

Perceived organizational support and perceived private life support as predictors of sustainable careers: the moderating effect of adaptability.

Master Thesis

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Abstract

The diminishing labor market supply and pension legislation arising therefrom, has emphasized the need for sustainable careers. In order to map important contextual influencers this study investigated the role of organizations and the social environment of individuals in ensuring these sustainable careers. The influence of adaptability as moderator was also analyzed. On the basis of the sustainable careers model and the work-home resource model this study expected to find a positive influence of organizational support and private life support on the sustainable career outcomes health, happiness, and productivity. A survey was used to test the proposed hypotheses. This study found that organizational support contributed to the sustainable career outcome happiness. Both organizational support and private life support did not influence sustainable careers outcomes health, and negatively influenced productivity. Adaptability was found to strengthen the effect of organizational support and private life support on the sustainable career outcome productivity.

Key words: Perceived organizational support, perceived private life support, adaptability, sustainable careers, sustainable career outcomes, health, happiness, productivity.

Table of contents

Introduction	2
Literature review.....	5
Sustainable careers.....	5
<u>Perceived organizational support.....</u>	6
Perceived private life support.....	9
Adaptability.....	10
Methods.....	13
Sample size and respondents	14
Measurement of variables	16
Control variables.....	18
Statistical analysis.....	18
Results.....	19
Descriptive statistics	19
Correlation statistics.....	20
Effects on health	22
Effects on happiness.....	23
Effects on productivity.....	26
Adaptability as a moderator.....	28
Discussion	30
Limitations.....	31
Theoretical implications and future research.....	32
Practical implications.....	33
Reference list.....	34

Introduction

The recent development of a diminishing labor supply poses significant challenges for organizations (Lawrence & Arthur, 2015). Governments have been trying to resolve the shortage on the labor market by increasing the pension ages (Lawrence & Arthur, 2015). The increase of pension ages is justified by governments on the basis of increasing health care quality and life expectancy (Soosaar et al., 2020). However, the number one reason for premature work exit is still some form of health problem, either mentally or physically (Lawrence & Arthur, 2015). Therefore, to counteract labor market shortages and increase the effectivity of the increase in pension ages, career sustainability should be the primary focus.

Health is an important condition for individuals to keep working, and is consequently important for sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020). However, health is not the only important condition for a sustainable career. Next to health, happiness and productivity are also considered to be vital aspects of a sustainable career (De Vos et al., 2020). The sustainable career model looks at sustainable careers from the individual's perspective, considering the individual as the main actor in their own career (De Vos et al., 2020). A sustainable career is the sum of all career choices and experiences of an individual over time, in order to accumulate and use resources (De Vos et al., 2020). Existing contextual factors are able to influence the decision making of an individual (De Vos et al., 2020). These contextual factors are considered the most direct factors an individual interacts with, and are suggested to play a significant role in an individual's career (De Vos et al., 2020; Meyers et al., 2019; Ocampo et al., 2018).

Previous research proposes the organization at which an individual works plays a role in ensuring sustainable careers (Meyers et al., 2019). More specifically, employee well-being is consistently mentioned in literature as an important factor which can be influenced by the organization (Meyers et al., 2019). When the employee perceives organizational actions as helpful and targeted on increasing employee well-being, an employee will feel supported (Alfes et al., 2020; De Vos et al., 2020). When the employee perceives a lack of support this may have negative effects on the well-being of employees and the sustainability of their career (De Vos et al., 2020).

Next to the role an organization plays, attention should also be paid to the support from an individual's social environment. A wide range of people can be considered supporters in the private lives of individuals, although friends, family, and spouses are arguably the most important (De Vos et al., 2020; Russo et al., 2016). Some studies touch upon the element of work-life balance and supporting factors, but the majority of these studies relate their results to organizations in the form of organizational outcomes, not with individual work outcomes like sustainable careers. A study by Ocampo, Restubog, Liwag, Wang, and Petelzyc (2018) discovered a positive effect of perceived spousal support on perceived career success and the adaptability of employees. These findings offer some interesting research opportunities regarding the possible existence of valuable actors in the area of private life support.

Perceived organizational support and perceived private life support are proposed to interact with the adaptability of an employee (De Vos et al., 2020). Adaptability is the strategy individuals choose to use their resources when faced with changes and adversity (Cullen et al., 2013). Adaptability can be more concretely seen as a lens which helps the individual to interpret changes in their contextual environment as positive (Cullen et al., 2013). Individuals with high adaptability are more likely to perceive actions of organizations as supportive instead of disruptive (Cullen et al., 2013). The same is true for actions of private life actors (Ocampo et al., 2018). On the basis of the preceding considerations adaptability can be seen as an important variable which may influence an individuals' interpretation of their relationship with perceived organizational support and perceived private life support in their careers. Still, adaptability has not been previously researched as such. Therefore, this study investigates adaptability as a possible moderator variable.

On the basis of the preceding the following research question is constructed:

To what extent are sustainable careers influenced by organizational support and private life support, and to what extent is this relationship moderated by adaptability?

This research will complement the academic literature in two ways. First, it helps explain the role of perceived private life support in the development of sustainable careers. Previous research seems to neglect private life support and predominantly focuses on organizational support (Ocampo et al., 2018). Therefore, a lot still remains unknown about the effects of perceived private life support. Second, it helps develop the conceptual model as

proposed by (De Vos et al. (2020)). This research uses concepts and theories which overlap with the conceptual model of De Vos et al. (2020), and complements the model by investigating the role of adaptability and the role of several indicators mentioned in the model. This research also uses quantitative methods and can therefore help proving the proposed relationships in the conceptual model of sustainable careers. With the results of this research the understanding of sustainable careers deepens.

This research will also help managers understand their role in creating and maintaining sustainable adaptable employees, as well as understand the importance of the private life support employees experience. Although organizations are not able to control the private lives of employees, still it is important to understand what employees go through and how this influences their employment relationship.

Literature review

In this chapter, literature surrounding the proposed variables will be discussed. First, sustainable careers will be explained. Second, the predictor variables perceived organizational support and perceived private life support will be discussed. Subsequently, the link between these variables will be explained. Concluding, the proposed moderator variable adaptability will be discussed. The variables will be linked according to the work-home resource model, which is an adaptation of the conservation of resource theory adapted to and made for the work-home dynamic.

Sustainable careers

Sustainable careers have been defined as “sequences of career experiences reflected through a variety of patterns of continuity over time, thereby crossing several social spaces, characterized by individual agency, herewith providing meaning to the individual” (Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015, p.7). In this definition it is clear sustainable careers are characterized as a process over time where several events and stakeholders may influence the career and the choices of an individual.

De Vos et al. (2020) propose three outcomes of sustainable careers: health, happiness, and productivity. These three outcomes create mutual benefits for the individual and their environment. The outcome health refers to the physical and mental health of people. When an individual is healthy in their career they don't experience excessive amounts of stress, have good well-being, and are not physically exhausted (De Vos et al., 2020). This research will use perceived work-ability as a measurement of employee health. Perceived work-ability is defined as “an individual's self-perception or evaluation of his or her ability to continue working in his or her job.” (McGonagle et al., 2015, p. 3).

Happiness is the degree an individual feels satisfied with their career (De Vos et al., 2020). An individual is considered happy with their career when they perceive their career as successful and are satisfied with their occupation (De Vos et al., 2020). Happiness was measured by career satisfaction. Career satisfaction can be defined as “a positive or negative evaluative judgement one makes about one's job or job situation.” (Weiss, 2002, p. 175)

The third outcome productivity is concerned with how an employee performs in their career, so it entails more than excelling your current occupation (De Vos et al., 2020). If an

individual performs well, shows organizational citizenship behavior, and has relatively high employability, they are considered productive (De Vos et al., 2020). Here perceived employability was used as a measurement of productivity. Perceived employability can be defined as “one’s perception of the ability to keep the job one has or to get the job one desires.” (Akkermans et al., 2013; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

Perceived organizational support

It has been shown that when employees feel appreciated and valued by their organization, they tend to perform better and are more motivated (Meyers et al., 2019; Zhong et al., 2016). The support of organizations plays a large part here. Since the actions of organizations are interpreted by the central actor the individual (De Vos et al., 2020), the degree of organizational support is always a perception of the individual. Perceptions of organizational actions can differ per individual, and different perceptions can have different results (Alfes, Veld, & Fürstenberg, 2020). Perceived organizational support is based on employees’ beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The employee attributes these beliefs to the organization and in this way personifies the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This means the organization can be seen as another individual that the employee interacts with on a daily basis.

The employees’ actions will be influenced in three ways when they feel supported by the organization. Firstly, the employee is more likely to contribute to the organizational goals and participate in extra tasks on the basis of positive reciprocity (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Reciprocity is the reaction of employees on actions of the organizations, this can be either a positive (e.g. willing to do extra work) or a negative (e.g. cutting corners) reaction (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Second, the employee will be more likely to display actions of organizational citizenship behavior (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). And lastly, the employee will be more incentivized by performance rewards as they believe doing extra work will be rewarded (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Organizational support can be seen as a work resource when applying the work-home resource model. The work-home resource model applies the conservation of resources theory to the work-home environment (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The conservation of resources theory aims to explain the amount of stress an individual experiences by describing and analyzing the accumulation and spending of resources (Hobfoll, 2002). Resources are

spent when an individual needs to deal with stressors and are accumulated when stressors are non-existent (Hobfoll, 2002). Therefore, it aims to explain work and home outcomes by means of personal resource management. A resource can be an object, personal attributes, circumstances, or energy (Hobfoll, 2002). These resources are spent to cope with stressors and are accumulated when stressors are absent. The work-home resource model proposes that when a resource is spent in the work environment it can have consequences in the home environment, and vice versa, via personal resources possession (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Several key personal resources are distinguished; physical, psychological, affective, intellectual, and capital (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Physical personal resources are for example their health or energy. Psychological personal resources are attributes like mental resilience and optimism. Affective personal resources are an employees' mood or their empathy. Intellectual personal resources are the skills and knowledge an employee possesses. Capital personal resources are the time and money an employee has. All proposed hypotheses are formulated considering the work-home resource model.

Perceived organizational support is related to the well-being of an employee (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). The support an organization gives to an employee helps the employee to manage their stress-levels and preserve their physical health (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). In employee careers organizational support can be therefore seen as an important resource which individuals use to manage their stress levels (Brown & Roloff, 2015). Perceived organizational support can also help employees putting their workload in perspective and therefore increasing workability (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009). Following the work-home resource model an employee uses resources when they are confronted with work demands that cause stress (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The organization can provide work resources, which the employee can use to cope better with the work demands and in turn higher workability (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Therefore, the following hypothesis is constructed.

H1: Perceived organizational support will positively influence health.

Perceived organizational support can increase career satisfaction by means of an comfortable working atmosphere perceived by the employee (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). If the organization shows that they value the employee and their contribution to the organization,

employees are more happy and satisfied to work at the organization (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). The care for employee well-being has been found to make employees feel more satisfied with their current occupation (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009; Podnar & Golob, 2021). According to the work-home resource model the supportive behavior of the organization can increase the affective personal resources of an employee by means of providing work resources to cope with work demands (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Following previous considerations, the following hypothesis is constructed.

H2: Perceived organizational support will positively influence happiness.

Perceived organizational support also influences the perceived employability of employees (Guilbert, Carrein, Guénolé, Monfray, Rossier, & Priolo, 2018). Organizations can give employees tools to help them balance their career, and develop their skills (Guilbert et al., 2018). The implementation of supportive HR practices also increases the employability of employees, for example giving employees the opportunity to sport during their break (Ybema et al., 2020). To summarize organizations can provide resources for employees to enhance their employability (Guilbert et al., 2018; Ybema et al., 2020). The work-home resource model is used as underlying theory for the conceptual relations of this research. In this model organizational support can be seen as work resource. Work resources can strengthen home resources and vice versa (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) Therefore, on the basis of the work-home resource model this study expects that organizational support will strengthen home resources. These home resources are key elements of employability (Akkermans et al., 2013). Therefore, this research expects to find the following effect of perceived organizational support on productivity.

H3: Perceived organizational support will positively influence productivity.

Perceived private life support

Next to the support of an organization, individuals also are subject to other social support, for example the support of friends and family. This social support can be defined as: “The extent to which individuals believe their social environment values their contribution and cares about their well-being.” (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Russo et al., 2016, p.2). Since an individual’s social environment can be very broad there are more specific variants of social support existing in literature. The most common variants are considered to be family support and spousal support (Ocampo et al., 2018; Russo et al., 2016).

Family support is the degree to which individuals believe their family is concerned with their well-being and are willing to support them (Russo et al., 2016). It can be argued spouses are a part of someone’s family, however spouses know a more direct role and deserve to be differentiated as separate group (Ocampo et al., 2018). The social support given by family and spouses can be categorized in four categories: emotional, instrumental, tangible, and informational (Ocampo et al., 2018; Russo et al., 2016). Emotional support encompasses support which affects the individual’s emotions, for example an encouraging attitude. Instrumental support is the help provided to the individual when the individual is confronted with a problem. Tangible support is the support given to an individual by doing tasks for the individual. Informational support is support given by means of providing information and advice. For this research the focus was on spousal and family support as well as support received from close friends. Looking through the work-home resource lens, social support is a home resource and can therefore strengthen the work resources (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012; Ocampo et al., 2018). An increase in work resources means the individual has more resources available to spend in the work environment when necessary, for example to cope with stress (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

When the social support received is sufficient employees deem themselves more able to participate in work tasks, handle stressful situations better, and feel more energetic (Nahum-shani et al., 2011; Russo et al., 2016). When the social support received is not sufficient the effects are in almost all situations the other way around (Nahum-shani et al., 2011; Russo et al., 2016). When looking at perceived career success, social support provides reassurance for individuals that they are doing well and become more confident about their work (Ocampo et al., 2018). The social support received thus influences the perceived work-ability (Nahum-

shani et al., 2011; Ocampo et al., 2018; Russo et al., 2016). Following these considerations, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H4: Perceived private life support will positively influence health.

Social support also lets individuals feel more energetic and psychologically available, in turn making individuals feeling more satisfied with their career (Russo et al., 2016). Social support also makes an individual more confident about their career situation and helps individuals to handle negative aspects of their career (Ocampo et al., 2018), thus they acquire affective personal resources increasing happiness (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Support from family and friends also helps individuals balance work and life (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Russo et al., 2016). This helps individuals to be more satisfied with their occupation and career (Adams et al., 1996). On the basis of these consideration the following hypothesis is constructed.

H5: Perceived private life support will positively influence happiness.

The influence of social support on the balance of work and life, also helps individuals to maintain and develop their employability (Adams et al., 1996; Veld et al., 2016). The feeling of support helps an individual to feel able (Nahum-shani et al., 2011) and more confident (Ocampo et al., 2018) to develop their skills and knowledge (Veld et al., 2016). Social support makes the individual feel they can handle work tasks better (Russo et al., 2016), mainly because they acquire physiological and intellectual personal resources (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), thus increasing productivity. On the basis of these considerations the following hypothesis is constructed.

H6: Perceived private life support will positively influence productivity.

Adaptability

The world is increasingly volatile and people need to continuously adapt to changing working conditions (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006). The way people adapt and the degree to which they adapt varies per individual (Cullen et al., 2013). These variations can be conceptualized as adaptive capabilities. How adaptive capabilities are defined differs among researchers and seems to depend on the field of research. Looking through a psychological lens, adaptive

capabilities are a collection of psychological resources and attitudes which determine the ability to handle change (Hirschi et al., 2015). In a more managerial point of view, adaptive capabilities entail the ability and willingness of an individual to change and refit their attitude and working strategy (Cullen et al., 2013; Ployhart & Bliese, 2006). Adaptability is an important factor in sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020). An individual's career is characterized by multiple career defining experiences and events over time (De Vos et al., 2020). In order to cope with these experiences, an individual benefits from a positive attitude towards change (Cullen et al., 2013).

A by research proven way of mapping adaptability is through the 4 Cs; concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Concern is the degree to which an individual has a future focused vision, control is the action an individual takes to prepare themselves for possible changes, curiosity is the mapping of various possible scenarios, and confidence is the degree to which an individual has faith in a successful adaptation (De Vos et al., 2020; Hirschi et al., 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence all can be seen as resources an individual might have. These resources might help using and accumulating resources in the work and home environment.

By applying the work-home resource model to adaptability, some expectations can be developed. Adaptability can be seen as a category of personal resources specific to handling change and uncertainty, and is build up from concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The work-home resource model states that personal resources can strengthen the resources in the home environment as well as the work environment (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). These work and home resources can in turn strengthen personal resources and create a positive feedback loop (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). As stated adaptability can be seen as an important resource (Hirschi et al., 2015) and can positively influence their attitude in the home environment (Ocampo et al., 2018), and thus strengthen their personal resources (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Similarly adaptability can influence the attitude towards changes in the work environment (Cullen et al., 2013), thus influencing the accumulation of work resources (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). This accumulation mechanism leads to the expectation that when an individual has high adaptability, work and home support will create more personal resources related to

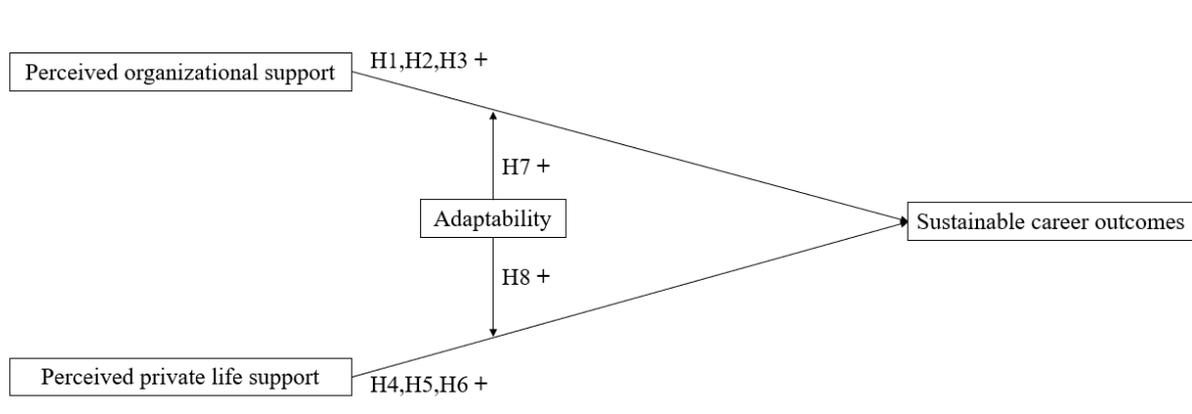
sustainable career outcomes than without adaptability. On the basis of these considerations the following hypotheses are developed.

H7: When adaptability increases, the relationship between perceived organizational support and sustainable career outcomes strengthens.

H8: When adaptability increases, the relationship between perceived social support and sustainable career outcomes strengthens.

The proposed relationships are visualized in a conceptual model in Figure 1.

Figure 1:
Conceptual model.



Methods

This thesis focuses on the relationships of perceived organizational support and perceived private life support with sustainable careers. Employees' adaptability will be researched and explored as a possible moderator variable. This research is largely based on proposed relations in the proposed conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020). Therefore, this research has taken a quantitative approach with online surveys as data-collection method. The goal of this study is to build upon and contribute to the conceptual model of sustainable careers, therefore a quantitative approach is deemed most useful to test the suggested relations. Surveys are a great tool for collecting data in order to use in statistical analysis and consequently exploring relationships between variables (Vennix, 2016). This research will also be conducted in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Online surveys make it possible to gather data without the need of physical contact. Since this research looks into the individual perspective on sustainable careers, the surveys were specifically targeted on individual employees.

Data collection

Since the possible respondent group is very broad, a convenience sample is used to gather responses. A link for the survey is distributed on social media and people are asked to forward it to their peers. Using a convenience sample helps acquiring the required amount of data for statistical analysis usage. Respondents are not compensated for their responses. Respondents are able to stop participating in the research without constraints or notice, a total of 24 respondent chose to do so. All collected data is collected completely anonymously. The answers of the survey can not be traced back to any individual that participated. Answers are organized using randomized codes. In order to achieve transparency, the goals of the research are communicated on the first introductory page of the survey.

The advised amount of response for the use of multivariate statistical analysis is a minimum of 50 respondents with an advised maximum of 500 respondents (Hair et al., 2019). The minimum is needed for reliable results, whereas the maximum is advised based on practical considerations. In order to make sure the final sample could be considered reliable the G*power 3 tool was used. The G*power 3 tool is a tool used for calculating sample size by means of desired statistical power (Faul et al., 2007). For this research an alpha of 0,05 and a desired statistical power of 0,8 was put in for the option "linear multiple regression: fixed

model, single regression coefficient". This resulted in a desired sample size of 43 respondents. The achieved sample size was 102 respondents. To be eligible for addition in the results respondents needed to be employed by an organization and should not be self-employed.

One significant contextual remark on this research is the fact that this research has been conducted in 2021, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is important to mention all results may possibly be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sample size and respondents

Most working individuals in the Netherlands are possible respondents of the survey. In order to include the response in the dataset two main criteria were considered: the respondent is 18 years or older and the respondent is currently working in the Netherlands. For this research it also considered important that individuals have some form of relationship with the organization at which they work. For this research work was demarcated by the existence of a contractual employment relationship. By demarcating the working definition self-employed and people with side jobs are excluded from the sample. This is done because the variable perceived organizational support builds upon the existence of a worker-organization relationship (Meyers et al., 2019). Workers who are self-employed or have a side-job are expected to have weaker organizational bonds. A further group of respondents excluded from the final sample are CEO's and other top management positions. This top management group is excluded from the sample because one of the dependent variables is perceived organizational support and thus entails the support from managers perceived by employees.

A total of 126 survey responses were recorded from the 19th of May, through the 16th of July 2021. All participants allowed the use of their response for this research. There were no participants who left remarks or contacted the researcher. The survey software was set to record incomplete responses after 1 week of inactivity, leading to a total of 24 unfinished recorded responses. Explanations for inactivity may include respondent forgot to finish, respondent wanted to withdraw from the research, or loss of internet connection.

Taking the dataset including the recorded due to inactivity responses leads to 24 cases with more than 50% missing data, and a Little's MCAR test of sig.: 0.092 meaning the missing data can still be classified as missing at random with $p > .05$.

The possible reasons for the missing data discussed earlier, and the result of Little's MCAR test make all 24 cases eligible for deletion. Further analysis was done with the remaining 102 cases.

The remaining 102 cases included 43 respondents which identified as male and 56 which identified as female. 3 respondents did not disclose their gender. In the Netherlands for each 100 females there are 99 males, approximately divided 50/50 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021, 29 juli). Meaning in the results females are 4,9% overrepresented and Males are 7,8% underrepresented.

The average age of the respondents was 45.63 with a SD of 13.59. Respondents worked an average 34.4 hours per week. The average tenure is 8.7 years with a SD of 8.61. Descriptives are shown in Table 2.

Regarding educational level 7 (6.9%) respondents have completed high-school, 15 (14.7%) have completed post-secondary vocational education, 37 (36.3%) have completed applied sciences, 36 (35.3%) have completed university, 3 (2.9%) have completed a PhD, and 1 (1%) has no diploma. Educational levels in the Netherlands in 2020 are divided as follows: 8,7% have no diploma, 28,5% have a high-school diploma (VMBO, HAVO, VWO), 26,5% have completed post-secondary vocational education (MBO), 21,5% have completed applied sciences (HBO), and 12,7 % have completed university (WO) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021, 29 juli). In the results high-school education is underrepresented by 21,6%, post-secondary education is underrepresented by 6,9%, applied sciences education is overrepresented by 14,8%, and university education is overrepresented by 22,6%.

The survey was distributed on LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, and personal communication tools. The distribution method may be the cause of the overrepresentation of applied sciences and university education. The frequencies of education and gender are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency statistics for variables gender and educational level.

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	43	42.2	High school	7	6.9
Female	56	54.9	Post-secondary vocational education	15	14.7
Other	0	0	University of applied sciences	37	36.3
Missing	3	2.9	University	36	35.3
Total	102	100	PhD	3	2.9
			No diploma	1	1
			Missing	3	2.9
			Total	102	100

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for variables age, hours, and tenure.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	45.63	13.59
Hours worked per week	34.4	8.61
Tenure	8.70	8.61

Measurement of variables

The survey used is made up of the four proposed variables: sustainable career outcomes, perceived organizational support, perceived private life support, and adaptability. For each variable indicators and items were determined on the basis of previous research where possible. The reliability of the scales was tested, results are shown in Table 2.

Sustainable career outcomes The conceptual model proposed by De Vos et al. (2020) looks at three outcomes of sustainable careers: health, happiness, and productivity.

Health is measured with the indicator perceived work-ability. Work-ability is measured using the 4-item scale constructed by McGonagle et al. (2015). The answer scale ranges from cannot currently work at all (0) to work-ability at its lifetime best (10). An

example item is: *“How many points would you give your current ability to work?”*. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.836.

Happiness is measured with the indicator career satisfaction. Career satisfaction was measured using the 5-item scale constructed by (Greenhaus et al., 1990). The answer scale ranges from strongly disagree (5) to strongly agree (1) and were reverse coded so that a high score represents high career satisfaction. An example item is: *“I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.”*. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.743.

Productivity is measured with the indicator perceived employability. Perceived employability will be measured using the 11-item scale developed by Rothwell and Arnold (2007). The answer scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). An example item is: *“Even if there was downsizing in this organization, I am confident I would be retained.”*. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.805.

Perceived organizational support Perceived organizational support is measured using the survey of perceived organizational support scale developed and proved by Eisenberger et al. (1986). This scale consists of 36 items with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) through strongly agree (7). A shorter version is also tested and consists only of 6 items with the same Likert scale. These 6 items are the items with the highest factor loadings and are deemed not significantly less reliable (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Practical considerations persuaded this research to use the shorter 6-item scale. An example item: *“The organization values my contribution to its well-being.”* The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.896.

Perceived private life support Perceived private life support is measured with the scale constructed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988). The scale is multidimensional and focuses on family, spousal, and friends’ support. The scale originally is used for psychology research. Some items were therefore altered to fit this research better. For example: *“I can talk about my problems with friends.”* was changed to *“I can talk about my work problems with friends.”*. In total this variable was measured by 12 items answered by a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) through strongly agree (7). An example item: *“I have a spouse I can depend on when I’m having problems with work.”*. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.816.

Adaptability Adaptability is measured using the career adaptabilities scale constructed and used by Savickas and Porfeli (2012). The scale has been constructed after researchers in 13 countries tested and refined the items that were a part of the scale. The scale consists of the four Cs of career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) measured by 6 items each. Items consists of statements upon which the respondent answers how they feel about their ability on these statements using a 5-point scale which ranges from strongest (5) through not strong (1). An example item: *“Thinking about what my future looks like.”*. Each of the four subscales contain 6 items. Per 6 items 1 factor is created, for example the 6 items belonging to subscale concern make up the factor concern. In total this comes down to 4 factors. The weighted average of these four factors can then be used as the scale for adaptability. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.894.

Control variables

For this research three control variables are added. The first control variable added is age. Firstly, because this research aimed for respondents older than 18 years old. Second, previous research indicates age might have implications for individuals’ perception of sustainability of their careers (Van den Elsen & Vermeeren, 2019).

The second control variable added is education attainment. Research has shown that individuals with a high educational level have more confidence in their career and workability (Fenning & May, 2013), and think of their career as valuable more often than individuals with a low educational level (Dekker, 2012).

The third control variable added is weekly working hours. As previously has been stated career decisions can have short term positive effects while also having long term negative effects with regards to the sustainability of a career (De Vos et al., 2020). Working long hours in order to reach a promotion or goal might influence the individuals’ perception of the sustainability of their career. Next to this, working long hours seems to be associated with high career satisfaction (Fabian & Breunig, 2019).

Statistical analysis

This research is concerned with the effects of perceived organizational support and perceived private life support on sustainable career outcomes. This research also investigates the moderating effects of career adaptability. First, descriptive statistics are explored for all

variables. Second, assumptions of the proposed analysis method will be checked. Last, the regression analyses are run.

This research explores a model which included a moderator variable. Therefore, the custom dialog PROCESS is used in SPSS. To analyze the data and explore possible moderation, the model 1 of PROCESS is used (Hayes, 2013). The model 1 shows similarities with the proposed conceptual model and is deemed most useful to analyze moderating relationships. The independent variable “sustainable career outcomes” is made up of three indicators, health, happiness, and productivity. Therefore, six analyses are run. Three with organizational support as predictor and three with private life support as predictor.

Results

Descriptive statistics

In Table 3 the descriptive statistics for health, happiness, productivity, organizational support, private life support, adaptability, age, hours worked per week, and tenure. For the categorical variables gender and educational level a frequency distribution is disclosed above.

All variables know a skewness and kurtosis between -3 and 3, except for the variable health (*kurtosis: 3.73*). Q-Q plots of all variables were plotted and for all variables the points followed a straight line with minimal deviations. Normality was deemed present in all variables except health. A kurtosis of 3.73 for health is considered high and may indicate problems with the normality of this variable. However, because the proposed regression analysis is robust for violations of normality (Hair et al., 2019), the high kurtosis of health was not deemed a risk for further tests. Other assumptions were not violated.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics for variables health, happiness, productivity, organizational support, private life support, age, hours worked per week, and tenure.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Missing%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
Health	102	0	7.76	1.35	-1.45	3.73
Happiness	102	0	3.85	0,57	-0.68	1.16
Productivity	102	0	3.66	0.56	-0.03	-38
Organizational support	102	0	5.16	1.14	-0.68	0.08
Private life support	102	0	5.68	0.81	-0.88	0.36
Adaptability	99	2.9	3.28	0.51	0.47	0.50
Age	99	2.9	45.63	13.59	-0.43	-1.37
Hours worked per week	99	2.9	34.43	8.61	0.121	0.313
Tenure	99	2.9	8.70	8.61	1.196	0.560

Correlation statistics

A correlation analysis was performed on the variables. All relevant correlation statistics are shown in Table 4. The variable health is significantly correlated with happiness (0.480) at the 0.01 level, and with productivity (0.230), perceived organizational support (0.476), perceived private life support (0.327), as well as with adaptability (0.269) and gender (-0.227) at the 0.05 level.

Happiness is significantly correlated with happiness (0.480), productivity (0.423), perceived organizational support (0.445), and adaptability (0.508) at the 0.01 level, as well as with perceived private life support (0.248) at the 0.05 level.

Productivity is significantly correlated with happiness (0.423), perceived organizational support (0.443), perceived private life support (0.259), and adaptability (0.377) at the 0.01 level, as well as with health (0.230) and hours worked per week (0.216) at the 0.05 level.

Perceived organizational support is significantly correlated with happiness (0.445), productivity (0.443), and perceived private life support (0.319) at the 0.01 level, as well as with health (0.476) at the 0.05 level.

Perceived private life support is significantly correlated with productivity (0.259), and perceived organizational support (0.319) at the 0.01 level, as well as with health (0.327), happiness (0.248), and adaptability (0.229) at the 0.05 level.

Adaptability is significantly correlated with happiness (0.508), and productivity (0.377) at the 0.01 level, as well as with health (0.269), private life support (0.229) and hours worked per week (0.224) at the 0.05 level.

Hours worked per week is significantly correlated with gender (0.458) at the 0.01 level, as well as with productivity (0.216) and adaptability (0.224) at the 0.05 level. Tenure is significantly correlated with age (0.490) at the 0.01 level. Gender is significantly correlated with hours worked per week (0.458) at the 0.01 level, as well as with health (-0.227) at the 0.05 level. Educational level does not have a significant correlation with any of the other variables, and therefore left out of the following regression models.

Table 4:

Correlation statistics for the variables health, happiness, productivity, organizational support, private life support, adaptability, age, hours, tenure, gender, and educational level.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Health	1										
2. Happiness	.480**	1									
3. Productivity	.230*	.423**	1								
4. Organizational support	.476*	.445**	.443**	1							
5. Private life support	.327*	.248*	.259**	.319**	1						
6. Adaptability	.269*	.508**	.377**	.137	.229*	1					
7. Age	-.065	.131	-.152	-.011	-.176	-.118	1				
8. Hours	.139	.178	.216*	.102	-.103	.224*	-.081	1			
9. Tenure	-.032	.060	-.122	-.132	-.190	-.039	.490**	.056	1		
10. Gender	-.227*	-.089	-.109	-.075	.047	-.108	.102	.458**	.024	1	
11. Educational level	.038	.097	-.002	.062	.000	.068	-.051	-.107	-.140	.187	1

Note: **correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Effects on health

In order to analyze the effects of perceived organizational support and perceived private life support on health, two regression models were developed. The moderator variable adaptability was added to test the moderating effect.

The first model was made up of the variables organizational support, adaptability, organizational support * adaptability, private life support, hours worked per week, tenure, and gender. The model itself was significant ($p = 0.000$). Only the variable gender ($\beta = 0.56, p = 0.039$) was a positive significant predictor of health. The variables organizational support ($\beta = 1.05, p = 0.103$), adaptability ($\beta = 1.34, p = 0.186$), organizational support * adaptability ($\beta = -0.18, p < 0.341$), private life support ($\beta = 0.30, p = 0.067$), age ($\beta = -0.00, p = 0.794$) hours ($\beta = -0.01, p = 0.653$) and tenure ($\beta = 0.01, p = 0.468$) were not significant predictors. Therefore hypothesis 1 is not supported.

Table 5

Model 1: multiple regression analysis with dependent variable health.

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.333$ $p = 0.000$.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	-0.69	3.46	-0.20	0.844
Organizational support	1.05	0.64	1.65	0.103
Adaptability	1.34	1.01	1.33	0.186
Organizational support * Adaptability	-0.18	0.19	-0.95	0.357
Private life support	0.30	0.16	1.85	0.067
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.79	0.794
Hours	-0.01	0.02	-0.45	0.653
Tenure	0.01	0.02	0.73	0.468
Gender	0.56	0.27	2.09	0.039

The second model was made up of the variable's private life support, adaptability, private life support * adaptability, organizational support, hours worked per week, tenure, and gender.

The model itself was significant ($p = 0.000$). The variables organizational support ($\beta = 0.48, p = 0.000$) and gender ($\beta = 0.57, p = 0.035$) were positive significant predictors of health. The variables private life support ($\beta = -0.76, p = 0.418$), adaptability ($\beta = -1.38, p = 0.389$), private life support * adaptability ($\beta = 0.32, p = 0.251$), age ($\beta = -0.00, p = 0.646$) hours (β

= -0.01 , $p = 0.449$) and tenure ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.408$) were not significant predictors. Therefore hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Table 6

Model 2: multiple regression analysis with dependent variable health.

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.336$ $p = 0.000$.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	8.45	5.45	1.55	0.125
Private life support	-0.76	0.93	-0.81	0.418
Adaptability	-1.38	1.58	-0.87	0.389
Private life support * Adaptability	0.32	0.27	1.16	0.251
Organizational support	0.48	0.11	4.39	0.000
Age	-0.00	0.01	-0.46	0.646
Hours	-0.01	0.02	-0.76	0.449
Tenure	0.01	0.02	0.83	0.408
Gender	0.57	0.27	2.14	0.035

Effects on happiness

In order to analyze the effects of perceived organizational support and perceived private life support on happiness, two regression models were developed. The moderator variable adaptability was added to test the moderating effect.

The third model included the variables organizational support, adaptability, organizational support * adaptability, private life support, hours, tenure, and gender. The model itself was significant ($p = 0.000$). The variable adaptability ($\beta = 0.99$, $p = 0.011$) and Age ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.041$) were positive significant predictors of happiness. The variables organizational support ($\beta = 0.48$, $p = 0.502$), organizational support * adaptability ($\beta = -0.09$, $p = 0.208$), private life support ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = 0.641$), hours ($\beta = 0.00$, $p = 0.531$), tenure ($\beta = 0.00$, $p = 0.763$), and gender ($\beta = -0.01$, $p = 0.947$) were not significant predictors. Therefore hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Table 7

Model 3: multiple regression analysis with dependent variable happiness.

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.446$ $p = 0.000$.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
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Constant	-0.97	1.31	-0.74	0.463
Organizational support	0.48	0.24	1.98	0.502
Adaptability	0.99*	0.38	2.58	0.011
Organizational support * Adaptability	-0.09	0.07	-1.27	0.208
Private life support	0.03	0.00	0.47	0.641
Age	0.01*	0.04	2.07	0.041
Hours	0.00	0.00	0.63	0.531
Tenure	0.00	0.01	0.76	0.763
Gender	-0.01	0.10	-0.06	0.947

The fourth model included the variables private life support, adaptability, private life support * adaptability, organizational support, hours, tenure, and gender. The model itself was significant ($p = 0.000$). The variable organizational support ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.000$) was a positive significant predictor of happiness. The variables private life support ($\beta = 0.05$, $p = 0.889$), adaptability ($\beta = 0.55$, $p = 0.371$), private life support * adaptability ($\beta = -0.01$, $p = 0.958$), hours ($\beta = 0.00$, $p = 0.679$), tenure ($\beta = 0.00$, $p = 0.640$), and gender ($\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.853$) were not significant predictors. Therefore hypothesis 5 is not supported.

Table 8

Model 4: multiple regression analysis with dependent variable happiness.

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.436$ $p = 0.000$.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	0.48	2.09	0.23	0.819
Private life support	0.05	0.36	0.14	0.889
Adaptability	0.55	0.61	0.90	0.371
Private life support * Adaptability	-0.01	0.11	-0.05	0.958
Organizational support	0.18*	0.04	4.23	0.000
Age	0.01	0.00	1.95	0.055
Hours	0.00	0.01	0.42	0.679
Tenure	0.00	0.01	0.47	0.640
Gender	0.19	0.10	0.19	0.853

Effects on productivity

Similar to the previous analyses, two models were constructed for the dependent variable productivity.

The fifth model included organizational support, adaptability, organizational support * adaptability, private life support, hours, and tenure. The model itself was significant ($p = 0.000$). The variables organizational support ($\beta = -0.62$, $p = 0.016$) and adaptability ($\beta = -0.93$, $p = 0.023$) both were negative significant predictors of productivity. The variable organizational support * adaptability ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.002$) was a positive significant predictor of productivity. The moderating effect of adaptability is visualized in Figure 2. The variables private life support ($\beta = 0.02$, $p = 0.739$), age ($\beta = -0.01$, $p = 0.221$), hours ($\beta = 0.00$, $p = 0.571$), tenure ($\beta = -0.00$, $p = 0.666$) and gender ($\beta = 0.02$, $p = 0.839$) were not significant predictors. Therefore hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Table 9

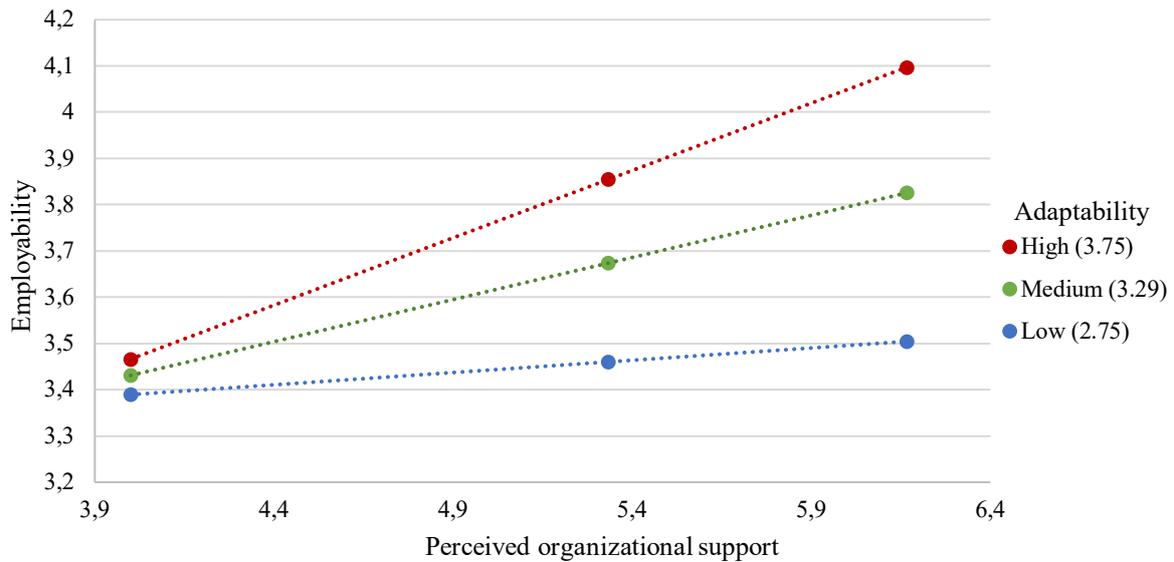
Model 5: multiple regression analysis with dependent variable productivity.

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.379$ $p = 0.000$.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	5.67	1.37	4.13	0.001
Organizational support	-0.62*	0.25	-2.45	0.016
Adaptability	-0.93*	0.40	-2.32	0.023
Organizational support * Adaptability	0.24*	0.08	3.20	0.002
Private life support	0.02	0.06	0.33	0.739
Age	-0.01	0.00	0.57	0.221
Hours	0.00	0.01	0.56	0.571
Tenure	-0.00	0.01	0.22	0.823
Gender	0.02	0.11	0.20	0.839

Figure 2

The moderating effect of adaptability in model 5 visualized in a graph.



The sixth model included private life support, adaptability, private life support * adaptability, organizational support, hours, tenure, and gender. The model itself was significant ($p = 0.000$). The variables private life support * adaptability 9 ($\beta = 0.36, p = 0.001$) and organizational support ($\beta = 0.19, p = 0.000$) both were positive significant predictors of productivity. The moderating effect of adaptability is visualized in Figure 3. The variables private life support ($\beta = -1.18, p = 0.002$) and adaptability ($\beta = -1.73, p = 0.007$) both were negative significant predictors of productivity. The variables age ($\beta = -0.01, p = 0.199$), hours ($\beta = 0.00, p = 0.470$), tenure ($\beta = -0.01, p = 0.785$) and gender ($\beta = -0.02, p = 0.799$) were not significant predictors. Therefore hypothesis 6 is not supported.

Table 10

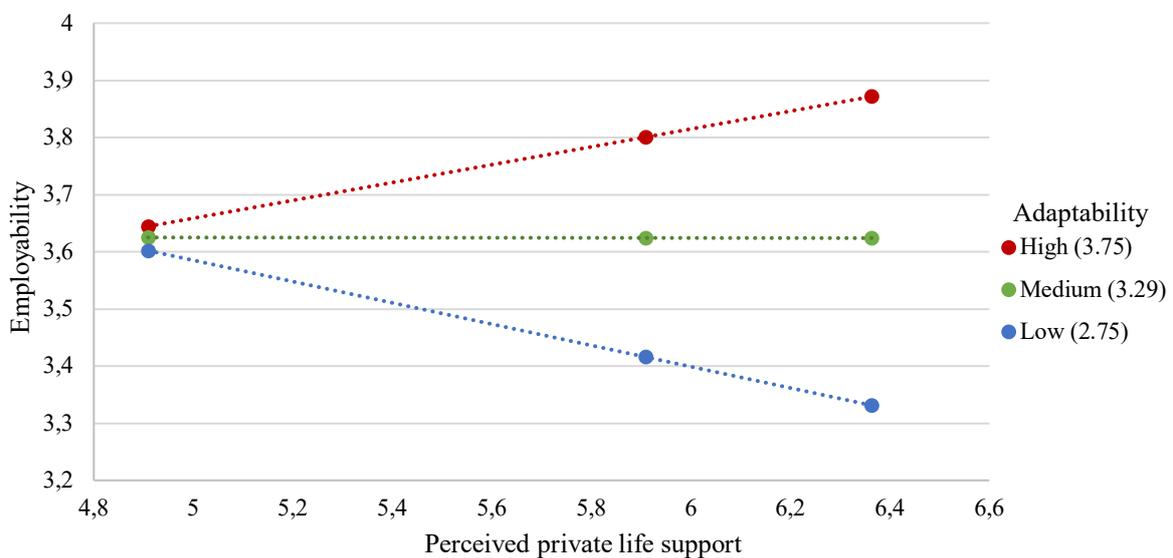
Model 6: multiple regression analysis with dependent variable productivity.

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.382$ $p = 0.000$.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	8.50*	2.17	3.92	0.000
Private life support	-1.18*	0.37	-3.20	0.002
Adaptability	-1.73*	0.63	-2.74	0.007
Private life support * Adaptability	0.36*	0.11	3.29	0.001
Organizational support	0.19*	0.04	4.42	0.000
Age	-0.01	0.00	-1.29	0.199
Hours	0.00	0.01	0.72	0.470
Tenure	-0.01	0.01	-0.27	0.785
Gender	-0.02	0.11	-0.25	0.799

Figure 3

The moderating effect of adaptability in model 6 visualized in a graph.



Adaptability as a moderator

This research also investigated if adaptability could be a possible moderator for the effects of organizational support a private life support on sustainable career outcomes. The variables organizational support*adaptability and ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.002$) and private life support*adaptability ($\beta = 0.36$, $p = 0.001$) were significant predictors of productivity in model 5 and model 6. The

variables organizational support*adaptability ($\beta = -0.18, p = 0.357$) and private life support*adaptability ($\beta = 0.32, p = 0.251$) were not significant predictors of happiness in model 1 and model 2. The variables organizational support*adaptability ($\beta = -0.09, p = 0.208$) and private life support*adaptability ($\beta = -0.01, p = 0.958$) were not significant predictors of happiness in model 3 and model 4. Therefore hypothesis 7 and hypothesis 8 are not supported.

Table 11:

Interaction effects of adaptability summarized.

<i>Model</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
1	Health	Organizational support*adaptability	-0.18	0.19	-0.95	0.357
2	Health	Private life support*adaptability	0.32	0.27	1.16	0.251
3	Happiness	Organizational support*adaptability	-0.09	0.07	-1.27	0.208
4	Happiness	Private life support*adaptability	-0.01	0.11	-0.05	0.958
5	Productivity	Organizational support*adaptability	0.24*	0.08	3.20	0.002
6	Productivity	Private life support*adaptability	0.36*	0.11	3.29	0.001

Discussion

This study aimed to provide a contribution to the sustainable career literature and to explore as well as help develop the conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020). Diminishing labor market supply and the increase of life expectancy has emphasized the need for sustainable careers. In order to explain and investigate factors that influence sustainable careers the following research question was developed:

To what extent are sustainable careers influenced by organizational support and private life support, and to what extent is this relationship moderated by adaptability?

This study found that both perceived organizational support and perceived private life support did not contribute to the sustainable career outcome health. Additionally, this research found that organizational support and adaptability positively influenced the sustainable career outcome happiness. Next to these findings, this study found that organizational support, private life support, and adaptability negatively influenced the sustainable career outcome productivity.

Organizational support was found to have a positive contribution to sustainable career outcome happiness, which was measured using the indicator satisfaction. The effect of organizational support and adaptability on happiness, was hypothesized on the basis of the sustainable careers model (De Vos et al., 2020) and the work-home resource model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The results of the current research have confirmed this hypothesis.

Organizational support and private life support both were expected to have positive contributions to sustainable career outcome health. Results did not confirm this hypothesis. A possible explanation is the nature of the concept of work-ability. Work-ability can be seen as a very personal affair. Individuals can possess skills and knowledge which make their job easier, or have lifestyles which help them do to their work (Cadiz et al., 2019). Perceived work-ability is also dependent on the mental mindset and attitudes towards the work (McGonagle et al., 2015). Therefore, it is likely external influences will only have minor effect on the perceived work-ability of individuals (Cadiz et al., 2019).

Organizational support and private life support were also expected to positively influence the sustainable career outcome productivity. However, organizational support and

private life support were found to have a negative influence on productivity. Productivity was measured using the indicator employability. The support of organizations makes an individual feel more at home at the current organization, which makes employees less likely to look for another job or invest in their employability (Guilbert et al., 2016). Although organizational support can also have the form of encouraging employability activities, the individual will still be more likely to determine that they are where they want to be and will therefore decrease perceived employability (Van Dam, 2007).

The negative effect of private life support on productivity is less easily explained, most studies find a positive effect of social support and social capital on perceived employability (Guilbert et al., 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2019). A possible explanation for these results may lie in the fact this research took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a shift in how work is performed, and causes insecurity in individuals (Kniffin et al., 2020). Therefore, it is possible individuals received private life support in terms of reassurance that they are able to do the job they currently have. Individuals become more confident that their current job suits them and consequently rate their perceived employability lower.

The role of adaptability as a possible moderator was also researched. This study found that for both organizational support and private life support, adaptability did not affect the relationship with the sustainable career outcomes health and happiness. This research found that adaptability positively influences the relationship between organizational support and private life support with productivity. Employees with high adaptability are likely to be confident about their skills, and are more likely to deem themselves over-qualified (Dong et al., 2020). This causes employees to seek out new challenges and opportunities in another job (Dong et al., 2020). If an employee receives support from their organization or private life, adaptability can therefore strengthen the effects due to already increased levels of confidence.

Limitations

This study has four limitations. A first limitation lies in the research method. This research used a cross-sectional research method. Cross-sectional research is considered useful for this research area, however most literature suggests longitudinal research designs are more useful because of the “evaluate in hindsight” aspect of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020; Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015). Therefore, longitudinal research results in a more complete

image of sustainable careers, since each time interval the career will be evaluated in hindsight and the development of a career will be more clear.

A second limitation is the self-serving bias of the respondents. Self-serving bias states that individuals are more likely to attribute positive feelings to themselves and negative feelings to external factors. The respondents were asked to evaluate external factors like organizational support and private life support, next to internal factors like health, happiness, productivity, and adaptability. Therefore, organizational support and private life support might have been rated lower than reality and health, happiness, productivity, and adaptability might have been rated higher than reality. Since there were no follow up options with a questionnaire in order to minimize this bias, self-serving bias may have caused some disfigurement of the results.

A third limitation is the scope of the research. In order to research all sustainable career outcomes simultaneously, indicators were chosen which each represented a career outcome. For example, health was measured using work-ability as an indicator. It can be argued that the career outcomes entail much more than just one indicator. Using only one indicator made the research more practically feasible, but some effects might have been missed.

A fourth limitation is the composition of the respondents. In total 102 respondents filled in the survey. From these 102 respondents 74,5 % were higher educated. Throughout the society of the Netherlands only 34,2 % of Dutch citizens are higher educated. This means this group is severely overrepresented and results of the study are only generalizable to this group.

Theoretical implications and future research

The main goal of this study was to build upon and contribute to the conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020) by investigating the role of organizational support and private life support. This study found a positive influence of organizational support on happiness. Therefore, suggesting a role in sustainable careers for organizational support. It is important to note sustainable career outcomes were measured by 1 indicator per outcome, whereas the sustainable career model suggests 3-4 possible indicators per outcome (De Vos et al., 2020). There are still ample opportunities for future research. Future research can be useful to investigate and analyze the relations of organizational support and private life

support on each outcome individually, for example on health. There is more to health than just work-ability, and future research can map all important indicators for health. The same can be done for each of the sustainable career outcomes. Each study contributes to understanding sustainable careers and develop the sustainable career model.

Future research could also focus on the role of adaptability in sustainable careers. Adaptability is put forward as an important factor for careers (De Vos et al., 2020; Hirschi et al., 2015; Konstam et al., 2015), however the exact role of adaptability remains unclear after this study. It is also entirely possible adaptability only has a role for some aspects of sustainable careers.

Furthermore, there are opportunities in the research area of private life support and perceived employability. This study found a negative influence of private life support on the perceived employability. The result is only marginally explained by the COVID-19 pandemic. A study after the COVID-19 pandemic could be worthwhile to explore this relationship and help to understand this dynamic.

In order to overcome the limitations this study had, future research should try to find and create a larger and more representative respondent group. Which is essential for more generalizable results. Future research should also try to implement a longitudinal study, in order to help develop a more accurate image of a sustainable career over time. The self-serving bias of respondents could be overcome by using a mixed methods research design, and also use verbal interviews next to the survey.

Practical implications

This study helps HR professionals and manager understand their role in maintaining a sustainable and adaptable workforce. Support from the organization was found to decrease the perceived employability of employees, which can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, organizational support helps to bind the employees to the organization, and is therefore useful to decrease employee turnover. Secondly, organizational support limits employee employability. HR professionals must maneuver this delicate paradox, however the first step is awareness.

This study also showed organizational support increases the job satisfaction of employees. Employees appreciate the supportive activities from the organization, and consequently enjoy their jobs more. If organizations experience low levels of job satisfaction,

this might due to the absence of support. HR professionals can use this insight to maintain happy employees.

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