

Viewpoint: COVID-19 and the future of careers

Dr William E. Donald ^{1 2}

¹ *Research Scholar, Organisational Behaviour and HR Management, Ronin Institute, USA*

² *Visiting Academic, Southampton Business School, University of Southampton, UK*

william.donald@ronininstitute.org

<http://ronininstitute.org/research-scholars/william-e-donald/>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William_Donald/research

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/willdonald/>

23rd July 2020

Citation:

W. E. Donald (2020). *Viewpoint: COVID-19 and the future of careers*. Graduate Recruitment Bureau: Brighton, UK. [DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.19306.13760](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.19306.13760)

Viewpoint: COVID-19 and the future of careers

Abstract

This paper articulates the author's viewpoint on COVID-19 and the future of careers by addressing three aims. (1) To understand how the response to COVID-19 might affect the future careers of individuals. (2) To explore how the response to COVID-19 might affect the future of organisations. (3) To ascertain how the response to COVID-19 might affect national governments. This paper advances the field of career theory via the application of a career ecosystem framework to highlight the interconnected and interdependent nature of individuals, organisations, and national governments. Further theoretical contribution emanates from the construction of a COVID-19 Future Careers (CFC) Model, and opportunities for future empirical research. The practical contribution comes through offering individuals, organisations, and national governments insight into how the response to the COVID-19 pandemic might affect them in the post-COVID-19 economy, thus providing an opportunity for these actors to prepare, adapt, mitigate, and benefit from such scenarios.

Keywords – Career Ecosystem, Career Theory, COVID-19, Post-COVID-19 Economy, Sustainable Careers.

Article Type – Viewpoint

Viewpoint: COVID-19 and the future of careers

Introduction

The disease COVID-19 is caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) which forms part of the coronaviruses (CoV) family and was first identified in humans in December 2019 in Wuhan City situated in the Hubei province of China (Chen and Li, 2020). The World Health Organization originally categorised COVID-19 as a public health emergency of international concern on 30th January 2020, before declaring it a pandemic on 11th March 2020, as the epicentre moved from Asia to Europe (World Health Organization, 2020). COVID-19 spreads from one human to another in a similar way to seasonal flu through droplets of infected fluid. However, unlike seasonal flu, a vaccine or herd immunity does not yet exist. COVID-19 also has a higher infection rate and increased risk of mortality, particularly for elderly patients and patients with comorbidities (Chen and Li, 2020). At the time of publication of this article on 23rd July 2020, there have been 15,023,398 confirmed cases and 618,061 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 across 188 countries or regions around the world (Coronavirus Resource Centre, 2020). The actual figures for cases and deaths may be considerably higher due to inconsistencies in testing, measurement, and reporting strategies from country to country, with further increases expected over time.

The first pandemic of the new millennium forced countries and regions to take aggressive public health measures in an attempt to save lives. These strategies predominantly focused on slowing the spread of the virus by managing the number of cases at any given time whereby an individual required hospital treatment – so termed in epidemiology as ‘flattening the curve’ (Specktor, 2020). The measures included varying degrees of lockdown and social distancing, shielding of vulnerable groups, temporary closure of businesses deemed to be providing non-essential services, and unprecedented levels of government spending on organisations and individuals in an attempt to manage the financial implications (UK Cabinet

Office, 2020; Safi, Giuffrida and Farrer, 2020; Specktor, 2020). These public health measures to minimise the loss of life meant that what had begun as a health crisis also became an economic crisis. The 2020 Stock Market Crash, which began on 20th February 2020, saw a downturn in global stock markets of at least 25%, (30% in most G20 nations) by 31st March 2020, with the largest one-week losses since 2008, highest one-day losses since 1987, and fears of a repeat of the 1930s Great Depression (Goldman Sachs, 2020; Partington and Wearden, 2020).

The health, financial, and social implications of the response to COVID-19 are likely to have far-reaching effects potentially lasting for a decade or more. The purpose and original contribution of this paper are therefore to articulate the author's viewpoint on COVID-19 and the future of careers by addressing three aims. (1) To understand how the response to COVID-19 might affect the future careers of individuals. (2) To explore how the response to COVID-19 might affect the future of organisations. (3) To ascertain how the response to COVID-19 might affect national governments.

Originality and value come through helping to advance the field of career theory via the application of a career ecosystem framework (discussed in the next section) to highlight the interconnected and interdependent nature of individuals, organisations, and national governments. The theoretical contribution emanates from the construction of a COVID-19 Future Careers (CFC) Model, and the associated opportunities for future empirical research. The practical contribution comes through offering individuals, organisations, and national governments insight into how the response to the COVID-19 pandemic might affect them in the post-COVID-19 economy, thus providing an opportunity for these actors to prepare, adapt, mitigate, and benefit from such scenarios.

The next section sets out the theoretical framework before the focus then shifts to addressing each of the research aims in turn by drawing on relevant literature to support the

viewpoints of the author. Next, the CFC Model and analysis is presented, before the final segment offers theoretical contributions and ideas for future research, practical contributions, and conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

The viewpoints presented in this article centre around a theoretical framework of career ecosystems. Iansiti and Levien (2004, p.5) introduced the theory of ecosystems to the field of management and defined an ecosystem as “*a system that contains a large number of loosely coupled (interconnected) actors who depend on each other to ensure the overall effectiveness of the system.*” Baruch (2013, p.197) applied the term “*ecosystems*” to the study of careers and contemporary labour markets, drawing on Muller’s previous work highlighting the multiple relationships across the actors. A key characteristic of a career ecosystem as described by Baruch (2015) is having multiple entities – actors, interconnectedness, interactions, and interdependencies.

In this article, the actors within the career ecosystem framework refer to individuals, organisations, and national governments. The linked nature of the interaction between these three actors highlights their interconnectedness and interdependencies. As stated by Georgieva (2020, p.1) in her opening remarks at the joint press conference between the International Monetary Fund and the World Health Organization “*the global health crisis and the health of the global economy are intertwined. Let us implement policies that protect both lives and livelihoods*”. Furthermore, the sustainability of career ecosystems relies on these actors to work collaboratively and to recognize their interrelated dependencies (Donald, Baruch and Ashleigh, 2020; Tams and Arthur, 2011). A failure to step up to this challenge and understand the competing and complementary aspects of such interactions risks the sustainability of careers (Donald, Ashleigh and Baruch, 2018). National governments, organisations, and individuals

thus have a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of businesses and jobs in the post-COVID-19 economy, affected by disruption at the health, economic, and societal levels.

Our focus now moves to address the three aims of this article by exploring the effects of COVID-19 on each of the actors in turn within the framework of a career ecosystem.

COVID-19 Response: Individual Careers

Viewpoint 1 (V1) Sector: Individuals with jobs linked to particular sectors of employment are more at risk of reduced hours, unemployment, or forced career pivots.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (2020) has warned that the COVID-19 pandemic could cut 75 million (23%) of jobs worldwide in the travel and tourism sector with Asia particularly badly hit. These figures are five times the effect of the 2007-2008 financial crisis and are particularly significant given the travel and tourism industry accounted for 10.3% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10% of global jobs at the start of the pandemic. The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) reported in April 2020 that due to the COVID-19 lockdown the economic output of the United Kingdom (UK) had reduced by 31% at a daily cost of £2.4bn. The sectors with the largest financial hits included manufacturing (£500m), construction (£274m), hospitality (£172m), and non-food retail (£156m). Hospitality represented a 79% drop in production and manufacturing a 69% drop in production compared to pre-COVID-19 levels. These figures are typical for countries around the world and although predicted to be temporary, the time taken for organisations to return to their pre-COVID-19 operational levels means that some businesses will fail to survive. The author, therefore, believes it is likely that workers in jobs linked to these sectors will be most at risk of reduced hours or unemployment as organisations either look to become leaner through reduced operating costs or collapse. Given that the economic effects will vary by sector and change over time, it may also be necessary for workers to career pivot temporarily or permanently into

alternative sectors to secure employment as work opportunities become more limited and less secure.

Viewpoint 2 (V2) Gender: Women are more likely to face greater negative effects than men will.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) reported in April 2020 that women were approximately one third more likely than men were to be classified as non-key workers and furloughed during the COVID-19 lockdown. The author, therefore, believes that women will experience greater negative effects than men will in the post-COVID-19 economy, particularly when coupled with the viewpoint expressed in *V1*. Such experiences are likely to widen the existing gender pay gap of the pre-COVID-19 economy (Donald et al., 2018).

Viewpoint 3 (V3) Age: Workers under the age of twenty-five or within five years of retirement are likely to face greater negative effects than the rest of the working-age population.

The IFS report in April 2020 also stated that workers under the age of twenty-five were two-and-a-half times more likely to work in the sectors most affected by COVID-19 compared to those workers aged over twenty-five. They also reported that low earners were seven times more likely to work in affected sectors than higher earners. The author believes that a key risk to individuals under twenty-five is that they lose their job and end up unemployed or take alternative employment opportunities at lower wages through necessity, thus trapping them in low-income jobs for a longer period than in the pre-COVID-19 economy.

The other vulnerable group of working-age include those within five years of their planned retirement date. The downturn in global stock markets of at least 25%, (30% in most G20 nations) between 20th February 2020 and 31st March 2020 has significantly reduced the value of pension pots held by individuals, at least in the short-medium term (Goldman Sachs, 2020; Partington and Wearden, 2020). Therefore, it would seem reasonable to assume that

many of these individuals will now have to delay their retirement and offset these pandemic-related losses through additional earnings and pension contributions, and by providing time for markets to recover some or all of their pension pot deficits.

Viewpoint 4 (V4) Household Income: The majority of individuals are likely to see their incomes either reduce, be frozen, or rise at a slower rate, and tax rises are likely to exacerbate these negative effects on household income.

The International Monetary Fund (2020) project 170 countries to experience negative growth per capita in 2020 due to the global economic effect of COVID-19, representing the first time since the 1930s Great Depression that advanced and developing economies both fall into recession simultaneously. They also project the global GDP to shrink during 2020-2021 by 3%, equivalent to £7.2 trillion. Deutsche Bank (2020) predicts GDP to fall in 2020 in the United States of America (USA) by 4.2%, in the UK by 6.5%, and in the Euro Area by 6.9%. The Banque De France (2020) reported the worst contraction in the French economy since 1945 as GDP shrunk by 6% in the first three months of 2020. Furthermore, in the USA, more than twenty million people filed for unemployment in four weeks between 19th March 2020 and 16th April 2020, compared to nine million people across the entire 2007-2008 financial crisis (Department of Labor, 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2020).

The author believes that these significant effects to national and global economies will result in the majority of workers seeing their incomes either reduce, be frozen, or rise at a slower rate in the post-COVID-19 economy as organisations seek to reduce operational costs or collapse. This is particularly likely to affect the individuals (and therefore their wider household incomes) previously identified as working within specific sectors (VI), as women (V2), or under the age of twenty-five (V3). Exceptions to this general trend may include previously underpaid key workers who provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic and are now more valued and better compensated, as well as workers in

predominantly online industries (e.g. digital services, e-commerce) who benefit from increased demand and sales revenue due to the collapse of independent and high street retailers. Furthermore, national governments will need to increase taxation if they are to manage national debt as a proportion of GDP, which will further reduce the disposable income of many households, evidencing the interlinked and interdependent nature of the actors within the career ecosystem.

Viewpoint 5 (V5): Work-Life Balance: Individuals are likely to have a greater desire for work-life balance with a particular focus on flexible working arrangements, life-long learning, and healthy lifestyle choices.

In early April 2020, a third of the global population was under some form of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaplan, Frias, and McFall-Johnsen, 2020). Examples of countries with some of the strictest measures included China, Columbia, Egypt, India, Italy, Jordan, and South Africa. Where feasible, organisations asked individuals to work from home, many having not done so before. Anecdotally, a small sample of around fifty people on the networking website LinkedIn who had not previously worked from home reported positive experiences of these flexible working arrangements, in keeping with previous findings in career theory literature (e.g. Burke, Page, and Cooper, 2015; Donald et al., 2020). In particular, they described how not having to commute to work resulted in more time to spend with family, as well as facilitating healthier life choices such as exercising, cooking, or sleeping. Furthermore, people felt more focused, more productive, and spent more time reading books, listening to podcasts, or undertaking forms of life-long learning, which according to Vanhercke et al. (2015) and Donald et al. (2020) can offer a mechanism for career sustainability within a knowledge-based economy. The author's viewpoint is that during the COVID-19 lockdown, individuals will have the opportunity to reflect on the toll that long daily commutes and working hours take on themselves and on their dependents. The outcome will be a greater

desire for work-life balance with a particular focus on flexible working arrangements, life-long learning, and healthy lifestyle choices. However, a global recession leading to high levels of unemployment, increased competition for jobs, and reduced household incomes (V4) may limit the number of people able to act on such desires.

COVID-19 Response: Organisations

Viewpoint 6 (V6) Business Culture: Organisations that balance the competing aspects of profit, ethics, and compassion in their business culture are more likely to survive and thrive in the post-COVID-19 economy.

Capitalism and globalisation in the pre-COVID-19 economy led to many benefits for organisations and for the communities in which they operate. However, the COVID-19 pandemic shone a spotlight on the significant inequalities in society leading to criticism by employees, the public, and the media of organisations they considered to have prioritised profit over ethics or compassion. This led to several policy U-turns. For example, Premier League football clubs backtracked on decisions to use the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to furlough backroom staff (de Menezes, 2020) and Waitrose revoked a policy asking staff who missed work due to self-isolation to make up the hours afterwards (Read, 2020). These examples highlight how organisations realised that the optics of acting ethically and with compassion were more important than short-term profit margins. Pedersen and Ritter (2020) ask how the culture and identity of businesses will now change. The author believes that organisations that balance the competing aspects of profit, ethics, and compassion in their business culture are more likely to survive and thrive in the post-COVID-19 economy.

Viewpoint 7 (V7) Hiring & Retaining: Organisations that balance profit, ethics, and compassion and evolve their recruitment processes will thrive by successfully hiring and retaining employees.

Pedersen and Ritter (2020) ask if the COVID-19 pandemic will bring employees of an organisation closer together, or drive them apart. The author agrees with the views of PwC (2020) that organisations who balance profit, ethics, and compassion during the COVID-19 pandemic will retain their existing staff through a sense of loyalty. These organisations will also attract new employees and gain consumer support based on the positive optics and perceptions of their business culture (V6). Equally, organisations considered to have acted inappropriately will experience reduced motivation, reduced productivity, and increased rates of turnover in their staff (Porath and Pearson, 2013). They will also struggle to recruit new staff and risk consumer boycotting threatening their long-term viability.

Organisations that continued to hire during the COVID-19 pandemic had to embrace online interviewing due to social distancing regulations and restrictions on national and international travel. For many businesses, this represented a major shift from the traditional face-to-face interview approach. However, the author believes this offers several opportunities to evolve the recruitment process in the post-COVID-19 economy. For example, online interviews combined with remote working significantly increases the pool of talent available to an organisation and could help to reduce the costs associated with physical office space. Organisations would need to invest in the technology infrastructure to support remote working (V9), but in return could promote a green agenda (V10) and offer work-life balance to new employees as previously discussed (V5). This highlights the interconnected and interdependent interactions identified by Baruch (2015) of the different actors within a career ecosystem.

Viewpoint 8 (V8) Agility & Resilience: Organisations who demonstrate greater agility and resilience are more likely to survive and thrive in the post-COVID-19 economy.

Pedersen and Ritter (2020) and PwC (2020) suggest that in the post-COVID-19 economy organisations will face temporary or sustained cash flow issues, collapses in business demand, regulatory modifications, and increased uncertainty. They also describe a trade-off

between short-term profit and long-term risk reduction with a specific focus on overstretched global supply chains. Organisations that can absorb the short-term costs of diversifying their supply chains will benefit from greater protection and sustainability than organisations who continue to rely on a single supply chain source (Wilson, 2020), as such organisations would likely fail or require government intervention (e.g. bailout) if the single supply chain collapsed.

The author agrees with the views of Wilson (2020) that businesses who have previously embraced innovation, as a necessity to survive rather than as a desire for novelty, will be the organisations most equipped to identify and exploit opportunities in the post-COVID-19 economy. For example, universities (online classes), restaurants (take-away diversification), manufacturers (warehouse optimisation and automation), and retailers (online sales channels). The author believes that organisations who identify the link between business culture (V6) and hiring and retaining talent (V7) will be able to demonstrate greater agility and resilience, enabling them to survive and thrive.

Viewpoint 9 (V9) Technology Infrastructure: Organisations that invest in technology infrastructure capabilities to support critical areas of business, particularly flexible working, will gain a competitive advantage over rival organisations.

Donald et al. (2020) describe the need for organisations to invest in technology infrastructure (e.g. optimisation, automation, remote working capabilities) to remain sustainable and competitive. However, as Venkatraman (1994) notes, organisations must ensure that the application of their technology strategy aligns with their business strategy (V6). As previously discussed, investment in technology infrastructure offering remote working capabilities can promote employee well-being and work-life balance (V5) by maximising career satisfaction and sustainability of employees (Burke et al., 2015; Donald et al., 2020). It can also help the attraction, hiring, and retention of employees (V7) since individuals place ever-greater emphasis on flexible work arrangements (Baruch, Altman and Tung, 2016). The

author agrees with the view of PwC (2020) that technology infrastructure capabilities (e.g. optimisation, automation, and e-commerce) and fraud protection measures, specifically those that enable remote working opportunities, will provide a competitive advantage within the post-COVID-19 economy.

Viewpoint 10 (V10) Green Agenda: Organisations that adopt a green agenda will be more sustainable and gain a competitive advantage over rival organisations.

The World Economic Forum (2019) conducted a global survey to understand the views of individuals in terms of climate change as part of preparations for their Sustainable Development Impact Summit. They found that one in seven people would choose not to fly because of climate change, which increased to 44% when combined with people who would opt for an alternative to flying if provided at the same cost and convenience. Most strikingly, the greatest support for switching to low-carbon alternatives to flying came from business travellers and people aged under twenty-five. The author believes that the COVID-19 pandemic will force organisations to focus on a green agenda if they are to survive. For example, national and international travel restrictions are likely to remain in place for some time allowing organisations to lower their carbon footprint by transitioning away from air travel and promoting remote working. Organisations can then portray their green credentials to the public and environmental lobbyists whilst simultaneously reducing their travel budgets and boosting the productivity of their employees. A green agenda, therefore, can offer remote working linked to work-life balance (V5), and a more environmentally responsible perception of the organisation that may facilitate hiring and retention (V7). Furthermore, organisations that adopt a green agenda will be more sustainable and gain a competitive advantage by demonstrating agility and resilience (V8) and aligning the business culture (V6) with the technology infrastructure (V9).

COVID-19 Response: National Governments

Viewpoint 11 (V11) Welfare Bill: The COVID-19 pandemic will lead to an increased welfare bill for national governments.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw twenty million people file for unemployment in the USA between 19th March 2020 and 16th April 2020, compared to nine million people across the entire 2007-2008 financial crisis (Department of Labor, 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2020). By the end of 2020, the International Monetary Fund (2020) predicts unemployment in the USA of 10.4%, compared to 4.8% in the UK due to state intervention via the CJRS. The author agrees with Kelly (2020) that job losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns are likely to continue especially in the sectors discussed in VI, as organisations collapse or reduce the number of staff that they employ. The individuals hired in March and April of 2020 to address temporary increases in demand during the lockdown phase may be particularly susceptible to redundancy later in the year as organisations respond to shifting consumer behaviour post-lockdown. These factors indicate an increased welfare bill for national governments contributing to greater levels of the national debt as discussed in V12.

Viewpoint 12 (V12) National Debt: The policies required from national governments to reduce the national debt incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic will affect organisations and individuals for at least a decade.

The aggressive public health measures taken by the majority of national governments during the COVID-19 pandemic helped to save lives but also led to predictions of the worst economic crisis since the 1930s Great Depression. For example, the International Monetary Fund (2020) projects 170 countries to experience negative per capita growth in 2020, Australia's first recession since 1991, and China's slowest rate of growth since 1967. They also report that the overall effects and duration are not yet clear. For example, the global economy is set to shrink by 3% in 2020. If the pandemic can be contained by summer 2020 the global

economy could then grow by 5.8% in 2021 but if another wave of COVID-19 occurred in 2021 then the economy could instead shrink by a further 8%.

The author fears that even in a 'best-case' scenario where economic recovery occurs in 2021, the national debts accrued during the pandemic in 2020 will likely take at least a decade to repay. Many countries have already experienced a decade of austerity politics and increased levels of inequality following the 2007-2008 financial crisis. Therefore, it is feasible that the COVID-19 pandemic is either a pre-text for Austerity 2.0 or for tax rises, where either policy leads to lower household disposable incomes (V4) and increased levels of poverty (Oxfam, 2020). Furthermore, the author believes that national debt, as a percentage of GDP, will increase as organisations default on loans provided during the pandemic lockdown phase. National governments will either nationalise such organisations or let them fail, leading to increased unemployment and associated welfare bills (V11). The author also agrees with Gray (2020) that the pre-COVID-19 focus on globalisation and economic expansion will shift post-COVID-19 to agility and resilience (V8) and climate change considerations (V10 and V15) as the world becomes more fragmented and our lives more physically constrained.

Viewpoint 13 (V13) Job Status: Jobs that were previously low paid and undervalued but subsequently deemed essential during the pandemic will be more valued and better paid in the post-COVID-19 economy.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK government issued a list of key workers and non-key workers. What was striking about the key worker list was the barbell curve of pay distribution. For example, supermarket clerks, forklift truck operators, delivery drivers, medical assistants, nurses, and midwives experienced considerably lower incomes than supermarket executives, technology engineers, programmers, medical consultants, and surgeons (Gray, 2020). Furthermore, the UK Government CJRS scheme which enabled non-key workers to stay at home furloughed resulted in some non-key workers receiving higher

incomes than low paid key workers (many on minimum wage) who experienced stress and daily exposure to the risk of COVID-19 infection. The author believes jobs that were previously low paid and undervalued but subsequently deemed essential during the pandemic will be more valued and better paid in the post-COVID-19 economy. The value of these jobs to the society in which we live means that it can no longer be acceptable to rely on 'career as a calling', a 'sense of duty', or 'necessity for employment' as a means to underpay such roles. The public appreciation of the role the workers in these jobs played during the COVID-19 pandemic puts national governments under pressure to ensure that the post-COVID-19 economy addresses the high levels of inequality, in-work poverty, and reliance on food banks, which have been typical experiences for these workers under the Austerity politics of the previous decade.

Viewpoint 14 (V14) Mental Health: National Governments will need to invest in mental health services and actively train, recruit, and retain mental health workers to meet the demand generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on the mental health of individuals around the globe. For example, key workers on the front line witnessing trauma and death from COVID-19 patients on a scale they may never have seen before; supermarket and delivery workers worrying about catching COVID-19 from interactions with the general public; people who lost loved ones to COVID-19 and could not say goodbye or attend funerals; individuals who lost their jobs or experienced financial hardship and turned to alcohol or gambling as coping mechanisms; those who suffered from domestic abuse; as well, as people who struggled with the experience of lockdown and the associated constraints on their daily lives of isolation and temporary loss of freedoms.

Holmes et al. (2020) describe the increased social isolation, loneliness, anxiety, stress, and an economic downturn as a perfect storm to harm people's mental health and wellbeing. They called on national governments to monitor mental health issues including anxiety and

depression to reduce subsequent cases of self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, homelessness, and suicide. Additional research by Ipsos Mori (2020) of 2,250 adults during the COVID-19 lockdown found that 49% were more anxious or depressed, 38% were struggling to sleep, and 22% were facing financial issues. They also reported that 24% of 16-24-year-olds said they were finding lockdown extremely difficult to cope with.

The author, therefore, believes that national governments will need to invest in mental health and domestic abuse services and actively train, recruit, and retain additional workers to meet the demand generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be particularly crucial for countries where such services have lagged behind physical health services before the pandemic meaning that individuals already struggled to access services of sufficient quality.

Viewpoint 15 (V15) Climate Change: National governments that invest in a greener and cleaner economy post the COVID-19 pandemic will experience more sustainable and longer-term benefits than those who do not.

The Royal Society of Arts (2020) found that of 4,343 adults surveyed online in the UK, 51% had noticed cleaner air and 27% had noticed more wildlife since the lockdown. The International Energy Agency (2020) concurred that short-term falls in CO₂ had occurred, however, they caution that the COVID-19 pandemic could be a longer-term threat to climate action and renewable energy investment if national governments divert resources during a recession.

The author believes that climate change poses a significant threat to global economies and the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity for national governments to re-model their economies as a mechanism for job creation and to offer some protection to wider society against Austerity 2.0. National governments that invest in a greener and cleaner economy post the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. research and development, infrastructure, technology) will experience sustainable and longer-term benefits than those who do not. For example,

investment and subsidies in public transport, electric cars, cleaner energy, and recycling. National governments should also invest in the provision of reliable fibre broadband connections across the UK as this can enable more workers to gain the work-life balance (V5) associated benefits of remote working and help to reduce carbon emissions and operational costs (e.g. office space) for organisations (V10).

COVID-19 Future Careers (CFC) Model and Analysis

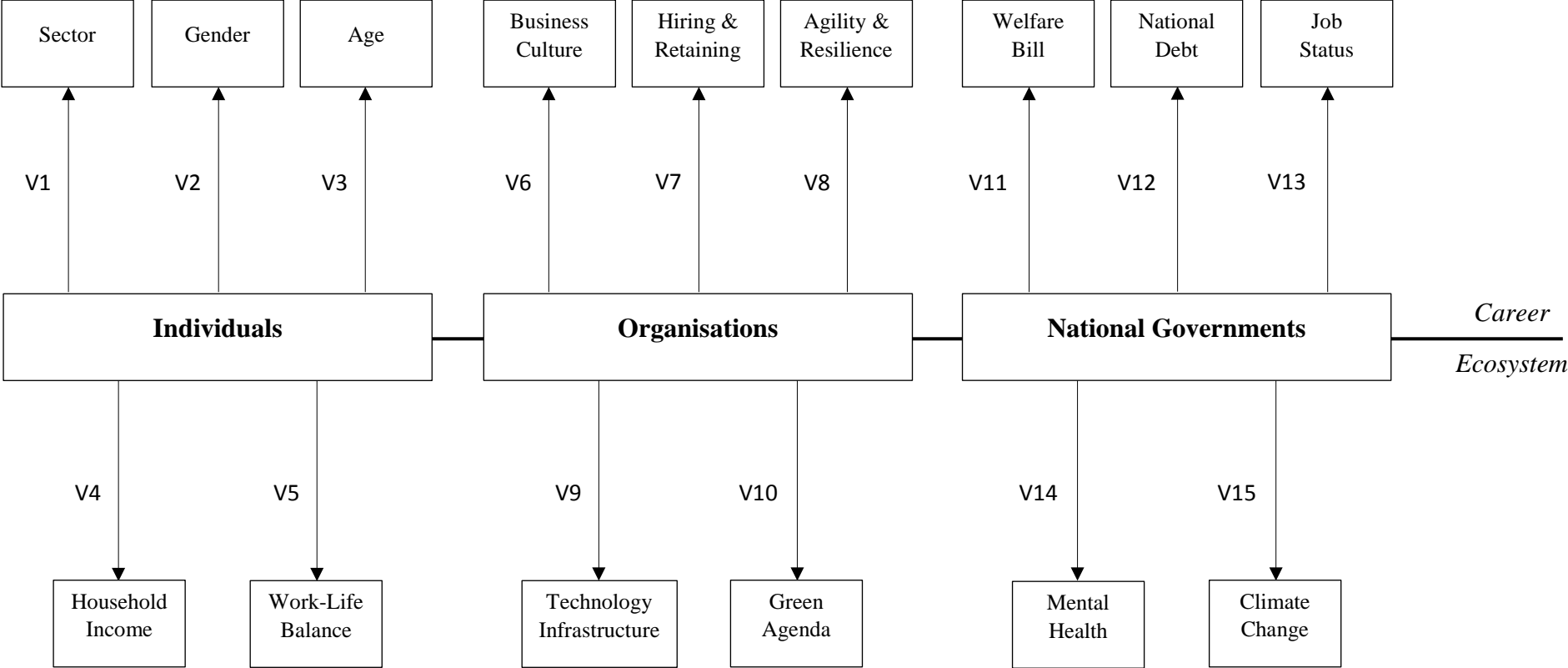
This article has now addressed the three aims set out in the introduction. (1) To understand how the response to COVID-19 might affect the future careers of individuals (V1-V5). (2) To explore how the response to COVID-19 might affect the future of organisations (V6-V10). (3) To ascertain how the response to COVID-19 might affect national governments (V11-V15). Figure I offers a new COVID-19 Future Careers (CFC) Model that draws together the fifteen viewpoints.

Figure I (next page)

The COVID-19 pandemic offers a turning point in history whereby the post-COVID-19 economy characterised by reduced inequality (V1, V2, V3, V4, V11, and V13), improved mental health (V14), greater work-life balance (V5), and mitigating the effects of climate change (V10 and V15), provides an alternative to the non-sustainable economic expansion of the pre-COVID-19 economy (Gray, 2020). There appears to be public support for such change as a survey of 4,343 adults in the UK found that 85% wanted to see at least some of the personal and social changes experienced during lockdown to continue afterwards and only 9% wanted a complete return to a pre-COVID-19 society (Royal Society of Arts, 2020). The survey also found that 40% of adults felt a stronger sense of community and 39% had more contact time with family during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The author believes that individuals (V1-V5), organisations (V6-V10), and national governments (V11-V15) will need to recognise their interconnectedness, interactions, and

Figure I. COVID-19 Future Careers (CFC) Model



interdependencies as the actors within a career ecosystem in the post-COVID-19 economy (Baruch, 2015). For example, the cumulative effects of the sector of work (V1), gender (V2), and age (V3) will directly affect household income (V4) for individuals. In turn, this affects national governments in terms of the welfare bill (V11) and national debt (V12) and raises the need to address existing perceptions of job status (V13). It also affects mental health requiring national governments to invest in mental health service (V14) and to train, recruit and retain workers (V7) to meet such demand.

National government policy should strive for a green and clean economy to address the threat of climate change (V15) through investment in infrastructure projects, digital transformation, and research and development to facilitate job creation, enable organisations to survive and thrive, and offer a sustainable alternative to Austerity 2.0. National governments must facilitate organisations to align their business culture (V6), agility and resilience (V8), and technology infrastructure (V9) (Venkatraman, 1994) as part of their green agenda (V10) (Gray, 2020). For example, by offering subsidies to enable diversification or re-shoring of essential supply chains, by investing in reliable fibre broadband connections to facilitate remote working, and by increasing taxes on business-related travel as a mechanism to reduce CO₂ emissions. Moreover, Baruch et al., (2016) found that individuals place ever-greater emphasis on flexible working arrangements and Burke et al. (2015) and Donald et al. (2020) suggest such arrangements can maximise career satisfaction leading to improved work-life balance (V5), enhanced attraction, hiring, and retaining of employees (V7), and result in better performing organisations.

Theoretical Contribution and Future Research

This article offers a new contribution to career theory as at the time of submission there has not been a peer-reviewed publication in this field looking at COVID-19 and the future of careers. Additionally, this article further develops careers ecosystems theory (Baruch, 2015;

2013) by building on the work of Donald et al. (2020) who applied career ecosystems as a theoretical framework for sustainable graduate careers. Further theoretical contribution emanates from the development of fifteen viewpoints and the construction of a CFC Model and three associated opportunities for future research. (1) Empirically test the new CFC Model to identify ways to maximise benefits to all actors within a career ecosystem. (2) Empirically explore how individual attitudes to work and the wider economy has changed pre and post the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular focus on how society rewards and values jobs. (3). Develop case studies of national governments and organisations around the world to identify best practices by comparing and contrasting their different strategies to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, and the effects on careers and the post-COVID-19 economy.

Practical Contribution

The practical contribution of this article comes through offering individuals, organisations, and national governments insight into how the response to the COVID-19 pandemic might affect them in the post-COVID-19 economy, thus providing an opportunity for these actors to prepare, adapt, mitigate, and benefit from such scenarios.

For example, national governments will need to balance economic decisions with compassion for actual people's lived experiences to account for the interlinked nature of the health, social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Society needs to look at individuals who work in jobs that have previously had a low appreciation (e.g. carers) and start to recognise, value, and compensate them appropriately. This approach can help address existing levels of inequality in society, particularly in terms of household income contributions by women and workers under the age of twenty-five. National governments need to invest in mental health services and actively train, recruit and retain workers. They also need to invest in a greener and cleaner economy to support organisations, to generate jobs, and to minimise the effects of Austerity 2.0 and climate change. Organisations need to evolve and utilise

technology to reduce their carbon footprint and enable their workers to work remotely where this is feasible as part of a wider strategy to promote work-life balance and attract, hire, and retain staff.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic was a watershed moment for humanity and the health, financial, and social implications are likely to have far-reaching effects potentially lasting a decade or more. The selfless actions of low-paid key workers on the front line during the pandemic must provide the catalyst for a fairer society and a re-evaluation of the value, contribution, and remuneration of these essential jobs. The fifteen viewpoints and the new CFC model offer the basis for further empirical research in the field of career theory and beyond. In practical terms, this article offers individuals, organisations, and national governments an overview of their interconnected, interactions, and interdependencies as actors within a career ecosystem. The sustainability of future careers in the post-COVID-19 economy relies on collaboration, innovation, and a shared vision across these actors in terms of strategy, particularly to address the impending challenges of Austerity 2.0 and climate change.

References

- Banque De France. (2020, April 8). Macroeconomic Projections France. *Banque De France*. Retrieved from <https://www.banque-france.fr/en/economics/macroeconomic-projections-france>.
- Baruch, Y. (2013). Careers in academe: the academic labour market as an ecosystem, *Career Development International*, 18(2), 196-210. doi:10.1108/CDI-09-2012-0092
- Baruch, Y. (2015). Organizational and labor markets as career ecosystem, In A., De Vos & B. I. J. M. Van der Heijden (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Careers* (pp. 365-380). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Baruch, Y., Altman, Y. & Tung, R. L. (2016). Career mobility in a global era – advances in managing expatriation and reputation, *Academy of Management Annals*, 10(1), 841-849. doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2016.1162013
- Burke, R. J., Page, K. M. & Cooper, C. L. (2015). *Flourishing in Life, Work and Careers: Individual Wellbeing and Career Experiences*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Centre for Economics and Business Research. (2020, April 6), Coronavirus lockdown is costing the British economy £2.4 billion a day, says alarming report. *CEBR*. Retrieved from <https://cebr.com/reports/the-sun-coronavirus-lockdown-is-costing-the-british-economy-2-4billion-a-day-says-alarming-report/>
- Chen, Y. & Li, L. (2020). SARS-CoV-2: virus dynamics and host response. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, (ahead-of-print) doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30235-8.
- Coronavirus Resource Centre. (2020, May 6). Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases from Johns Hopkins University and Medicine Coronavirus Resource. *Johns Hopkins University*. Retrieved from <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

- De Menezes, J. (2020, April 13). Tottenham U-turn on decision to furlough non-playing staff during coronavirus crisis. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/premier-league/tottenham-staff-furlough-coronavirus-premier-league-latest-a9462466.html>
- Department of Labor. (2020, April 8). News Release: COVID-19 Impact on Unemployment Claims. *Department for Labor*. Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/newsreleases/ui-claims/20200592pdf>
- Deutsche Bank. (2020, April 8). European banks in the corona crisis. *Deutsche Bank*. Retrieved from [https://www.dbresearch.com/servlet/reweb2.ReWEB?rwnode=RPS_EN-PROD\\$PROD000000000435632&rwsite=RPS_ENPROD&rwobj=ReDisplay.Start.class&document=PROD000000000506825](https://www.dbresearch.com/servlet/reweb2.ReWEB?rwnode=RPS_EN-PROD$PROD000000000435632&rwsite=RPS_ENPROD&rwobj=ReDisplay.Start.class&document=PROD000000000506825)
- Donald, W. E., Ashleigh, M. & Baruch, Y. (2018). Students' perceptions of education and employability: Facilitating career transition from higher education into the labor market. *Career Development International*, 23(5), 513-540. doi:10.1108/CDI-09-2017-0171
- Donald, W. E., Baruch, Y. & Ashleigh, M. (2020). Striving for sustainable graduate careers: Conceptualization via career ecosystems and the new psychological contract, *Career Development International*, 25(2), 90-110. doi:10.1108/CDI-03-2019-0079
- Georgieva, K. (2020, April 3). Opening Remarks for Joint IMF/WHO press conference. *IMF*. Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/04/03/sp040320-opening-remarks-for-joint-imf-who-press-conference>
- Goldman Sachs. (2020, March 20). Goldman Sachs now says US GDP will shrink 24% next quarter amid the coronavirus pandemic – which would be 2.5 times bigger than any decline in history. *Markets Insider*. Retrieved from <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/us-gdp-drop-record-2q-amid-coronavirus-recession-goldman-sachs-2020-3-1029018308>

Gray, J. (2020, April 1). Why this crisis is a turning point in history. *New Statesman*. Retrieved from <https://www.newstatesman.com/international/2020/04/why-crisis-turning-point-history>

Holmes, E. A. et al. (2020). Multidisciplinary priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action for mental health. *Lancet Psychiatry*. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30168-1.

Iansiti, M. & Levien, R. (2004). Strategy as ecology. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(3), 66-81.

Institute for Fiscal Studies. (2020, April 6). Institute for Fiscal Studies Briefing Note. *IFS*. Retrieved from <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14791>

International Energy Agency. (2020, April 8). COVID-19: Exploring the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global energy markets, energy resilience, and climate change. *IEA*. Retrieved from <https://www.iea.org/topics/covid-19>

International Monetary Fund. (2020, April 9). Worst economic crisis since 1930s depression, IMF says. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52236936>

Ipsos Mori. (2020, April 9). Life under lockdown: coronavirus in the UK. *Ipsos Mori*. Retrieved from <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori-en-uk/life-under-lockdown-coronavirus-uk>

Kaplan, J., Frias, L. & McFall-Johnsen, M. (2020, March 29). A third of the global population is on coronavirus lockdown. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/countries-on-lockdown-coronavirus-italy-2020-3?r=US&IR=T>

Kelly, J. (2020, March 27). Thousands Of New Jobs Are Being Created In Response To The Coronavirus. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2020/03/27/thousands-of-new-jobs-are-being-created-in-response-to-the-coronavirus/amp>

Oxfam. (2020, April 9). Half a billion people could be pushed into poverty by coronavirus, warns Oxfam. *Oxfam Press Releases*. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/half-billion-people-could-be-pushed-poverty-coronavirus-warns-oxfam>

- Partington, R. & Wearden, G. (2020, March 9). Global stock markets post biggest falls since 2008 financial crisis. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/mar/09/global-stock-markets-post-biggest-falls-since-2008-financial-crisis>
- Pedersen, C. L. & Ritter, T. (2020, April 10). Preparing Your Business for a Post-Pandemic World. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2020/04/preparing-your-business-for-a-post-pandemic-world>
- Porath, C. & Pearson, C. (2013, January 1). The price of incivility. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2013/01/the-price-of-incivility>
- PwC. (2020, March 14). Considering the potential business impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. *PwC*. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/publications/covid-19/considering-the-potential-business-impacts-covid-19-outbreak.pdf>
- Read, S. (2020, April 6). Waitrose in U-turn on virus pay policy. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52191147>
- Royal Society of Arts. (2020, April 17). Brits See Cleaner Air, Stronger Social Bonds and Changing Food Habits Amid Lockdown. *ERSA*. Retrieved from <https://www.thersa.org/about-us/media/2019/brits-see-cleaner-air-stronger-social-bonds-and-changing-food-habits-amid-lockdown>
- Safi, M., Giuffrida, A. & Farrer, M. (2020, March 22). Coronavirus: Italy bans any movement inside country as toll nears 5,500. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/22/italian-pm-warns-of-worst-crisis-since-ww2-as-coronavirus-deaths-leap-by-almost-800>
- Specktor, B. (2020, March 16). Coronavirus: What is ‘flattening the curve’ and will it work? *Live Science*. Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/coronavirus-flatten-the-curve.html>

- Tams, S. & Arthur, M. B. (2011). *Career Communities: Examining Learning through the Culture-as-Practice Lens*. International Critical Management Studies 2011, Conference Proceedings, Naples, 1-23.
- UK Cabinet Office. (2020, March 23). Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do. *GOV.UK*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>
- Vanhercke, D., Kirves, K., De Cuyper, N., Verbruggen, M., Forrier, A. & De Witte, H. (2015). Perceived employability and psychological functioning framed by gain and loss cycles, *Career Development International*, 20(2), 179-198.
- Venkatraman, N. (1994). IT-enabled business transformation: from automation to business scope redefinition, *Sloan Management Review*, 35(1), 73-87.
- Wilson, J. (2020, March 30). The economic impact of coronavirus: analysis from Imperial experts. *Imperial University*. Retrieved from <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/196514/the-economic-impact-coronavirus-analysis-from/>
- World Economic Forum. (2019, August 30). 1 in 7 people would choose not to fly because of climate change. *WEF*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/08/1-in-7-people-would-choose-not-to-fly-because-of-climate-change>
- World Health Organization. (2020, March 11). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Pandemic. *WHO*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>
- World Travel and Tourism Council. (2020, April 8). Travel & Tourism Economic Impact from COVID-19: Global Data. *WTTC*. Retrieved from <https://wttc.org/en-gb/Research/Economic-Impact>