants did not experience Covid-19 as a career shock. Two of them indicated that this is because the pandemic has changed the work content too little to really change their perceived employability in such a way. One of them said the following: *"I honestly don't think it has changed. We had to find some things out, of course, when everything suddenly became online, you can imagine that. 'How do you do that?' That we all had to do the meetings digitally at once, but I think it actually took two or three weeks. So, what do you want to see then?"* (Female, 41 years old, director of operations). The other participant agrees, for her the way of working has changed enormously, specifically from physical teaching to online, but the content has remained the same, so that she has experienced no influence on her perceived employability. The other two participants perceived their internal employability as high but their external employability as lower. According to them, this high internal score has to do with the appreciation within the organization and the career opportunities within the organization. They attribute the low external score to their age and the ageism that they think is still going on in the work field. For the two of them the Covid-19 pandemic has not changed this perception, for both internally and externally.

Differences between internal and external perceived employability

When asking the participants about their perceived employability, it was based on their own interpretation whether they wanted to split the concept into their perceived employability on the internal labour market and their perceived employability on the external labour market or whether they observed it as one concept. Nine participants observed their perceived employability as one concept while six participants divide the concept into internal and external perceived employability.

Within this group of participants who divided the concept into two components, there are two participants who experienced different effects regarding these different components of

perceived employability. By one of them it is indicated that the fact that there is no difference in terms of his internal perceived employability mainly has to do with the success of the organization where he works and the career opportunities within this organization. The decline in his external perceived employability has to do with the restraint and uncertainty in the work field due to Covid-19. The other participant gives two similar reasons. For him the internal perceived employability did not change because of the career opportunities within the organization he works. His external perceived employability decreased because of the restraint and uncertainty in the work field due to Covid-19, but he also mentioned his age as a limiting factor in this. He said the following about this: *“Well of course, at first there were more than enough jobs, but well, I have an age, they don't say it but well, subconsciously there is just age discrimination and I understand that. They prefer someone who is cheaper plus that they may benefit from longer. With me they just know, in a manner of speaking, about seven to eight years it is just ‘bye bye’”* (Male, 57 years old, demand planner).

Overview

When the participants are compared in terms of their perceived employability with whether they experienced Covid-19 as a career shock, a number of findings emerged. Four participants that experienced growth in their perceived employability due to the Covid-19 pandemic did experience Covid-19 as a career shock, three as partial and one as a full career shock. Looking at the participants who experienced a decline in their perceived employability, all six participants experienced Covid-19 as a career shock, four as partial and two as a full career shock. The four participants who did not notice a change in their perceived employability did not experience Covid-19 as a career shock. This means that all participants who, completely or partly, experienced Covid-19 as a career shock experienced a growth or decline in their perceived employability.

Table 3

Comparison of Covid-19 Career Shock with Perceived Employability

Participant	Full, partial or no career shock?	Perceived employability due to Covid-19
1	Partial	Growth
2	Partial	Decline
3	Partial	Decline
4	Partial	Growth
5	Partial	Growth
6	No	No change
7	Full	Decline
8	No	No change
9	No	No change

10	Full	Decline
11	No	No change*
12	Partial	Decline
13	Full	Growth
14	Partial	Decline
15	No	No change

*This participant experienced growth but not due to Covid-19

Barriers and opportunities

Building further on the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), possible barriers and opportunities were expected to influence the perceived employability of the participants.

Barriers

Work and home demands were expected to be barriers to participants' perceived employability. With regard to the expected barriers, none of these were really mentioned much by the participants as influential on their perceived employability. One participant indicates that taking care of her young children and the multitasking that comes with it has had some influence, which can be labelled as both a cognitive demand and a physical demand. Another participant indicates that he experiences working from home, or teleworking, as very negative. He also thinks that this could be a barrier to his perceived employability, because when this becomes the 'new normal' it will be more difficult for him to find a possible new job that does not involve working from home. Teleworking can also be classified as a cognitive demand.

However, particular type of demands that do not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), are mentioned by far the most by the participants as barriers for their perceived employability. These demands are grouped together and can be called 'work field demands'. The first work field demand is that participants felt restraint and uncertainty in the work field due to Covid-19, which is mentioned by five participants as prominent. One participant who wanted a new job postponed this because he noticed that there was restraint among employers.: *"You just noticed that employers were a bit more afraid to hire people, due to Corona"* (Male, 23 years old, disabled care worker). This restraint and uncertainty made that another participant would like to stay where he is regarding work because *"we are in uncertain times"* (Male, 57 years old, demand planner). The second market demand named by participants is the negative image of the work field that they have. Three participants state that this is perceived as disadvantageous in terms of their perceived employability. A barrier that also classifies as a work field demands but that has nothing to do with the Covid-19 pandemic is a negative experience with finding a job. One participant indicated that he experienced this

when he had problems finding a job as a 53-year-old. According to him, this affects his sense of employability. The feeling that there are few jobs available in the sector is another barrier that has nothing to do with Covid-19 but does form a barrier for a participant.

A second group of demands are named 'personal demands', and again do not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), these demands were mentioned frequently as barriers. According to the majority of the participants who were over 50 years old, age is a personal characteristic that is frequently experienced as a barrier with regard to their perceived employability. There is only one participant who is older than 50 years who did not mention this. One of them said: *"My opportunities on the labour market? Well, the older you get, the less, of course, that is a fact"* (Male, 57 years old, demand planner). Someone else agrees and indicates that he has the feeling that age discrimination should not officially exist but is convinced that it certainly does. For participants of other age groups, feelings of insecurity are influential in their perceived employability. These feelings of insecurity arose among other things, from, a lack of experience, not being trained or educated for something and not having diplomas. One participant said about this: *"That is a kind of insecurity that has always bothered me when I do something for which I was not trained, for example"* (Female, 55 years old, GZ psychologist). What connects with feelings of insecurity is the fact that someone is thinking too negative, this is experienced as a barrier by one participant. This participant said that this is a personality trait that is just part of his nature, but that sometimes it turns out that he can ultimately do more than he thinks.

Opportunities

Work and home resources were expected to be opportunities to participants' perceived employability, based on the theory from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). A number of these expected opportunities emerged that were frequently mentioned by the participants. The first group are the psychological opportunities. Self-efficacy is by far the most cited as an opportunity for ones' perceived employability, eleven participants mentioned this. One participant said the following about this: *"I think that if this were to be necessary, I would still be able to arrange a nice job for myself"* (Male, 25 years old, recruiter). And another one said: *"Knowing what I am like as a person and what I can do for a company. That is quite much in my opinion. That does sound very strange when I say that about myself"* (Male, 26 years old, catering waiter). Optimism is also a psychological opportunity and is emphasized by four participants. One of them said: *"I think optimism certainly played a role, because I always had the feeling like 'well, if it is not possible to find work then I will find temporarily work in another sector, where they are in need for employees ', for example healthcare or something. So, I am*

always set up like 'well, if it doesn't work now, I will find something else', so there is always a plan B for me. And that did not necessarily contribute to a new employer, but it did contribute to the feeling of reassurance and 'it will be all right'' (Female, 31 years old, team assistant). This participant worked as a freelancer before she started as a team assistant and had a large decrease in hours during the Covid-19 pandemic, but this optimistic attitude has ensured that she stayed positive. With this being said, this participant not only highlights her optimism, but also her degree of flexibility is reflected in this statement. Flexibility is also mentioned by five other participants as an opportunity for their perceived employability. According to the participants, this flexibility is mainly based on the fact that they can adopt a flexible attitude towards their employer when necessary. One of them said about this: *"Yeah, I could just do another task if people, or myself, needed it"* (Female, 40 years old, economics teacher and publishing house employee). This opportunity is closely related to another opportunity, namely adaptability. *"That you adapt easily"* (Male, 57 years old, procurement manager) is seen by the participants as adaptability and is often mentioned together with flexibility, specifically by a total of three participants. Flexibility and adaptability are two intellectual opportunities that do not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Skills is another intellectual opportunity that is mentioned frequently by eleven participants, this opportunity does originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). *"I am also in a certain way convinced of my own knowledge and skills"* (Male, 25 years old, recruiter) where the words of one participant about his skills and is an example of something many of them said. Experience, knowledge and perspectives are also intellectual opportunities that are in line with this and were both appointed by eight participants. One participant said the following about her knowledge and experience: *"In the meantime I am experienced, I do not only speak with children, young people and young adults but also with adults, so I have become very employable"* (Female, 55 years old, GZ psychologist). Another candidate also underlines her knowledge and experience: *"...and I also think that I have built up a nice CV to end up well externally"* (Female, 41 years old, director of operations). Not having physical energy is the lack of a personal resource which is very valuable and is experienced as a barrier by two participants, this does not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). One of them indicated that this lack of physical energy is in the form of fatigue and that this has mainly to do with Covid-19. She said: *"Yes I think I have been very tired and also that sometimes you are just really done with it, with how things are going now"* (Female, 40 years old, economics teacher and publishing house employee). The other participant, who is over 50

years old, indicates that it is mainly his age that makes him have less energy than when he was a younger.

The third group of frequently mentioned opportunities are the opportunities for development from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) and developmental practices from the HR bundles (Kooij et al., 2014). One topic most frequently mentioned were career opportunities within the organization, which did not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) or the HR bundles (Kooij et al., 2014). These career opportunities within the organization were identified as opportunities by eight participants. An example: *“I also see a lot of people who were hired for a certain role and have grown to another, so I see opportunities in that”* (Male, 25 years old, recruiter). When participants see this by their colleagues or undergo these career opportunities themselves, this contributes to their perceived employability. This closely relates to promotion, which is also an opportunity that causes four participants to grow in their feelings of employability. One of the participants said about promotion: *“I started at level 2 technical specialist support, then level 3, then level 4 and now customer relations manager and those four positions in 11 years, almost 12 years, so yeah. I went from 3 to 4 to manager very quickly”* (Male, 64 years old, customer relationship manager). Development on the job and training are other developmental topics that are experienced positively by the participants, seven of them pointed these out. According to the participants, this includes following training courses and internal educational courses provided by the employer. One participant said about this: *“We could do any course we wanted, but really any course, you only had to indicate it. Just say where and when and it will be paid, ready. Yes, that had always gone very smoothly”* (Male, 57 years old, demand planner). Another participant agreed and said: *“We are given every opportunity to follow courses and training. If you think I want something different than yes, they will help you too”* (Female, 59 years old, risk specialist insurance).

An opportunity which did not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) or the HR bundles (Kooij et al., 2014) and is not covered by any of the existing opportunities, are market opportunities. However, the image of the work field is a topic that is noted by six participants. This positive image ensures that these six participants have more confidence in their chances on the labour market and is in line with the other market opportunity, the fact that there are many jobs available in the work field. This is a topic that is noted by seven participants. They said: *“I know you have a lot of jobs in healthcare”* (Female, 25 years old, youth care worker) and *“this is mainly because economics teachers are simply in demand”* (Female, 40 years old, economics teacher and publishing house employee). A positive

experience when applying for a job is also identified by two participants as an opportunity in their perceived employability. One of them said: *"When I went to apply for a job I did three applications and I was hired by all of three"* (Female, 25 years old, youth care worker). A possibility that is comparable, and which is also underlined by four participants, is getting job offers. According to one these participants, this definitely boosts his sense of employability. He said: *"I've also been offered jobs, I was offered a job last week and that was a job in Stuttgart and that recruiter already sent me, like 'you don't have to move for that job, you can just do that from the Netherlands', so that wasn't a problem at all"* (Male, 57 years old, procurement manager). When looking at how often these work field related topics are mentioned as a positive factor, it can be seen as an important factor for someone's perceived employability.

Overview

With regard to the barriers, it can be stated that in addition to the expected cognitive and physical demands, work field demands, personal demands and personal characteristics are most often seen by the participants as barriers to their perceived employability. Few of the expected initial demands from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) have returned in this. What is also striking is that with regard to barriers, these are often factors that have to do with a person's personal agency and the work field, but not so much with factors from the organization or their job. Opportunities that emerged were psychological opportunities, intellectual opportunities, opportunities for development and market opportunities and were somewhat more in line with the initial expected opportunities from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) or the HR bundles (Kooij et al., 2014), only the latter group does not come from these two. With regard to opportunities, it is shown that there is one group that has to do with the organization or someone's job, namely opportunities for development. The rest of the opportunities, just like the barriers, often has to do with a person's personal agency and the work field.

Discussion

This qualitative study aims to answer the question of how employees perceive the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as a potential career shock with regard to their perceived employability, and which barriers and opportunities they experience in order to deal with this. This was examined with the use of semi-structured interviews in which fifteen participants were asked about these topics regarding their career. It was found that Covid-19 was experienced as a career shock by ten participants, for three of them as a full career shock and for seven of them as a partial career shock. Covid-19 affected the perceived employability for all these ten

participants, for four in the form of growth and for six in the form of a decline. Barriers and opportunities that they experienced in order to deal with this were mainly work field barriers and work field opportunities.

Interpretation of the results and theoretical contribution

Career shock Covid-19

This study contributed to the literature on career shocks by providing insights into how participants experienced Covid-19 as a career shock. Based on previous research (Akkermans et al., 2020; Kniffin et al., 2021; Kramer & Kramer, 2020) it was assumed that Covid-19 can be seen as a career shock which affects all employees. A career shock is an event that is disruptive and extraordinary, caused by factors outside the individual's control that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career. A career shock can vary in the degree to which they are expected versus unexpected and can either be positively or negatively valenced (Akkermans et al., 2018). Whether Covid-19 can be seen as a career shock is debatable. After examining whether the characteristics of a career shock matched the participants' experiences, it was found that only three participants met all of these characteristics. This is because these three participants were the only three in which a conscious thought process was triggered about their career as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The notion that shocks activate people to actively think about their career is a fundamental characteristic of a career shock (Akkermans et al., 2018). Nevertheless, this does not mean that these participants were the only ones to experience Covid-19 as a career shock. Because although the thought process concerning their career did not take place with seven other participants, the event had such an influence that they gave high scores on the fact that it was disruptive and extraordinary, not controllable, not predictable, negatively valenced and it affected the perceived employability for all of them. So, the fact that all participants who experienced Covid-19, completely or partly, as a career shock also experienced a growth or decline in their perceived employability underscores this idea and emphasizes that it is not only a career shock when it meets all the characteristics, but also when it affects work outcomes. This notion that an event is a career shock when it affects one's work outcomes is also adhered to by Pak et al. (2020) in their study on career shocks in relation to ability, motivation and opportunity to work. For the literature this means that instead of just measuring and looking at the characteristics of a career shock, it is more important to look at the outcomes that the career shock produces. Because even without a thought process regarding one's career, an event can be experienced as a career shock that triggers a change in career outcomes. The five remaining participants scored lower on these characteristics which leads to

the conclusion that they have not experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as such a career shock. The fact that not all the participants who experienced a change in their perceived employability meet all the characteristics of a career shock may be related with the predictability and controllability of the shock (Akkermans et al., 2018). These two characteristics relate to the time at which the individual is likely or able to engage in a deliberate thought process and furthermore initiate action regarding the consequences of the shock to their career. The degree to which a shock is predictable might have a different impact on career outcomes compared to the degree to which a shock is controllable. However, predictability and controllability may interact in bringing about important career outcomes and it might especially be the interaction between these two that determines the impact on career outcomes (Akkermans et al., 2018). This interaction also applies to the Covid-19 pandemic that has been going on for more than a year in terms of duration, so individuals have had a very long time to adapt and to initiate action regarding the consequences of the shock to their career. This agrees to what Akkermans et al. (2018) state in their study, that even though it seems that shocks that last longer will have more serious consequences, there are potential interactions with other shock attributes (e.g. in this situation with predictability and controllability) that causes that it is a long but not a very disruptive shock. The duration and the fact that the pandemic is an exceptional but above all temporary situation is expected to contribute to how individuals experience the shock, because they assume that when the pandemic is over, everything will most likely fall into place again. It is therefore possible that some participants will only notice the effects of Covid-19 as a career shock in the longer term because they are now only focused on getting through the pandemic as best as they can. As a result, the outcomes of their work outcomes (i.e. their perceived employability) already became clear, but no deliberate thought process has yet taken place.

Covid-19 and perceived employability

The second contribution is twofold and was to examine if Covid-19 as a potential career shock affects individuals perceived employability and which barriers and opportunities they experienced in order to deal with this. Based on the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) it was expected that, in line with the components of this model, the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to impact the home and work demands that individuals are experiencing (Kniffin et al., 2021). Subsequently these home demands will impact one's personal resources, which influences the work outcomes (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), of which perceived employability is part (Blokker et al., 2019). It can be concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the perceived employability of the majority. Ten participants note that their perceived employability has changed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, for four of

them in the form of growth and for six of them in the form of a decline. This impact is in line with the predictions from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), that demands will impact one's resources, which subsequently influences the perceived employability. For most participants, the cause for these resources and demands has been the Covid-19 pandemic, which they experienced completely or partly as a career shock. It can therefore be stated that the findings of this study cut both ways, Covid-19 can be seen as a career shock because it affects individuals' perceived employability and affects the perceived employability of individuals because it is a career shock. This means, as a contribution to the literature, that a career shock can influence the perceived employability of individuals.

Barriers and opportunities

Building further on the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), possible barriers and opportunities were expected to influence the perceived employability of the participants. Possible barriers were expected to be in line with the 'work and home demands' (i.e. contextual demands) and possible opportunities with the 'work and home resources' (i.e. contextual resources and personal resources) from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Four bundles of HR practices (Kooij et al., 2014) can also be classified as work resources (Pak et al., 2020) and were added as possible opportunities. Indeed, it was found that the growth in perceived employability for the four participants had to do with the increase in work resources. A positive image of the work field of the sector, the fact that there are many jobs available in this work field, positive experiences when applying for jobs and receiving job offers play an important role in how individuals perceive their employability. These opportunities can be called work field opportunities and are in previous research by Berntson et al. (2006) also identified as important factors. They argue that the conditions of the labour market are crucial in shaping the perceived employability of individuals (Berntson et al., 2006). These opportunities do not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) and can therefore be seen as additional to the initial work resources. The three participants who experienced growth due to one of these work field opportunities work in the healthcare sector where there are major shortages, and the Covid-19 pandemic has only put more emphasis on these shortages. In turn, barriers that are related to the work field also apply to participants who experienced a decline in their perceived employability. Restraint and uncertainty in the work field due to Covid-19, a negative image of the work field, a negative experience with finding a job and the feeling that there are few jobs available in the sector are these so-called work field demands, or barriers, and are additional work demands that had not yet been named in the current group of demands of the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

These barriers were mentioned by five of the six participants as the main reason for their decline.

In addition to the two above-mentioned barriers and opportunities that were mentioned most, a number of opportunities have been mentioned that do originate from the expected initial resources of the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) or the HR bundles (Kooij et al., 2014). The groups that were the most mentioned coming from these expected opportunities were psychological opportunities, intellectual opportunities, development practices, opportunities for development and resources. This leads to the conclusion that a person's personal agency, the work field and factors from the organization or their job play an important role in individuals perceived employability. Subsequently the conclusion can be drawn that the results of this study closely agree with the initial work and home resources from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) who were experienced as possibilities. However, this conclusion does not apply to the expected initial demands of the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), because these do not match the emerged demands. Of the four expected groups of demands, only two were mentioned, very minimally, by the participants, namely physical demands and cognitive demands. The demands that emerged most, in addition to the work field demands mentioned above, were personal characteristics and personal demands, both of which do not originate from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). It can therefore be concluded that with regard to the demands or barriers, especially a person's personal agency and the work field play an important role in someone's perceived employability, but not so much factors from the organization or their job. In such a way, this study has different findings than expected from the W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Reflection on limitations of the research and directions for further research

This study was subject to five limitations. First, and probably the principal limitation of this study is the sample. With regard to the sample size, fifteen participants were interviewed. Due to the design and time frame of this study, there was no room to interview more participants, but it may be difficult to establish an objective picture of reality based on fifteen participants. To get results that were as representative and balanced as possible, careful attention was paid to diversify the sample, purposive sampling has been used to ensure this. However, due to the selection of the participants that was based on the judgement of the researcher potential bias might occurred in the sampling method (Vennix, 2019). Thus, due to the small sample size and the sampling method, the gathered data cannot be seen as profound

enough to generalize it. Nevertheless, interesting results have emerged that could perhaps be further explored with quantitative research. For example, by querying a large sample and asking respondents whether, and to what extent, they experienced the characteristics of career shock as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Second, related to the previous point, the sampling of the participants could be viewed as too broad as the selection was not based on a specific sector. Participants of multiple sectors as hospitality, ICT, healthcare and education took part in the interviews and this could possibly lead to less detailed insights into specific sectors which could have been very valuable. A recommendation for future research is therefore to conduct a similar qualitative study with a more narrow scope focused on sectors that have been hit very hard by the Covid-19 pandemic or sectors that have grown in times of Covid-19. Such a study can provide valuable insights into which sectors Covid-19 has had the most impact on career outcomes and in which sectors it may have had less impact and compare these results.

Third, in this study a career shock was defined as an event that is disruptive and extraordinary, caused by factors outside the individual's control that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career, can vary in the degree to which it is expected versus unexpected and can either be positively or negatively valenced (Akkermans et al., 2018). These characteristics were used to determine whether the participants had experienced Covid-19 as a career shock or not. However, it turned out that this was only the case for three participants, while it did influence the perceived employability for a much larger group. Therefore, it could be interesting for future studies to focus on a different way of defining a career shock when studying it in relation with Covid-19. For example, to define it as an event that had an influence on some kind of work outcome, like Pak et al. (2020) did in their qualitative study about career shocks in relation to ability, motivation and opportunity to work. When using a different (e.g. broader) definition, perhaps more valuable insights will emerge in the results compared to using a more narrow definition because when using a broad definition fewer individuals are excluded if they do not qualify for all characteristics.

Fourth, this study focuses explicitly on the influence of Covid-19 as a career shock on individuals perceived employability. However, Covid-19 as a career shock, or as an event itself might also influence other work-related outcomes that were not included in this study. Given the limited amount of research that has been done on career shocks, this could be a good addition in this field. Examples could be work-life balance, sustainable careers, job performance, job satisfaction or employee commitment.

Fifth, the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing which means that the experience of a career shock in general and with regard to one's perceived employability can still change. Perhaps it would have yielded more striking results if this study had been conducted once the Covid-19 pandemic was over, which could be an interesting recommendation for future research. However, this also entails limitations because with a retrospective nature interviewing it may be difficult for participants to remember certain events from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially if it goes on for a long time.

Scientific and practical implications

Since scientific literature on career shocks, barriers and opportunities to deal with these shocks and their impacts on careers is still sparse (Akkermans et al., 2018; Blokker et al., 2019), this study makes an important contribution to this field. To expand this field, there was a demand for explorative research to acquire new insights with regard to these topics. This research contributes to this field because it provides insights into whether and to what extent individuals from different age categories, sectors and jobs have experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as a career shock, this was the case for the majority. Three participants experienced it as a full career shock while seven other participants experienced it as a partial career shock, for all of them it did bring about a change in their perceived employability in the form of growth or decline. This contributes to science that even without a thought process regarding one's career, an event can be experienced as a career shock that triggers a change in career outcomes. As a final implication, this study expanded the list of existing expected barriers and opportunities that could influence individuals perceived employability with work field barriers and work field opportunities. Those barriers include restraint and uncertainty in the work field, a negative image of the work field, negative experience in finding a job and not much jobs available in sector. The opportunities, on the other hand, include a positive image of the work field, the fact that there are many jobs available in the work field, a positive experience when applying for jobs and job offers.

Implications for practice are that employers, HR managers and career counsellors could use the findings of this study to better assist employees who are experiencing Covid-19 as a career shock with regard to their perceived employability. To assist in this, it is good to take into account that a lot comes down to an individual's image of the work field and personal factors as self-efficacy, optimism, flexibility and adaptability. Yet there are also opportunities from the employer with which they can contribute. Specifically, interventions focusing on developmental practices as task enrichment and attending courses and training could help

employees maintain their perceived employability in times of the Covid-19 career shock. This is in line with what Blokker et al. (2019) state, that initiatives of this kind could empower employees to take charge of their careers and at the same time address the potential impact of career shocks on career outcomes. Communicating openly (i.e. open communication at work) about these kinds of developmental practices and other topics, offering career opportunities within the organization and providing supervisor support will also contribute to an employee's perceived employability in times of Covid-19 and are therefore important for employers to consider.

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Appendix 1

Interviewgide in Dutch

Goedendag, ik heb u vandaag uitgenodigd voor een interview in het kader van mijn afstudeeronderzoek voor mijn master aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen. Het interview zal gaan over uw Corona en werk. Ik verwacht dat dit interview ongeveer 60 tot 90 minuten zal duren. Uiteraard kan ik niet allemaal onthouden wat er in die tijd is gezegd en daarom wil ik het interview graag opnemen. Heeft u daar bezwaar tegen? Verder zou ik dan nu graag het toestemmingsformulier met u doornemen. Dit interview zal anoniem zijn waardoor alles wat u zegt niet direct herleidbaar is naar u. Daarnaast is alles wat wij bespreken tijdens dit interview vertrouwelijk. De data van dit interview zal (anoniem) voor de komende tien jaar worden opgeslagen op een veilige locatie op de Radboud Universiteit. Wanneer het gesprek op wat voor manier ongemakkelijk wordt voor u, heeft u de mogelijkheid om zonder opgaaf van reden te stoppen. Als u akkoord bent met deze voorwaarden mag u het toestemmingsformulier ondertekenen

Uitreiken toestemmingsformulier

Dan start ik nu de opname en dan kunnen we beginnen met het interview.

Opname starten

Het interview kan worden opgesplitst in drie onderdelen: een aantal algemene vragen, vragen over de motivatie en vragen over inzetbaarheid. Het gaat tijdens dit interview om uw beleving, daarin zijn geen foute antwoorden mogelijk, er is dus geen goed of fout.

Deel 1: Algemene vragen

Allereerst starten we met wat algemene vragen (om het ijs te breken zullen we maar zeggen).

1. Wat is uw leeftijd?
2. Wat is uw hoogst gevolgde opleiding?
3. Heeft u op dit moment een baan of bent u werkzoekend?
4. Wat voor werk doet u op dit moment?
5. Wat zijn/waren uw belangrijkste taken?
6. Hoe lang werkt u al in uw huidige of laatste positie?
7. *Als de positie tijdens corona begonnen is: wat deed u hiervoor?*
8. Hoeveel uur werkt(e) u gemiddeld per week?
9. Hoeveel uur daarvan werkt(e) u thuis? (Voor de Corona pandemie)
10. Hoeveel uur werkt(e) u thuis naar aanleiding van de Corona pandemie?
11. Werkt(e) u fulltime of parttime?
12. Kan u op een schaal van 1 tot 10 toelichten in hoeverre corona impact heeft gehad op uw dagelijks leven?

Inzetbaarheid

Inzetbaarheid betekent wat volgens jou de kansen op de arbeidsmarkt zijn, zowel binnen u huidige organisatie als buiten deze organisatie (dus interne of externe arbeidsmarkt). Ik wil u nu vragen om een tijdlijn te tekenen waarin duidelijk wordt hoe u kansen op de arbeidsmarkt zijn veranderd vanaf het begin van 2020 (voordat de Corona pandemie begon) tot nu. (Als iemand vraagt of het twee lijnen mogen zijn, dan mag dat als dat hun opvatting is over hun inzetbaarheid.)

- **Zoom:** u kunt nu weer rechts bovenin in ‘view options’ op ‘Annotate’ klikken, waarmee u de lijn kunt tekenen.
- **Fysiek:** ik geef u nu een tijdlijn op dit vel papier. Teken met de blauwe pen deze lijn.

Geef de geïnterviewde de tijd om de tijdlijn in te vullen

Tekenen: Inzetbaarheid

Zou u de lijn willen omschrijven/toelichten?

- Beginpunt (= hoe hoog is uw inzetbaarheid op een schaal 0-10)
- Verloop
- Fluctuaties (= waar fluctueert het? Hoogte-/dieptepunten)
- Indien het een rechte lijn is: wat heeft ervoor gezorgd dat de pandemie geen invloed heeft gehad op uw inzetbaarheid?

Doorvragen:

- Zijn er dingen geweest die u **geholpen** hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid?
 - Zijn er dingen op uw **werk** die u geholpen hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid? (*Bijvoorbeeld advies, begrip en/of respect van collega's, teamgevoel, de mogelijkheid om uw werktijden in te plannen, nieuwe dingen leren binnen uw functie of werk, financiële beloningen*)
 - Zijn er dingen in uw **privé situatie/sociale situatie** die u geholpen hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid? (*Bijvoorbeeld begrip vanuit uw familie/gezin, liefdevol worden behandeld door uw familie/gezin, open communicatie met uw familie/gezin, het verdelen van de huishoudelijke taken binnen uw familie/gezin, de mogelijkheid om sport of hobby's uit te voeren*)
 - Zijn er **persoonlijke** dingen die u geholpen hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid? (*Bijvoorbeeld uw gezondheid, energie, positieve stemming, optimisme, focus, mentale veerkrachtigheid, financiële situatie, ervaringen of vaardigheden*)
- Als u vanuit deze drie domeinen/ situaties geen ondersteuning hebt ontvangen, zijn er momenten geweest waarop u toch graag ondersteuning had ontvangen? En hoe zou dit er volgens u uit moeten zien? (Mogelijk om expliciet in te gaan op de 3 situaties) (*Bijvoorbeeld vanuit HR de mogelijkheid om parttime te gaan werken, meerdere taken mogen uitvoeren, fysieke werkplekverbeteringen als een betere laptop of bureaustoel bij het thuiswerken*)
- Zijn er dingen die u **belemmerd** hebben?
 - Zijn er dingen op uw **werk** die u belemmerd hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid? (*Bijvoorbeeld te hoge werkdruk, overwerken, hele dagen achter de computer zitten, conflicten met collega's of boze klanten, teleurstellingen op het werk*)
 - Zijn er dingen in uw **privé situatie/sociale situatie** die u belemmerd hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid? (*Bijvoorbeeld meer huishoudelijke taken, de zorg van familie (ouderen of kinderen) op u moeten nemen, conflicten thuis*)
 - Zijn er **persoonlijke** dingen die u belemmerd hebben wat betreft uw inzetbaarheid? (*Bijvoorbeeld uw gezondheid, uw humeur, energieniveau,*

hoeveelheid slaap die u krijgt, voldoening die u uit uw werk haalt, financiële situatie)

Indien nog niet aan de orde gekomen:

Bij verschillende lijnen: expliciet naar het verschil vragen. Speelden er andere dingen?

Bij identieke lijnen: zit er voor u nog verschil in de kansen binnen u huidige werk of de kansen buiten jouw werkgever?

Slot

Dan zijn we aangekomen bij het einde van het interview. U heeft me veel inzichten gegeven.

Voor mij is alles duidelijk. Heeft u nog vragen over het interview? Of wilt u nog iets kwijt?

Stop de opname

Ik zal het transcript van ons interview binnen zeven werkdagen naar u toesturen, zodat u nog eens terug kunt lezen wat we hebben besproken. Ik wil u vragen dit door te lezen en te beoordelen of wat u tijdens het interview heeft bedoeld ook zo in het transcript naar voren komt. Dit doe ik om te waarborgen dat de door u beschreven informatie overeenkomt met hoe ik dit heb opgeschreven. Dan wil ik u hartelijk bedanken voor de deelname aan het onderzoek en ik zal u op de hoogte houden van de uitkomst.

Appendix 2

Initial coding template

Concepts	Dimensions	Indicators	Definition
Perceived employability	The extent that a person perceives to have opportunities to maintain one's current job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline • Growth • No change 	The extent that a person perceives to have opportunities to maintain one's current job or find a new job when needed in either the internal or external labour market (Vanhercke et al., 2014)
	The extent that a person perceives to have opportunities to find a new job when needed in either the internal or external labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline • Growth • No change 	
Career shock	Perceived as disruptive and extraordinary events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive • Extraordinary 	A disruptive and extraordinary event that is, at least to some degree, caused by factors outside the focal individual's control and that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career. The occurrence of a career shock can vary in terms of predictability and can be either positively or negatively valenced (Akkermans, et al., p.4)
	Caused by factors outside the focal individual's control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors outside one's control 	
	Triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought process concerning one's career 	
	The occurrence varies in terms of predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predictability 	
	Either positively or negatively valenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positively valenced • Negatively valenced 	
Work and home demands (i.e. contextual demands) / barriers	Overload demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working overtime • Many household chores • Urgent care tasks 	Stressors that individuals encounter in their work and home environment that affect their well-being and resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002)
	Physical demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting weights • Care for the elderly • Care for young children 	
	Emotional demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with an angry customer • Conflicts at home • Disappointments 	
	Cognitive demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a report • Coordination of household and care tasks • Multitasking 	
Work and home resources (i.e. contextual resources, personal resources) / possibilities	Social support opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice from co-workers • Understanding • Love • Respect from a friend 	Objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by a person or serve as a means of obtaining these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies (Hobfoll, 2002).
	Autonomy opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control over work design • Planning leisure time • Allocating home tasks 	
	Opportunities for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tasks at work • Attending courses • Participating in sports • Hobbies 	
	Feedback opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor evaluation • Open communication at home • Reflection with friends 	
	Physical opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Physical energy • Power • Sleep 	

	Psychological opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism • Self-efficacy • Focus • Mental resilience 	
	Affective opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood • Fulfilment • Empathy • Gratefulness 	
	Intellectual opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Perspectives • Knowledge • Experience 	
	Capital opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money 	
HR practices	Accommodative practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time work / semi-retirement • Additional leave • Demotion • Early retirement • Exception from working overtime / night shifts • Reduced workload • Prolonged career interruptions 	Additional HR practices that are aimed at assisting employees to function better during the Covid-19 career shock (Kooij et al., 2014).
	Utilization practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral job movements • Participation • Second career • Task enrichment 	
	Maintenance practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compressed workweek • Ergonomic adjustments to the workplace • Flexible benefits • Performance appraisal • Pay for performance • Teleworking 	
	Development practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career planning • Development on the job • Promotion • Training 	
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor support • Colleague support • Autonomy 	

Appendix 3

Final coding template

Concepts	Dimensions	Indicators	Definition
Perceived employability	The extent that a person perceives to have opportunities to maintain one's current job on the internal or external labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline Growth No change 	The extent that a person perceives to have opportunities to maintain one's current job or find a new job when needed in either the internal or external labour market (Vanhercke et al., 2014)
Career shock	Perceived as disruptive and extraordinary events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruptive Extraordinary Different Unusual Changed 	A disruptive and extraordinary event that is, at least to some degree, caused by factors outside the focal individual's control and that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career. The occurrence of a career shock can vary in terms of predictability and can be either positively or negatively valenced (Akkermans, et al., p.4)
	Caused by factors outside the focal individual's control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not in control Unexpected 	
	Triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking about career Making career changes 	
	The occurrence varies in terms of predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpredictable 	
	Either positively or negatively valenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced positive Experienced negative 	
Work and home demands (i.e. contextual demands) / barriers	Work field demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restraint and uncertainty in the work field due to Covid-19 Negative image of the work field Negative experience in finding a job Not much jobs available in sector Being fired 	Stressors that individuals encounter in their work and home environment that affect their well-being and resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002)
	Personal demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecurity Thinking too negative Feelings of failure Feelings of guilt 	
	Personal characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age 	
	Physical demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care for young children 	
	Cognitive demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination of household and care tasks Multitasking Teleworking 	
Work and home resources (i.e. contextual resources, personal resources) / possibilities	Work field opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive image of the work field Many jobs available in the work field Positive experiences when applying for jobs Job offers Network Never been unemployed for a long time Visibility of vacancies Active on LinkedIn 	Objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by a person or serve as a means of obtaining these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies (Hobfoll, 2002).
	Social support opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding 	

	Opportunities for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career opportunities within the organization • New tasks at work • Attending courses 	
	Feedback opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication at work • Reflection with friends • Comparing career situation with friends 	
	Psychological opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy • Optimism • Wide field of interest • Mental resilience • Vision • Happy with the job 	
	Affective opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood • Fulfilment • Empathy • Gratefulness • Confidence • Positivity 	
	Intellectual opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Perspectives • Knowledge • Experience • Flexibility • Adaptability • Eager to learn 	
HR bundles	Utilization practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral job movements • Second career • Task enrichment 	
	Development practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career planning • Development on the job • Promotion • Training 	
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor support • Colleague support • Autonomy • Appreciation within the organization • Trust from employer • Feelings of security • Success of organization • Salary raise • Lack of personal resources 	