Sustainable Careers in times of COVID-19

From the perception of young professionals

Radboud University

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Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Purpose: This research contributes to the literature of sustainable careers by examining how young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19.

Methodology: The data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with nine young professionals who started working at their first job during COVID-19. The data was analysed by using template analysis.

Findings: The findings show that the value a young professional holds towards building a sustainable career depends on what phase he or she is in at the time. Different factors during such phase, such as the pressures of having a first job and the COVID-19 restrictions, played an important role in whether the young professional valued building a sustainable career at the time. Nevertheless, once the happiness, health and/or productivity got affected to a point where it negatively affected their daily wellbeing, a majority of the young professionals did take action to safeguard one of the characteristics. At that time, the importance of their wellbeing outweighed the pressures they dealt with surrounding their first job. All in all, one can say that most young professionals eventually do value building a sustainable career once they experienced the importance of safeguarding their happiness, health, and productivity.

Research limitations: One of the limitations of this research is that a relatively small scope of nine respondents within rather similar contexts (working from home) were interviewed. More research is needed with young professionals who experienced different types of contexts to fully understand the concepts of sustainable careers with regard to young professionals.

Practical Implications: The findings enable HR professionals to develop new HR practices that support young professionals in times of a pandemic and help them with building a sustainable career.

Key words: Sustainable Careers, Young Professionals, COVID-19 & Career Shocks

Paper type: Master Thesis

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the unpredictability of a career, mainly due to its unforeseen consequences. Employees were suddenly obliged to adapt their working habits, such as, working from home more often and being isolated from colleagues (Akkermans et al., 2020). For many employees, this was paired with negative outcomes like job insecurity, emotional impact of social isolation and increased general anxiety (Akkermans et al., 2020). Hence, these COVID-19 consequences have the potential to negatively affect one's health, happiness, and productivity.

According to Van der Heijden (2005) one's health, happiness and productivity are the three indicators of a sustainable career. A sustainable career can be seen as a particular form of human sustainability were employees have the capacity to create, test and maintain an adaptive capability (Holling, 2001). These indicators are viewed as contributors to an employee's prosperity and the interaction shapes the sustainability of one's career (De Vos et al., 2020). De Vos et al. (2020) argue that employees will be more able to protect their sustainable career when they safeguard these indicators. Therefore, it is of importance for an employee to be aware of his or her own requirements in order to have a career marked by happiness, health, and productivity (Van der Heijden, 2005). While these personal requirements and expectations may change over time, they are crucial factors to consider when an employee wants to improve the person-career fit (De Vos et al., 2020).

The happiness, health and productiveness of an employee could be heavily impacted during COVID-19. Unforeseen events such as COVID-19 that have a large impact on careers are considered as career shocks (Akkermans et al., 2018). As employees are confronted with such unplanned career shocks, a thought process concerning one's career can be initiated (de Vos et al., 2020). For example, when COVID-19 causes employees not to be able to safeguard their health, happiness, and productivity, they can perceive their career as unsustainable (De Vos et al., 2020). This can lead to employees re-evaluating their career trajectories or broader life aspirations (Akkermans et al., 2020).

Especially young professionals, who started their job during COVID-19, could experience a difficult time (Scott et al., 2021). Due to the fact that many employees were isolated from colleagues, there were fewer opportunities to socially engage and build a network. It even occurred that employees suddenly were forced to switch to other work tasks that felt disconnected from the originally stated purpose of the job (Scott et al., 2021).

At the same time, the start of a career is known to be an important first stage to work on the sustainability of one's career (Akkermans et al., 2021). Within this period, young professionals are supposed to focus on performance, achieve a person-career fit, and develop in their work, all with the goal of laying the foundation for a sustainable career (Akkermans et al., 2021). As a result, it is recommended to young professionals to continuously review their situation and be aware of the opportunities in their career (McDonald, 2018; Tomlinson et al., 2018).

However, unforeseen COVID-19 consequences potentially lead to young professionals experiencing a challenging time regarding this matter (Akkermans et al., 2021). Taking the above in consideration, it is assumed that COVID-19 has consequences for a young professional' happiness, health, and productivity. When these indicators are negatively affected, it potentially results into the young professional evaluating the sustainability of their career what could in turn lead to actions to safeguard their happiness, health, and productiveness (de Vos et al., 2020).

Since the subject of sustainable careers is highly complex, research calls for more qualitative empirical research in this area to get a more in-depth understanding of the process and underlying mechanisms (De Vos et al., 2020). Recent literature found that building a sustainable career is important in the early stages of one's career (Akkermans, 2021). However, little research has been conducted regarding the value of young professionals towards this matter during times of COVID-19. In addition to this, extant research has shown that COVID-19 consequences have the potential to start a deliberate thought process concerning one's sustainable career (Akkermans et al., 2020, De Vos et al., 2020). Nonetheless, it is yet unknown how this thought process affects young professionals' value towards building a sustainable career.

This thesis tries to contribute to this knowledge gap in the literature by conducting a qualitative study including semi-structured interviews with young professionals who started working during COVID-19 (2021-till present 2022). The aim is to gain a more in-depth understanding of how young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19. Therefore, the research question of this thesis is:

How do young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19?

This thesis contributes to scientific literature by adding knowledge to two gaps in the literature. Firstly, to the literature regarding the importance of building sustainable careers for young

professionals during COVID-19. This thesis gives insights into how young professionals value safeguarding their happiness, health, and productivity during their first job during COVID-19. Secondly, by adding knowledge to the literature about the work and career implications of COVID-19 (Akkermans et al., 2020). This thesis generates a more in-depth understanding how COVID-19 restrictions, such as working from home, altered the young professionals' value towards building a sustainable career. In addition, the knowledge of this study can be useful for other pandemic scenarios who have the same type of restrictions as a result.

This thesis contributes to the field of HR by giving HR-professionals more insights into the value young professionals hold against building a sustainable career. Currently numbers of Statistics Netherlands show that there is a labour shortage in the Netherlands (CBS, 2022) Therefore, it is important for HR-professionals to understand how they can make jobs attractive so that they can recruit new employees. By knowing how young professionals deal with COVID-19 and the sustainability of their career, HR-professionals can respond to this matter. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to develop new HR practices that support young professionals in times of a pandemic and to develop guidelines to build a sustainable career (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017, Hite & McDonald, 2020). This in turn has the potential to make a job more attractive for outsiders, when the organisation can show that they find it important for their employees to have a sustainable career.

Theoretical framework

In this study, career sustainability of young professionals in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is the central concept. To understand what is meant by the sustainability of one's career, the topic is first explained below. An important theory to consider regarding the topic of sustainable careers is the person-career fit. This theory supports the rationale of sustainable careers and serves as an important indicator. Thereafter, the theory of sustainable careers is linked to young professionals who are at the start of their career. Different studies have been examined to get a more in-depth understanding of the importance of building a sustainable career during this period. To get more insights into what perception young professionals have towards building a sustainable career during COVID-19 the literature on career shocks is used. The literature provides insight into the possible effects of such "career shocks" on one's perception towards a sustainable career.

Sustainable careers

Multiple studies have been conducted about the subject of sustainable careers. In this paragraph an overview is given from these different studies in order to provide insights into what a sustainable career actually entails and how such a career can be indicated.

A sustainable career, according to Valcour (2015) is one that lasts over time and is marked by the development, preservation, and renewal of the working individual's career-related resources, such as human/social capital (skills, qualifications, reputation, and relationships), as well as personal characteristics (proactive behaviour and persistence) that support in career self-management. The individual in this process is the 'owner' and bears primary responsibility for safeguarding and enhancing their career sustainability through proactive behaviour (Anseel, 2017)

In 2020, de Vos et al. developed three indicators to characterize the sustainability of someone's career, whether someone is happy, healthy and productive. They state that these indicators are contributors to one's prosperity and their interaction shapes the sustainability of one's career (De Vos et al., 2020).

Happiness can be found in feeling successful and satisfied with your career (de Vos et al., 2020). For many people, happiness is a primary goal. It can be defined as the dynamic fit between one's career with one's values, career goals and needs for a work-life balance or personal growth (Sheldon et al., 2002). In this thesis happiness is operationalized according to the dimensions of the happiness at work-model (HAW), which are the subjective feelings of

job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and work engagement (De Waal, 2018). One's happiness throughout the career can for example be indicated trough whether they feel satisfied in the long run (de Vos et al., 2020).

The health indicator refers to both the physical and mental health, and whether there is a dynamic fit between one's career and his or her physical and mental capabilities (de Vos et al., 2020). In this thesis, health is operationalized by the feelings of wellbeing. Health is a component of well-being (Gakidou, 2000, Deaton, 2003), which refers to a person's overall heath as well as their mental, psychological, and emotional well-being. For example, during COVID-19, employees could experience negative outcomes like job insecurity, emotional impact of social isolation and anxiety which potentially affects their mental health (Akkermans et al., 2020). This could possibly result in a low fit between their career situation and their mental capabilities due to poor wellbeing. Both physical and mental health can change through different periods in a career and could also become more impactful when one grows older. For example, when someone is facing physical demands in their job or experiences high levels of stress, it could be that not until later in their life these demands can turn into negative consequences like stress or physical problems, especially when there are no initiatives taken by the organisation to help prevent these damages (de Vos et al., 2020).

The last indicator, productivity, refers to the dynamic fit of a career and organizational human capital needs (de Vos et al., 2020). A strong performance and employability (referring to employment opportunities (Akkermans et al.,2020), leads to high productivity within a job (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). In this thesis, productivity is operationalized by feelings of strong performance and employability. Especially for young workers having a strong performance and high employability is important to reach a high level of performance in a new job to secure employment (De Vos et al., 2020). It is important to note that the level of productivity can change through different lifetimes because of changes in the context, person, and time (Alavinia et al., 2009). Therefore, there is no guarantee that having a high performance in the short run will secure this for the rest of a career.

In order to have a career characterized by happiness, health and productivity, it is important for an employee to be aware of his or her personal needs to define what is important to them in their career (Van der Heijden, 2005). Although personal needs and expectations may vary over time, they are important considerations for making decisions in one's career which will in turn increase a person-career fit (De Vos et al., 2020). According to Parasuraman et al. (2000) person-career fit is defined by: "*the extent to which an individual's career experiences are compatible with his or her needs, values, interests, and talents*" p. 10. A good fit can lead

to positive work attitudes and stability in one's career (Blau, 1987; Smart et al., 1986; Spokane, 1985). As a result, it can be stated that having a strong person-career fit over time means that one will perceive their career as more sustainable (Cha et al., 2009).

In summary, in order to provide answer to the research question, it is important to consider that having a sustainable career is thus based on feeling happy, healthy, and productive within one's career. The employee bears responsibility to safeguard those indicators which in turn enhance their career sustainability. When the happiness, health, and productiveness is compatible with the needs, values, interests and talent of an employee, one can say that there is a good career fit.

Young professionals and sustainable careers

Although 'young professionals' is a commonly used term in practice, there is no clear definition in the scientific literature yet. In general, a young professional is described as someone who has at least a bachelor's degree and is employed (Lattuch & Young, 2011). Their age is mostly between 20 and 30 years (IAEE, 2020). Hence, based on these definitions, this thesis refers to young professionals as Dutch employees who are graduated from higher vocational education or university and are at the start of their careers.

The beginning of a career is a challenging time for most young professionals because they go through many important changes in a short period of time, such as facing the obligations of work for the first time and discovering their own professional identity in a new way (Arnett, 2007; McKee- Ryan et al., 2005). Recent literature has shown that the beginning of a career is crucial for young professionals' chances of long-term career success (Pinquart et al., 2003, Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009). Within this period, young professionals are able to focus on performance, achieve a person-career fit, and develop in their work, all with the goal of laying the foundation for a sustainable career (Akkermans et al., 2021). Akkermans et al. (2021) argue that this period is an important first stage to work on the sustainability of one's career because this is a time when many career opportunities arise. As a result, it is recommended to actively take charge of one's career (Akkermans et al., 2021).

In order to take actively charge of one's career, Akkermans et al. (2021) argue that career competencies and employability are crucial. Akkermans et al. (2013) defined career competencies as "*knowledge, skills, and abilities central to career development, which can be influenced and developed by the individual*" (p. 249). Akkermans et al. (2015) show in their research that competencies are a crucial building block for young professionals because it can

enhance their problem solving-skills, self-efficacy and help them proactively craft their jobs. At the same time, these career competencies assist young professionals to more effectively navigate through their career, which helps them to build a sustainable career (De Vos et al., 2020).

Another aspect that is crucial to attaining a successful start is employability. Employability means that an employee has the necessary competencies that are needed to be able to obtain and retain employment for the market (Dacre et al., 2007; Van Hercke et al., 2014, Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Employees must be flexible when it is needed and desired (Akkermans et al., 2021). Recent studies showed that employability can lead employees to be healthier (Berntson & Marklund, 2007), have better performance (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011), experience less job insecurity (De Cuyper et al., 2012), cope with organizational change (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) and achieve higher levels of career success (De Vos et al., 2011). Therefore, given the relevance of these factors for young professionals in the early stages of their career, Akkermans et al., (2021) point out the importance of enhancing one's career competencies and employability for young professionals to ensure a successful start. This will help them lay the foundation for a sustainable career (Akkermans et al., 2021).

In summary, in order to understand how young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired, it is important to take into account that the start of a career can be a challenging time. This is mainly due to the fact that young professionals go through many significant changes in a short period of time (Arnett, 2000, 2007; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). On top of this, it is argued that this period is an important first phase to work on the sustainability of one's career, because many career opportunities arise during this period. This makes it therefore advisable to actively take charge of one's own career (Akkermans et al., 2021). In order to make a successful start, Akkermans et al. (2021) state that career competencies and employability are crucial.

COVID-19 as a career shock

One's career sustainability can be impacted by a career shock such as COVID-19 (Akkermans et al., 2020). In their research, Akkermans et al., (2018) defined a career shock 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 valanced*" (p.4). COVID-19 impacted a lot of employees and brought disruptive and extraordinary implications such as working from home and adaption to online-work

arrangements, while others could even face job loss (Akkermans et al., 2020). In addition, the low controllability and uncertainty of COVID-19 makes it more likely to start a deliberate thought process about one's career (Akkermans et al., 2018).

This shift in work that is caused by COVID-19 can be troublesome in many careers in society, but it is even more pronounced for unfamiliar new employees that start with their career in these unpredicted times (Scott et al., 2021). COVID-19 not only let to the drastic change to remote and virtual work, but also affected physical workspaces and workplace culture. This could result into employees being isolated from colleagues and make social interaction difficult (Scott et al., 2021). In some organisations it occurred that work expectations changed due to different priorities, and employees suddenly had to do busy work or "filling gaps" that felt disconnected from the stated purpose of the job (Scott et al., 2021). Some employees could have experienced lack of clarity, expectations, or goals due to the changing demands of the organisation (Scott et al., 2021). A career shock such as COVID-19 can significantly influence the development process of a young professionals' career (Bright et al., 2009, Krumboltz, 1998, Hirschi, 2010) and can impact their efforts to build their employability (Akkermans et al., 2019). Young professionals could experience a hard time knowing this is the time in which one is supposed to work on building a sustainable career (Akkermans et al., 2021) but possibly are not able to due to the unforeseen circumstances that COVID-19 caused.

These unforeseen circumstances that career shocks such as COVID-19 cause, can trigger a deliberate thought process concerning one's career (Akkermans et al., 2018). This can lead to people re-evaluating their career trajectories or broader life aspirations (Akkermans et al., 2020). For example, de Vos et al. (2020) argue that careers in which the health, happiness and productivity is safeguarded, are perceived as more sustainable. But when internal- and external factors like COVID-19 causes them to not be able to safeguard their health, happiness and productivity, the career can be perceived as unsustainable (De Vos et al., 2020). This perception can start a deliberate thought process concerning one's career and review their options due to the fact that they want to maintain a sustainable career. The possibility then arises that they take action in order to safeguard their happiness, health and productivity by for example switch jobs, apply to training programs or going from full-time to part-time (Amundson et al., 2010).

In summary, in order to understand how young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19, it is important to keep in mind that a career shock such as COVID-19 can significantly impact the career development process of young professionals (Bright et al., 2010). COVID-19 may cause young professionals

to be unable to secure their health, happiness, and productivity, resulting in a perception of the career as unsustainable (De Vos et al., 2020). This perception can trigger a deliberate thought process about one's career, what could cause young professionals to revise their options and take action to safeguard their sustainable career.

Framework for understanding young professionals' sustainable careers during COVID-19

This theoretical framework elaborates the concept of sustainable careers and operationalizes the three indicators (health, happiness, and productivity). When these indicators are ensured over time, it can be said that there is a high person-career fit and the career can be considered as more sustainable. Next to this, the importance of building a sustainable career during the start of a career for a young professional was emphasized. By taking into account the theory of career shocks, it is expected that the effects of COVID-19 may prevent the young professional from working on the sustainability of one's career via the desired way. It may then occur that a deliberate thought process is initiated in which the young professional reviews their current profession, which can result into taking actions to improve the situation. However, these assumptions are almost all theoretical based and are not all empirically examined in great detail yet. These theories serve as a background and help to understand how young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19.

Method

Research design

In order to provide an in-depth understanding of the perceptions that young professionals have towards building a sustainable career during COVID-19, a qualitative study with an explorative approach is applied (Myers, 2013). Since little is known about the subject of sustainable careers in context of COVID-19 it therefore is interesting to unravel people's underlying experiences, emotions, and beliefs (Ritchie et al., 2013).

In this research, the epistemological stand that is used is the interpretivism perspective. This perspective takes the human experience as a central focus point for development of knowledge about the social world they live in (King & Brooks, 2017). In this research the exploration of meaning from the respondents is used to understand socially constructed realities (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

The research aims to gather new insights in order to describe and understand the concept of sustainable careers in its social context. Information is therefore gathered through conducting nine semi-structured interviews with young professionals that started working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity to dive further into the experiences and meanings of the respondents concerning their sustainable careers (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Sample

The respondents in this interview study were selected using purposive sampling (Saunders et al., 2012, Symon & Cassel, 2012). This non-probability sampling technique allows the researcher to choose the respondents based on her own judgement (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Purposive sampling has the advantage of allowing the researcher to select suitable individuals that comply with the desired characteristics. The researcher chose the respondents based on the following characteristics.

Since the subject contains young professionals, based on the definition given in the theoretical framework, the respondents needed to be between the age of 20-30, who started to work at their first job during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 till present) and have a higher vocational education or university-level degree. In this research it is chosen to interview young professionals with an office job in both private and public sector, since this is the type of work that had to face rather similar circumstances due to the COVID-19 restrictions, such as working from home. Due to the relatively small scope of the thesis (nine interviews) it is

interesting to study respondents with rather similar contextual factors because then there is room for a more extensive and in-depth understanding of their experiences in such context. Both men and woman were interviewed to achieve a representative sample.

The use of purposive sampling provided the opportunity to select suitable respondents from the researcher's own professional network (Symon & Cassel, 2012). The respondents were approached via WhatsApp and Linked-In. The young professional was then asked if they wanted to participate in the research. Table 1 shows an overview of the respondents and their main characteristics. Appendix A shows the message that was send to the respondents.

Table 1

Respondents

Respondent	Gender	Age	Education	Sector	Function	Characteristics
1	W	24	HVE*	Private	Consultant Installation Technology	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
2	W	26	HVE	Private	Purchase advisor Military	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
3	M	24	UNI*	Public	Policy advisor Infrastructure	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
4	W	25	HBO	Private	Facility Service Desk Child Care	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
5	W	24	HBO	Private	Facilities Consultant Municipality	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
6	W	27	HBO	Public	Facilities employee Municipality	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
7	M	26	WO	Public	Policy advisor	Had to work from home due to COVID-19

					Public Domain	
8	W	26	HBO	Public	Purchase advisor Media Company	Had to work from home due to COVID-19
9	M	25	WO	Private	Consultant Energy Company	Had to work from home due to COVID-19

*HVE = Higher Vocational Education

*UNI = University

Instruments

This research data is gathered by semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews generate the opportunity to gather rich data, that often cannot be obtained through quantitative surveys. This is due to the fact that more in-depth questions can be asked (Saunders et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow-up and probing questions in order to gain a better understanding of the respondent's viewpoint on a social phenomenon (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In addition, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to alter the questions to some extent and are free to change between respondents (Fylan, 2005). For example, when during an interview new important subjects arise that the researcher initially overlooked, the researcher is then allowed apply the subject to the interview guide so see whether other interviewees experience the same. By this way, all useful data can be gathered because the researcher is not obligated to maintain a fixed set of questions. Individual dialogues throughout the interviews can be enriched by having semi-structured questions, in terms of depth, richness, vividness, and nuance (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Eventually, this has helped to understand the perception that young professionals have towards sustainable careers based on their personal experiences, opinions, and viewpoint.

The interview questions were based on a priori themes (Appendix C) that are derived from the theoretical framework (Bleijenbergh, 2015; Symon & Cassell, 2012). The key themes are (1) their experiences around starting their first job, (2) their experience around their job satisfaction during their first job, (3) their experience around their wellbeing during their first job, (4) and their experience around their productivity during their first job. When asked about

their experience during their first job, questions are aimed at the experience, the importance and whether he or she took action to safeguard the aspect. The complete interview guide is added in Appendix B.

Procedure of data collection

The procedure of the data collection went as follows. First, young professionals that met the sample criteria were searched through the network of the researcher. The suitable respondents were asked if they would want to participate in this research.

Most of the interviews were physical, face to face, with the aim to give the researcher the opportunity to observe the body language of the participant and to experience the atmosphere during the interview. Some interviews were kept online via Teams because the respondent was not able to meet face to face. Teams made it possible to observe the body language of the participant and their atmosphere through camera. Both aspects are important to take into consideration when analysing and interpreting the data (Quartiroli et al., 2017).

All the interviews were held in the home of the participant or from their home via Teams to ensure a confidential environment (Quartiroli et al., 2017).

Before the interview was started, the researcher explained to the participant that confidentiality and anonymity restrictions were taken into account. The respondent was then asked to sign the confidentiality form of the Radboud University (Appendix H). In addition, the participant was asked permission to record the interview.

One of the advantages of recording the interviews is that a detailed and extensive transcript can be conducted afterwards, and no information can be lost. Another advantage of recording the interview is that the focus of the researcher can be aimed at the conversation, this enabled the researcher to ask appropriate follow-up questions when needed.

Furthermore, the main themes and the expected time span of the interview was explained. The interview started with some general questions to make the participant feel at ease. Most interviews had the duration of 30 to 50 minutes. After the interview the respondents were asked if they would like a summary of the transcript send to them to approve in order to increase credibility (Symon & Cassel, 2012). Furthermore, the names of the respondents are replaced with fake names to ensure anonymity. The approved transcripts were used for the coding analyses explained below.

Data analyses

After conducting the interview, the interview was transcribed in the same week. All interviews were transcribed using the tool Transcribe via Word. This tool helped the researcher to efficiently convert the recording material into text without missing any information. Every spoken phrase and silence are written down while transcribing the interviews. Through this approach, the researcher was able to accurately write down what was asked and said, as well as where there were hesitations and silences, as well as moments of laughing. It is important for the researcher to take these behaviours into account when analysing the transcripts (Bleijenberg, 2016). Behaviours can change the meaning behind what is said. For example, when one is being sarcastic or when something is viewed as funny, it can give a different meaning to what is said.

The transcripts were coded and analysed by using the program ATLAS.TI. The program helps the researcher with efficiently coding the transcripts by giving multiple options such as an overview of codes and an option to quickly search for the cited code into the original transcript.

The data analyses what done by use of Template Analyses. Template Analysis is a type of thematic analysis that emphasizes hierarchical coding while balancing a high level of structure in the process of analysing textual data with the possibility to adjust it to the needs of a specific study (Brooks et al., 2015). By using Template Analyses the opportunity raised to use both an inductive and deductive approach when analysing the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The deductive approach allowed the researcher to create operationalized concepts (also known as sensitizing concepts) based on the theoretical framework (Crabtree & Miller, 1992) (Appendix C). The operationalized concepts serve as an analytical starting point for the researcher because they can help to understand and interpret the perceptions of the respondents. Simultaneously, an inductive approach was used during the analysing process, that allowed a data-driven technique that made it possible to add new concepts that derived from the real-life situations that respondents illustrated (Boyatzis, 1998).

Template analyses can be used to analyse the data from interviews by developing a coding template (Symon & Cassel, 2012). The initial template contains priori themes that are derived from the operationalized concepts (Appendix D&E).

During the coding process, the researcher used hierarchical coding (i.e., overarching themes that can be narrowed into more specific themes), parallel coding (i.e., segments of text

that can be classified with more than one code) and integrative themes (i.e., themes that pervade much of the data by crosscutting other clusters) (King, 2012, p. 7).

During the analyses it is possible to alter or add new codes when some important findings cannot be linked to the initial codes (Symon & Cassel, 2012). By taking a systematic and well-structured approach the quotes of the interviews are linked to the codes of the final template. By doing so, a clear overview of the findings could pe presented. Finally, the similarities and differences in the findings were compared and summarized. The final coding scheme together with an explanation of the changed and added codes can be found in Appendix F.

Conducting Template Analyses

During the analyses, the researcher followed the six steps of King and Brooks (2017).

First, the researcher must become familiar with the data that is gathered from the interviews. This was done by transcribing the interviews soon after the interviews were kept so that the researcher could become familiar with the data while the experience of the interview was still clear in the mind.

Secondly, directly after the transcript of the first four interviews was finished, the researcher tried to apply important quotes from the transcript to a-priori themes. The a-priori themes where derived from the operationalized concepts (sensitising concepts) and combined with important quotes from the transcripts. During this process, the researcher could alter the a-priori themes into different themes or add new themes when quotes could not be aligned.

In step three, different themes were aligned into clusters to form a hierarchical structure. In this process the researcher tried to identify how the different themes interacted with each other. The initial clusters that derived from the themes were (1) experience first job, (2) experience job satisfaction, (3) experience wellbeing and (3) experience productivity.

In step four, the initial template was set up (Appendix E). In the initial template the clusters mentioned above combined with their sub-themes where placed.

After the initial template was finished, the researcher put the initial themes into ATLAS.TI and started coding the first four transcripts again together with the remaining six transcripts. The researcher worked systematically through the transcripts and modified the template when necessary. The researcher noticed that not all quotes could be placed under the initial codes. When quotations did not 'fit', modifications were applied to the template.

Finally, in step six, when no alterations were applied to the template, the final version was originated (Appendix F). In the appendix the changes compared to the initial template are explained.

The researcher then tried to interpret the coded data by summarizing the important findings that related to the value towards building a sustainable career. Those findings are captured in the results section below.

Research quality

In order to safeguard the quality of the research, the four quality criteria from Guba and Lincoln (1989) are used. The criteria consist of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In order for a research to be credible it is important that there is a match between the constructed reality of the respondents and the realities that the researcher attributed to them (Symon & Cassell, 2012). To realise this, two actions are taken by the researcher. First, the researcher took notes of the original constructs and the personal development of the constructs during the research. This was done so that the researcher could be aware of the changes in constructs caused by the outcomes of the interviews. Next to this, the researcher used peer debriefing. The emerging outcomes were discussed with the supervisor and students from the thesis cercle. By discussing the outcomes with others combined with the researcher's assumptions, high levels of reflexivity can be achieved (Symon & Cassel, 2012).

In order to safeguard the transferability of the research, the researcher described the research context of the study in detail, as well as the methodology that is used and the outcome of the results. The detailed description helps other researcher to see whether the findings are transferrable and useful in other situations (Symon & Cassel, 2012).

The next assessment criteria, dependability, was safeguarded by using multiple techniques. A detailed demonstration of the methodological changes was captured and made available for examination. Changes and explanation of the interview guide and the coding template are conducted in the therefore assigned appendix. Furthermore, the steps that were used during the analysing process are described above.

Finally, the criterion of confirmability is safeguarded through providing a detailed description of the data collection and analysis process. The researcher made clear how the data is collected and how the results are analysed. By doing so, the researcher made sure the data and outcomes are a result of the context and the respondents, and not the imagination of the

researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Next to this, original quotations from the transcripts are used in the results chapter to ensure authenticity (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

Research ethics

The researcher followed the guidelines of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity to assure research integrity. Honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence, and responsibility are the guiding principles (KNAW et al., 2018). Conducting research requires a high level of research ethics. When researchers do not follow these guidelines, it can lead to questionable research procedures and research misconduct which affect the quality of the research (Pimple, 2002).

Before the interviews, the respondents are explained what the aim of the thesis and the interview is to ensure honesty and transparency. The researcher explained what the questions of the interviews would be about so that the participant could decide whether to participate or not. In addition, the participant is told that the information and names will be kept anomalously and will be used with confidentiality and that there is the possibility to withdrawn from the interview at any time. It is explained to the researcher that the information would only be available of the researcher and the supervisor. Furthermore, the respondents were asked if they were ok with the interview being recorded and they were explained what the benefits where of doing this. After that, the interviewee is asked to sign a consent form before the interview (Appendix H). The researcher also asked if the participant wanted to review the transcripts and the overall results of the thesis.

It was important for the researcher to be honest and transparent about all matters mentioned above in order to gain trust from the participant.

Finally, the literature that was used in the thesis was only used from scientific and academic sources to ensure scrupulousness of the research.

Results

Unforeseen circumstances (career shocks) can trigger a deliberate thought process concerning one's career. For example, when a person's health, happiness or productivity is affected, one can take actions to safeguard these aspects in order to keep a sustainable career. When keeping this in mind, we assume that it is possible that the value has towards building a sustainable career can change over time. Therefore, during the analysing process, the researcher has taken into account that a young professional can go through multiple phases in which multiple contextual factors can change. Different circumstances during each phase can affect the value towards building a sustainable career. This chapter discusses different phases a young professional goes through during their first job. Such as the phase in which they start looking for their first job, the phase in which a deliberate thought process concerning one's career is initiated and the phase in which the young professional takes action to safeguard their happiness, health, and/ or productivity. For each phase, a detailed description of the young professionals' experiences and how these affected their value towards a building a sustainable career is described.

Search for the first job

After the interviewed young professionals had completed their studies, the period arose in which they had to apply for their first job. For all respondents, the transition from being a student to employee fell in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most companies that time had to deal with new restrictions that led to working from home and adapting to online work arrangements. In addition, the effects of COVID-19 led some organizations to initiate a hiring freeze and slow down or stop their hiring processes altogether. This resulted in a few consequences for the young professionals who were searching for their first big job at that time. For example, one young professional described:

> "*That period was terrible, because before I graduated, I saw job vacancies online everywhere. I wanted to be a purchase advisor and there was a huge shortage. So, I thought, that's okay. I'll get a job. And then during COVID-19, April or May, then I thought well, let me call those companies.... Suddenly all of them had a hiring freeze. That was pretty stressful*". (Interview 8, Purchase Advisor, G.1*).

Other young professionals experienced similar circumstances as well:

> "*I had graduated in March 2020 and I finally I started on the first of November 2020. (...) I started applying in February 2020 because I thought, well, maybe I can run*

* Appendix G, Quote 1

through after my study, but then COVID-19 started, the first week of March. During that time, I had two applications running where all of a sudden, they said: "we're going to stop the whole application process because we don't know if we can hire you and how it's going to work out in the future. Whether we can even continue to get profit" (…) That was a stressful period" (Interview 7, Policy Advisor, G.2).

Because there where little job offers during that time, some young professionals felt the insecurity whether they would find a job or not. Most young professionals indicate that they had applied to many vacancies, but it still took a few months before they finally got their first job. A few young professionals even accepted a job that they initially did not desired, just so that they could begin to work. Some young professionals even took the first offer they got just because they could then start to work. Denise describes:

"*Then I went to work at Bol.com for three months because I just had to work somewhere. I did not really like the job, but at a certain point you just want to start, because you don't want a blank space in your resume (…) You don't know how long it will take. You don't know anything at that moment*" (Interview 8, Purchase Advisor G.3).

Due to the small amount of job offers in the market, some of the interviewed young professionals where happy that they finally got a job. At that time, some young professionals were not actively aware if the new job was good for their happiness, health or productivity. After asking whether Nard found it important or not to have a job in which he could be happy, healthy and productive at that phase he responded: *"I wasn't aware at all beforehand, I was happy that I got a job, that that uncertainty was gone, that I found a job after my studies and that I wanted to prove myself"* (Interview 3, Policy Advisor, G.4).

On the in contrast, some young professionals did achieve to find the job they aspired from the beginning. They mention that they also had a hard time finding a job and were glad that they finally found one during that time that was to their likings: "I was a difficult time because I was afraid I could not find a job in time (…) but after a few tries I managed it to find a nice job (…) I was really happy about that" (Interview 9, Consultant, G.5).

What we see here is that in the first stage of their career, the interviewed young professionals had to face a low amount of job offers in the market because of COVID-19. As a result, some young professionals chose a job they did not really like just so that they could start working. Some young professionals indicated that they were not actively aware of the importance of having happiness, health, and productivity in the job. Others did eventually find a job they liked. However, they experienced a hard time finding one as well.

Start deliberate thought process

When the young professionals started working for their new job, new experiences arose. For example, several respondents indicated that they found this period to be accompanied by uncertainty and the pressure to perform.

> *"In the beginning it was very liberating because your studies are finished and you think, I'm finally going to start the working life, but there is also a lot of tension involved… Can I do it? (…) This is a serious job, they will be expecting something from me, there is quite a bit of pressure… I was nervous beforehand but on the other hand I was also very much looking forward to it"* (Interview 3, Policy Advisor, G.6).

Other young professionals had similar opinions: "*It was exciting because you do want to show what you can do, and you hope that you pick up your work quickly. You want to prove yourself despite having no experience. (…) But I did get insecure about that [having no experience]*" (Interview 5, Facilities Consultant, G.7). Denise explained in the interview: "*I was quite insecure and at the same time you are super ambitious. You demand of yourself that you can do things when you've never done them before. Maybe that's also a bit of character, I'm really very strict with myself*" (Interview 8, Purchase Advisor, G.8).

Next to the feeling of excitement, eager to prove themselves, and the pressure to perform in the new job, the young professionals also had to deal with the COVID-19 restrictions which caused even more pressure and insecurities. "*It is tedious that you have a different start than usual. You do not experience everything as it should be. Especially getting to know new colleagues was difficult and getting to know your daily tasks via zoom is not ideal either*" (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.9). She also points out that during the start of the job she had a hard time figuring out how to make an impression: "*when you work at home, you are less visible (…) no one sees what you do. It's all a bit of hidden work. And I find it a bit too much when you want to show that off via zoom. At the office it would be easier*" (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.10). Multiple young professionals indicated that they dealt with the same issue:

> *"[Working from home] makes it difficult to be able to prove myself, because of course you want to show other people that you are doing well and that you can be trusted or that they can rely on you. And that's difficult if it's only through the mail or over the phone (…) you can be busy and work your ass off, but the rest can't see what you're doing… And that also makes it difficult to get to know other colleagues, so you remain in a sort of settling-in phase for a long time... you still feel new, because you haven't seen a lot of people yet. Also, because a lot of things you don't know, because it all goes through the mail and over the phone, and that makes it very difficult. It also took a long*

time before I really felt... I really felt at home at work, and I thought, okay, I have confidence... you don't get confirmation from others, so you don't know if you are doing it right...". (Interview 3, Policy Advisor, G.11).

The distance toward the college's made it hard for the young professional to ask for help when needed: *"That threshold feels much higher to seek help for a question"* (Interview 3, Policy Advisor, G.12). Other young professionals experienced the feeling of a threshold to seek for help as well. Some young professionals mention that it resulted into feelings of insecurity:

"I could sometimes sit at home and think, this did not go well…I did something wrong... And I'm uncertain about that. (...) But in the beginning, because you cannot really build up a bond with colleagues yet because you are at a distance, it is quite difficult to tell them about your insecurity." (Interview 8, Purchase Advisor, G.13).

All the interviewees were asked how each of them experienced their happiness, health and productivity during the first weeks of their first job. When asked about their happiness during that phase, almost all young professionals pointed out that they liked their job because it was challenging and new. *"In the beginning I was satisfied with my work. I had enough challenge and fun"* (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.14). Nard had a similar opinion: *"In general, I was very satisfied with my work in the beginning because I really enjoyed doing it and it felt useful to do. Um… so about the content of my work I was very satisfied"* (Interview 3, Policy Advisor, G.15).

But after a while, some young professionals noticed a negative change in their happiness. For example, multiple young professionals indicated that their work became less challenging. This resulted into the start of a deliberate thought process concerning their career: *"After a month of working at my first assignment. (…) At some point, I did think …okay, you get the hang of it pretty quickly. It's not that difficult. I can imagine that it can get boring pretty quickly"* (Interview 1, Consultant, G.16). Nore had similar experiences *"I think after 3 months or so, I was like, Okay, I feel like I know a lot of the tricks now"* (Interview 6, Facilities Employee, G.17). When they were asked why they did not take action at the time, they mentioned that they both struggled with the fact that it was their first job, and they did not want to nag right away:

"Well…You don't want to start nagging at the beginning or indicate that you don't like it [the job]. I was still thinking, I'm already happy that I have a job and that they give me this opportunity. You think you're just going to carry on and it will get better" (Interview 1, Consultant, G.18)

In contrast, Walter noticed after a month that the project he was placed on was too challenging. In his opinion he was not experienced enough to do the job, and experienced stress because of this. He also experienced a deliberate thought process:

> *"I had a lot of stress from that… Yeah, shit, I noticed it's just not going well (…) I did not dare to say to my employee that I thought I was not good enough…Try saying that [nervous laugh]"* (Interview 7, Policy Advisor, G.19).

He also did not take action at the time*: "I wanted to see whether things would maybe turn out fine"* (Interview 7, Policy Advisor, G.20).

When asked about their health during the beginning of their job, the young professionals explained that COVID-19 negatively influenced their health. For some young professionals, the situation around COVID-19 resulted in feelings of loneliness or/ and insecurity:

> *"My wellbeing, that um, that was kind of low… Especially because you also get into quite a negative mood because of the whole situation. You feel alone, you only have a few social contacts, your whole life consists of working. I do think that if Corona hadn't been there, my wellbeing would have been better, because you just physically go to the office and you can talk with people and you don't have to deal with things on your own, and then the threshold is much lower to talk to your colleagues"*. (Interview 1, Consultant, G.21).

But what was noticeable is that, again, in the beginning phase, little action was taken to safeguard one's health. The young professionals named multiple reasons for this matter. "*In the beginning covid was just very present and then you just go with the flow because there were also just few resources to take action* [to safeguard health]" (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.22). She later adds: "*all people are in the same situation, right? You're not the only one with that problem. We just do what we must do. And you hold on to the moment everything will go back to normal*" (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.23). Laure experienced similar feelings. She describes:

> *"Um you just want to... [silence] All kinds of things are happening in the world, and you just want to create a certain stability for yourself. That what you do, what you can do, just goes well and you just hold on to that to get through it a little bit, despite all the disappointments of a lockdown. (…) So, I think for me at the time it just wasn't an option [to take big action] and I actually just really wanted to keep going and thought of well… Yeah, you know, there is probably an end to it, that's going to happen, and it'll be okay..."* (Interview 2, Purchase Advisor, G.24).

During the interviews the young professionals were also asked how they experienced their productivity during the beginning phase. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the young professionals had to work from home during that period. It was remarkable that most young professionals did not experience bad productivity (yet) in the beginning of their job and therefore did not take action to safeguard it. One of the reasons for this was because the job was still challenging and new. Some young professionals mentioned that they were motivated which resulted in good productivity. Other young professionals argued that they did have some productive and less productive days, but they accepted it at the time. "*It also has a bit to do with having a balance*" Laure says in the interview. "*I have to say, I haven't been very conscious about that during that period. And ehm… whether I've really done anything about it when I was not being productive? No*" (Interview 2, Purchase Advisor, G.25 & G.26). When she was asked what she meant with having a balance, she explained: "*You cannot always be a hundred precent productive*" (Interview 2, Purchase Advisor, G.27).

All in all, during the beginning (first months until action), the young professionals where motivated and exited to finally start working at their first job. However, because it was their first big job, some young professionals felt the pressure to perform. At the same time, working from home let to feelings of loneliness and insecurity. When asked about their happiness, health and productivity at the time, most young professionals do point out that they notice a small decline. For most young professionals a deliberate thought process concerning their job is then initiated. But at the time, no action was taken to safeguard those aspects. The main reasons were because they felt the urge to proof themselves because it was their first job and some young professionals pointed out that everyone faces COVID-19 at the time, and they therefore did not feel the need to take action. Another mentioned reason for not taking action was because they were okey with having a balance between good and bad days.

Action to safeguard health, happiness, and/ or productivity
Eventually, after some time, most young professionals did take action to safeguard their happiness, health and/or productivity. Most young professionals mention that the reason for taking action was because one of the aspects was affected too much to a point that their daily mood or mental state was negatively affected. A few young professionals also mention that COVID-19 has made them realise more quickly when one of the aspects was affected at the time:

> "*COVID-19 has also made people realize that work was all they had. And if that isn't fun and you don't get any satisfaction from it, you realize that much faster than when*

you have a normal life and go out for a drink with friends in the evening, because then you think: yes, that's where I get my satisfaction from, so it's fine that work isn't fun for a while…" (Interview 7, Policy Advisor, G.28).

Because life at that time consisted of only work, the impact of not having the three aspects in balance was became much greater. Therefore, the young professionals took action faster than normal.

As some young professionals did not find their job challenging enough, their happiness got affected negatively. The young professionals initially did not take action because they did not want to nag in their first job. But after a while, Anna mentions that her happiness got affected to a point in which it affected her motivation. As a result, she started taking small actions: "*I started looking for other tasks to keep myself a little motivated*" (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.29). Some young professionals noticed the same and mention that they eventually took action by asking their employer for help.

One young professional even noticed a complete change in happiness after a couple of months. She mentions that due to the lack of challenge she started to dislike her job. She indicates that, even when she took small actions such as asking for more tasks, she noticed that at a certain point the dislike of the job started to affect her daily mood and health: "*because I actually started crying every morning before work. I just really noticed that I wasn't happy anymore (…) At that point it was time to take action*" (Interview 1, Consultant, G.30). At the time she was approached by a recruiter from another firm and eventually decided to swich jobs. Nore experienced similar circumstances, she as well noticed that her job lacked challenge which eventually affected her happiness and health: "*I wanted to make steps and learn. (…) But there was no challenge. (…) At a certain point, on Sunday night I thought, I have to go to the office tomorrow, I really just don't feel like it*". (Interview 6, Facilities Employee, G.31). She also points out that her happiness, health, and productivity are intertwined with each other: "*you don't experience motivation to do something if you don't like it…. And vice versa as well. If I can't be productive, I experience less job satisfaction*" (Interview 6, Facilities Employee, G.32). She continues saying that she is now also looking for another job in which she hopes to find a bit more challenge.

A few young professionals also took small action to safeguard their health when it affected their daily mood too much. For example, some respondents mentioned that they started to walk outside during the break in order to clear the mind, others searched for distraction outside of work, such as eating with friends or work together via zoom "*to keep it a little bit more fun*" (Interview 4, Facilities Employee, G.33).

There was also a group of young professionals who indicated in the interview that at some point they accepted it when one aspect was not to their liking. For example, Merle indicated that she also dealt with little challenge in her work and that it was too easy for her. She explained that there were some days she did not do much and felt guilty… But after she asked for help and her employer could do nothing for her, she indicated that she accepted it: "*I accepted it and did not feel guilty anymore. I did what I could do and asked for help (...) but when there is no solution, it is not my problem anymore*" (Interview 5, Facilities Consultant, G.34). When she got asked whether she found it important at the time for her job to be challenging she pointed out that she did not mind, because she knew she would be on another project soon due to her consultancy function.

Eventually, all young professionals where asked whether they, at that time during the interview, valued having happiness, health, and productivity in their job. Some young professionals responded that they learned from the benefits to take action to safeguard their happiness, health, and/ or productivity. After Loes took action to safeguard her happiness and health by switching jobs, she admits that she now learned that it is important to safeguard those aspects: "*I am now more quickly aware of what it does to me and that I have to watch out that it doesn't influence me too much, and if so, I will also indicate it more quickly. (…) Which is completely different than before [during the start of the job]*" (Interview 1, Consultant, G.35) Also Walter has noticed the importance to take action: "*As soon as I notice that my job satisfaction, wellbeing or productivity is affected I have now learned that I must take action or seek for help. I would take action sooner*" (Interview 7, Policy Advisor, G. 36). In addition, Nore indicates in the interview that she wants to give extra attention to her happiness, health, and productivity in her new job. She says: "*I think the balance is very important (...) I think it's fine to have to work harder sometimes (...) but not at all costs*" (Interview 6, Facilities Employee, G.37).

All in all, some young professionals did end up taking action to ensure their happiness, health and/or productivity when it was negatively affected. The reason for most young professionals to take action was because their health was too affected to a point where it affected their daily mood. There were also young professionals who took little to no action to ensure their happiness, health and/or productivity. They indicated that they accepted it when one of the aspects was not balanced.

Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to provide an in-depth understanding of how young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19. The findings show that the value a young professional holds depends on what phase he or she is in at the time. Different factors during such phase played an important role in whether the young professional took action to safeguard their sustainable career or not. The findings are discussed below in relation to their contribution to the existing literature.

For all interviewed young professionals, the transition from being a student to employee fell in the early stages of COVID-19. During that phase, the young professionals faced a low amount of job offers by which most young professionals experienced insecurity and stress whether they would find a job or not. Although many vacancies were applied to, for most young professionals it took a while to finally get accepted. This resulted into some young professionals accepting a job that they initially did not really like, just so that they could start with work.

Because of the uncertainty that COVID-19 caused, some young professionals (unconsciously) neglected their own happiness. It is therefore assumed that, at that time, some young professionals did not hold much value towards building a sustainable career. As a result of the uncertainty whether they could get a job or not, they were already happy with the first job that they could get, whether it benefit their health, happiness, or productivity or not. Some young professionals also indicated that, at that time, they were not actively aware of the importance of having happiness, health, and productivity in the job.

New experiences arose for the young professionals when they finally began at their new job. Next to the feeling of excitement, eager to prove themselves, and the pressure to perform in the new job, the young professionals also had to deal with the disruptive and extraordinary restrictions due to COVID-19, which resulted into even more pressure and insecurities. Some young professionals had experienced a hard time working from home. For example, they struggled with figuring out how to make an impression, they experienced a threshold to seek for help, and they experienced insecurities because they got less confirmation whether they were doing a good job or not. These findings are in line with the research of Scott et al. (2021) that the effects of COVID-19 can be troublesome for unfamiliar new employees who start with their job during the pandemic, such as feeling isolated form colleagues and the difficulty of social interaction.

The COVID-19 restrictions caused a decline in the young professionals' happiness, health and/or productivity. As a result, they all experienced the start of a deliberate thought

process concerning their career. These findings further support the study of Akkermans et al. (2018) and De Vos et al (2020), noting that a career shock such as COVID-19 can cause employees to not be able to safeguard their health, happiness, and productivity, which can result into the career being perceived as unsustainable (De Vos et al., 2020). This perception can start a deliberate thought process concerning one's career and review their options due to the fact that they want to maintain a sustainable career.

However, one interesting finding is that, at the time, most young professionals did not take action to safeguard their health, happiness and/or productivity yet. Their reason for this was that they experienced pressure to perform well in their first job and did not want to leave a bad impression. In addition, the young professionals indicated that everyone faced a difficult time during COVID-19, and they just hold on to the thought that the situation would go back to normal. Some young professionals also did not take action because, at the time, they did not have the resources, or they were okey with having a balance between good and bad days.

It is therefore assumed that once the young professionals experienced the start of a deliberate thought process, they did start to value a sustainable career because they considered to safeguard their health, happiness and/or productivity. However, due to the pressures of having a first job combined with the pressures of COVID-19, the young professionals did eventually not take action to safeguard the characteristics. At that time, the pressures may have weighed too much for them to act out.

Nevertheless, when the happiness, health and/or productivity got affected to a point where it negatively affected their daily mood and wellbeing, a majority of the young professionals did take action to safeguard one of the aspects. One young professional indicated that she started to dislike her job to a point where she started crying every morning before work. Another young professional stated that it even affected the fun things she did in life, because she knew she eventually had to work the day after. At that point, it was time to take action.

In the end, almost all young professionals indicate that they do find it important to safeguard their happiness, health and/or productivity when they notice a decline. They point out that they learned that taking action to safeguard the characteristics is important. This indicates that they eventually do value building a sustainable career during their first job that they acquired during COVID-19.

Another interesting finding was that multiple young professionals pointed out that through COVID-19, they recognized more quickly when one of the characteristics was negatively affected. Because work was the only thing they had left at the time, because everything else was shut down, it was easier to notice when one of the characteristics was

declining. For example, when they did not really like the job, they noticed more quickly because work was all they had. They did not have much distraction outside work in which they could get their happiness from. In addition, they mention that they therefore possibly took action faster because of COVID-19. This is an interesting finding because in contrast, COVID-19 was also a reason why some young professionals did not take action in the beginning. It is therefore assumed that COVID-19 is both a retarder and accelerator when it comes to taking action to safeguard one's happiness, health and/or productivity.

The findings also showed that happiness, health, and productivity intertwined with one another. When one was not happy with the job, it affected their motivation and thus their productivity and the other way around. Similar findings emerged in the study of de Vos et al. (2020), in which they show that the different characteristics are intertwined and cannot be analysed separately when considering one's career's sustainability. This could indicate that when one characteristic is targeted by a career shock, that characteristic might influence the others, causing someone to view their career as unsustainable.

The results of this study also indicate that different actions were taken to safeguard one or all the characteristics. A few young professionals took action by switching jobs. Other young professionals only took incremental actions such as attaining more projects to keep the work challenging. There were also still some young professionals who did not take action. They mention that they accepted it when one of the characteristics was not to their likings.

An explanation for the difference in action between the young professionals may be due to their personal characteristics combined with their personal circumstances at the time. Some young professionals who took rather big action, such as changing jobs, where ambitious and had the eager to make steps and learn. When they found out that their current job did not offer the needed resources for them to make steps and learn, they choose to take action. These findings are in line with the study of Akkermans et al. (2021) in which they show that career competencies and employability are crucial elements to take actively charge of one's career. The young professionals show that they find it important to learn and take steps which may indicate that they find it important to build career competencies and employability. Both elements helped the young professionals to take actively charge of their sustainable career.

The young professionals who took incremental actions to safeguard their sustainable career, mostly gave the impression that they did not really mind when one of the characteristics decreased. As long as they experienced a balance between good and bad days. This impression may indicate that those young professionals where less eager to build a sustainable career. The

findings mentioned above are also in line with the study of De Vos et al. (2020), who argued that factors such as personality also play a big role in regarding a career as sustainable.

Limitations and future research

This research has a few limitations. First of all, the research scope only consists of nine interviews. On top of that, the sample contains a rather similar (homogeneous) group of respondents. This limits the findings to only a few experiences of young professionals who had to work from home during COVID-19. However, due to the relatively small scope, studying young professionals with rather similar contextual factors becomes interesting, because there is more room for a more extensive and in-depth understanding of their experiences in a similar context. In addition, in the last interviews no new information was observed so the researcher concluded data saturation (Symon & Cassel, 2012).

However, in a crisis such as COVID-19, different people can experience different contextual impacts. Those different context factors can explain the behaviour of the person (Johns, 2006). Therefore, it is recommended for future research to dive further into the experiences of young professionals in different contexts, regarding their value towards building a sustainable career. For example, other young professionals who did go to office may have experienced the importance of a sustainable career differently, since they possibly did not experience social isolation and therefore may not felt the threshold to seek for help.

Second, in the initial invite text that was used to ask the first three respondents for participation, the subject of sustainable careers was named. The researcher soon realised that the explanation of the subject could result into biased respondents, because they could become familiar with the subject in advance, and, for example, notice beforehand that it is important to build a sustainable career. As a result, the first three respondents could have had a bias about the subjects and therefore the sincerity of the answers could be questioned. The researcher changed the invite texts soon after she noticed the mistake (see Appendix A). The subject of the new invite text only entailed how the respondent experienced the start of their first job during COVID-19, to prevent any bias about sustainable careers.

Third, this research only examined the experiences surrounding the characteristics of a sustainable career and not the dimensions (personal, time and context (De Vos et al., 2020)). Some of the findings show that personality and contextual factors play an important role in whether someone perceives their career as sustainable or not. For example, personal characteristics, such as being ambitious, could have benefit a young professional in taking

action to safeguard their sustainable career. In addition, contextual factors, such as the different phases a young professional goes through during their first job, also have impact on the way they perceive the importance of building a sustainable career. It is therefore recommended that future research can dive further into the question how those dimensions played a role in the experiences of young professionals towards the value they hold against building a sustainable career.

Fourth, the use of semi-structured interviews led to the advantage of alterations of the questions when necessary. In addition, the researcher was able to add new questions along the way. During the interviews new questions were added to the interview guide once the researcher noticed that important information could be gathered that way. However, some questions were added after the first four interviews were already taken. Therefore, not all interviewees were asked the same questions. Unfortunately, this resulted into the fact that for some questions, not all information of all the respondents was obtained which could result into the loss of valuable insights. More insights could have been obtained when all questions were asked to all respondents. The questions who were not asked to all participants are mentioned at the additional information of the interview guide (Appendix B).

Finally, up till now, limited quantitative research has been done about the subject of young professionals regarding their value towards building a sustainable career. Since this research is qualitative and has a small scope, no statistical conclusions can be made on base of the findings. In order to test whether the findings apply to other young professionals, it is recommended for future research to conduct a quantitative study.

Practical implications

First of all, the findings show that most young professionals experience different pressures during the start of their first job. Some young professionals feel the pressure or the urge to perform because it is their first job, and they don't want to make a bad impression. As a result, some young professionals find it difficult to indicate when they notice a decline in their happiness, health, or productivity. This finding can contribute to the field of HR by giving HR-professionals the awareness about the different pressures a young professional faces during their first job. HR-professionals can make the young professionals feel at ease or apply HR practices in which the importance of indicating bad happiness, health and/ or productivity is emphasized.

Second, the findings show the different implications young professionals experienced due to COVID-19. As a result of having to work from home, some young professionals experienced feelings of loneliness and insecurities. Most young professionals did not dare to indicate to the manager or colleagues when they noticed their happiness, health and/ or productivity declined. They experienced a threshold to ask for help because they did not want to nag at their first job, and they thought that everyone dealt with the same issues. This finding can contribute to the field of HR by giving HR-professionals the awareness of the implications COVID-19 and working from home caused. Since it is arguable whether the COVID-19 pandemic is almost over, it is important to mention that these findings could also contribute to other similar pandemic contexts in which the young professionals have to work from home. The HR-professionals could help the young professionals feel at ease and lower the threshold to seek for help. In addition, HR-professionals could arrange more social interaction moments via Teams in which the young professionals can share their experiences.

Finally, findings of this research show that most young professionals do find it important to build a sustainable career during their first job. This finding contributes to the HR-field by giving HR-professionals the knowledge that young professionals value building a sustainable career. As a result, managers can apply new HR practices or programs which help the young professionals to indicate when one of the characteristics declines and in turn offer opportunities to improve the characteristics. Furthermore, HR-professionals could use the knowledge in the search for new employees by demonstrating their awareness of the importance of building a sustainable career. This in turn has the potential to make a job more attractive for new employees.

Reflectivity

Lastly, a reflectivity of the researcher on the role she served during the research is required (Haynes, 2012). The different actions and interpretations of the researcher during the research could have had an (unintended) impact on the overall results.

First of all, before the research I had limited knowledge about the subject of sustainable careers. However, since I will be a young professional myself rather soon, I noticed that I was sometimes very interested and emotionally attached to the literature surrounding sustainable careers and the experiences of the young professionals. As a result, my interest sometimes made it hard for me to stay neutral and open minded. I was aware of the importance of building a sustainable career and the importance to safeguard your happiness, health, and productivity.

During the interviews, some respondents may therefore have noticed that my facial impression and interest changed when one of the respondents mentioned that they did not mind when one of the characteristics was declining. They could possibly have noticed my rather astonishing facial expression what could result into them altering their answers into more likable answers. However, I was aware of my bias and tried to keep objective as possible in order to prevent this from happening.

Second, I was aware of my role as a researcher during the interviews. Since a few of the interviews were conducted with people of my own network, I was aware that this could benefit the creation of an open and safe environment. Since the subject could contain sensitive information (such as feelings of insecurity, not being happy), this was beneficial for the researcher because the respondents felt eat ease and shared most information. In contrast, there were also some respondents who I did not know. When I had to conduct an interview with them, I tried to create an open and safe environment by first having a small talk and make some friendly jokes. Once I noticed that the responded felt at ease, I started the interview. In addition, some interviews had to be conducted online. When this was the case, I made sure that the respondent could see me clearly. By this way, the respondent could see my friendly posture and facial expressions what could make them feel at ease more quickly.

Finally, I attempted to maintain an interpretivist view throughout the collecting of the data and the analysis process. In line with this approach, the understanding of the studied subjects and their social context is highly subjective. Therefore, I am aware that my own bias may have had an impact on how the data is collected and analysed. It could be possible that if the research was conducted by another researcher, with a different type of bias, different outcomes of the findings could have been generated. However, I was aware of this matter and therefore tried to elaborate every step I took in the research.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to provide answer to the following question: **How do young professionals value building a sustainable career in their first job that they acquired during COVID-19?**

The findings show that the value a young professional holds towards building a sustainable career depends on what phase he or she is in at the time. Different factors during such phase played an important role in whether the young professional valued building a sustainable career at the time and whether he or she took action to safeguard one or not.

During the search for their first job, most young professionals experienced a low amount of job offers due to COVID-19. As a result, some young professionals (unconsciously) neglected their own happiness and choose the first job offer they could get, just so that they could start to work. At that time, some young professionals did not hold much value towards building a sustainable career.

During the start of their first job, the young professionals experienced the pressure to perform and had to face disruptive and extraordinary restrictions due to COVID-19. As a result, they noticed a decline in their happiness, health and/or productivity, which initiated a deliberate thought process. For some young professionals, the value towards building a sustainable career arose. However, due to the pressures of having a first job combined with the pressures of COVID-19, the young professionals did not take action to safeguard the characteristics at the time.

Nevertheless, once the happiness, health and/or productivity got affected to a point where it negatively affected their daily wellbeing, a majority of the young professionals did take action to safeguard one of the characteristics. At that time, the importance of their wellbeing outweighed the pressures they dealt with surrounding their first job.

All in all, one can say that most young professionals eventually do value building a sustainable career once they experienced the importance of safeguarding their happiness, health, and productivity.

The findings contribute to the relatively new concepts of young professionals combined with career shocks and sustainable careers. However, more research is needed to fully understand the concepts of career shocks and sustainable careers with regard to young professionals.

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Appendix A: Invite text respondent (ENG)

Dear [Name],
My name is Linde Kaspersma and I am a master student in Human Resources Leadership. Currently I am working on my master thesis about the experiences of young professionals and their first job during COVID-19. I saw that you started working at your first job during COVID-19. I am very interested in your experiences during that time. I would therefore like to ask you whether you would want to participate in my research by doing an interview. The interview should be about 40 to 50 minutes and I am able to come visit you at your office/ home, or we can do it online. The findings will be kept anonymously, and you are able to withdraw at any time.

Greetings from Linde
[Since all respondents are Dutch, the text above was translated to Dutch.]

Appendix B: Interview guide (ENG)

Hello, first of all, thank you for wanting to participate in my research. My name is Linde and I am studying the master's degree in SHRL. I have invited you here today to interview you about your career start during COVID-19. I expect this interview to take about 50/60 minutes of your time. I would like to ask if you would be okay if this interview will be recorded. This will allow me to transcribe the interview verbatim which helps for the rigor of my analyses. The findings will be anonymized and used only in my research. You may stop the interview whenever you wish. Before we begin the interview, I would like to ask you to sign the consent form.
The purpose of this thesis is to gain more insights of your experience about the start of your career during COVID-19. First, I will ask you some general questions to get to know you and your work a little better.

1.   General Information
A.   What is your age?
B.   What is your current profession?
D.   How long have you been working at your current job? Did you start during COVID-19?
E.   What daily tasks do you have?

As mentioned before, the aim of the thesis is to get more insights into how a young professional experienced his/her start of career. One possibility is that the career was put under pressure by the effects of COVID-19. This could cause someone to look at his/her career differently and as a result make different choices. I am doing a study on how corona affects a person's career. I am doing this using three characteristics to indicate a career: these are well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. First, I want to ask a few questions about your experience of starting your career during COVID-19.

2.   Experience of early career during COVID-19
A.   How did you experience the first few weeks of your first job?
B.   Was it easy for you to find your first job or not?
C.   What did you think were important characteristics that your first job had to meet?
D.   How did you experience your first job in terms of excitement? Was it exciting or not? What was the reason for that?
E.   Did you experience any pressure to perform or not?
F.   What would you personally like to achieve in your career?
G.   What obstacles did you experience during the first few months? Did you run into anything?
H.   How did you experience the impact of the restrictions due to COVID-19 on your work?
I.   How do you experience having to work from home?
J.   Dit you experience any barriers or not?
Follow-up questions: ask for examples.

Now we are going to look further into the different characteristics of a career, job satisfaction, well-being and productivity, and how you experienced those during the beginning of your career during COVID-19.

3. Experience happiness
The first item is the characteristic happiness, operationalised as work satisfaction.
A.   How did you experience the first few weeks of your job in terms of job satisfaction?
Follow-up questions: asking for examples.
B.   Did you think it was important to be satisfied with your work during the first weeks of your career or did you not think this was important? Why? What were possible barriers?
C.   Did COVID-19/working from home affect this? If so, how?
D.   Did you notice a change in work satisfaction after those few weeks? How?
E.   Did you take any actions to improve your job satisfaction at that time? Why?
F.   What actions did you take to continue to maintain your job satisfaction?

4. Experience health
The second component is the characteristic health, or well-being. This is about how you felt physically and mentally during the first weeks of your first job.
A.   How did you experience the first few weeks of work in terms of your well-being?
Follow-up questions: asking for examples.
B.   Did you think it was important to have good well-being or did you not think it was important during your first weeks on the job? Why? What were possible barriers?
C.   Did COVID-19 have an impact on this? If so, how?
D.   Did you notice a change in your well-being after those weeks? How?
E.   Did you take any actions to maintain/improve your well-being? Why?
F.   What actions did you take to continue to maintain your wellbeing?

5. Experience productiveness
The third and final characteristic is productivity, or performance, the feeling that you can perform and that you are meeting your own and the organization's expectations.
A.   How did you experience the first weeks of your work in terms of productivity?
Follow-up questions: ask for examples.
B.   Did you think it was important to be able to be productive in the first few weeks? Or not?
C.   Did COVID-19 have an impact on this? If so, how?
D.   Did you notice any difference in your productivity after these weeks? How?
E.   Did you take any actions to improve your productivity? Why?
F.   What actions did you take to maintain/improve your performance?

6. Final Questions:
A.   During the first weeks of your career, did you feel it was important to safeguard the 3 characteristics?
B.   How do you feel about that now?
C.   Did you feel like COVID-19 had an impact on this?

This is the end of the interview. I want to thank you very much for your time and energy. Do you have anything else to add or would you like to comment on the topic? If you are interested in the results, I would be happy to hear from you. Thank you very much!

Additional information about the relevance of the questions:
  1. The question about the experience of health, happiness and productivity first is asked about the first weeks of the job, because in the first week the young professionals are assumed to still deal with the pressures of a first job, and it is interesting to see whether this influences their value towards the importance of having happiness, health or productivity. Instead of asking how their value was during the first whole year.

2. To see when the happiness, health, or productivity changes and whether it causes a deliberate thought process, the respondent is asked when he/she notices a change and whether she took action to safeguard one of the aspects and why.
3. After the first three interviews the questions P, Q, R were added because the researcher was interested in the overall opinion of the respondent about the importance of the three characteristics combined. In addition, the researcher wanted to know how COVID-19 influenced their value towards building a sustainable career. The questions were added because the researcher noticed that the respondents retrospective view on the value towards changed through the interview. Sometimes the respondent said that they did not find it important at the time, but later added that they do find it important nowadays. These questions give an overall insight into the experience of the respondent.
4. Since all respondents are Dutch, the text above was translated to Dutch.

Appendix C: Operationalized concepts/ Sensitizing concepts

Table 2: Operationalization of concepts

Concept	Operationalisation
Sustainable careers	"*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*" (Heijden and De Vos, 2015 p. 7). Whether someone is happy, healthy and productive within their career (De Vos et al., 2020).
Happy	Happiness is operationalized as the subjective feelings of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement (De Waal, 2018).
Healthy	Health is operationalized as well-being. which refers to a person's overall heath as well as their mental, psychological, and emotional well-being (Gakidou, 2000, Deaton, 2003).
Productive	Productivity is operationalized by feelings of strong performance and employability (Akkermans et al.,2020).
Persoon-Career fit	The person-career fit is operationalized as the extent to which an individual's career experiences are compatible with his or her needs, values interests, and talents (Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Linnehan, 2000)
Career competencies	Career competencies is operationalized as "*knowledge, skills, and abilities central to career development, which can be influenced and developed by the individual*" Akkermans et al. (2013 (p. 249).
Employability	Employability means that an employee has the necessary competencies that are needed to be able to obtain and retain employment for the market (Dacre et al., 2007; Van Hercke et al., 2014, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006).

Career shock	A career shock is operationalized 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, Seibert and, Mol, 2018)

Appendix D: Priori themes

Table 3: Priori themes

Themes	Related concept
Experience first job	Stressful, Hard to find job, Insecurities, Pressure to perform, difficult to make impression.
Experience Job Satisfaction	Job satisfaction, no job satisfaction, results into start deliberate thought process, action to safeguard job satisfaction.
Experience Wellbeing	Good wellbeing, bad wellbeing, results into start deliberate thought process, action to safeguard wellbeing.
Experience Productivity	Good productivity, bad productivity, results into start deliberate thought process, action to safeguard productivity.

Appendix E: Initial template

1. Experience first job
    1.1. Stressful period
        1.1.1. COVID-19
        1.1.2. Pressures of first job
    1.2. Not stressful period
        1.2.1. Don't experience pressure
        1.2.2. Don't experience stress
    1.3. Effect of start career on importance SC
2. Experience Job Satisfaction beginning
    2.1. Satisfied with job
        2.1.1. Reason to be satisfied with job
    2.2. Not satisfied with job
        2.2.1. No challenge
        2.2.2. Not how you thought it would be
    2.3. Effect of Job satisfaction on importance SC
        2.3.1. Rising importance
        2.3.2. No importance
3. Experience Job Satisfaction turning point/ deliberate thought process
    3.1. Not satisfied with job turning point
        3.1.1. Reason for turning point
    3.2. Action to safeguard job satisfaction
        3.2.1. Find other projects/ more work
        3.2.2. Find distraction outside work
    3.3. No action to safeguard job satisfaction
        3.3.1. Reason for not taking action

       3.4. Effect of deliberate thought process job satisfaction on importance SC
4. Experience wellbeing beginning
    4.1. Affected wellbeing
        4.1.1.Reason for affected wellbeing
    4.2. No affected wellbeing
        4.2.1.Reason..
    4.3. Effect of wellbeing on importance SC
        4.3.1.No bad wellbeing so no importance (yet)
        4.3.2.Bad wellbeing so rising importance
5. Experience bad wellbeing turning point/ start deliberate thought process
    5.1. Bad wellbeing leads to deliberate thought process
        5.1.1.Reason for turning point
    5.2. Action to safeguard wellbeing
        5.2.1.Find other projects/ more work
        5.2.2.Find distraction outside work
        5.2.3.Seek help manager
    5.3. No action to safeguard wellbeing
        5.3.1.Covid
        5.3.2.Not important
    5.4. Effect of wellbeing turning point/ deliberate thought process on importance SC
6. Experience performance beginning
    6.1. Bad performance
        6.1.1.Reason for bad performance
                6.1.1.1.1.   Social isolation
    6.2. Good performance
        6.2.1.Reason for good performance
    6.3. Effect performance on importance SC
        6.3.1.No bad performance so no importance (yet)
        6.3.2.Bad performance so rising importance
7. Performance turningpoint/ start deliberate thought proces
    7.1. Bad performance leads to deliberate thought process
        7.1.1.Reason for turning point
    7.2. Action to safeguard performance
        7.2.1.Find other projects/ more work
        7.2.2.Find distraction outside work
        7.2.3.Seek help manager
    7.3. No action to safeguard performance
        7.3.1.Covid
        7.3.2.Not important
    7.4. Effect of performance turning point/ deliberate thought process on importance SC

Appendix F: Final template

1. Experience first job
    1.1. Stressful period
        1.1.1. Effects COVID-19
        1.1.2. Hard to find job
        1.1.3. Pressures first job
    1.2. Not stressful
2. Experience Job Satisfaction
    2.1. Job satisfaction
        2.1.1. Challenging
        2.1.2. Enjoy the work
    2.2. No Job Satisfaction

2.2.1. Start deliberate thought proces
2.2.2. No action to safeguard
2.2.3. Action to safeguard
2.2.4. Effects of COVID-19
3. Experience Wellbeing
   3.1. Good Wellbeing
   3.2. Bad Wellbeing
      3.2.1. Start deliberate thought process
      3.2.2. No action to safeguard
      3.2.3. Action to safeguard
      3.2.4. Effects of COVID-19
4. Experience Productivity
   4.1. Good productivity
   4.2. Bad productivity
      4.2.1.Start deliberate thought process
      4.2.2. No action to safeguard
      4.2.3. Action to safeguard
      4.2.4. Effects of COVID-19
5. Experience HHP
   5.1. Importance HHP
      5.1.1. Final awareness
      5.1.2. Intertwining
      5.1.3. Overall effect COVID-19
      5.1.4. Balance HHP
   5.2. No Importance HHP

Changes compared to the initial template:
During the coding, I noticed that a lot of codes could be applied to the same quotes. Therefore, I altered most codes into a bigger concept so that it would cover most quotes. The initial template was also too detailed. Therefore, it became difficult to keep an clear overview of the findings. As a result, I made a concise version of the initial template.

Appendix G: Coding scheme

Nr	Quote	Sub-theme	Theme	Cluster
1	*"That period (…) pretty stressful"*	Hard to find job	Stressful period	Experience first job
2	*"I had (…) stressful period"*	Hard to find job	Stressful period	Experience first job
3	*"Then I (…) that moment"*	Hard to find job	Stressful period	Experience first job
4	*"I wasn't (…) prove myself"*	No awareness importance HHP*	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
5	"I was (…) about that"	Hard to find job	Stressful period	Experience first job
6	*"In the (…) to it"*	Pressure first job	Stressful period	Experience first job
7	*"It was (…) about that"*	Pressure first job	Stressful period	Experience first job
8	*"I was (…) with myself"*	Pressure first job	Stressful period	Experience first job
9	*"It is (…) ideal either"*	Effects COVID-19	Stressful period	Experience first job
10	*"When you (…) be easier"*	Effects COVID-19	Stressful period	Experience first job
11	*"Makes it (…) it right..."*	Effects COVID-19	Stressful period	Experience first job

12	*"That threshold (…) a question"*	Effects COVID-19	Stressful period	Experience first job
13	*"I could (…) your insecurity."*	Effects COVID-19	Stressful period	Experience first job
14	*"In the (…) and fun"*	Challenging	Satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
15	*"In general (…) very satisfied"*	Enjoyed the work	Satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
16	*"After (…) pretty quickly"*	Start deliberate thought process	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
17	*"I think (…) tricks now"*	Start deliberate thought process	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
18	*"Well…You (…) get better"*	No action	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
19	*"I had (…) saying that"*	No action	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
20	*"I wanted (…) out fine"*	No action	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
21	"My wellbeing (…) your collegues"	Effects COVID-19	Bad wellbeing	Experience Wellbeing
22	"In the (…) take action"	No action	Bad wellbeing	Experience Wellbeing
23	" All people (…) to normal"	No action	Bad wellbeing	Experience Wellbeing
24	" Um you (…) be okay"	No action	Bad wellbeing	Experience Wellbeing
25	"It also (…) of balance"	Balance HHP	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
26	"I have (…) No"	No action	No productivity	Experience Productivity
27	"You cannot (…) percent productive"	Balance HHP	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
28	"COVID-19 has (…) a while"	Effect COVID-19	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
29	*"I started (…)little motivated"*	Action	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
30	*"because I (…) take action"*	Start deliberate thought proces	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
31	*" I wanted (…) like it "*	Start deliberate thought proces	Not satisfied with job	Experience Job Satisfaction
32	" You don't (…) job satisfaction"	Intertwining HHP	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
33	" To keep (...) more fun"	Action	Bad Wellbeing	Experience Wellbeing
34	" I accepted (…) problem anymore"	No action	Bad Productivity	Experience Productivity
35	"I am (…) than before"	Final awareness	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
36	"As soon (…)action sooner"	Final awareness	Importance HHP	Experience HHP
37	" I think (…) all cost"	Balance HHP	Importance HHP	Experience HHP

Appendix H: Confirm document Radboud Universiteit Copy (NL)

INFORMATIE- EN TOESTEMMINGSFORMULIER DEELNEMERS > 18 JAAR

U bent uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een onderzoeksproject waarin [uitleg onderzoeksproject]. Dit onderzoeksproject wordt uitgevoerd door student Linde Kaspersma van de Radboud Universiteit.

De procedure omvat het worden geïnterviewd. De vragen gaan over de ervaringen tijdens de eerste baan in tijden van COVID-19. Het gesprek duurt ongeveer 40/50minuten. Het interview zal worden opgenomen op een geluidsband. Uw contactgegevens worden veilig opgeslagen door de hoofdonderzoeker.

Vertrouwelijkheid van de onderzoeksgegevens

De onderzoeksgegevens zullen anoniem worden gemaakt/ onder een pseudoniem worden vastgelegd en veilig opgeslagen volgens de richtlijnen voor het beheer van onderzoeksgegevens van de Radboud Universiteit en conform de Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming (AVG). Alle persoonlijke gegevens worden zo snel mogelijk verwijderd. De onderzoekers die betrokken zijn bij dit onderzoek zullen de onderzoeksgegevens gebruiken voor academische publicaties en presentaties. De anonieme gegevens kunnen beschikbaar kommen in het kader van Open Science zodat andere onderzoekers ernaar kunnen verwijzen en hergebruiken. Met het oog op de onderzoeksintegriteit zullen de onderzoeksgegevens voor een periode van ten minste tien jaar toegankelijk zijn voor de academische gemeenschap.

Vrijwillige deelname

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig. Dit betekent dat u uw deelname en toestemming op elk moment tijdens de periode van het verzamelen van gegevens kunt stopzetten en intrekken, zonder opgave van reden. Tot zes weken na deelname kunt u uw onderzoeksgegevens /persoonsgegevens/ contactgegevens laten verwijderen door een verzoek te sturen naar linde.kaspersma@live.nl

Meer informatie

Heeft u vragen naar aanleiding van dit onderzoek, nu of in de toekomst, neem dan contact op met Linde Kaspersma (telefoon: 0637560004]; e-mail: linde.kaspersma@live.nl; adres: [Pijkestraat 55]).

Als u klachten heeft over dit onderzoek, neem dan contact op met de onderzoeker *of*

Neem contact op met de vertrouwenspersonen voor academische integriteit via email: vertrouwenspersonen@ru.nl

Of

Neem contact op met de Commissie Wetenschappelijke Integriteit van de Radboud Universiteit. De secretaris van de commissie is Mr. M. Steenbergen, (m.steenbergen@bjz.ru.nl of 024 3611578) Bestuurlijke & Juridische Zaken.

Meer informatie over de Commissie Wetenschappelijke Integriteit vindt u hier: https://www.ru.nl/over-ons/overradboud/integriteitsbeleid/wetenschappelijke-integriteit//

TOESTEMMING: Selecteer hieronder uw keuze.

Door ondertekening van dit formulier/ door te klikken op de knop 'Akkoord' geeft u aan dat:
• u deze informatie hebt gelezen en begrepen
• u vrijwillig instemt met deelname
• u ten minste 18 jaar bent

Als u niet wilt deelnemen aan het onderzoek, kunt u de deelname weigeren door dit formulier niet te ondertekenen/ door op de knop 'Ik wil niet deelnemen' te klikken.

Datum, naam & handtekening/ Akkoord | Ik wil niet deelnemen