JYU DISSERTATIONS 687

Elina Auvinen

# Building Sustainable Careers

## Motivation to Lead as a Resource for Leaders

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

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Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston kasvatustieteiden ja psykologian tiedekunnan suostumuksella
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in building Agora, auditorium 2, on October 6, 2023, at 12 o'clock.

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# ABSTRACT

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In today's intensifying and turbulent working life, employees and organizations highly value ways of supporting careers that promote happiness, health and productivity. This dissertation examined the role of leadership-related motivation (Motivation to Lead, MTL; Chan & Drasgow, 2001) as a personal resource in the sustainable career construction of highly educated Finnish leaders. This was done using both variable- and person-centered methods with cross-sectional, longitudinal, hierarchical, qualitative and quantitative data. In Study I, individual paths to leadership were examined. The results showed that for many leaders context-related and non-agentic as well as person-related and agentic factors lay behind their leader role occupancy. Intrinsic factors for leader role occupancy were associated with both better leader and follower occupational well-being. Context-related factors were associated with poor occupational well-being for both leaders themselves and their followers. Study II examined leadership motivation in more detail, focusing on its dimensionality and associations with career sustainability indicators. The analysis yielded four different MTL profiles. The leaders in these profiles differed in their indicators of career sustainability, i.e., occupational well-being, leadership-related career intentions, and follower assessments. Profiles characterized by high Affective-Identity MTL showed the most favorable outcomes, while those with the lowest AI-MTL or overall MTL were unfavorable for both the leaders themselves and their followers. Study III empirically tested the hypothesis presented in Study II on MTL as a personal resource. The results showed, over a two-year follow-up, that leadership motivation can buffer against burnout when leaders are faced with intensified job planning and career-related demands. MTL is potentially a vital personal resource for leaders in sustaining and/or strengthening their careers. The results of this research may be valuable in efforts to foster leader self-awareness and career management at both the individual and organizational level.

*Keywords*: sustainable career, Motivation to Lead, personal resources, leader career, leadership

# TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

Auvinen, Elina
Kestävää työuraa rakentamassa: Johtamismotivaatio johtajan voimavarana
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Nykypäivän intensiivistyneessä työelämässä on tarpeen tukea sellaisten työurien rakentumista, jotka tuottavat onnellisuutta, terveyttä ja tuottavuutta – niin yksilön, yritysten kuin koko yhteiskunnankin näkökulmasta. Väitöskirjassani tarkasteltiin kestävien työurien rakentumista erityisesti korkeasti koulutettujen johtajien johtamismotivaation (Motivation to Lead; Chan & Drasgow, 2001) näkökulmasta: johtamismotivaation ajateltiin edesauttavan kestävän johtajauran rakentumista. Väitöskirjassa hyödynnetty kyselyaineisto koostui 1031 johtajasta, hierarkkisesta johtaja-alaisaineistosta (242 johtajaa ja heidän yhteensä 990 alaistaan), sekä johtajien seuranta-aineistosta (N= 250). Osatutkimus I tarkasteli yksilöllisiä polkuja johtajuuteen. Tulokset osoittivat, että niin itsestä kumpuavia ja toimijuutta osoittavia syitä kuin myös toimintaympäristöstä kumpuavia ja ei-toimijuuteen liittyviä syitä mainittiin perusteluina nykyisissä johtotehtävissä toimimiselle. Ensiksi mainitut sisäiset syyt olivat yhteydessä parempaan työhyvinvointiin sekä johtajan itsensä että hänen alaistensa kannalta. Toimintaympäristöstä kumpuavat syyt taas yhdistyivät huonompaan työhyvinvointiin. Osatutkimus II tarkasteli johtamismotivaatiota yksityiskohtaisemmin yksilöllisellä tasolla sekä sen yhteyksiä erilaisiin kestävän työuran indikaattoreihin. Henkilökeskeinen tutkimusote toi esille johtajien erot johtamismotivaatiossa: neljä erilaista johtamismotivaatioprofiilia tunnistettiin tutkitusta joukosta. Eri profiilien johtajat erosivat toisistaan työhyvinvoinnissa, johtajuuteen liittyvissä urasuunnitelmissa sekä alaistensa antamissa arvioissa. Osatutkimus III tarkasteli empiirisesti edeltävässä tutkimuksessa esitettyä hypoteesia johtamismotivaatiosta henkilökohtaisena voimavarana. Tässä kaksivuotisessa seurantatutkimuksessa havaittiin, että etenkin sisäsyntyinen ja epäitsekäs johtamismotivaatio suojasivat johtajaa työuupumukselta tilanteessa, jossa johtaja koki intensiivistyneitä oman työn tai uran suunnittelun vaatimuksia. Yhteenvetona todettakoon, että johtamismotivaatiota voidaan pitää lupaavana henkilökohtaisena voimavarana, joka luo ja voi vahvistaa kestävän työuran edellytyksiä. Väitöskirjani tuloksia voidaan soveltaa käytäntöön sekä yksilö- että organisaatiotasolla lisäämään ja edistämään johtajien itsetuntemusta ja uranhallintaa.

*Avainsanat:* kestävä työura, johtamismotivaatio, voimavarat, johtajaura, johtajuus

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Tampere/Karvahaara, July 2023

Elina Auvinen

## LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This dissertation is based on the following original publications:

**I** Auvinen, E., Huhtala, M., Rantanen, J., & Feldt, T. (2021). Drivers or Drifters? The "Who" and "Why" of Leader Role Occupancy—A Mixed-Method Study. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 573924. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.573924

**II** Auvinen, E., Huhtala, M., Kinnunen, U., Tsupari, H., & Feldt, T. (2020). Leader motivation as a building block for sustainable leader careers: The relationship between leadership motivation profiles and leader and follower outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 120*, 103428. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103428

**III** Auvinen, E., Mauno, S., & Feldt, T. (2023). Towards sustainable leader career in intensified working life: personal resources perspective. *Submitted manuscript.*

As the first author of the original publications, I have taken the comments and recommendations of my co-authors into account and contributed to the original publications in following ways: in 1) participation in planning the data collection and collecting the data, 2) planning the study designs independently for all three original publications, 3) implementing the data analyses, and 4) writing the original publications as well as administering their review processes.

## FIGURES



## TABLES

## ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations are presented in the order of appearance.

**VUCA** = Volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous
**BANI** = Brittle, anxious, nonlinear, incomprehensible

**MTL =** Motivation to Lead
**AI-MTL =** Affective-Identity Motivation to Lead
**NC-MTL =** Non-Calculative Motivation to Lead
**SN-MTL =** Social-Normative Motivation to Lead

**LRO =** Leader role occupancy

**COR =** Conservation of Resources (theory)

**IJPDs** = Intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands
**ICPDs** = Intensified career-related planning and decision-making demands

**CFA** = Confirmatory factor analysis
**EPL** = Entrepreneurship, professionalism, leadership

## APPENDICES

# CONTENTS

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Tell me somethin', girl
Are you happy in this modern world?
Or do you need more?
Is there somethin' else you're searchin' for?

- Lyrics from *Shallow*, in the movie *A Star Is Born*

As inhabitants of the modern world, we have all likely observed the increasing tempo of day-to-day existence. The most obvious arena for this societal change, defined by Rosa (2003; 2013) as acceleration, is working life, where it manifests itself in the form of various technological advances. These technological shifts stem from the so-called fourth industrial revolution, which is characterized by the increasing automation and digitalization of work processes, robotization and artificial intelligence (Schwab, 2017). This acceleration in working life poses new challenges and possibilities for the employment and careers in general of working people.

The fourth industrial revolution and the acceleration of change are aspects of our present-day environment, which is often characterized as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA; e.g., Bennett & Lemoine, 2014a; 2014b) or brittle, anxious, nonlinear and incomprehensible (BANI; Cascio, 2020). Both characterizations portray a world – and working life – where experiences of continuity and security are scarce yet still needed. In such an environment, careers have also become more unstable and unpredictable. Contemporary careers have been described as "boundaryless" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; 2001) and "protean" (Hall, Yip, & Doiron, 2018) to differentiate them from traditional organizational careers, which for many were sources of continuity. In current career-building, more emphasis is placed on individual effort to secure a job, create and maintain a professional history, and acquire a set of personal characteristics that ensure one's career continuity (e.g., Hirschi & Koen, 2021).

While full responsibility for career construction is not – and probably never will be (Li et al., 2022) – borne on their own shoulders, it is helpful for individuals to recognize their own strengths, personal resources, and sources of work-related meaning, which are key elements in the construction of a sustainable career.

For leaders, the current situation manifests itself as a dual challenge: while they must deal with the challenges of career self-management just like any other employee, they also face leadership-related duties and responsibilities when navigating their organizations towards survival and success in a VUCA and BANI business environment. It has been suggested that pursuing leadership positions is an increasingly less important career goal: some researchers argue that leadership-related career advancement has lost its attraction (Chudzikowski, 2012; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Sutela & Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014). The combination of societal changes, especially acceleration, and operating in a turbulent, even chaotic environment adds to the increased demands related to individual leadership behavior and leader character (Yukl, 2012). This is affirmed from the perspective of potential future leaders in one Finnish study, which recently revealed that professionals who could obtain a leader role in the future reported leadership-related worries (Auvinen et al., 2022). These worries could potentially create an emotional barrier towards hierarchical career progress and result in avoiding leader positions altogether. At the same time, the need for leadership has not diminished – and probably will not diminish: leadership seems essential for various organizations on different levels and in different forms (e.g., Hodges & Howieson, 2017; Pearce et al., 2008, 2009) as well as for an organization's performance (e.g., Jensen et al., 2020).

Leadership in non-business environment seems not to be an exception to the rule regarding the questions of leadership: for example, the current academic world is also a highly competitive and results-oriented environment with VUCA and BANI features. Leadership in these environments may also have distinctive features: for example, the task of leading academics is often referred to as one of "herding cats", a metaphor which highlights the complexity and difficulty of the task. According to Heilmann (2017; p. 32), "leading a specialist right way can be complicated: specialists want to have a manager, but they do not want to have a manager. Specialists are eager to criticize managers that do not lead them. Alternatively, they do not always want to be led." Therefore, it may not come as a surprise that, especially in academia, leadership positions are not very actively sought (Askling & Stensaker, 2002).

In worst case scenario, the above-presented may lead to leader shortage that has considered equal to severe threats to civilization like nuclear warfare, plague, and ecological catastrophe (Jones, 1998). To prevent such course of events, this dissertation research aimed to shed light on the factors that support construction of sustainable leader careers. The focus was on leadership motivation as a leader's personal resource that could aid sustainable career construction for leaders in both business and non-business work environments. To cover this aim, an extensive and heterogeneous data representing highly educated Finnish

leaders were collected during years 2017-2019 and analyzed in statistical and qualitative manner.

The concept *Motivation to Lead (MTL*; Chan & Drasgow, 2001) was chosen as an operationalization for leadership motivation in the present research. The concept of MTL facilitates exploration of the different reasons (the whys) behind an individual's decision to strive for and function as a leader. More specifically, MTL refers to an individual's willingness to lead others, and it affects their desire to claim a leadership role (Kennedy et al., 2021) and their input and persistence when in that role (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). To support current leaders as well as potential leaders-to-be, it is important to understand leaders' motivations for leadership and consider how to promote lasting and rewarding leadership careers by seeking answers to such questions as "Does every leader share a similar motivation for occupying a leadership position?" and "Does the 'quality of motivation' relate to how leaders' careers unfold?"

As already stated, leadership in today's world appears demanding. Hence, if a potential leader-to-be pursues a career that is demanding not only because of the duties and responsibilities it entails but also because the operating environment is uncertain, that individual should also be given something special in return. Thus, to stay "happy in this modern world", a leader-to-be should be searching for *career sustainability* (De Vos & van der Heijden, 2015; De Vos et al., 2020). Career sustainability refers to a dynamic process in which individual's career develops through the interaction between three different dimensions: individual, context and time. The conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos & van der Heijden, 2015; De Vos et al., 2020) views the individual as an active career actor whose career prospects are influenced by the context (e.g., occupation, organization, family, labor market) and time (e.g., career stage) in which they operate. Ideally, career sustainability can manifest itself as healthy, committed employees who find meaning in their career and perform well in their job.

In this dissertation research, *leader career* is viewed as one dimension of boundaryless careers and a part of individual's subjective career space (Chan et al., 2012; 2020) alongside with two other dimensions; professionalism and entrepreneurship (cf., Kanter, 1989) in contrast to traditional, "bounded" organizational careers. In such conceptualization, an individual's career can be viewed as a vector in three-dimensional subjective career space: for example, a career for an individual holding a leader position in university would represent a vector highlighting professionalism and leadership dimensions of their career in such career space. This paradigm contrasts traditional perspective on "managerial careers", which are associated with organizational form, stability of a career and hierarchical work role transitions (e.g., Gunz, 1989). Such understanding of a leader career as *one aspect* of individual's subjective career space instead of exclusive or competing alternative to other career aspects allows for more holistic perspective towards one's career in general and is beneficial for

career development in today's work environment, which presents us various career role demands and opportunities (Chan et al., 2012; 2020).

Identifying the precursors of leader career sustainability is the overarching theoretical concern of this research. To support future leader careers calls for more information on leader role occupancy in real life, individuals' means and possibilities to make their leadership career more lasting in the current organizational context and the kinds of resources that are helpful in creating and maintaining lasting career as a leader in the face of the multiple demands presented by their working environment. Hirschi (2018) highlights this by stating that to maintain and develop one's career in a world characterized by structural changes in ways of working and technological advances, career management practices that aim at forming and cultivating a sense of meaning, the construction of an identity and eventually providing consolidation across work arrangements and organizational boundaries are crucial.

The main aim of my doctoral dissertation was to examine leadership motivation in the 21st -century career context in relation to sustainable careers. Thus far, leadership and careers in the present century have largely been discussed separately, and study of leadership has focused largely on social influence perspective of leadership theory research, highlighting leader emergence and effectiveness in social contexts. The research aimed to connect the existing literature on MTL and on sustainable careers, as research on leaders' career sustainability remains scarce (for examples of studies, see Lo Presti et al., 2022 and Li et al., 2020). While the topic of leader emergence has received a lot of research attention (e.g., Special Issue in *Frontiers in Psychology*, titled "*What Is Wrong With Leader Emergence?*", 2021) recently, the question of supporting leadership careers after leader emergence is equally important.

Until now, only a few studies have examined leadership career-related phenomena. These include studies on how career communities can support careers for managers (Hennekam et al., 2021), how networks may impact managerial careers (Ekonen & Heilmann, 2021), the factors that either promote or prevent managerial careers (Ekonen & Heilmann, 2015) and how new role requirements stemming from contemporary business realities or changing managerial motivations, such as career self-management, can positively affect managers' experiences of their career opportunities (Laud et al., 2019). The small amount of joint discussion engaged in has centered on the positive aspects of boundaryless and protean careers for those in managerial positions (e.g., Baruch & Vardi, 2016). In contrast, the current research conceptualizes social acceleration (Rosa, 2003; 2013) and the resulting intensification of working life (Kubicek et al., 2015) as challenges for lasting careers within the broader framework of sustainable careers. In the present research, these precursors of sustainable leader careers amid today's career challenges were examined empirically. To the best of my knowledge, such empirical investigation is largely absent in the literature. This research contributes to filling this gap and moving the field forward from the dominant social influence and leader performance perspective in leadership

research to also a *careers perspective*, i.e., how, why and under what circumstances some individuals may build or to sustain leadership as a career.

This study focused on, first, leader role occupancy (LRO) in real life and second, how to support leadership careers in the future. This was done by bringing the voice of leaders themselves into the discussion and examining the reasons leaders gave for occupying their leadership role, and further, the role of MTL behind the LRO. Moreover, the role of MTL as a resource for leader career sustainability was assessed from various perspectives, highlighting the dimensionality of MTL and by using variable- and person-centered methodologies to various kinds of data: cross-sectional, longitudinal, and hierarchical matched leader-follower data. These matched data enabled us to investigate how leader's motivational resources are associated not only with career sustainability indicators related to themselves but also with indicators stemming from their followers' perspective.

In the following sub-sections, I introduce the theoretical model of sustainable careers and show how MTL can be considered as a personal resource for a sustainable leader career. I then introduce the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1998; 2001; 2011) as an ancillary theory to integrate MTL into the theoretical framework of sustainable careers. Finally, I introduce the aims of this dissertation research in detail.

## 1.1 Overview of the components and indicators of sustainable careers

### 1.1.1 Components of sustainable careers

A sustainable career is defined as a career enabling an individual to stay "healthy, productive, happy and employable throughout its course" (Hauw & Greenhaus, 2015, p. 224; Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015, p. 11) while fitting in with the individual's broader life context. The conceptual model of sustainable careers presented by De Vos et al. (2020), which serves as the fundamental theoretical framework used in this research, explains how careers unfold as an interplay of three dimensions: the individual, context, and time (Chudzikowski et al., 2020; De Vos et al., 2020). In the model, an *individual* is seen as an agentic career actor, whose career possibilities are likely to be influenced by and to interact with their specific *context* (e.g., occupation, work group, organization, family, labor market, society) and *time* (e.g., career stage). In this systemic interplay, the generation of new and protection of existing resources are important to ensure career continuity (De Lange et al., 2015; De Vos et al., 2020).

Creating a sustainable career comprises four central processes: *agency, meaning, proactivity,* and *adaptation* (De Vos et al., 2020) that aggregate both the important dimensions of a sustainable career (person, context, time) and motivational processes related to the person's resources. Career sustainability

can be seen as the result of a dynamic process in which the interrelationship between these four focal processes is manifested as good *person-career fit*. To acquire and maintain a good person-career fit, the individual as an agentic subject both proactively shapes their environment and, on the other hand, adapts to external forces stemming from the surrounding context. Person-career fit is closely related to meaningfulness: when individuals are aware of their personal values and needs in (work)life, this important knowledge serves as a guide for their present and further career decisions aimed at maximizing their experience of person-career fit and career meaningfulness. In addition to the exploration of personal values and motivation, an individual's own proactive endeavors as well as adaptation and adjustment to contextual factors contribute to the level of fit experienced, as individual agency and proactivity are in constant interplay with (and affected by) contextual demands and resources, which sometimes also require adaptation and adjustment by the individual to ensure positive career experiences.

### 1.1.2 Indicators of career sustainability: happiness, health, and productivity

The sustainability of a career can be assessed through three indicators: happiness, health, and productivity (De Vos et al., 2020). As an attitudinal component, *happiness* refers to personal satisfaction with one's career and to feelings of subjective career success. The well-being component, *health*, covers both physical and psychological health and well-being. The behavioral component, *productivity,* refers, for example, to performance in one's current job, employability and engagement in extra-role behaviors. All these indicators are susceptible to contextual change and to change in the individual that may occur over time. To determine what is needed to meet these career sustainability criteria will vary depending on the person, their (life) environment and the course of their career.

The empirical research on sustainable careers conducted to date with working-life population is summarized in Table 1. It is comprised of only empirical studies that have relied on the sustainable careers conceptualization by Van der Heijden and De Vos (2015) and De Vos et al. (2020), thus excluding theoretical and conceptual papers, research on student populations and measurement validation studies. Also, articles comprising this dissertation research have been excluded from the Table 1. As can be seen from the Table, great amount of the studies has relied on qualitative research methodology and less on e.g., longitudinal study designs. In addition, some of the studies are also limited to very specific cultural or occupational contexts.

**TABLE 1** Summary of empirical research on sustainable careers.

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argyropoulou, K., Mouratoglou, N., Antoniou, A. S., Mikedaki, K., & Charokopaki, A. (2020). Promoting career counselors' sustainable career development through the group-based life construction dialogue intervention:"Constructing my future purposeful life". *Sustainability, 12*(9), 3645. | Mixed-method intervention study | N= 33 in experimental group, N= 27 in control group | The study results indicate that the intervention improved career counselors' reflexivity and self-awareness, while there is a pronounced need for practical training in contemporary interventions to support their sustainable career development. To work efficiently as a career counselor, the professional needs to construct their own self as a sustainable project in advance to be able to support their clients in their own self construction work and promote their well-being. |
| Bai, B., Li, M., & Lyu, X. (2022). Sustainable career and employability of student leaders in China. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13,* 1033401. | | Qualitative; N= 23 | Based on the findings, the studied student leaders have strong social competence, emotional competence, action competence, responsibility, and resilience which employers value. These competencies are essential to career development in the workplace, and they are considered to be helpful to support student leaders in their adaptation to real work environment quickly and achieving career success. |
| Barthauer, L., Kaucher, P., Spurk, D., & Kauffeld, S. (2020). Burnout and career (un) sustainability: Looking into the Blackbox of burnout triggered career turnover intentions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 117,* 103334. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 385 academic scientists | The results of the study highlight burnout as a risk to sustainable careers, and the role of perceived departmental support as a promising resource toward sustainable careers. Burnout was positively related to career turnover intentions, and both perceived internal marketability and career satisfaction mediated the relationship between burnout and career turnover intentions. No moderation effect of perceived departmental support was found for the direct relationship between burnout and career turnover intentions. Perceived departmental support however moderated the associations of burnout to perceived internal marketability and to career satisfaction. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bozionelos, N., Lin, C. H., & Lee, K. Y. (2020). Enhancing the sustainability of employees' careers through training: The roles of career actors' openness and of supervisor support. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 117*, 103333. | Quasi-experimental process model | Quantitative; N= 334 salespersons | Job performance and employability increased substantially and significantly after the training compared to their pre-training levels. Learning because of the training mediated the relationships of openness to experience and supervisor support resulting in increases in job performance and employability. A substitution effect was found between openness and supervisor support in fostering learning as result of training, and subsequently, increases in job performance and employability. |
| Castro, M. R., Van der Heijden, B., & Henderson, E. L. (2020). Catalysts in career transitions: Academic researchers transitioning into sustainable careers in data science. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 122*, 103479. | | Qualitative; N= 28 early and mid-career STEM researchers | This research identified the career barriers that junior researchers experience in academia and how career catalysts increase their career adaptability, which facilitates a career transition into sustainable careers in data science. The study showed that career sustainability was experienced through the reaffirmation of interviewees' identity as researchers outside of academia in addition to the reconciliation between their previous career expectations and actual career outcomes after transitioning into data science. |
| Chu, W., Liu, H., & Fang, F. (2021). A tale of three excellent Chinese EFL teachers: unpacking teacher professional qualities for their sustainable career trajectories from an ecological perspective. *Sustainability, 13*(12), 6721. | | Qualitative; N= 3 English as Foreign language (EFL) teachers | This study confirmed four interconnected dimensions of excellent EFL teachers' professional qualities. In addition, the studied teachers constructed and developed their professional qualities in dynamic interaction with the complex ecological systems in their own contexts. This study highlights that teachers' sustainable career paths should not only be viewed from a micro perspective (i.e., classroom teaching) but also include social and cultural aspects of their career achievements. |
| Chudzikowski, K., Gustafsson, S., & Tams, S. (2020). Constructing alignment for sustainable careers: Insights from the career narratives of management consultants. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 117,* 103312. | | Qualitative; N= 34 consultants | Four narrative approaches for construing alignment was found for consultans working in a large consulting firm: overidentifying, conforming, creating symbiosis, and moving on. The findings of the study elaborate the sustainable career framework by suggesting alignment narratives as a contextually situated expression of agency as people strive for sustainable careers. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Curado, C., Gonçalves, T., & Ribeiro, C. (2023). Validating Sustainable Career Indicators: A Case Study in a European Energy Company. *Merits, 3*(1), 230-247. | Cross-sectional case study | Quantitative; N= 150 employees from European energy company | The study results support the choice of the selected proxies (job satisfaction, well-being and organizational citizenship behavior) as adequate operationalization of three indicators of sustainable careers: happiness, health and productivity. |
| Dlouhy, K., & Froidevaux, A. (2022). Evolution of professionals' careers upon graduation in STEM and occupational turnover over time: Patterns, diversity characteristics, career success, and self-employment. *Journal of Organizational Behavior,* 1-18. | Longitudinal | Quantitative; N= 1512 STEM graduates | The study results revealed 6 career patterns that can be distinguished into a) continuity (STEM, part-STEM, non-STEM) and b) change (hybrid, boomerang, dropout) sustainable career patterns. Gender differences - but not differences regarding ethnic minority status - was found across career patterns. Professionals who changed from STEM occupations to non-STEM occupations showed higher objective career success and were more often self-employed than professionals with continuous STEM career pattern. |
| Elsey, V., Van der Heijden, B., Smith, M. A., & Moss, M. (2022). Examining the role of employability as a mediator in the relationship between psychological capital and objective career success amongst occupational psychology professionals. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13,* 958226. | Cross-sectional | Quantitaive; N= 135 UK occupational psychology practitioners | This study revealed that the relationship between psychological capital and objective career success was fully mediated by employability. These findings highlight the role of psychological capital as a personal resource in achieving career success as it influences on employability. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gu, Y., Tang, T., Wang, H., & Zhou, W. (2019). Sustainable career development of new urban immigrants: A psychological capital perspective. *Journal Of Cleaner Production, 208*, 1120-1130. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 78 employers with 2 to 9 employee respondents (matched leader-follower data) | Psychological capital has a significant impact on career development, including opportunities and satisfaction, through job performance. Employees' origin region moderated the relationship between psychological capital and job performance. Compared to urban employees, the psychological capital of rural employees had stronger influence on job performance. Origin region also significantly moderated the relationship between job performance and career development opportunities: At the same level of performance, supervisors gave more career development opportunities to rural employees. |
| Hakanen, J. J., Rouvinen, P., & Ylhäinen, I. (2021). The impact of work engagement on future occupational rankings, wages, unemployment, and disability pensions—A register-based study of a representative sample of finnish employees. *Sustainability, 13*(4), 1626. | Longitudinal | Quantitative; N= 4876 Finnish employees | The study findings indicated that after controlling for outcomes at baseline in addition to several covariates, e.g., health, work engagement positively predicted future wages and the probability of rising in occupational rankings, and negatively predicted future unemployment and disability pensions. This study thus highligts the importance of work engagement for objectively measured indicators of sustainable careers. |
| Hennekam, S., de Becdelièvre, P. and Grima, F. (2022), "A sustainable career for interim managers: the role of career communities", *Personnel Review, 51*, (4), 1277-1297. | | Qualitative; N= 31 interim managers | The results of this study highlights career communities as vehicles through which a sustainable career can be created: mutual and reciprocal career support, collective support and learning in career communities are seen as crucial. |
| Herman, C., & Lewis, S. (2012). Entitled to a sustainable career? Motherhood in science, engineering, and technology. *Journal of Social Issues, 68,*(4), 767-789. | | Qualitative; 4 organizations with 8-13 interviews in each, N= 38 | This study examined sustaining careers and motherhood in highly masculinized science, engineering, and technology (SET) sectors. Sense of entitlement to reduce working hours without forfeiting career progression is limited across all the studied organizations. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hirschi, A., Steiner, R., Burmeister, A., & Johnston, C. S. (2020). A whole-life perspective of sustainable careers: The nature and consequences of nonwork orientations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 117*, 103319. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= total of 2679 in five samples | This study considered nonwork roles, and what consequences they may entail for a sustainable career development. Five studies yielded various results that call for more research of non-work orientations and how they relate to a sustainable approach to career development. |
| Karsili, H., Yesiltas, M., & Berberoglu, A. (2021). Workplace flexibility for sustainable career satisfaction: case of handling in the aviation sector in North Cyprus. *Sustainability, 13*(12), 6878. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N=216 handling workers in aviation sector | To summarize the main findings, workplace flexibility, along with goal orientation, positively contributed to the sustainable career satisfaction of employees in the handling sector. |
| Kelly, C. M., Strauss, K., Arnold, J., & Stride, C. (2020). The relationship between leisure activities and psychological resources that support a sustainable career: The role of leisure seriousness and work-leisure similarity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 117,* 103340. | Longitudinal; 7 monthly surveys | Quantitative; N=129 | The time spent on leisure over and above an individual's average was positively related to work-related self-efficacy, but only when the leisure activities were high in seriousness and low in work-leisure similarity, or when they were low in seriousness and high in work-leisure similarity. When leisure activities were high in seriousness and similar to an individual's work, investing time in leisure was negatively associated with self-efficacy. |
| Li, Y., Li, X., Chen, Q., & Xue, Y. (2020). Sustainable Career Development of Newly Hired Executives—A Dynamic Process Perspective. *Sustainability, 12*(8), 3175. | | Qualitative; N= 20 newly hired executives | The analysis indicated three discernible career development stages for newly hired executives: the (1) embeddedness stage, (2) the symbiosis stage, and (3) the cocreation stage. By investigating what makes up a sustainable career for newly hired executives, what affects it, and how it develops across time in the context of entering a new organization, the study contributed to the understanding of career sustainability in a particular worker group and context. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Liu, H., Chu, W., Fang, F., & Elyas, T. (2021). Examining the professional quality of experienced EFL teachers for their sustainable career trajectories in rural areas in China. *Sustainability, 13*(18), 10054. | Mixed-method | Quantitative N= 367 EFL teachers; Quantitative N= 4 | A two-module structure of teachers' professional quality, addressing teacher beliefs and English language pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was found via exploratory factor analysis. This two-module structure is discussed in relation to EFL teachers' sustainable career development. |
| Lo Presti, A., Manuti, A., De Rosa, A., & Elia, A. (2022). Developing a sustainable career through discourse: a qualitative study on a group of Italian project managers. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business, 15*(8), 1-18. | | Qualitative; N= 50 Italian project managers | Based on this study, project managers' career could be a prototypical example of sustainable career, described in terms of four basic constitutive dimensions: time frame, social space, agency and meaning. The results obtained are also discussed in relation to project managers' career management interventions. |
| Lu, H., & Zhang, X. (2023). Developing sustainable career paths as teacher-researchers in a changing academic landscape: A tale of two EFL teachers in China. *Plos One, 18*(5), e0285363. | | Qualitative; N= 2 | Despite the different identity trajectories for the participants, the construction of their teacher-researcher identity facilitated their continuing professional development. It's worth noting that complexities in EFL teachers' identity (re)construction needs to be addressed when seeking to establish sustainable career pathsfor them in a changing academic context. Implications for both EFL academics and university management on how to assist EFL teachers in integrating teacher and researcher identities to achieve sustainable professional development are discussed too. |
| Magnano, P., Santisi, G., Zammitti, A., Zarbo, R., & Di Nuovo, S. (2019). Self-perceived employability and meaningful work: The mediating role of courage on quality of life. *Sustainability, 11*(3), 764. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 660 Italian workers | This study found direct effects of employability and meaningful work on the studied indicators of quality of life, i.e., life satisfaction and flourishing. In addition, indirect effects of employability and meaningful work on the quality of life were found and to be caused by the mediation of courage. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maree, J. G., & Di Fabio, A. (2018). Integrating personal and career counseling to promote sustainable development and change. *Sustainability, 10*(11), 4176. | | Qualitative & quantitative; N=1 | Integrating personal and career counseling helped to address the participant's ingrained personal needs while simultaneously addressing his career counseling needs. This study highlights the need for longitudinal, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research in determining the value and importance of integrated personal and career counselling. |
| Muthuswamy, V. V. (2023). Effects of equal employment opportunities, workplace environment and sustainable career path on Saudi Female employees job performance: Role of organizational culture. *International Journal of Operations and Quantitative Management, 29*(1). | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 312 Saudi-Arabian female healthcare sector workers | Equal employment opportunities, workplace enviroment and sustainable career path had significant associations to jo performance, JP, WE and JP, and SCP and JP were found to have a significant association. Organizational culture moderated the association between equal employment opportunities and job performance but failed to act as moderator between work environment and job performance and sustainable career paths and job performance. |
| Nakra, N., & Kashyap, V. (2023). Linking career adaptability and psychological well-being: A test of moderated mediation model among Indian employees. *Journal of Career Development, (ahead-of-print).* | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 550 Indian employees from banking and IT sectors | The results indicated that career adaptability had significant effect on career sustainability that eventually predicts psychological well-being. Also, the interaction effect of career adaptability and sustainable career climate on psychological well-being via career sustainability was found: it highlighted the significance of unison between individual and contextual factors for important employee outcomes. The indirect effect of career adaptability on psychological well-being through career sustainability is stronger among employees who perceived their organizational career climate as sustainable. |
| Pak, K., Kooij, D., De Lange, A. H., Meyers, M. C., & van Veldhoven, M. (2020). Unravelling the process between career shock and career (un) sustainability: exploring the role of perceived human resource management. *Career Development International, 26*(4), 514-539. | | Qualitative; N= 33 | Career shocks influence career sustainability via a changes in demands or changes in resources: this in turn relate to changes in person–job fit. When person-job–fit diminished, the ability, motivation and opportunity to continue working decreased,and vice versa: when person–job fit improved, the ability, motivation and opportunity to continue working improved as well. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Salminen, H., von Bonsdorff, M. E., McPhee, D., & Heilmann, P. (2022). The extended late career phase–examining senior nursing professionals. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, 17*(2), 183-200. | | Qualitative; N= 22 Finnish senior nursing professionals | Senior nurses' late career narratives differed regarding late career aspirations, constraints, mobility and active agency of one's own career. The identified career narratives revealed that the building blocks of sustainable late careers in the context of extending retirement age are diverse. |
| Šapale, S., Iliško, D., & Badjanova, J. (2021). Sustainable career guidance during the pandemic: Building pathways into a 'new normal'. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education, 12*(1), 140-150. | | Qualitative; N= 10 career counsellors | The studied career guidance experts were trying their best to adjust to a "New Normal" after COVID-19 pandemic and arrange a meaningful communication with the students in addressing their fears, concerns, and inspiring them for action. Some career counselors easily adjusted to a new situation, others needed more<br>time to learn new skills and acquire new digital literacies.The authors proposed a conceptual model of sustainable career guidance based on current research findings. |
| Straub, C., Vinkenburg, C. J., & van Kleef, M. (2020). Career customization: Putting an organizational practice to facilitate sustainable careers to the test. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 117*, 103320. | Multiple wave design | Quantitative; N= 464 professionals | Findings of this study reveal mixed outcomes for Mass Career Customization (MCC): Fathers who customized down reported no loss in career satisfaction; Mothers who customized down reported increased performance evaluations. MCC has also negative career consequences that may relate to flexibility stigma: especially for fathers deviating from the ideal worker norm typical to organization studied. |
| Stuer, D., De Vos, A., Van der Heijden, B. I., & Akkermans, J. (2019). A sustainable career perspective of work ability: the importance of resources across the lifespan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(14), 2572. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 5205 employees working in diverse sectors | All studied resources (autonomy, strenghts use, needs-supply fit, future fit) were significantly and positively related to perceived meaningfulness, but only needs-supply fit was positively related to perceived work ability. Strengths use was also significantly related to perceived work ability, but negatively. The association between future-orientedness of the job and perceived work ability was moderated by age: the association was significant and positive only for middle-aged and senior workers. Perceived meaningfulness of work did not mediate the relationships between resources and perceived work ability. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Suhairom, N., Musta'amal, A. H., Amin, N. F. M., Kamin, Y., & Wahid, N. H. A. (2019). Quality culinary workforce competencies for sustainable career development among culinary professionals. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 81*, 205-220. | | Qualitative; N= 9 culinary professionals | This research aimed to identify quality culinary workforce competencies for sustainable career development. The integration of document analysis with semi-srtuctured interviews resulted in The framework of the Star-Chef Competency Model. |
| Talluri, S. B., Schreurs, B., & Uppal, N. (2022). How do individual factors affect career sustainability? An investigation of cascading effects through the career construction model of adaptation. *Career Development International, 0*(0). | Two-wave survey design | Quantitative; N= 414 Indian professionals | This study highlighted the role of individual factors in career sustainability. Proactive personality indirectly related to proactive career behaviors via career adaptability. Furthermore, career adaptability indirectly related to career sustainability via proactive career behaviors. Also, serial indirect effect model was supported: career adaptability and proactive career behaviors carried the effect of proactive personality on career sustainability. |
| Tong, M., & Gao, T. (2022). For Sustainable Career Development: Framework and Assessment of the Employability of Business English Graduates. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. | Mixed-method | Qualitative N= 25; Quantitative N= 483 | This study states that the demand for business English graduates is increasing, yet there is a skill gap between their educational readiness and the recruitment requirements. Based on the findings fo this mixed-method study, the employability of business English graduates reached the standard of talent training and met the requirements of employers. There were employability differences regarding the gender, places of origin and educational institutions. |
| Tordera, N., Peiro, J. M., Ayala, Y., Villajos, E., & Truxillo, D. (2020). The lagged influence of organizations' human resources practices on employees' career sustainability: The moderating role of age. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 120*, 103444. | Two-wave survey design | Quantitative; N= 653 employees and their supervisors | This study found interarctions between age and HR practices in their relationships with well-being and performance patterns: performance appraisal, recruitment and selection, security, and exit management were more beneficial to young employees. Contingent pay and a competitive salary were more beneficial to older employees. The findings indicate that HR practices and age together act as antecedents of employees' wellbeing and performance, i.e., a sustainable career potential. |

| | Study design | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| van den Groenendaal, S. M. E., Akkermans, J., Fleisher, C., Kooij, D. T., Poell, R. F., & Freese, C. (2022). A qualitative exploration of solo self-employed workers' career sustainability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 134,* 103692. | | Qualitative; N= 102 solo self-employed workers | This qualitative study identified four career self-management patterns: proactive crafters, adaptive crafters, survivors, and passive balancers. Differences in their career sustainability (i.e., happiness, health, and productivity) was found: Specifically, self-employed workers' happiness was overall sufficient while the level of productivity was mixed, while their health seemed to be most at risk. |
| Van der Heijden, B. I., Houkes, I., Van den Broeck, A., & Czabanowska, K. (2020). "I just can't take it anymore": how specific work characteristics impact younger versus older nurses' health, satisfaction, and commitment. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 762. | Longitudinal | Quantitative; N= 3399 Dutch nurses, N= 3636 Polish nurses | This study found out that working conditions, labor relations, work content, and employment conditions were associated with nurses' health, motivation and career outcomes. Tthe nurses' level of commitment was more determined by meaning of work than by opportunities for development. In addition, psychological support was associated with job satisfaction (and not only with burnout as hypothesized, in both studied contexts). |
| Zhou, W., Pan, Z., Jin, Q., & Feng, Y. (2022). Impact of self-perceived employability on sustainable career development in times of covid-19: Two mediating paths. *Sustainability, 14*(7), 3753. | Cross-sectional | Quantitative; N= 4990 HR practitioners | Self-perceived employability reduced emotional exhaustion and to a larger extent, increases work engagement. |

In the still-developing research on sustainable careers, various concepts have been investigated as indicators of happiness, health and productivity, including quality of life (Magnano et al., 2019), self-efficacy and resilience (Kelly et al., 2020), burnout and career turnout intentions (Barthauer et al., 2020), career development (Li et al., 2020), entrepreneurial career intentions (Kiani et al., 2020), reflexivity, self-awareness, and vision of the future life chapters (Argyropoulou et al., 2020), vocational identity (Castro et al., 2020), and future wages, the probability of rising in occupational rankings, future unemployment and disability pensions (Hakanen et al., 2021), to name a few examples. One recent study (Curado et al., 2023) conceptualized job satisfaction, employee well-being and organizational citizenship behavior as proxies for indicators of happiness, health and productivity, and as the literature of sustainable careers is rapidly evolving, also other operationalizations of these indicators are probable.

From the perspective of my dissertation research, happiness, health and productivity was assessed from various perspectives. As an indicator of *happiness*, this dissertation research investigated leader's leadership-related career intentions, the aim being to capture leaders' satisfaction with their position and their aspirations regarding their career continuity. Designed specifically for the purposes of the broader research project, these measures of career intentions included whether individuals in leadership positions will seek less or more challenging positions as leaders in the future compared to their current position, or whether they intend to resign from their current leadership position altogether. These measures intended to measure leader's satisfaction with the leading position as reflecting their happiness with chosen career.

Leaders' occupational well-being, namely burnout and work engagement, were examined as indicators of *health*. Burnout in the work context is a psychological stress-related syndrome that develops over time as a result of prolonged interpersonal job stressors (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The nature of burnout is considered multidimensional (Alarcon 2011; Koutsimani et al., 2019): the three best-studied dimensions are exhaustion, cynicism and professional inefficacy (or inadequacy; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). Exhaustion refers to feelings of strain and fatigue, while cynicism refers to a distal attitude toward one's work or colleagues and a general loss of interest in one's work. Reduced professional efficacy (or inadequacy) refers to feelings of incompetence at work, a tendency to evaluate one's own input into one's work negatively and reduced work-related productivity or capability (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). Work engagement, on the other hand, is a three-dimensional concept of positive motivational well-being at work that comprises having high mental energy while working (vigor), a sense of significance, pride and inspiration (dedication) and immersion in one's work (absorption) (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006).

Lastly, to describe *productivity*, several follower-rated indicators were studied. Followers' assessments of their own occupational well-being, their leader's leadership behaviors and the quality of the relationship with their leader

were conceptualized as indicators of leader performance. This theoretical perspective, i.e., that how leaders perform their leadership-related duties and how their performance is further manifested in their followers' occupational well-being and other leader-related ratings, is of central importance given that leaders' performance and behaviors are highly relevant to their employees' well-being and to the organization as a whole (e.g., Skakon et al., 2010; Ashford et al., 2018). An important theoretical link between leader performance and the follower ratings suggested in this research could be the leader's motivational resources, as these may affect both the leader's actual performance as a leader and various leadership behaviors. A meta-analytical review has shown some preliminary evidence that leader stress is an antecedent of leader behaviors (Harms et al., 2017). Leader behaviors may then be manifested in several ways: for example, in the quality of social relationships, such as the quality of the leader-member exchange (LMX; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and in the leader's transformational leadership skills, that is, their capacity to inspire, provide a clear vision, initiate structure, and support followers (Bass, 1999).

## 1.2 Challenges for sustainable careers – intensification as a contextual demand

To achieve career sustainability in the form of enhanced happiness, health and productivity during one's career in a specific working-life context, career self-management becomes important (Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). Managing one's career includes behaviors directed towards oneself, one's work context or the career management process itself. All these behaviors deal with applying, maintaining, or developing the resources that are required to navigate one's career, or balancing important resources between life domains. Career management does not appear in a vacuum but rather takes different forms depending on the context in which the individual operates.

The fourth industrial revolution (an umbrella term for changes such as the digitization and automation of work; Schwab, 2017) is thought to be the most important economic and societal trend that will inevitably alter our lives in the near future, from the way we work to how the business and whole societies operate (e.g., Arntz et al., 2016; 2020). It has been stated that the forces of the fourth industrial revolution will shape career choices and career development in the future (Hirschi, 2018). Contemporary working life and various contextual factors typical of it may, however, set boundary conditions within which sustainable careers unfold. In this dissertation research, the intensification of working life, as a representative feature of the fourth industrial revolution, was considered as one such contextual factor and is described in next in more detail.

The intensification of working life has been conceptualized as a multifaceted phenomenon capturing five different dimensions of intensified

demands (e.g., Korunka, et al., 2015; Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; Mauno et al., 2022a; 2022b; Minkkinen et al., 2019; Stenman et al., 2020) that have resulted from societal acceleration (Rosa, 2003; 2013) and major technological advances. According to its original conceptualization by Kubicek et al. (2015), the five dimensions are work intensification (WI), intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands (IJPDs), intensified career-related planning and decision-making demands (ICPDs), intensified knowledge-related learning demands (IKLDs) and intensified skill-related learning demands (ISLDs).

In this dissertation, the main focus is on two intensification stressors that especially relate to career construction: in addition to career management-related requirements, individuals are also coerced into autonomous planning and decision-making on a daily level at work and with respect to the task at hand (Kubicek et al., 2015) in order to perform well in their job, a stressor which may indirectly affect their career. More specifically, *intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands* (IJPDs; Korunka, et al., 2015; Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2022a; Mauno et al., 2019a) refers to increased demands to plan and structure one's work independently, set work goals autonomously, and decide for oneself how to handle one's work-related tasks (Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2020). *Intensified career-related planning and decision-making demands* (ICPDs; Korunka et al., 2015; Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2022a; Mauno et al., 2019a) refers to career self-management demands in the form of an intensified requirement to autonomously plan and manage one's career to maintain and prove one's value as an employee to the current employer and also, more broadly, on the labor market (Kubicek et al., 2015; Pongratz & Voß, 2003).

According to the challenge-hindrance approach to work stressors (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005), job demands or stressors can be divided into *hindrance stressors*, if they evoke a negative belief that accomplishment at work is constrained, which in turn may threaten employee well-being and performance, and *challenge stressors*, if they evoke a positive belief about one's ability to cope with stressors, achievement, and personal development and attaining positive outcomes. In this dissertation, both the intensified job demands studied were conceptualized as hindrance stressors, as they may take an additional toll on employee well-being with respect to either self-reliance (structuring and planning work and tasks without support; IJPDs) or uncertainty about oneself (future career opportunities and personal value in the labor market; ICPDs). Expectations about independent decision-making on a daily basis regarding one's work generally or the task at hand can be seen as an energy-depleting stressor (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). Moreover, maintaining one's value for both internal (own organization) and external (new organization) career prospects via networking and other career-management practices may drain one's resources. Previous studies also support the interpretation of these demands as hindrance stressors rather than challenge stressors (see e.g., Mauno et al., 2023).

From the perspective of sustainable careers, these intensified demands may present a risk for an individual's well-being and hence also a risk for career sustainability. In general, IJPDs have been associated with increased risk for job burnout (Huhtala et al., 2021; Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2019b), decreased patient satisfaction (poor performance; Huhtala et al., 2021) and job satisfaction (Paškvan et al., 2016). There is also evidence to suggest that heightened pressure to continuously improve one's capacities, psychological capital and networks in order to secure one's employment and attractiveness in the labor market, ICPDs, can also be seen as stressful demand (Pongratz & Voß, 2003) and it has been linked with both job burnout and job dissatisfaction (Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2019b).

For leadership careers specifically, there seems to be a research gap in the literature on the issue of how leaders experience intensified career-management demands. Some studies suggest that despite the positive aspects of autonomy and latitude in decision-making on well-being (e.g., Bakker et al., 2010; Stansfeld & Candy, 2006) that are especially characteristic of leader roles, higher amounts of decisions that leaders have to take daily is associated with higher emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions (Knudsen et al., 2009). The present research thus aimed at shedding light also on leaders' experiences of intensified demands in today's working life.

Although some individuals may view the above-mentioned demands as positive stressors that offer a challenge, it cannot be denied that demands arising from the intensification of working life nevertheless negatively challenge the possibilities of creating a sustainable career in various fields irrespective of the individual's work role (McDonald & Hite, 2018). In contrast to the view that certain aspects of today's careers, such as boundaryless and protean careers, may appear non-beneficial for an employee but are positive for the well-being of those in leadership positions (see Baruch & Vardi, 2016), the present research hypothesized that that leaders are no exception to that rule and that contemporary career environment entails challenges and demands that may hamper the construction of sustainable careers for leaders as well as followers. Thus, personal resources become important when leaders seek to navigate their career in a desired direction amid various context-related demands.

## 1.3 Resources in the framework of sustainable careers: Motivation to Lead (MTL) as a personal resource

### 1.3.1 Motivation to Lead (MTL) as a concept

The concept of Motivation to Lead (MTL) informed the exploration of leader's personal resources in the present research. MTL was introduced as a multi-dimensional "individual-differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; p. 482). On this definition, MTL is seen as an inherently agentic, active component that reflects both an individual's pursuit of leadership and the effort they put into the role. Many definitions of personal resources (introduced in more detail in the next chapter) are active, agentic and goal-oriented, fitting well the sustainable careers framework, which implicitly suggests that individuals actively shape their careers towards well-being and balance in all life areas. These definitions suggest the MTL can also be viewed as a personal resource for leaders that fosters their construction of a meaningful, fulfilling career as a leader.

The original conceptualization of MTL by Chan and Drasgow (2001) highlights the three-dimensional structure of MTL. The first dimension, *Affective-Identity MTL (AI-MTL),* refers to positive valence toward leadership and leading, and is considered the most intrinsic component of leadership motivation. Individuals with high Affective-Identity MTL usually consider themselves natural born leaders. The second dimension, *Social-Normative MTL (SN-MTL*), a more extrinsic motivational component, is based on social norms and perceived obligations: an individual with high Social-Normative MTL might lead out of a sense of duty or responsibility towards peers or their team, or because they consider leader status is normatively valued. The third dimension, *Non-Calculative MTL (NC-MTL),* refers to positive perceptions of leadership irrespective of the potential costs or negative consequences the role entails (Badura et al., 2020). Because those with high NC-MTL are likely to lead out of a general willingness, without weighing the possible costs and benefits related to leading (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Porter et al., 2019), NC-MTL can be considered a "selfless" aspect of leadership motivation. Recent meta-analytical (Badura et al., 2020) and empirical studies (Kennedy et al., 2021) have validated the dimensions of MTL as capturing distinctive but related motivational constructs with different antecedents and outcomes. In the following sub-sections, the ancillary theory informing this thesis, the Conservation of Resources theory (COR theory; Hobfoll, 1998; 2001) is introduced in more detail and the resource mechanisms of the different MTL dimensions are discussed.

### 1.3.2 The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as a baseline for sustainability

In this research, based on the framework of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1998; 2001), MTL is understood as a resource for a leadership career. According to the COR theory, "individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster those things that they value" (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 341), and these valued entities are referred as resources. In the literature, the concept of resources is applied at multiple levels to capture the variety of the phenomenon (e.g., personal, organizational, job-related, career-related resources). Such a variety may cause conceptual unclarity, as the definition of resources lacks precision (Halbesleben et al., 2014) and the phenomenon is easily confused with proximal concepts, such as career capital (referred as "career-related resources embedded within individuals that are necessary to navigate one's career"; Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017, p. 595) or career competencies (e.g., three ways of knowing; Arthur et al., 1995). Hobfoll and colleagues (2003) define personal resources as individuals' sense of their ability to control and successfully impact their environment. According to the most recent definitions, resources are anything that the individual perceives as helpful from the perspective of goal-attainment (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

Starting out as a stress theory, the COR theory has been applied widely in organizational research during recent decades (Hobfoll, et al., 2018). The theory has two focal principles and four corollaries that relate to losing and gaining resources (Hobfoll, 2001). The main focal principle highlights the importance of the conservation of current resources and the saliency of resource loss: for the individual, losing resources is more harmful than regaining lost resources is helpful. According to the resource investment principle, people must invest resources in order to gain new resources, to recover from resource losses and, most importantly, to avoid resource loss. These principles permit the following conclusions: individuals with high initial resources are better off investing their resources, as resources tend to accumulate; and conversely, those with low or few resources tend to conserve their remaining resources defensively to avoid losing them. In addition, resources tend to operate jointly with other resources both "in good and bad" ways: gaining new resources will typically lead to acquiring or accessing other resources (gain spiral) and vice versa, losing valuable resources will boost further resource loss (loss spiral).

According to Hobfoll (1988, 1998), how resources operate depends largely on the ecological context. In the case of leader emergence, reality sometimes casts along different organizational situations while at other times mere chance can play a role in the question of who becomes a leader. Context also plays a role in whether leader positions are striven for: in the business context, there are generally many applicants for open leader positions whereas, for example, in academic environments, leader positions are not actively sought (Askling & Stensaker, 2002). These situations also depict two different contexts of career decision-making: active/agentic and non-active/non-agentic. Such contextual

differences could influence how MTL operates as a resource for a leader career in these different situations.

Leaders who have actively pursued their leadership position and are highly motivated for leadership (i.e., have MTL as a personal resource) are likely to experience good person-career fit and may gain satisfaction and experiences of meaningfulness from being able to act in a satisfying leadership role. Consequently, they are better able to invest more resources in leader behaviors, such as time spent in interactions with their followers, thereby speeding up the gain spiral. On the contrary, leaders who have not actively sought their position and are possibly equipped with fewer personal MTL resources, may experience person-career misfit and be prone to a negative spiral of resource loss, as they may struggle to cope with their leadership responsibilities and be not able to respond adequately to the demands they are presented with. For such leaders, defending their initially scant resources is energy-consuming, a situation that can lead to their putting less effort into their leadership-related duties. This may give rise to feelings of dissatisfaction and loss of meaningfulness, and even to leader turnover and discontinuity of a career as a leader. Person-career misfit may also be experienced by leaders who have actively pursued a leadership role but have poor or insufficient motivational resources for leadership, similarly rendering them prone to a resource loss spiral. Lastly, for leaders with good motivational resources who have not actively sought a leadership position but end up occupying one, the question of person-career fit may initially be unclear. However, positive experiences and success in the role of a leader may bring about a resource gain spiral, lending them wings to continue in a leadership career. In contrast, negative experiences may lead to person-career misfit and hence to a negative spiral of resource loss.

### 1.3.3 The resource mechanisms of MTL in building sustainable careers

The theoretical arguments presented below for MTL as a personal resource for a leadership career are based on current knowledge about different motivational elements of the MTL dimensions (for a meta-analysis, see Badura et al., 2020). The fundamental idea underlying the present research is that a leader's MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) is a personal resource that fosters sustainable leadership careers, as MTL resembles the "knowing-why" type of career capital, i.e., it involves the employee's motivation and identity (Arthur et al., 1995; Inkson & Arthur, 2001) and thus reflects the different reasons ("whys") behind an individual's decision to strive for and operate in a leadership position and attain certain career-related goals (Hobfoll, 2001; see also Halbesleben et al., 2014). Hence, different MTL dimensions can be assumed to relate differently to the key concepts of a sustainable career framework, i.e., agency, meaning, proactivity and adaptability.

AI-MTL, the most intrinsic type of motivation, is based on the agentic, identity-like motivation for leadership (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). It is well-known that intrinsic motivation can function as a personal resource, as it relates to self-

esteem, positive affect, efficacy, persistence and well-being (Deci et al., 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000), all of which are valuable assets for goal attainment. Individuals with high AI-MTL usually have a lot of past leadership experience (Badura et al., 2020), a work history which could indicate that they have actively sought a leadership career and found it meaningful and enjoyable. From the perspective of sustainable careers, AI-MTL is considered a valuable personal resource for a leader that might guarantee good person-career fit, as these leaders or leaders-to-be most likely find meaningfulness in the position of a leader and proactively shape their environments towards enabling the continuity of a leadership career.

SN-MTL is more of an extrinsic motivational component that integrates both the agentic and communal orientations towards leadership. Individuals with SN-MTL usually have some amount of past leadership experience, which is associated with the agentic component of SN-MTL that is required in addition to the communal orientation for pursuing leader positions (Badura et al., 2020). The combination of individualistic and communal value orientations may indicate that individuals with SN-MTL are prone to adapt to the contextual demands and perceived obligations of their leadership role. The original conceptualization of SN-MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) taps into the descriptions of different types of extrinsic, or controlled, motivation that vary in their level of autonomy (from external to identified motivation; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Moran et al., 2012). For example, leaders with high SN-MTL may act in their role as leader because "the situation demanded it" or they were appointed to it (external motivation, the least autonomous type) or due to a feeling of responsibility or obligation, as in "I have a responsibility to do it for the team" (introjected motivation). These are the two most controlled forms of extrinsic motivation (Moran et al., 2012). Individuals with introjected motivation may operate "to comply their inner 'shoulds'" (p. 3; Deal et al., 2013): feeling good about oneself, demonstrating competence and achievement, maintaining a good reputation, or gaining positive evaluations are examples of ego-enhancement, which may be a viable source of motivation for leaders with introjected motivation (and potentially also SN-MTL).

The dimension of SN-MTL also includes a more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation, called identified motivation, that captures the experiences of leaders who feel that working in a leader role is an important privilege and it is not morally right to decline a leader role if asked (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). As SN-MTL seems to be associated with the more controlled forms of extrinsic motivation (e.g., "It is an honor and privilege to be asked to lead"; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Gagné & Deci, 2005) reflecting obligation, responsibility and duty as well as social norms, in addition to identified motivation, its role as a resource may be contradictory. In addition to the earlier research evidence showing the superiority of autonomous motivation over controlled motivation from the well-being and performance points of view (Deci & Ryan, 2008), recent studies (Sansone & Tang, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020) suggest that the most autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation can also contribute to well-being and performance,

if the impetus for behavior comes from values that are identified within the person.

NC-MTL is related to communal orientations and valuing harmony and collectivist values (Badura et al., 2020), and can be seen as a "selfless" motivational component. It refers to positive perceptions of leadership opportunities despite its potential costs or negative consequences to the self (Badura et al., 2020). To work in a leader position without weighing the possible pros and cons and regardless of the possible disadvantages the role entails might indicate that such leaders would strongly adapt themselves to contextual demands and put their own interests aside for the sake of pursuing the greater collective good. Leaders with high NC-MTL may then be likely to take an altruistic motivational stance toward leader positions. A selfless motivational stance towards leadership may also act as a resource for a leadership career, as the evidence from the organizational commitment literature suggests that personal sacrifice is associated with affective commitment (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991), service performance (Vanderberghe et al., 2015) and career success (Vanderberghe & Panaccio, 2012). However, it has also been suggested that NC-MTL is associated with a non-agentic approach and a lack of personal proactivity in constructing a leadership career (Auvinen et al., 2021). These findings may indicate that NC-MTL shares some similarities with non-autonomous forms of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The role of the selfless component of leadership motivation as a resource is thus not unambiguous and deserves more research attention.

According to my best knowledge, this thesis is the first to introduce MTL as a personal resource for sustainable leadership careers. Thus far, the research on MTL has largely made use of student and military samples. Previous studies on MTL that have been conducted with working life populations are summarized in Table 2 (comprises only empirical studies that have focused on MTL, excluding review articles and those validating MTL measure in different contexts). As the Table 2 shows, most of these MTL studies in the context of the leadership or leader emergence literature have been quantitative and have treated MTL as an outcome. Moreover, MTL has not been studied in the context of the career literature or with extensive, diverse samples of leaders from working populations representing different sectors. This dissertation research aimed at complementing the MTL literature in these respects. The aims of the thesis are presented in detail in the next chapter.

**TABLE 2** Summary of MTL studies with working life samples.

Note: If the original publication reported more than one study, the data in the Table are reported for only those studies that measured MTL as originally conceptualized by Chan and Drasgow (2001)

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Joo, M. K., & Cruz, K. S. (2023). Formal Mentoring and Protégés' Leadership Development: The Roles of Protégés' Informal Mentoring Networks, Political Skill, and Gender. *Group & Organization Management,* 10596011221150869. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an out-come; Chan & Drasgow's MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; South-Korean mentors and protégés (N= 100 matched dyads) | For two protégé leadership development outcomes (MTL and promotability), a higher level of formal mentoring was positively associated with the quality of protégés' informal mentoring networks, which in turn was positively associated with protégés' MTL, but not with promotability. |
| Schyns, B., Braun, S. H., & Xia, Y. E. (2023). What motivates narcissistic individuals to lead? The role of identity across cultures. *Personality and Individual Differences, 206*, 112107. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Felfe et al.'s (2012) MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; UK (N= 241 and 358) and Chinese (N=150 and 228) employees | Two empirical studies found a positive relationship between narcissism and AI-MTL in the UK and China. An indirect effect emerged between narcissism and MTL via individual-level identity in the UK, but not in China. These findings point to narcissism as an antecedent of MTL, and how these processes may differ between individualist and collectivistic cultures. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lehtiniemi, K., Tossavainen, A., Auvinen, E., Herttalampi, M., & Feldt, T. (2023). Do intensified job demands predict burnout? How motivation to lead and leadership status may have a moderating effect. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14.* | Longitudinal; MTL as a moderator, Chan & Drasgow's MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; Finnish professionals (N= 372) | High AI-MTL strengthened the association of intensified job- and career-related demands with burnout in a Finnish professional sample. However, across the whole sample, professionals with high AI-MTL reported lower burnout when job demands were not highly intensified. Leadership status moderated the associations: High AI-MTL strengthened the association of career-related demands with burnout for professionals who became leaders during the follow-up. |
| Schyns, B., Lagowska, U., & Braun, S. (2022*).* Me, me, me: Narcissism and motivation to lead. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 230*(4), 330–334. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Felfe et al.'s (2012) MTL measure (4 dimensions) | Quantitative; German multi-industry employee sample (N=310) | Grandiose narcissism correlated positively with all three dimensions of MTL, though the relationship with SN-MTL disappeared when narcissistic organizational identification (NOI) and interaction were controlled for. Vulnerable narcissism was positively associated with avoidance of leadership, but not to AI-MTL. Vulnerable narcissism was negatively related to AI-MTL for individuals with low or moderate (but not high) NOI. |
| Jones-Carmack, J. (2022). Increasing Employee Motivation to Lead Through an Understanding of Communication Apprehension. *International Journal of Business Communication, 0,*(0). | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US retail employees (N= 170) | The results revealed a strong, negative relationship between communication apprehension and AI-MTL, SN-MTL and NC-MTL. Communication apprehension was a stronger predictor of MTL than the other individual difference variables. Although communication apprehension was significantly negatively related to all the dimensions of MTL, it accounted for more of the variance in AI-MTL than in the other dimensions. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wallace, D. M., & Zaccaro, S. J. (2022). Who Wants To Be Here? Empirically Investigating Motivation and Engagement During Leader Development. *Journal of Leadership Education, 21*(3) | Cross-sectional; MTL as a predictor; Chan & Drasgow's MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; participants in leader development program (N= 373) | The influence of MTL and motivation to learn on engagement during leader development through the linkage of motivation to develop as a leader was demonstrated. However, no interaction between MTL and motivation to learn was observed; the analyses revealed that they influenced the motivation to develop as a leader independently of each other. |
| Wiese, M. T., Conen, K., & Alewell, D. (2022). Gender-Differences in Affective Motivation to Lead. The Roles of Risk Propensity & Self-Stereotyping. In *Academy of Management Proceedings*, p. 14287). | Cross-sectional; Felfe et al.'s (2012) MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; German employee sample (N= 651) | On average, men had higher AI-MTL than women. For both men and women higher self-described agency assertiveness was associated with higher AI-MTL. A higher score on self-described communion morality was related to lower AI-MTL, but only in women. While financial risk propensity was not associated with an individual's AI-MTL, in men both higher health and social risk propensity were associated with higher AI-MTL. In women, higher career risk propensity was associated with higher AI-MTL. Further, the largest proportion of the difference in AI-MTL between women and men was explained by gender differences in agency assertiveness and in the control variables of leadership responsibility and leader self-efficacy. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guillén, L., Jacquart, P., & Hogg, M. A. (2022). To Lead, or to Follow? How Self-Uncertainty and the Dark Triad of Personality Influence Leadership Motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 01461672221086771. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; US employee samples (Ns = 2,641, 421, 513, and 400) | Self-uncertainty reduced leadership motivation for individuals low in the dark triad. In contrast, those high in the dark triad had an elevated leadership motivation that remained unaltered when they were self-uncertain. Self-uncertainty was associated with a reduction in one's own MTL. Among participants low in the dark triad, leadership motivation significantly decreased with increasing self-uncertainty; among those high in the dark triad, leadership motivation was unaffected by self-uncertainty. In the high self-uncertainty condition, individuals low in the dark triad were significantly less motivated to lead than those in the high-dark triad. |
| Jones-Carmack, J. (2019). Motivation to Lead: Preparing Leaders of the Future through an Understanding of Role Ambiguity and Perceived Organizational Support. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 13*(2), 6-22. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome¸ Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US retail employees (N= 170) | After controlling for individual differences, contextual variables (goal and process clarity and perceived organizational support, POS) accounted for significant additional variance in NC-MTL but not in AI-MTL and SN-MTL. Past leadership experience and personality were the only significant predictors of AI-MTL, and values and personality were the only significant predictors of SN-MTL. |
| Porter, T. H., Gerhardt, M. W., Fields, D., & Bugenhagen, M. (2019). An exploratory study of gender and motivation to lead in millennials. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 159*(2), 138-152. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US multi-industry employee sample (N= 210) | Gender directly affected two types of MTL. The mean level of AI-MTL adjusted for the influences of the control variables was significantly larger for women than for men. Conversely, the adjusted mean level of NC-MTL was significantly larger for men than for women. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ulrich, T. R. (2018). Motivation To Lead And Asian American Engineering Managers. In *Proceedings of the International Annual Conference of the American Society for Engineering Management*. (pp. 1-10). American Society for Engineering Management (ASEM). | Cross-sectional; MTL as outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US engineer sample (N= 152) | Asian American engineers reported higher levels of vertical collectivism than European American engineers. Despite differences in vertical collectivism, no difference in MTL was observed between the Asian American engineers and the European American engineers. Regardless of culture and ethnicity, the engineers experienced less SN-MTL than non-engineers. |
| Amah, O. E. (2018). Determining the antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership. *Journal of General Management, 43*(3), 126-138. | Cross-sectional; MTL as a predictor; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; Nigerian manager-follower sample (N= 200 managers; N= 750 followers) | Social consistency and social exchange theories were utilized to examine leadership motivation and self-concept variables as possible antecedents of servant leadership (SL). Of the MTL components, only NC-MTL appeared to be an antecedent of SL. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wellman, N., Newton, D. W., Wang, D., Wei, W., Waldman, D. A., & LePine, J. A. (2019). Meeting the need or falling in line? The effect of laissez-faire formal leaders on informal leadership. *Personnel Psychology, 72*(3), 337-359. | Longitudinal; MTL as a moderator; 10-itemed version of Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; Chinese multi-industry employee sample (N= 344) | Laissez-faire formal leaders were perceived as engaging in less modeling of effective leadership and, as a result, showed negative associations with informal leadership and team task performance. Social learning effects were stronger for teams whose members had low overall MTL and weaker for teams whose members had high overall MTL. The perceptions and actions of teams whose members had low MTL were more likely than those of teams whose members had high MTL to be affected by a laissez-faire formal leader. |
| Maurer, T. J., Hartnell, C. A., & Lippstreu, M. (2017). A model of leadership motivations, error management culture, leadership capacity, and career success. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 90*(4), 481-507. | Longitudinal; MTL as a predictor; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US multi-industry sample, respondents and their supervisors (N= 151 pairs) | Error management perceptions were positively associated with SN-MTL and with motivation to develop leadership skills (MTDL), whereas perceptions of error aversion were negatively associated with AI-MTL and SN-MTL. MTDL was distinguishable from MTL and demonstrated better predictive validity on leadership capacity and career success than MTL. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ulrich, T. R. (2017). A Phenomenological Inquiry into Engineers' Motivation to Lead. In *Proceedings of The International Annual Conference of the American Society for Engineering Management*. (pp. 1-10). American Society for Engineering Management (ASEM). | Cross-sectional | Qualitative; semi-structured interview guided by 11 questions; US medical managers (N= 6) | Eight themes emerged to explain why the engineers accepted leadership roles: 1) some simply enjoyed leading, 2) some felt a social obligation, 3) some were motivated by values higher than mere money, 4) some were motivated by a sense of benevolence, 5) some were motivated by observing other leaders in the organization, 6) some found additional motivation to lead as they experienced success as managers, 7) some were motivated by their engineering skills, and, most significantly, 8) some found motivation to lead in a desire to teach and mentor. |
| Chen, L. (2016). Linking leader personality traits to motivation to lead: A self-concept approach. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 44*(11), 1913-1925. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (AI-MTL + SN-MTL) | Quantitative; Chinese managerial sample (N= 280) | Both narcissism and humility had significant and positive influences on AI-MTL and SN-MTL. These relationships were mediated by leadership self-efficacy and positivity in leader identity. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Porter, T. H., Riesenmy, K. D., & Fields, D. (2016). Work environment and employee motivation to lead: Moderating effects of personal characteristics. *American Journal of Business, 31*(2), 66-84. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US employee sample (N= 210) | The results suggest that besides individual differences, the perceived work environment may be a significant determinant of motivation to become an organizational leader. Employee assessments of pay, promotion opportunities, recognition, job design, quality of organizational communications, and workplace spirituality all played a role in determining employee MTL. MTL had significant positive correlations with the individual characteristics of previous leadership experiences, self-efficacy, and willingness to serve. MTL also significantly correlated with both value recognition at work and support for work engagement. |
| Verdorfer, A. P. (2016). Examining mindfulness and its relations to humility, motivation to lead, and actual servant leadership behaviors. *Mindfulness, 7*(4), 950-961. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Felfe et al.'s (2012) MTL measure (NC-MTL only) | Quantitative; German employee sample (N= 93) | In the non-leader sample, a positive association of dispositional mindfulness with humility and NC-MTL was found. In the leader sample, leaders' dispositional mindfulness was positively related to ratings of the servant leadership dimensions of humility, standing back, and authenticity. |
| Amah, O. (2015). Servant leadership relationship with leader-member exchange: The moderating role of motivation-to-serve and motivation-to-lead. International *Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences, 4(*3), 108-127. | Cross-sectional; MTL as a moderator; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; Nigerian paired manager-follower sample (N= 200 pairs) | High motivation-to-serve was associated with low MTL. However, in a low motivation-to-serve environment, the secondary motive, MTL, did not improve the prediction of leader-member exchange. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guillén, L., Mayo, M., & Korotov, K. (2015). Is leadership a part of me? A leader identity approach to understanding the motivation to lead. *The Leadership Quarterly, 26*(5), 802-820. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; European executive sample (N=180); MBA program participants (N= 83); international multiprofessional sample (N=101) and executive sample (N=46) | Self-comparisons with concrete, influential leaders of the past or present (self-to-exemplar comparisons) were positively associated with MTL. Moreover, self-comparisons with more general representations of leaders (self-to-prototype comparisons in affiliation) were associated with MTL. The effect of self-to-exemplar comparisons was mediated through individuals' leadership self-efficacy perceptions, whereas the effect of self-to-prototype comparisons was not. |
| Stiehl, S. K., Felfe, J., Elprana, G., & Gatzka, M. B. (2015). The role of motivation to lead for leadership training effectiveness. *International Journal of Training and Development, 19*(2), 81-97. | Longitudinal; MTL as a predictor; Felfe et al.'s (2012) MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; Swiss leadership development training participants (N=132) | Individuals with higher AI-MTL achieved better results in leadership training effectiveness after 1 year of training. The relationship between AI-MTL and effectiveness was at least partly explained by the acquisition of competencies and display of effective behavior on the job. Highly leadership-motivated individuals acquired more leadership competencies during training and showed more effective leadership behavior later (1 year post training). |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ayrancı, E. (2014). Effects of emotion recognition and alexithymia on motivation to lead: evidence from Turkey. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences, 4*(2), 105–116. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; Turkish senior business administration students (N=160) and top managers (N= 160) | The statistical structures of emotion recognition, alexithymia and MTL were the same for senior business administration students and top managers. Having more extroverted alexithymia factors affected the managers' MTL. Managers' AI-MTL was associated with their emotionality, and their emotion recognition and externally oriented thinking affected their AI-MTL. The students' MTL was not found to be affected by their emotionality, but a decomposition of their MTL revealed that only SN-MTL was affected by their externally oriented thinking and deficiency in identifying their own emotions. |
| Felfe, J., & Schyns, B. (2014). Romance of leadership and motivation to lead. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 29*(7), 850-865. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Felfe et al.'s (2012) MTL measure (AI-MTL only) | Quantitative; German sample of high school students, university students and employees (N= 1348) | Individuals high in the romance of leadership (ROL) tended to be more motivated to lead. This relationship was stronger for individuals high in self-efficacy and high in personal initiative, especially in the student sample. |

| | Study design and MTL measure used | Analyses and sample | Main findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clemmons III, A. B., & Fields, D. (2011). Values as determinants of the motivation to lead. *Military Psychology, 23*(6), 587-600. | Cross-sectional; MTL as an outcome; Chan & Drasgow's (2001) MTL measure (3 dimensions) | Quantitative; US military personnel (N= 231) | Personal values made significant incremental contributions to explaining all three forms of MTL. Personal values had the largest incremental effect in explaining NC-MTL. Self-enhancement values had a larger positive relationship with AI-MTL and SN-MTL than did self-transcendence values. Inversely, self-transcendence values had a significantly larger relationship with NC-MTL. |

## 1.4 Aims of the research

This research aimed at shedding light on how leadership motivation operates within the framework of career sustainability. To complement the literature, the leader population of interest comprised white-collar employees heterogeneous in age, gender, and working sector and broadly representative of both business leaders and leaders in non-commercial organizations. An academic institution was one of the environments chosen to represent non-commercial organizations as it is known that leaders in academia generally have other primary work-related motivations, such as conducting research and teaching (Chan et al., 2012; 2015) than leading other people. The data also included leaders in social and health care sector organizations, who can also be considered non-business leaders and whose main motivation may also be related to their professions rather than to leading others. Because academic leaders had a high proportional representation in the data, it was decided to make a distinction between *academic* and *business leaders*. By combining qualitative and quantitative data, cross-sectional and longitudinal designs, variable- and person-centered methods, as well as utilizing nested, hierarchical data on highly educated Finnish leaders, I aimed at achieving a broad perspective on leadership motivation "in action" with samples from different working populations.

The specific aims for the study and research questions are presented below. The aims and research questions presented here are not identical to the ones presented in the original studies but are reworded to comprise a coherent whole to help grasping the broad perspective of this dissertation research.

1) To explore how leader careers are constructed in real life by investigating the factors that leaders mentioned as having affected their LRO (Study I)

   RQ1: What are the specific reasons that leaders themselves mention as having affected their occupancy of leader role?

   RQ2: How these reasons are related to indicators of *career sustainability* (*health:* leaders' self-evaluations of their occupational well-being; *productivity*: followers' evaluations of their burnout and work engagement as an indicator of leader's performance)

2) To identify motivation profiles that represent distinctive combinations of the three MTL dimensions, highlighting the dimensionality of leadership motivation (Study II)

   RQ3: Do individuals who hold a leading position have a similar motivation towards leadership or do they differ in their motivation

according, for example, to their occupational background or other studied individual factors?

RQ4: How the prospective motivational factors are associated with *career sustainability indicators* (*health*: leaders' self-evaluations of their occupational well-being; *happiness*: leaders' self-evaluation of their leadership-related career intentions; *productivity*: followers' evaluations of their burnout and work engagement as an indicator of leader's performance)

3) To empirically test the theoretical notion about leadership motivation being a personal resource for a sustainable leader career in contemporary career environment (Study III)

RQ5: In two-year follow up data, are the aspects of contemporary career environment, depicted as the intensification of working life, associated with *career unsustainability* (*health*: leader burnout)?

RQ6: Does different MTL dimensions moderate the presumptive associations, i.e., act as buffers against career unsustainability and do these associations differ regarding to the leader's working context (academic vs. non-academic)?

The aims of this research are summarized in Figure 1.

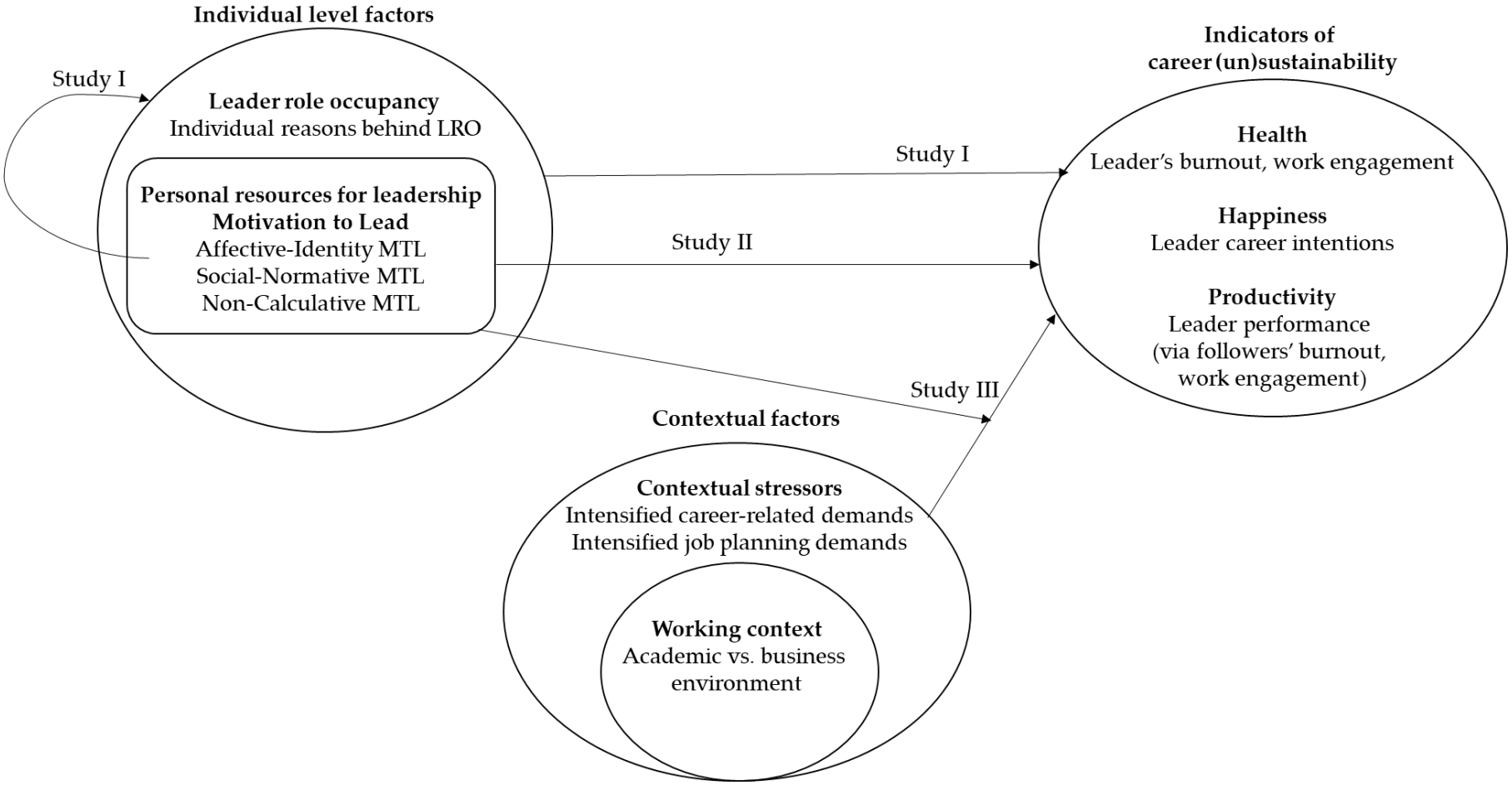



**FIGURE 1**. Theoretical model of the research, showing the constructs investigated and the relations between them.

# 2 METHOD

## 2.1 Participants and procedure

This dissertation study forms part of two research projects conducted in the University of Jyväskylä. The first of these, Worries about Leadership (WAL), was conducted in 2017-2019, and the second, MOTILEAD, started in 2019 and ends in 2023. The WAL study focused on negative emotions and worries that may act as "push factors" in relation to leadership, i.e., discourage individuals from wanting to be leaders. After exploring leadership from the worry perspective, the research group felt a need to examine the "pull factors", i.e., the motivational aspects that attract individuals towards leadership. The two projects were interlinked: the WAL study consisted of a large survey of highly educated professionals and leaders (cross-sectional study) while the MOTILEAD study was a follow-up survey of the individuals who had volunteered for the follow-up in 2017. Both research projects were funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund. The data utilized in this dissertation were collected during the years 2017-2019.

The main collaborators in the research project were four trade unions: the Finnish Union of University Professors, the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, the Union of Finnish Business School Graduates, Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland (TEK), and the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava). Participants were also recruited from an Executive MBA (eMBA) program, targeted at business managers with at least three years of work experience in a managerial or supervisory position.

The research sample was extracted by random sampling from the membership registers of the trade unions, excluding the academic trade unions, for which total sampling of employed members was used. For each trade union, the union representative implemented the sample extraction. This data collection was supplemented by responses collected from members of the Akava

managerial network and from the eMBA participants. To complement the hierarchical data, students of psychology also recruited highly educated leaders (n = 23) from among their acquaintances as a part of their studies. The survey consisted of carefully chosen study measures and two additional arms: 1) an invitation to those in leader positions only to recruit their followers to respond to another e-survey (to collect the hierarchical data) and 2) an invitation to all respondents to take part in the follow-up survey two years later. Detailed information on the data collection at both measurement points (T1 in 2017, T2 in 2019) is presented in Figures 2 and 3 and is described in rich detail in two reports by Auvinen et al. (2019) and Toropainen et al. (2023). An overview of all original studies is presented in Table 3.

## 2.2 Attrition analyses

The data collection began in 2017, when a total of 10 715 invitations to participation in the survey were sent in addition to an open call sent to certain abovementioned data collection sources. The total was made up of 1 282 invitations to professors, 3 549 invitations to university researchers, 3 000 to business school graduates and 2 884 to technical academics. In total, 9 948 people received the survey e-link (1 272 professors, 3 009 university researchers, 2820 business school graduates and 2 847 technical academics). Of these, 547 professors, 753 university researchers, 473 business school graduates and 362 technical academics responded, yielding the response rates of 43%, 25%, 17% and 13%, respectively. For members of Akava, the eMBA participants and those recruited by students, an open call method was used: the contact persons posted an open link to the e-survey, and hence the actual size of the target population is not known. In total, the final convenience sample who responded to the survey consisted of 141 members of the Akava managerial network, 161 eMBA participants and 22 leaders recruited by students.

At baseline, a total of 600 professors and university researchers along with 413 economists and technical academics and 118 eMBA participants had volunteered to participate in the follow-up survey to be conducted in in 2019. Thus, 46% of the professors and university researchers, 49% of the business school graduates and technical academics and 73% of the eMBA participants who responded at T1, had also volunteered to participate in the follow-up survey. The follow-up survey was finally submitted to 555 professors and scientists, 393 business school graduates and technical academics and 103 eMBA participants. The difference in numbers between those who had agreed to take part in the follow-up survey and those who received the survey link was due to problems with e-mail addresses (e.g., incorrect or inactive) or changes in employment status (e.g., retirement). Of those receiving the questionnaire, 135 of the professors, 282 university researchers, 139 business school graduates, 137 technical academics, 53 eMBA participants completed the questionnaire. The joint response rates in the follow-up survey were thus 75% for the professors and

university researchers, 70% for the business school graduates, 70% for the technical academics, and 51% for the eMBA participants. Joint response rates are reported here, as identical survey questionnaires were sent to the academic group, consisting of professors and university researchers, and to the non-academic group, consisting of business school graduates and technical academics.

It is generally known that response rates have decreased since the use of electronic surveys has become common practice (e.g., Fan & Yan, 2010). In fact, the response rates at T1 were not satisfactory for all the trade unions (e.g., only 13% for technical academics, vs. 43% for professors). On the other hand, those who had volunteered at baseline participate in the follow-up survey were clearly motivated to do so when the time came, as the follow-up survey response rates ranged from 51% to 75%.

For my first two studies (I, II), I utilized cross-sectional data collected in 2017. At that time, 1 220 of the respondents held a leadership position. In Study I, the final sample consisted of 1 031 leaders who had responded to the open-ended question inquiring about the factors that had affected their decision to occupy a leader role. In Study II, the final sample consisted of 1 003 leaders who had responded to the target questions of the study. Study III utilized longitudinal data from 2017 to 2019. In 2019, a total of 319 respondents held a leadership position at the time of the data collection. The final sample used in Study III consisted of 250 leaders who had held a leadership position at both measurement points and had responded to the target questions.

It is important to explore the representativeness of the studied sample as it affects the generalizability of the results. For the longitudinal study (Study III), I compared the leaders who had participated at both T1 and T2 with those who had only taken part at T1. Business school graduates were underrepresented (adjusted residual -2.2, ±1.96, deemed atypical) and eMBA participants slightly overrepresented (adjusted residual 2.4; $\chi 2$ (4) = 9.488*) in the study sample. The leaders who had participated at both T1 and T2 were somewhat younger ($M_{sample}$ = 50.51, $SD_{sample}$= 7.76) than those who had only taken part at T1 ($M_{T1\ only}$= 53.21, $_{SDT1\ only}$= 8.84; t(886) = -3.894, p = .029), and consequently had somewhat less leadership experience ($M_{sample}$ =11.75, $SD_{sample}$ 7.69 versus $M_{T1\ only}$ = 13.69, $SD_{T1\ only}$ = 8.78; t(937)= -3.091, p = .011). The gender distribution did not differ between the study sample and those who only participated at T1.

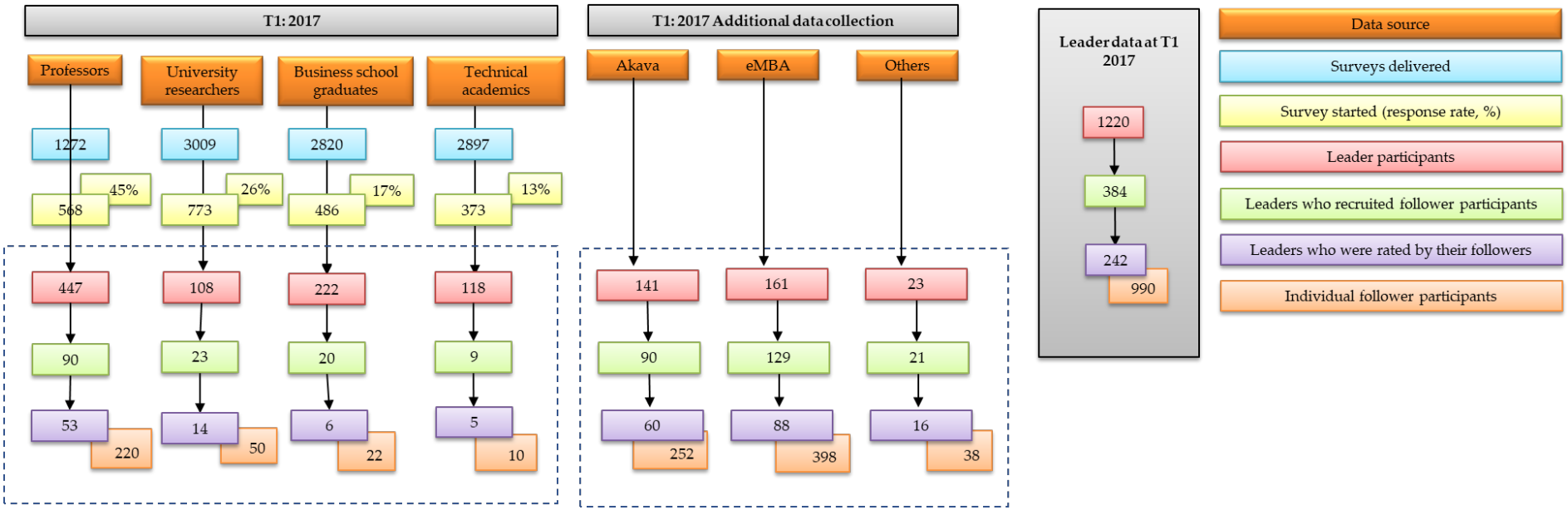



**FIGURE 2.** Summary of data collection procedure at T1

Note: Others = Highly educated leaders recruited by psychology students. Data used in the original studies are enclosed in dotted-line boxes.

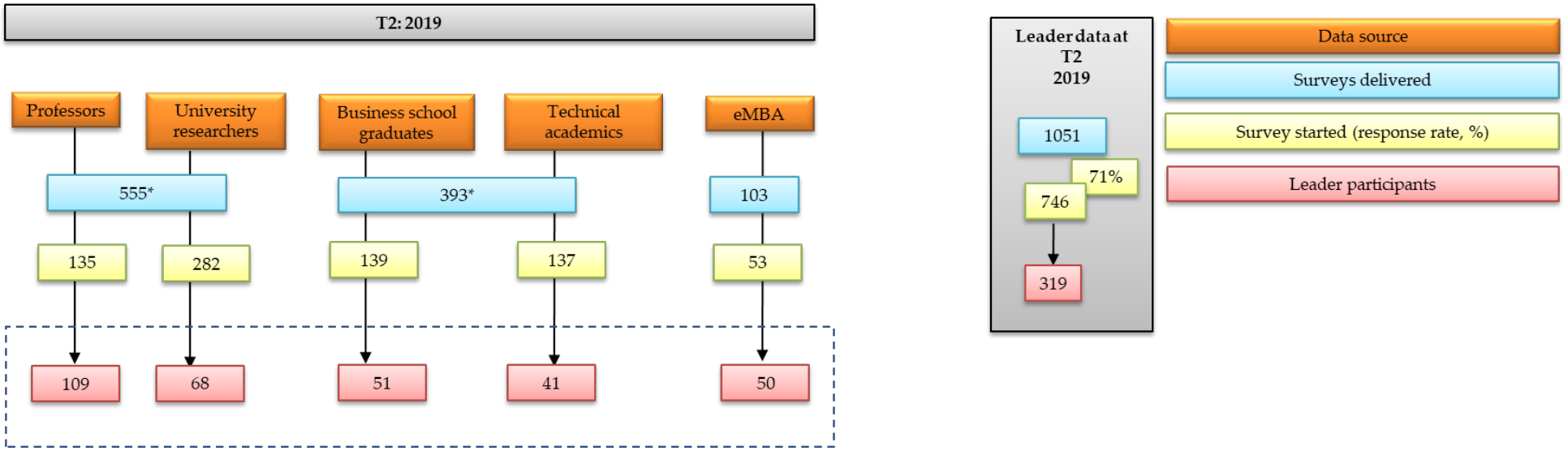



**FIGURE 3.** Summary of data collection procedure at T2

Note: * = The professors and university researchers were sent the same questionnaire and the business school graduates and technical academics were also sent the same questionnaire, hence the numbers of surveys delivered to each group are presented together. Data used in the original studies are enclosed in the dotted-line box

## 2.3 Measures

### 2.3.1 Measures for leaders

#### 2.3.1.1 Leader's personal resource: Motivation to Lead

*Leadership motivation* was measured in **Studies I, II** and **III**, using nine items of the 27-item Motivation to Lead Questionnaire originally developed by Chan and Drasgow (2001). The shortened 15-item questionnaire (MTL-15; Bobbio & Rattazzi, 2006) was included in our survey at the study baseline. In the present sample of Finnish leaders, the psychometric properties of the MTL-15 were carefully investigated by using a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs). Nine items of the MTL-15 (Bobbio & Rattazzi, 2006) were chosen based on the CFAs, as the analysis better supported the three-dimensional structure of the 9-item version in the Finnish data ($\chi 2$ (24) = 71.003, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.045, SRMR = 0.036, CFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.957) than the 15-item version ($\chi 2$ (87) = 621.543, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.091, SRMR = 0.095, CFI = 0.759, TLI = 0.709). Before the questionnaire was used, the original English version was translated into Finnish and later back-translated into English by a professional translator.

The MTL-9 scale covers the three subscales of MTL, namely Affective-Identity MTL (AI-MTL), Social-Normative MTL (SN-MTL) and Non-Calculative MTL (NC-MTL). In MTL-9, each subscale comprises three items, e.g., "I am the type of person who likes to be in charge of others" (AI-MTL), "It is appropriate for people to accept leadership roles or positions when they are asked" (SN-MTL), and "I never expect to get more privileges if I agree to lead a group" (NC-MTL). All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree – 5 = totally agree), higher scores indicating higher motivation. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) for each scale were 0.92, 0.75, 0.75 for AI-MTL (Studies I, II and III, respectively), and 0.89, 0.70, 0.70 for SN-MTL, and, finally, 0.74, 0.73, 0.72 for NC-MTL.

In MTL-9, it is notable that the dimension measuring NC-MTL has been constructed to work in a way similar to those of the other dimensions, i.e., higher scores indicate a higher amount of the motivation type in question, unlike in the original measure by Chan and Drasgow (2001). When the individual items measuring NC-MTL in the Finnish context were examined by CFA, the three items with the best factor loadings included two positive items measuring non-calculativity and only one reverse-coded item measuring calculativity. This is in contrast to Chan and Drasgow's (2001) original 27-item scale, in which 6 out of 9 of the NC-MTL items specifically measured calculativity, and thus the dimension operated in the opposite direction compared to the AI-MTL and SN-MTL dimensions.

#### 2.3.1.2 Indicator of sustainable careers: Health

*Burnout* was measured in **Studies I, II** and **III** with a nine-item version of the Bergen Burnout Inventory (Salmela-Aro et al., 2011), which is a shortened version of the Bergen Burnout Indicator 15 (BBI-15; Näätänen, Aro, Matthiesen, & Salmela-Aro, 2003). The nine-item version has shown good structural validity in Finnish occupational and longitudinal samples (Feldt et al., 2014). It measures three dimensions of burnout: exhaustion (3 items; e.g., "I am snowed under with work"), cynicism (3 items; e.g., "I feel dispirited at work and I think of leaving my job"), and inadequacy (3 items; e.g., "My expectations for my job and my performance have diminished") (see Salmela-Aro et al., 2011). All items were answered on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree), with higher scores showing higher burnout. The Cronbach's alphas for exhaustion were 0.75, 0.75, 0.75 and 0.80; for cynicism 0.83, 0.83, 0.82 and 0.82; and for inadequacy 0.79, 0.79, 0.75 and 0.77 (Studies I, II and III at Times 1 and 2, respectively).

*Work engagement* was included in Studies I and II and measured with a nine-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Seppälä et al., 2009). The UWES-9 measures three dimensions of work engagement: vigor (3 items, e.g., "At work, I feel that I am bursting with energy"), dedication (3 items, e.g., "I am proud of the work I do"), and absorption (3 items, e.g., "I get carried away when I'm working"). Each item was answered on a frequency-based scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (daily), with higher scores indicating more frequent experiences of work engagement.

#### 2.3.1.3 Indicator of sustainable careers: Happiness

*Leadership-related career intentions* were measured in **Study II**. To measure leaders' personal expectations for their future careers, three items were generated for the purposes of the research project. Different levels of management attract individuals in different ways (Torres, 2014), and therefore we were interested in whether the participants actively sought leadership career advancement, or whether they aimed to avoid leadership tasks in the future. To assess this, a brief instruction was first presented ("Please assess your career plans for the coming five years") before the following statements: 1) I will resign my leadership role, 2) I will seek more demanding leadership positions, and 3) I will seek less demanding leadership positions. The statements were answered on a scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely) and were used as single items in the analysis in Study II.

#### 2.3.1.4 Individual-level factor: Leader role occupancy (LRO)

*Reasons for leader role occupancy* were investigated in **Study I**. One open-ended question was formulated to capture the variety of personal reasons behind the leaders' current leader role occupancy: "What factors have contributed to you having your present position as a leader?" This question was followed by an

empty space in the electronic survey (no word limit) in which the leaders could type their answer. The respondents were thus able to describe as many factors that had affected their leader role occupancy as they wished. To identify common themes in the answers of the qualitative data, I first read the leaders' open-ended answers applying an inductive approach. The themes that emerged were then grouped according to similarity in content, resulting in 26 themes. Two independent coders then read the open-ended answers and coded them according to the different themes. Krippendorff's alpha, indicating the reliability of the coding, was calculated for each of the 26 themes: the mean Krippendorff's alpha across al the data was 0.52 (range −0.02 to 0.77). The qualitative analytical process is described in more detail in the original publication (Study I).

#### 2.3.1.5 Contextual stressors: Intensified job demands

Intensified job demands were measured in **Study III** with the Intensification of Job Demands Scale (IJDS) proposed by Kubicek and colleagues (2015). Respondents were asked to assess possible changes in job demands in their work during the past five years (or less, if a participant had a working history of less than five years). As the IJDS as a measure aims to capture the phenomenon of acceleration (Rosa, 2003), the instructions for this scale include a time-frame focusing on perceived changes in job demands that have occurred in the past (Kubicek et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2019a; Mauno & Minkkinen, 2020). *Intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands (IJPDs)* were measured with five items (e.g., "One increasingly has to check independently whether one's work goals have been reached"; Cronbach's alpha 0.83) and *intensified career-related planning and decision-making demands (ICPDs)* with three items (e.g., "One is increasingly required to maintain one's attractiveness for the job market, e.g., through advanced education, networking"; Cronbach's alpha 0.70). A five-point Likert response scale (1 = not at all, 5 = completely) was used, with higher scores indicating that the respondent experienced more frequent or more intensified job demands.

### 2.3.2 Measures for followers

#### 2.3.2.1 Indicator of sustainable careers: Productivity (leader performance)

*Leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship quality* was measured in **Study II.** Followers assessed the quality of their relationship with their supervisor using the LMX-7 scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which has been shown to be psychometrically superior to the other LMX scales (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Followers were instructed to assess items on their relationship with their closest supervisor (the person who had recruited them for the study) on a five-point Likert scale, higher scores indicating better relationship quality. Example items were "How well does your leader understand your work problems and needs?" and "How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?".

The mean score of the total scale was used in further analyses, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.89.

*Satisfaction with people- and task-oriented leader behaviors* were investigated in **Study II**. Based on the previous literature (Yukl et al., 2002), six items, three for each behavior, were developed in the research project to represent people- and task-oriented leader behaviors (Auvinen et al., 2020). Following a brief instruction ("Please assess your satisfaction with your leader on the following attributes"), a list of different leader attributes was presented. Followers rated their satisfaction with their leader's behavior for each attribute on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very satisfied). After the statistical analysis, detailed in the original publication, two sum scores, one for each behavior category, were calculated. The first was labeled the leader's ability to inspire others, motivate others and give feedback (Cronbach's alpha 0.89) and the second was labeled the leader's ability to make decisions, take responsibility and conduct planning (Cronbach's alpha 0.82). To test the overall structure of this six-item scale, an exploratory factor analysis (Oblimin rotation) was conducted, from which a two-factor solution emerged. The fit indices provided by confirmatory factor analysis also supported a two-factor solution: ($\chi 2$ (8) = 60.530, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.081, SRMR = 0.036, CFI = 0.978, TLI = 0.958). All the factor loadings were statistically significant (between 0.68 and 0.96.)

Followers' *burnout* and *work engagement* were measured in **Study I** using the same measures, the BBI-9 (Feldt et al., 2014; Salmela-Aro et al., 2011) and UWES-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Seppälä et al., 2009) as those used to measure leaders' burnout and work engagement. Cronbach's alphas for exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy were 0.72, 0.81, and 0.77, respectively.

### 2.3.3 Background variables

Several demographic factors were assessed in this research. The reasons for choosing these are given in the original publications. In **Studies I-III,** we measured leaders' age (continuous: years), gender (categorical: 1 = female, 2 = male), occupational background (categorical: 1 = professor, 2 = university researcher or other academic, 3 = business sector, 4 = engineer, 5 = social and health care, 6 = EMBA alumni or other), and past leadership experience (continuous: years).For the follower analyses in **Studies I** and **II**, the background variables measured were the follower's age (categorical: age groups; -20 or under, 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, and 61+), gender (categorical: 1 = female, 2 = male), and the duration of the leader-follower relationship (continuous: years).

## 2.4 Analyses

The analytical strategies used in this research are described in detail in original articles I-III and briefly summarized in Table 3.

In **Study I**, a mixed method approach (Creswell & Clark, 2007) was used: the data were analyzed by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. First, the factors mentioned by the leaders themselves as having affected occupancy of a leader role were analyzed qualitatively. The leaders' answers were categorized thematically, and theory-driven coding was then applied to the themes or reason categories identified. To assess how the individual factors (demographics, leadership motivation) were related to the reason categories, the qualitative data were quantified. The data analyses were conducted with SPSS version 24-26. The associations between the reason categories and demographic factors were assessed using $\chi$2-tests and analyses of variance (ANOVA). The associations between leadership motivation and the reason categories were examined using logistic regression. Finally, the associations between the reason categories and indicators of career sustainability were analyzed with analyses of covariance (ANCOVA).

In Studies II and III, the quantitative analyses were carried out using Mplus Version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010) and SPSS versions 24-26 (IBM Corp., 2016-2019). In all the original studies, the associations between the studied concepts were examined using Pearson and Spearman correlations. In **Study II**, a person-centered analysis (Latent Profile Analysis in Mplus) was used to detect leaders' potential combinations of the three MTL dimensions. Variable-centered methods treat the study populations as homogeneous groups, i.e., on the assumption that these population do not differ with respect to the phenomenon of interest. Thus, variable-centered methods do not yield information about individual differences or enable the identification of individual motivational profiles, which may be described not only in terms of varying levels of overall motivation but also individual combinations of different motivational aspects. These shortcomings can be overcome using person-centered methods (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Wang et al., 2013), which acknowledge heterogeneity within a population and aim to identify possible sub-populations that represent the studied variable(s) differently (i.e., in levels and/or configurations; Howard & Hoffman, 2018; Wang et al., 2013). Continuing with SPSS, the associations between the demographic factors and profile membership were examined using $\chi$2-tests and ANOVAs. The differences between the detected profiles in the MTL dimensions were analyzed using ANOVA. The associations between the MTL profiles and the career sustainability indicators (leader and follower measures) were analyzed using ANCOVA.

In **Study III**, longitudinal hierarchical linear regression in SPSS was used to answer the research questions. The direct associations between intensified job demands and leaders' job burnout (exhaustion, cynicism or inadequacy) over the two-year follow-up were examined first. The buffering role of different aspects of MTL in the associations was also examined, with the MTL dimensions acting as moderators (moderated hierarchical regression). Possible contextual differences (academic vs. non-academic leaders) in moderated associations (three-way interaction) were also investigated.

**TABLE 3** Summary of original studies

| | Participants | Study design and data type | Sustainable career indicator and its measures | Main analyses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Study I: Auvinen et al. (2021) | Leaders (N = 1 031), of whom 233 volunteered to recruit their followers (Followers' N= 987) | Cross-sectional; mixed-method Hierarchical leader-follower data | Health: leader's occupational well-being (burnout, work engagement)<br><br>Productivity: leader performance (assessed via followers' burnout, work engagement) | Qualitative content analysis<br>$\chi 2$<br>ANOVA & ANCOVA<br>Logistic regression |
| Study II: Auvinen et al. (2020) | Leaders (N = 1 003), of whom 233 volunteered to recruit their followers (Followers' N= 987) | Cross-sectional; quantitative Hierarchical leader-follower data | Health: leader's occupational well-being (burnout, work engagement)<br><br>Happiness: leader's career intentions<br><br>Productivity:<br>Follower-rated leader performance (satisfaction with leader's people- and task-related behaviors and dyadic relationship) | Latent Profile Analysis<br>$\chi 2$<br>ANOVA & ANCOVA |
| Study III: Auvinen et al. (2023) | Leaders who held a leader position during two-year follow-up (N = 250) | Longitudinal; quantitative Leader data | Health: leader's occupational well-being (burnout) | Longitudinal hierarchical linear regression<br>Three-way interaction |

# 3 OVERVIEW OF THE ORIGINAL STUDIES

## 3.1 Study I: Drivers or drifters? The "who" and "why" of leader role occupancy—a mixed-method study

**Study I** aimed to answer four focal questions. First, the various reasons behind leader emergence, that is, the factors leaders themselves put forward as having influenced their occupancy of a leadership role, were examined. Second, I explored the associations of individual factors (demographics: occupational group, age, gender, past leadership experience; and leadership motivation) with the reasons given by leaders for occupying a leadership role. The motivation for leadership (conceptualized as AI-MTL, NC-MTL, or SN-MTL) was the main individual factor examined. Third, I explored whether the leaders' different reasons for their leader role occupancy were associated with their career sustainability indicators, i.e., health (conceptualized as work engagement and burnout) and, fourth, whether the leaders' different reasons for their leader role occupancy were associated with their performance as a leader (conceptualized as followers' work engagement and burnout).

The preliminary qualitative analysis yielded 26 different themes, indicating substantial variation in the leaders' descriptions of what had influenced their current occupancy of a leadership role. These themes were classified according to the conceptual model of sustainable careers, and all the three components of the model (person, context, time) were identified. Both agentic and non-agentic attitudes toward pursuing a leadership role were also identified. The themes are presented in Figure 4.

| Agency vs. Non-agency / Sustainable career component | Agentic stance to pursuing leadership | Non-agentic stance to pursuing leadership |
|---|---|---|
| **Person** | Leadership motivation: 18%<br>Strive for impact: 13%<br>Proactive self-development: 8%<br>Proof of good performance: 7%<br>Managerial competencies: 7%<br>Hardworking attitude: 4%<br>Entrepreneurial motives: 3%<br>Leadership skills: 3%<br>Leadership experience: 3%<br>Social motives: 2%<br>Strive to coach: 1 % | Competence: 20%<br>Personal characteristics: 17%<br>Experience: 13%<br>Sense of duty: 4% |
| **Context** | Nature of the job itself: 4% | Procedures typical of a scientific organization or academia: 15%<br>Chance or circumstances: 13%<br>Recognized potential or peer-nomination: 7%<br>Organizational factors: 3% |
| **Time** | Intentional career advancement: 3% | Career evolution: 3% |

Note: The prevalence of each original theme (one or more mentions) among all responses presented as %.

**FIGURE 4** 3 x 2 matrix of themes as reasons for leader role occupancy in relation to sustainable career components and an agentic or non-agentic stance towards leadership identified among Finnish highly educated leaders (N = 1031).

The other results of the study are summarized in Figure 5. Of the individual factors (leader's MTL), the intrinsic component (AI-MTL) significantly predicted all the theory-driven reason categories behind the leaders' occupancy of their leader role, whereas the other motivation types (selfless, NC-MTL, and extrinsic, SN-MTL) did not. Women more often than men mentioned person-related and agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy, and younger leaders reported more agentic reasons than older leaders. Leaders in the academic context mentioned more context- and non-agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy, whereas leaders from the business sector or with some kind of formal leadership training tended to mention more person-related and agentic reasons.

When the associations between the leaders' different reasons for their leader role occupancy and the career sustainability indicators were examined, it was found that the leaders who had reported more person-related and agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy experienced better occupational well-being (less cynicism and inadequacy, and more vigor) than the others. The leaders who had reported agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy also reported stronger dedication.

In addition to their own well-being, the leaders' reasons for their leader role occupancy were also associated with their followers' occupational well-being. Surprisingly, these associations differed from those found for leaders' well-being: for example, while more person-related and agentic reasons associated with lower exhaustion among followers, this association was not found among the leaders themselves.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that leaders who are intrinsically motivated and have proactively chosen their leadership position (reflecting the agentic stance) likely have sufficient and appropriate resources for leadership to perform well in the position and promote good occupational well-being for both themselves and their followers.

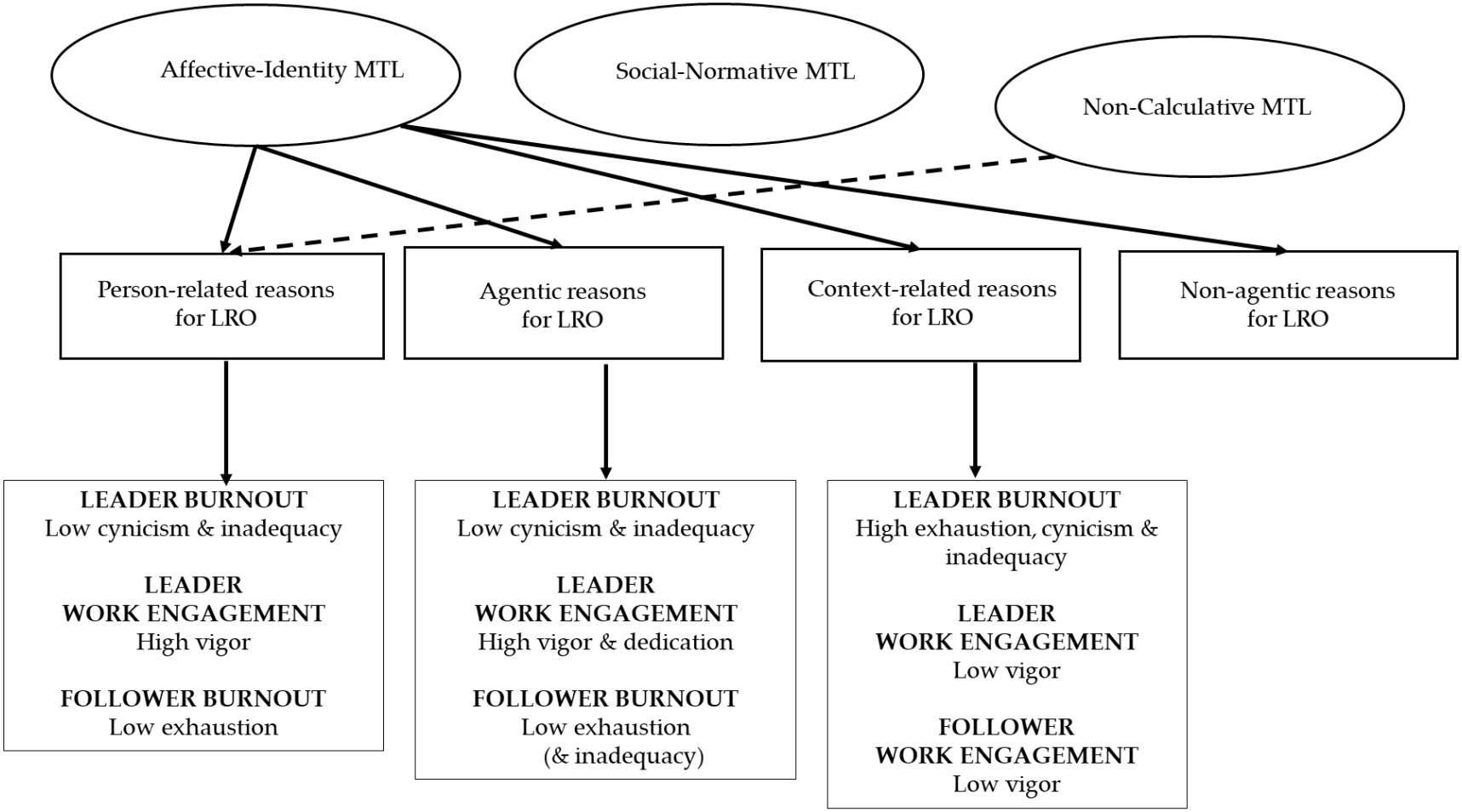



**FIGURE 5**. Overview of the results of Study I.

Note: LRO = leader role occupancy; solid line: *p*-values range between <.05 and <.001; dotted line and (text in parentheses): $p = .07$.

## 3.2 Study II: Leader motivation as a building block for sustainable leader careers: The relationship between leadership motivation profiles and leader and follower outcomes

**Study II** had two broad aims: first, to gain a more detailed understanding of how leaders differ in their motivational resources while in a leading position by examining leadership motivation profiles, and second, to study how these prospective motivation profiles associate with career sustainability indicators (happiness, health and productivity). The focal outcomes were investigated at both the individual (leader self-ratings: leadership career intentions, occupational well-being) and hierarchical level (followers' ratings of their leader: satisfaction with the leader's people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship).

Four distinct MTL profiles were identified based on the subdimensions of MTL (AI-MTL, SN-MTL and NC-MTL) in the data. This indicated that not all the leaders' motivational resources while working in a leadership position were similar. The level of Affective-Identity MTL varied most across the profiles (See Figure 6): the largest profile, the *Affective-Identity-based MTL profile* (42% of the studied leaders), was characterized by moderately high AI-MTL compared to other two motivational dimensions, and the second largest profile, the *Low overall MTL profile* (41% of leaders), was characterized by a below-average level of all three leadership motivation dimensions. The two smaller profiles were considered atypical: the third largest profile, *Low Affective-Identity MTL, High Non-Calculative MTL profile*, contained 12% of the leaders, including those with very low levels of AI-MTL and the highest level of NC-MTL. The smallest profile, the *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL profile,* containing only 5% of the leaders, was characterized by the highest levels of both AI-MTL and SN-MTL.

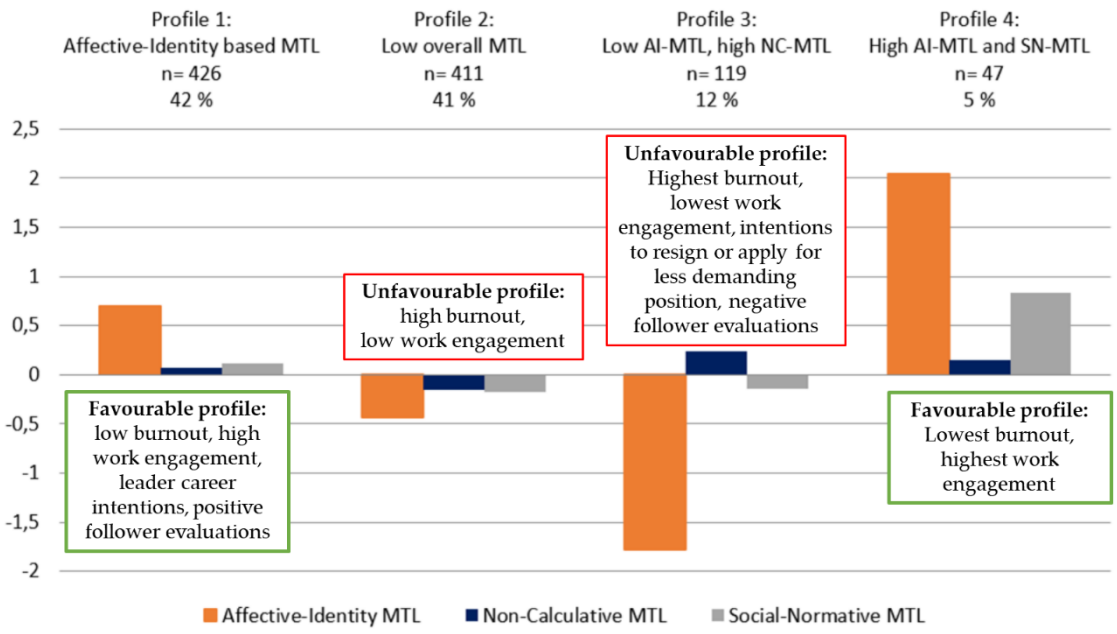



**FIGURE 6** Leaders' latent profiles of Motivation to Lead (MTL) and their relations to studied indicators of sustainable leader careers.

Note: Standardized scores are reported to aid interpretation.

Second, the associations between the MTL profiles and leaders' occupational well-being, leadership-related career intentions, and followers' evaluations of leader behaviors and of their dyadic relationship with the leader were investigated. For leaders themselves and for their followers, membership of the profiles characterized by intrinsic leadership motivation (*Affective-Identity-based MTL* and *High Affective-Identity- and Social-Normative MTL)* were associated with the most positive outcomes. The leaders in these profiles frequently experienced high work engagement and low burnout symptoms. In addition to considering more demanding leadership positions as a viable future career option, they also obtained favorable ratings on their leadership behaviors and dyadic leader-member relationship from their followers. In contrast, membership of the two profiles with low intrinsic leadership motivation (*Low Affective-Identity, High Non-Calculative MTL* and *Low overall MTL*) was related to the most unsatisfactory outcomes from both the leader's own and their followers' perspectives.

In conclusion, the results of this study foregrounded the variety in the leadership motivations of current leaders, indicating that it is important to pay attention to leaders' motivational resources, as they were associated with the career sustainability indicators and could potentially act as resources for a sustainable leader career.

## 3.3 Study III: Towards sustainable leader career in intensified working life: personal resources perspective

**Study III** investigated sustainable leadership careers longitudinally over a two-year period, first, by examining whether the intensification of working life (measured as experiences of intensified job- and career-related planning and decision-making demands, henceforth IJPDs and ICPDs) is associated with career unsustainability (leader's job burnout; exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy), and second, whether a leader's leadership motivation (different MTL dimensions) moderates these potential associations.

The results indicated that ICPDs were associated with higher leader cynicism and inadequacy, but not with exhaustion. However, no association between IJPDs and burnout was found. The results of the buffering effects are summarized in Figure 7. Intrinsic and selfless leadership motivation, namely AI-MTL and NC-MTL buffered against cynicism and inadequacy when leaders experienced intensified career- or job-related planning and decision-making demands. In addition, preliminary evidence on the role of context in these moderating associations was found. In the presence of high job planning demands, the academic leaders benefitted from high levels of AI-MTL, which protected them from feelings of inadequacy. This buffering effect was not found among the non-academic leaders. The moderating role of the MTL dimensions was not found in the association between intensified job demands and exhaustion, and it should also be noted that the "extrinsic component", SN-MTL did not act as a buffering factor in any such associations.

In sum, these preliminary findings on the role of MTL as a buffer against career unsustainability amid today's career demands open an important new avenue for further research.

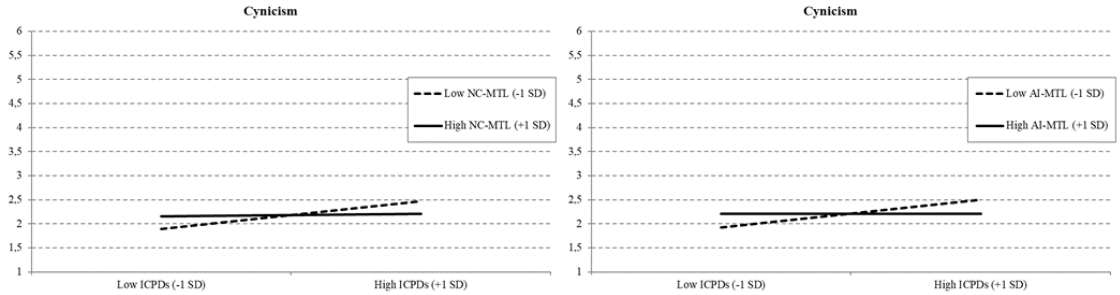



Figure 7a: NC-MTL (left) and AI-MTL (right) moderated the association between intensified career-related planning and decision-making demands and later cynicism.

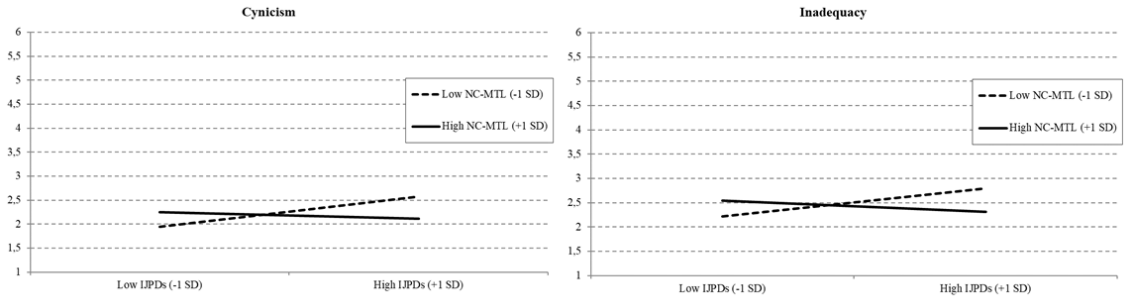



Figure 7b: NC-MTL moderated the association between intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands and later cynicism (left) and inadequacy (right).

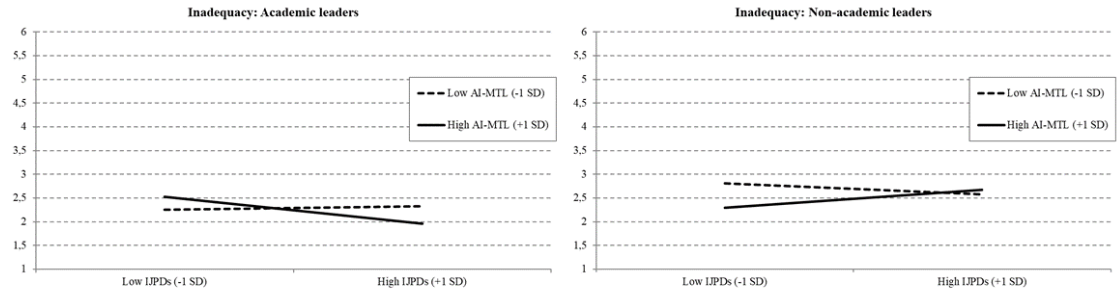



Figure 7c. The moderated association between intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands and inadequacy differed across the studied contexts: in the academic environment (left) AI-MTL acted as buffer whereas in the non-academic context (right) AI-MTL had no buffering effect.

**FIGURE 7** The buffering effects of MTL dimensions against burnout.

# 4 GENERAL DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Main findings of the research

This research aimed at shedding light on how leadership motivation operates as a resource within the framework of sustainable careers that could help Finnish highly educated leaders to build a career that brings about not only happiness, health and productivity but also the experience of meaningfulness at work. Leadership motivation was conceptualized as Motivation to Lead (MTL), a multidimensional concept comprising three components, i.e., Affective-Identity MTL, Social-Normative MTL and Non-Calculative MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). The main findings are summarized below and presented in detail in the original publications.

Study I focused on exploring the variety of reasons given by leaders for their occupancy of a leadership role and how these were related to leadership motivation and career sustainability indicators. The results showed that the pathway to leadership is not always straightforward: a total of 26 different themes explaining leaders' LRO were identified in the qualitative exploration of the survey data. These themes were further grouped according to the components of sustainable careers, i.e., *person, context* and *time,* resulting in theory-driven categories of reasons that explained individuals' paths to leadership. The themes were also grouped into categories based on whether they indicated an agentic or non-agentic stance towards leadership. The most common theme was "Competence" (mentioned in 20% of answers), which was categorized as both a *person* component and as indicating a *non-agentic* stance towards leadership. In giving this answer, leaders were emphasizing competence or qualifications as a quality that they actively possessed. However, this answer (e.g., competence, qualifications) did not highlight the active pursuit of leadership or how it had actively affected their LRO. To give an example of the

reasons that were categorized as non-agentic, one leader wrote, "My personal characteristics, I believe I am seen as an approachable and positive person. - -". This answer was categorized under the theme "Personal characteristics", as exemplifying a *person* component. The next most frequently mentioned themes were "Leadership motivation" (mentioned in 18% of the answers; person and agentic), "Personal characteristics" (mentioned in 17% of the answers; person and non-agentic), and "Procedures typical of scientific organization or academia" (mentioned in 15% of the answers; context and non-agentic).

The results also showed that of the three components of leadership motivation (selfless, NC-MTL, extrinsic, SN-MTL, and intrinsic, AI-MTL) only the intrinsic component AI-MTL predicted mention of all the reason categories, i.e., person, context, agentic and non-agentic, analyzed in the study. The reasons for leader role occupancy were also associated with the leadership career sustainability indicators: the more person-related and agentic reasons leader reported for their leader role occupancy, the better was their personal occupational well-being. Mention of multiple context-related reasons was associated with high burnout and low work engagement. In addition to their own well-being, leaders' reasons for their leader role occupancy were also associated with their followers' occupational well-being: the more person-related or agentic reasons the leader had mentioned, lower the burnout among their followers. In addition, if the leader had mentioned many context-related reasons, their followers' work engagement was low, but was not associated with their followers' burnout.

Study II moved on to explore leadership motivation itself, paying particular attention to its dimensionality: My aim was to gain a more detailed understanding of leaders' motivational resources while in a leading position by examining leadership motivation profiles. I was interested in the associations between the motivational profiles and the career sustainability indicators (leader and follower measures). Applying a person-centered approach, I found typical and atypical combinations of motivations for leadership in the studied leader population. The most common profile revealed by the analysis was "*Affective-Identity-based MTL*", which comprised 42% of the sample of leaders. The leaders in this profile reported moderately high AI-MTL compared to those in the other two motivational dimensions. Almost as common was the *"Low overall MTL"* profile (41% of leaders), which was characterized by a below-average level of all three MTL dimensions.

The motivation profiles that were characterized by high intrinsic motivation, AI-MTL, or a combination of high intrinsic and more extrinsic motivation, SN-MTL, were favorable for the leader's occupational well-being and follower ratings. It was noteworthy that the data included a group of leaders whose intrinsic motivation was strikingly low: in these cases, even in the presence of rather high selfless motivation, NC-MTL, the leader's occupational well-being and follower ratings were poorer compared to those in the other profiles. Based on these findings, I hypothesized that MTL is a personal resource for a

sustainable leadership career. I empirically investigated this possibility in Study III.

In Study III, in which burnout was considered as an indicator of career unsustainability, the buffering effect of MTL was tested using a longitudinal design. After controlling for burnout at baseline, the intrinsic and selfless components of MTL (AI-MTL and NC-MTL) were found to buffer against burnout when high job demands (intensified job-related planning and decision-making demands or intensified career-related planning and decision-making demands) were present. The study also revealed that when leaders experienced the demands of career self-management as high, they also reported more cynicism and inadequacy. The preliminary evidence also suggests that the context in which the leader operates matters. The academic leaders seemed to benefit from high levels of intrinsic motivation in the presence of high job planning demands, as it buffered against inadequacy. For the leaders in non-academic contexts, high AI-MTL showed no buffering effect on the association between job planning demands and inadequacy.

In the following sections, I introduce the key results of this thesis in relation to the components (time, person and context) of a sustainable career and discuss how these results can assist in the construction of sustainable leadership careers.

## 4.2 Time: Who can tell where the road goes?

When it comes to constructing a sustainable career, a glance in the rear-view mirror might also be revealing. Our analysis of leaders' reasons for their leader role occupancy (LRO) showed that over time their career paths could be influenced by agency. The two categories of agency, i.e., agency and non-agency, elegantly explained time-person interplay: the category "Intentional career advancement" described agentic actions and motivation targeted at moving up in the leadership hierarchy or acquiring a better position or status, whereas the category "Career evolution" was characterized by a non-agentic stance, in which the individual's career progression and leadership position had evolved over a long period. Although time-related reasons were very much in the minority, accounting for only 3 percent of the themes mentioned, our findings clearly show the importance of examining all of the components of career sustainability when assessing its future prospects. In real life, the components (in this case, time and person) are inextricably intertwined. However, we were unable to investigate how the time component *per se* affects the construction of a sustainable career, as time-related reasons were too rarely mentioned to be reliably studied using statistical methods.

The true sustainability of a career can only be determined in retrospect and reliably assessed longitudinally (De Vos et al., 2020). Therefore, I used a longitudinal design to examine whether leaders' occupational well-being was affected by preceding stressors. From the sustainability perspective, my interest

was in the potential buffering role of Motivation to Lead: I hypothesized that MTL buffers against the harmful effects of intensified job demands on leaders' occupational well-being (measured as leader job burnout, an indicator of career unsustainability). The two-year time lag proved sufficient to show that leadership motivation buffered against leader burnout in the association between intensified job planning and career-related demands. As burnout evolves over time (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), controlling for the level of previous burnout enabled us to examine the difference made by the moderating variable, i.e., the different MTL dimensions, during the two-year follow-up period.

Our findings showed that, during the follow-up, the intrinsic (AI-MTL) and selfless (NC-MTL) components of MTL buffered against burnout, when either high job planning demands or intense career-related demands were present. When a leader faced intense career-related demands (i.e., pressure to improve one's skills, psychological capital and networks to secure employment and enhance attractiveness in the labor market), a lower level of intrinsic or selfless motivation rendered them prone to higher cynicism two years later. Similarly, when a leader experienced high job planning demands, i.e., planning and structuring one's work independently, and autonomously setting work goals, a lower level of selfless leadership motivation exposed them later to higher cynicism and inadequacy. During the two-year measurement interval, the more extrinsic motivational component, SN-MTL, failed to act as a buffer and none of the of MTL components buffered against exhaustion when either intensified job-related or career-related demands were present. Such time-related aspects can only be properly studied if MTL is integrated into the sustainable career literature. It is also clear that the aspect of time can only be studied together with the experiencer, i.e., the career-holder in question.

## 4.3 Person - Everyone is the architect of their own fortune?

As the conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020) suggests, our findings also indicate that person-related aspects are central in evaluating the sustainability of a leadership career. I took a person-centered approach to the study of leadership motivation to be able to explore the individual nature of leadership motivation and found, as expected, that leaders differ widely from each other in their motivational resources.

My examination of the leader data yielded four different "motivation profiles". The profiles differed in their combinations of the MTL dimensions. The majority of the leaders (42%; profile 1) were in the profile characterized by intrinsic, Affective-Identity MTL: while these leaders ' levels of the other MTL components were average, their level of AI-MTL was clearly above average, when compared to that of all the other leaders in the sample. Almost as many leaders (41%; profile 2) were in the profile characterized by low overall MTL, with a below-average level in each MTL component (AI-MTL, SN-MTL and NC-

MTL). Two atypical profiles were also found, supporting the usefulness of person-centered methods in general and Latent Profile Analysis in particular. The first of these (profile 3), comprising 12% of the leaders, showed strikingly low intrinsic leadership motivation (AI-MTL) but the highest selfless motivation (NC-MTL) of all the leaders in the sample. The fourth profile, containing five percent of the leaders, was characterized by notably high intrinsic and normative motivation (AI-MTL and SN-MTL). Interestingly, the leaders' occupational background was associated with their profile membership: in the profiles characterized by low overall MTL or low intrinsic motivation, the academic leaders (profiles 2, 3) and social and health care leaders (profile 3) were overrepresented. In contrast, the business sector leaders were overrepresented in the profiles characterized by high intrinsic (profile 1) or high intrinsic and normative (profile 4) motivation. These findings are in line with Askling and Stensaker (2002) and Chan et al. (2012; 2015), who have previously discussed the low leadership motivation found among academics.

While the profiles reflect the characteristics of the data and the leaders studied, their emergence in the large-scale data (N = 1003) underlines the importance, when looking at motivation, of individuality and uniqueness. Moreover, while the societal narrative may hint that leader positions and the status are generally highly valued and sought-after in every context, the truth about a given leader's motivation to occupy a leadership position may suggest something else. The uniqueness of individual leaders' motivation should be the focus when seeking to support career sustainability.

To determine the associations between these different motivational combinations and the career sustainability indicators, leaders' occupational well-being, career intentions and their followers' satisfaction were assessed. An important finding was that leaders in the profiles with high intrinsic motivation (i.e., *AI-MTL-based* or *High AI- and SN-MTL*) reported the highest levels of occupational well-being and career intentions targeted towards the continuity of their leadership career, meaning that they would be applying for more demanding positions in the near future. In contrast, leaders whose profile was characterized by low overall motivational resources or very low intrinsic motivation towards leadership reported poor occupational well-being and a desire to step away from positions of leadership altogether or apply for less demanding positions. A similar trend was found in followers' evaluations of their leader's task- and people-related leadership behaviors and the dyadic leader-member relationship: the leaders in the profiles characterized by higher or more adequate resources also received more positive evaluations from their followers on their task- or people-related leadership behaviors and direct relationship with their followers. These findings led me to consider the MTL as a personal resource for leadership. This formed the topic of the next study, in which I adopted a variable-centered approach.

As indicated by the previous results, an intrinsic leadership motivation (alone or in combination with high normative motivation) seemed to associate

with favorable results from the perspective of leaders' career sustainability. In contrast, career unsustainability was indicated if the motivation to lead was generally low or if the leader's *intrinsic motivation* was very low. In such cases, even when a high level of selfless motivation was associated with low intrinsic motivation, the outcomes for career sustainability as a leader were not favorable.

The intrinsic dimension of leadership motivation, AI-MTL, was also associated with the reasons that leaders mentioned for their leader role occupancy (LRO). Leaders who had a higher level of intrinsic motivation towards leadership were more likely to give person-related and agentic reasons for their LRO, and less likely to give reasons that stemmed from the surrounding context or indicated a non-agentic stance towards their role as a leader. The other types of leadership motivation were not associated with naming any of the reason categories studied (person, context, agentic, non-agentic). Person-related and agentic reasons combined with an intrinsic leadership motivation described "drivers", i.e., leaders who had actively pursued a leadership career. They had better occupational well-being (less cynicism and inadequacy, and more vigor). Giving agentic reasons for leader role occupancy was also associated with stronger dedication to being a leader. In addition to their own well-being, leaders' reasons for their LRO were also associated with their followers' occupational well-being. As I see it, the level of followers' occupational well-being can be considered an indicator of leader performance: a leader with sufficient and adequate resources for leadership is capable of investing effort and resources in leader behaviors that will eventually be reflected in followers' good occupational well-being. Thus, a leader's career path characterized by agency and proactivity seems fruitful from the perspective of leader career continuity. In contrast, some leaders also emphasized non-agentic and context-related reasons for their LRO. These leaders, so-called "drifters", seemed to end up in their position rather than having actively pursued it. Mentioning more non-agentic or context-related reasons was also associated with poorer leader well-being and poorer follower outcomes.

These findings indicate that agency is a key prerequisite of a sustainable leadership career, thereby confirming the theoretical assumptions of the sustainable careers model proposed by De Vos et al. (2020). However, in line with Hanna et al. (2021) and Inkson et al. (2012), it was found that factors other than personal agency can also affect leader career construction. These are discussed in the following section.

## 4.4 Context – No one is an island

As humans, we do not operate in isolation but in constant interaction with our environment – whether conceptualized at the micro- or macro-level. In this research, the issue of career sustainability was approached on both levels. I investigated the micro-level context by focusing on the leader's working

environment (academic vs. non-academic) and the macro-level context by focusing on the societal phenomenon of work intensification.

The results of my studies suggest that their working environment may have an enormous impact on leaders' career sustainability. This finding resonates with Heilmann (2004), who found in her doctoral dissertation that the environment in which a managerial career develops affects *how* it will unfold. In the present dissertation research, the leaders in an academic working environment seemed to be struggling to meet the prerequisites of career sustainability: they generally had lower motivational resources, especially a low intrinsic motivation for leadership (profiles 2 and 3 in Study II). It is well known that the primary motivation for academics may not be leading others but relate to the objectives of their profession such as teaching and conducting research (see, e.g,. Chan et al., 2012; 2015; 2017). In the academic context, positions of leadership are viewed as an inevitable duty, as something that everyone must do in turn (Askling & Stensaker, 2002). For the present academic leaders, their career sustainability was threatened, as all the studied indicators (occupational well-being in the form of job burnout and work engagement; career intentions and followers' occupational well-being as a representation of leader performance) were unfavorable. The leaders in academic environments also reported more context-related and non-agentic instead of active, person-related reasons for their LRO. An example of the context-related reason theme category was "Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia", which included such factors that affect leader role occupancy as acquiring research funding, leading one's own research projects, or a status (professorship) that may eventually result in leadership duties. The theme "Organizational factors" (an example quote: "There is no one else to appoint as a leader in our unit"), which included matters such as organizational restructuring, the size of the unit or department, or filling a void also played a role for many such leaders in their leader role occupancy.

I termed the leaders whose LRO stemmed largely from context-related reasons and indicated a non-agentic stance towards leadership as "drifters", describing their adaptation to the demands of their environment rather than the proactive construction of a leadership career. It was notable that having greater intrinsic motivation reduced the probability of mentioning these reasons for LRO: in other words, the "drifters" likely had an altogether lower intrinsic motivation for leadership. Mentioning context-related reasons for LRO was associated with increased job burnout – exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy – and decreased vigor in the leaders themselves (and also decreased vigor in their followers). This indicates that for "drifters", a career based on reasons arising out of contextual factors may not unfold as sustainable in the long run – this should be borne in mind, especially in professional environments generally characterized as having little interest in leadership.

In academic context, somewhat reluctant and avoidant culture and attitudes towards leadership interact with an individual's personal, motivational resources, resulting in the prerequisites for sustainable leader career. The culture

and attitudes to leadership in a non-academic working environment (i.e., the so-called business context) are very different: the leaders working in this context generally reported greater overall motivation and, especially, great intrinsic and normative leadership motivation as compared to their counterparts in the academy. These leaders' motivational resources were associated with favorable prospects for their career sustainability, as their job burnout was low, work engagement high and they reported more leadership-related career intentions for their near future. Moreover, when their performance was assessed by their followers' occupational well-being, these motivational resources seemed to be beneficial.

As highlighted in the beginning of this section, the holistic investigation of a *person in a specific context* is needed when assessing or seeking to support their career sustainability (Hanna et al., 2021; Inkson et al., 2012). This viewpoint is supported by our preliminary findings on the contextual differences in how leadership motivation buffered against job burnout in an intensified working life environment. Work intensification, a broad societal phenomenon, and, more specifically, job planning demands and career-related demands as more everyday stressors, were examined as an example of the working environment in which careers nowadays unfold. For the academic leaders, an intrinsic leadership motivation seemed buffer against inadequacy when they were faced with high job planning demands: in this stressful situation, a more intrinsic leadership motivation protected them from feeling incompetent or lacking professional efficacy and from a tendency to evaluate their own input at work negatively. In this context, in which leadership is shunned rather than sought after, having an intrinsic motivation to lead others acted as a buffering resource. However, this was not the case for the leaders in a non-academic environments: the moderating effect of AI-MTL did not hold true for this group.

It was beyond the scope of this research to examine the mechanism or the root of these contextual differences, i.e., why AI-MTL was helpful for academic leaders and what specific aspects of the two contexts cause the difference in the buffering effect. It can be assumed that the match between motivation and position (person-career/role fit) is stronger and more valuable for an individual in a context in which leadership positions are not actively pursued – or wanted at all – by many of those employed in it (Askling & Stensaker, 2002). In such contexts, even a low level of motivation may be valuable, if one's peers have no motivation at all. In contrast, in the business context, which was examined as the opposite of the academic environment in leadership motivation, leader positions are generally highly valued and competed for. In these contexts where many peers may be pursuing the same position, an individual may not benefit from leadership motivation until it is on quite a high level. Nevertheless, these findings point to the importance of assessing the features of one's context together with one's personal motivational resources when constructing one's career path either individually (career self-management) or organizationally (organization-based career management).

## 4.5 Strengths and limitations of the research

The main strength of this thesis lies in the integration of the concept of MTL into career studies, as it has previously only received attention in the leadership literature. This dissertation research extended MTL research beyond its original focus on leadership from the dominant social influence and leader performance perspective towards the perspective of leader *careers*. As MTL has been traditionally studied in relation to leader emergence and effectiveness from a viewpoint of social influence, this research also contributes to the study of leadership by showing, via the career sustainability paradigm, how MTL is also an important psychological resource for leaders and may assist in career construction. This notion has a powerful message: leadership could be studied not only as a social phenomenon that highlights leader emergence and effectiveness, but also from other perspectives that enhance leader well-being and endurable careers.

By examining the career-related motivation of leaders in their career context it was possible to elaborate our understanding on how leadership careers unfold in reality and their potential sustainability. As in the leader emergence literature, the majority of career decision-making studies have focused on *individual-level mechanisms* and career management motivations (Hanna et al., 2021; Wang & Wanberg, 2017). In their review on career studies, Akkermans and Kubasch (2017, p. 591) called for "… in-depth knowledge about the interplay between micro, meso, and macro issues in individual career decision making." The present research, albeit not focused purely on career decision making, contributes to the discussion about how leader careers unfold in relation to contextual and time-related factors as well as person-related reasons and motivations. The findings of my dissertation suggest that even the most coveted positions (as the position and status of a leader is generally viewed) are sometimes occupied by individuals with little intrinsic motivation and for external, non-agentic reasons.

Chan and Drasgow's (2001) framework on individual differences in leadership behaviors in which they originally presented the construct of MTL, is based on the idea of agentic leader development and leadership potential, leaving contextual factors aside. In line with Hanna et al. (2021), who argued that situational and contextual factors are under-represented in the leader emergence literature, the results of this dissertation research provide complementary information that broadens the existing perspective. This dissertation shows that giving consideration to the role of person-context interactions in these processes is vital, as no one is an island: we all affect and are affected by our environments.

Methodologically, this dissertation research has considerable strengths. As part of a larger research project, it benefitted from the careful planning of the data collection and the selection of questionnaires to measure the phenomena of interest. The nested structure of the data (leaders matched with their followers) gives this research added value compared to previous MTL studies. This was

particularly beneficial, as we assessed leader performance as an indicator of a sustainable leadership career via their followers' ratings: that is, we considered followers' occupational well-being or satisfaction with their leaders' behaviors as an indicator of leader performance, by hypothesizing that poor leader performance (e.g., poor interaction with followers, resulting in an insufficient flow of information or the inability to make decisions that affect other people) would be manifested as high burnout and low work engagement among followers (see also Harms et al., 2017). The use of other than self-report data to describe leader performance also reduces the risk of common method bias, which is a general concern when relying solely on self-report data, especially when measuring themes that are sensitive or easily evoke socially desirable responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In both quality and extent, the data used are exceptional when compared to the majority of the previous MTL studies, which have mostly relied on student or military samples, or have been somewhat limited in sample size (see Table 2). I was fortunate to be able to utilize data on 1 220 leaders who were willing to share the reality, the joys and sorrows, of being in a leading position. Studying highly educated leaders in various sectors from academia to business enabled a rich picture to be gained of leadership motivation in these populations of leaders. The hierarchical dataset, comprising 242 leaders and their 990 direct followers, adds to the methodological value of this research. Given the educational background of the studied leaders, it should be kept in mind that the findings of this research can only be generalized to highly educated leaders – experiences from leaders with other educational backgrounds, however, also merit investigation.

Career studies with cross-sectional designs that only provide snapshots of time give only limited information about such career processes as career sustainability. In this research, we were able to study the same leaders over a two-year period, enabling inferences to be made about temporal causation (Study III). This revealed that leaders are also at risk for burnout due to career-related demands, as opposed to the findings reported by Baruch and Vardi (2016). In Study I, which utilized a mixed method approach, the qualitative investigation (inquiry about the reasons that have affected one's leader role occupancy) also involved a temporal perspective: I was able to delve into leaders' thoughts about their leader role occupancy retrospectively, and the supposed outcomes described the experiences of the moment when taking the survey. Although the design is not longitudinal in the strict sense, the temporal order of the variables studied follows a logic that is theoretically relevant for research on career sustainability.

In addition to utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data, this research also used both variable- and person-centered investigations, deepening the methodological triangulation. A person-centered approach acknowledges the heterogeneity in the studied phenomenon. Whereas variable-centered methods assume that the studied variables will show similar trends in the population,

person-centered methods allow for between-subject variation and acknowledge the existence of possible subsamples in the sample under investigation (e.g., Meyer & Morin, 2016). As the MTL dimensions correlated only weakly with each other, the use of person-centered methods allowed investigation of the interdependence between the dimensions and configuration of the motivational combinations of the different MTL dimensions between studied leaders. A purely variable-centered investigation would have ignored the different motivational profiles and therefore possibly strengthened the idea that all leaders share a similar leadership motivation.

Despite these strengths, this research also has its limitations. The response rates varied from 15 to 45 percent per trade union, and to collect sufficient data for a robust hierarchical analysis, additional data had to be collected. However, it should be borne in mind that in current research in which electronical surveys are used, low response rates are not unexceptional (see, e.g., Fan & Yan, 2010). More responses were collected from the trade unions for academics (i.e., professors, university researchers and teachers), meaning that academic sample had relatively higher representation in the data. In this specific research project, the fact that we were unable to compare the baseline survey participants to the studied population on, for example, demographic factors, must also be seen as a limitation.

The time frame of the study, two years with only two measurement points, may potentially mask some of the fluctuations in the studied variables. Adding more measurement points would have revealed potential variation in leaders' MTL and given finer-grained information on the phenomenon of interest. However, as MTL is said to be both stable and dynamic (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), a two-year follow-up period can be considered sufficient for change to occur and for measuring possible change cost-effectively and in a respondent-friendly manner. The other outcome measures (e.g., measures of occupational well-being) also suited the chosen follow-up time, as they reflect processes that develop as a result of the interplay between work and human (job burnout, work engagement; see, e.g., Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Moreover, the time frame was determined by the parent research project (the WAL study) of which this dissertation forms part: thus, not all the choices influencing my research were of my making. This also concerns some measurement-related issues; for example, no objective measurements, e.g., of leader performance, were included in the first data collection. In addition, the post hoc power analyses conducted for Study III indicated that the statistical power levels (ranging from .55, indicating medium power, to .89, which indicates high power) of the moderating associations could have been larger. Small moderator effects are said to be typical of non-experimental field studies (e.g., McClelland & Judd, 1993). Thus, even if only 1-2% of the total variance is explained, then this information should be considered valuable (Evans, 1985). Although some of the findings were based on only a medium level of statistical power, they may serve as an interesting starting point for further studies with larger samples.

## 4.6 Ethical issues

The present research was carried out as a part of two broader research projects: Worries About Leadership (WAL; see Auvinen et al., 2019; Feldt et al., 2019) and MOTILEAD (Toropainen et al., 2023). Both were funded by Finnish Work Environment Fund. Therefore, the ethical issues of this dissertation research need to be investigated in conjunction with these research projects.

Both projects had undergone a risk analysis procedure at the University of Jyväskylä. The research projects followed the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), which clarified that no approval was required by an ethical or institutional review board to conduct the research: all the participants were adults who voluntary consented to participate in the study. Moreover, informed consent to participate in the study had anyway to be obtained from the participants for their responses to be utilized as a part of the research data. Participation was not only voluntary, but participants could also withdraw from the study at any point. As researchers, we aimed at providing as much relevant information about the aims of the study and on practical matters (e.g., the time needed to fill in the questionnaire) as we could, and in addition to that, participants were provided with the researchers' email address for any possible further inquiries concerning the research.

The data were processed and stored according to the existing legislation, on personal data and privacy (Personal Data Act 523/1999, Data Protection Act 1050/2018 and the European Data Protection Regulation, GDPR, 2016/679). As some themes that were examined in the projects (e.g., dyadic leader-follower relationship, occupational well-being) can be considered sensitive topics, special attention was paid to informing the participants about the absolute confidentiality of their survey responses. Confidentiality and obtaining reliable results were a key reason for collaborating with the trade unions in the data collection for both research projects, instead of, for example, directly with companies or other private organizations. In such cases, uncertainty about how the results would be processed in the organization and whether the respondents could be identified from the results might have had an effect on willingness to participate and resulted in problems such as low response activity and socially desirable responding.

Personal email addresses were collected only from those participants who either volunteered to participate in the follow up surveys or who were willing to receive personal feedback on their occupational well-being or leadership motivation. To send this voluntary feedback, a participant's survey responses on work engagement and leadership motivation were collated on an Excel form which produced visual graphs that could be inserted in an email template. The template contained a brief presentation of the feedback topics in addition to participant's personal scores in visual form. Feedback emails were sent to the participants from the researchers' shared e-mailbox, which was set up for the

purposes of the research project. The research assistants, who sent the feedback emails, were carefully informed about maintaining confidentiality when handling such personal data. After collecting the data and sending the feedback emails, all personal information was deleted from the researchers' files.

For analytical purposes, pseudonymous data sets were created, containing only a numerical identifier for each respondent. For the hierarchical data, the follower participants received a personal numerical identifier that enabled them to answer the survey questions. The same identifier was used to connect their answers with the answers of their leader. The answers from the follower participants were directed to the university server such that they were never visible to the leader who recruited them. Like all the other project data, these data were stored in the university server and only accessible to the members of the research group.

One important aspect of ethical research is data transparency ("open data") and utilizing the data collected to its fullest capacity. At the very beginning of the first research project, the WAL study, the participants were informed that the data would be analyzed by the research group only. This means that the data from these research projects can, at most, be considered "semi-transparent", as they cannot be archived for public use or accessed by any other researcher, even if totally anonymized. However, as they had been invited to join the research group for their thesis period, the students of psychology working on their bachelor's or master's thesis could have utilized the data. Hence, the data were "semi-transparent", meaning that the data collected have been thoroughly utilized and that multiple research questions have been analyzed based on them, as well as those explored in the research projects and in my research.

## 4.7 Evaluation of the present study

In this section, the present research is evaluated in terms of its reliability and validity. Validity and reliability can be defined from two different perspectives: first, whether the measurement or research method is valid and/or reliable, and second, whether the conclusions drawn from the results are valid and/or reliable. These two perspectives aid in evaluating this dissertation research.

### 4.7.1 Assessing the reliability and validity of research methods

The research methods chosen will guide the nature of the information obtained: therefore, the validity of the research methods is of particular importance. From the standpoint of chosen research methods, the advantage of my dissertation research is the use of widely studied, well-established questionnaires that measure the core concepts of the study. In my research I also used measures that were developed for the needs of the research project, e.g. leader career intentions and followers' assessments of their leader's leadership behaviors. These

indicators were developed jointly by several researchers with a high level of expertise in their field, which increases the reliability of the measures. The selected study measures also showed good reliability across the different sub-studies (Studies I-III), and both the stability (stability over time) and consistency (coherence, congruence) of the measures were assessed by examining, for example, Cronbach's alpha coefficients at different measurement points in the research project. Depending on the measure used, these coefficients showed a reasonably good or even excellent degree of consistency.

My dissertation research focused on leaders' personal resources and their own evaluations of their conditions for career sustainability (e.g., occupational well-being), so the use of self-assessments is justified – although the use of self-assessments is not without problems (the risk for common method bias; see Chapter 4.5). Although the subject of the study – leadership motivation and for example, occupational well-being – taps the personal level, it is not necessarily such a sensitive personal topic that would tempt one to respond in a socially desirable way in the survey: workplaces and organizations conduct many staff surveys on similar phenomena and well-being at work has become an increasingly common topic for public discussion in recent years.

At the data collection phase, the sampling was designed to avoid selection bias. This was best achieved in the samples collected through trade unions (data collection described in more detail in Chapter 2.1). Selection bias may have occurred in additional sample collection, which used an open invitation link distributed via social media, managerial network and students to recruit respondents from their acquaintances. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, several test versions of the questionnaire were carried out in collaboration with trade union representatives. The main challenge from the perspective of external validity assessment is that for the main research project that my dissertation is a part of, we were unable to compare the baseline survey participants to the studied population, as not all the necessary background information (e.g., demographic factors) was available from the trade unions.

The data analysis methods used were chosen to best answer the research questions. To improve the reliability of the content analysis of the qualitative data (Study I), the data were read until the so-called saturation point was reached (i.e., no new response categories emerged) and several coders were used to classify the data into the thematic categories. The agreement of the coders was assessed by the Krippendorf's alpha coefficient. The process of qualitative analysis was carefully documented. When examining individual variation and the occurrence of a phenomenon at the personal level, it is impossible to use analytical methods with basic assumption of the population under study being a homogeneous group with respect to the phenomenon under investigation. For this reason, Study II used a person-centered Latent Profile Analysis, which allows for variation in the studied phenomenon between individuals and the existence of different subgroups within the studied population (Howard & Hoffman, 2018; Wang et al., 2013). Study III aimed to examine the impact of multiple variables

on leader burnout, which was conceptualized as a risk for sustainable careers. To address this need, a hierarchical regression analysis was selected, as it also allowed for the exploration of moderated associations. As the Study III was first to test the buffering role of MTL in the stressor-outcome associations (moderating role of MTL), the study needs to be replicated with different leader populations to verify MTL's role as a buffering resource.

### 4.7.2 Assessing the reliability and validity of conclusions

Here, validity refers to the conclusions drawn from the study results: whether the data used, the research methods and the results obtained justify the conclusions drawn. In addition, the relevance of the study results is also considered.

The results of this dissertation research are relevant for individuals in leading positions in Finnish context. The data used consisted of highly educated Finnish leaders and in Finland, 42% of the population has completed tertiary education (OECD, 2023). The population studied, Finnish highly educated leaders, can be considered to be representative also of a group of professionals whose career prospects are equally balanced between "expert and leader positions". It is therefore worth noting that they may have more diverse career opportunities (i.e., professional or leader career), compared to those who have progressed to a leading position without higher education qualifications (e.g. in the case of inheriting a family business). In such a situation, an individual may have more than one equally strong career motivation (e.g., academic leaders), in which case the weight of MTL as a personal resource may differ from that of an individual with only one strong career motivation. However, addressing this aspect was not one of the key research questions in my dissertation.

The evaluation of qualitative research differs considerably from the evaluation of the quantitative research, and it has also been suggested that there are better concepts for the evaluation of qualitative research than validity and reliability, which are the established concepts in the evaluation of quantitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). In the case of qualitative research, validity can rather be understood how well the concepts perceived by the researcher correspond to those produced by the study participants, and how well the researcher is able to reproduce these concepts in an understandable way in their study report. The assessment of the validity of qualitative research is thus primarily a critical evaluation of the whole process of research and a reflection of the researcher. In qualitative research, reliability can be achieved by documenting the research design and process as accurately as possible.

When assessing the reliability of the conclusions drawn from qualitative data results, attention can be directed to the theory-driven content analysis of reported in Study I. Here, the aim was to situate the thematic categories that emerged from the data within a pre-given theory, in this case the conceptual model of sustainable careers by De Vos et al. (2020), in addition to an assessment of the degree of agency (agency vs. non-agency; theory-driven coding). In some

cases, the open-ended responses produced by the participants were only one word long (an example response: "education"), which meant that as a researcher, I had to consider not only the *content* of the response but also *how it was presented* in relation to the question posed. In terms of content, the answer above ("education") can refer to active participation in the training and acquisition of knowledge. However, a one-word answer in itself does not give the impression of an active pursuit on the part of the respondent, reflecting something that the respondent would have done to achieve a certain goal (e.g., attain education). Examples of such responses could have been e.g. "My training for the role" or "I have acquired an education". These fictitious example answers correspond in content to the same thematic category as the earlier example, but they differ in the way how respondent's own agency and "ownership of education" comes to the fore. After discussing with my co-authors, this was the analytical choice I made when assessing the level of agency and it may be reflected in the conclusions drawn from the qualitative data.

The assessment of reliability is more straightforward for the conclusions drawn from the quantitative data results. The research questions and methods were designed to meet the objectives of the study. It was not possible to examine criterion validity in my study, as I did not have another similar measure of leadership motivation (concurrent validity) in use. Investigating the predictive validity of MTL measure is presented as one of the new openings for future research in Chapter 4.9. For the leadership motivation measure, the construct validity could be improved by improving the conceptualization of the Non-Calculative MTL in particular at the level of the individual items of the measure. The original questionnaire by Chan & Drasgow (2001) initially measured *calculative leadership motivation*, which was then revised to describe non-calculative motivation for leadership. The questionnaire I used in my study measures non-calculative leadership motivation (see Chapter 4.9 for more details), so the results and the conclusions obtained can be assumed to reflect the selfless, altruistic approach to leadership that the concept of NC-MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) was intended to capture. This study was in many respects the first to look at the role of MTL in the context of sustainable leader careers, which makes it difficult to thoroughly assess the reliability of conclusions. The reliability of the conclusions can best be assessed only when a similar study design is repeated (test-retest reliability), so that a study repeated under similar conditions and with similar data would yield similar results to the present study.

This study provided answers to the research questions set: in this respect, the study can be considered highly reliable. In all research, however, it is worth noting that no research can ever provide a complete explanation for the studied issue, but the research and the information obtained is always filtered through the "glasses" of the researcher - reflecting the researcher's perceptions and assumptions - even if the researcher strives for objectivity. In addition, research (both quantitative and qualitative) is always contextual, meaning that it is linked

to time, place, and the researcher. In this sense, too, the absolute truth cannot be achieved through research.

## 4.8 Practical suggestions

The findings of my research various practical implications for leadership motivation. In the following sub-sections, I present a few implications for both individuals and organizations.

### 4.8.1 Individual level implications

Familiarizing oneself with one's individual leadership motivation can be fruitful for those in a leadership position as well as those who may become leaders in the future. For a leader-to-be or someone without a formal leadership position, it may be beneficial to raise one's level of self-awareness by exploring one's different motivations to leadership (intrinsic, normative and selfless MTL). One could ask oneself questions such as "If I was offered a leader position, would I find it inspiring? and "What would be the 'why' behind my decision?" Reflecting on these motivational questions would be equally valuable whether one is deciding to accept or decline an offer of a leadership position. The dimensions of MTL can thus act as guidelines in this situation. Even if the decision is negative, the motivational aspects that MTL as a concept describes (intrinsic, extrinsic, selfless), can give an individual insight about what is important to them in leadership or in other roles in working life.

For someone in a leadership position or one with leadership-related duties, the practical implications of the results of this dissertation research have even greater relevance. As in the case of those without a formal leadership position, leaders themselves can benefit from gaining familiarity with the concept of MTL, which can act as a source of self-awareness and potentially, by means of psychoeducation, as a leadership mini-intervention. Pondering one's individual motives for becoming a leader can broaden one's perspective about oneself in that role even without enrolling in a formal leadership development program. In addition to self-awareness, reflection on one's personal motives for being a leader can translate into pondering on meaningfulness of one's work and the sources of meaning that being in a leader role may bring about. While no published studies exist on the connection between MTL and the mechanisms that generate meaningfulness in work, it can be proposed that because the different MTL dimensions have different origins, their mechanisms for generating experiences of meaningfulness in work are also likely to differ.

One important issue from the career sustainability perspective is the interplay between the meanings or needs that are important to the individual and the extent to which these are fulfilled in performing one's current work (task, position, role; Peterson et al., 2017). For a leader, this could mean valuing and

deriving meaning from the status and authority that being in a leader role entail. However, how this can be fulfilled in one's work depends on whether, for example, the individual works at the CEO level or as a line manager. This can result either in a gap or fit between meaningfulness and fulfillment – between what is personally important and how far it can be realized in one's present job. When a gap is present, it is vital to acknowledge and explore it, as it may prompt a move, either to establish a better balance between the personal meaning of one's role and its fulfillment or, alternatively, if an individual has the possibility to influence their situation, to make a career shift to a more fulfilling position altogether. According to Peterson et al. (2017, 2019) and Rantanen et al. (2022), such pondering and reflection on present reality and one's expectations can lead to higher life satisfaction, if the experienced conflict or gap is identified and the individual is motivated to pursue a solution to resolve it. It goes without saying that from the perspective of sustainable careers, this kind of individual "meaning work" is integral: experiencing satisfaction and meaning in one's current work enables the accumulation of other important resources that can promote well-being and life satisfaction both in work and in non-work.

For leaders, the resource perspective is of central importance for both individual well-being and career continuity. In addition to supporting meaning-making, motivational resources *per se* can also support or drain other resources that are needed to ensure positive outcomes for both the individual and their career. The main idea informing this dissertation is that to be able to flourish in one's work and build a lasting career, personal resources in the form of career-related motivation are needed. If a leader's motivational resources are insufficient (low overall) or inadequate (low intrinsic, normative or selfless leadership motivation), daily life as a leader can turn into a struggle. To put it bluntly, if a leader is not interested in leading others or taking care of other leadership-related duties, or if the reasons behind the occupancy of a leader role are, e.g., calculative, that leader can be expected to deploy a passive-avoidant leadership style, putting in less or non-optimal effort into the role (Murray & Chua, 2014). According to the tenets of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1988; 1998; 2001), disliking one's current role or stumbling along making a minimum effort fulfil one's role-related duties drains one's individual resources, for example by adding to the burden of negative feelings (resource loss spiral). However, if a leader has an adequate resource pool for leadership (finds the role rewarding and derives meaning from it through any of the above-mentioned ways), a resource gain spiral, and hence resource accumulation, is likely. The possession of adequate motivational resources for leadership can be seen in the effort that the leader invests in the role, manifested in positive leadership behaviors and interactions in the workplace, that can not only be rewarding as such, but can also generate other positive experiences that lead to resource gain (e.g., more effort put into role-related duties → satisfaction among followers → more positive feedback and performance evaluations → increased leader self-efficacy → solid self-esteem to apply for more demanding leadership positions).

To conclude, the term "career self-management" encapsulates the individual-level outcomes found in this study. Career self-management can be conceptualized as activities that enables realistic self-assessments of one's talents, potential and abilities not only in relation to career opportunities in one's current organization but with a view to taking concrete actions to realize one's career goals inside or outside the organization (De Vos et al., 2009; Noe, 1996; Sturges et al., 2000; Sturges et al., 2002). Pondering on one's personal motivations, raising self-awareness and acknowledging the association between motivation and other resources are all parts of such career self-management practices. Assessing one's motivational resources towards leadership can result in, for example, self-nomination for leadership positions or the creation of opportunities to gain leadership experience, both of which are examples of career self-management practices that stem from individual initiative. However, as career management is not – and should not be – solely the individual's responsibility, I now turn to a discussion of the implications for organization-based career management practices that arise from the present research findings.

### 4.8.2 Organizational level implications

Despite the emphasis on individual agency in career management and in constructing career opportunities, creating and supporting a sustainable career is also largely an organizational responsibility. Organizational career management has been defined as practices or activities undertaken by an organization to plan and manage its employees' careers of (e.g., Baruch, 1999). Below, I present two examples of such practices, leadership development interventions and career path management, in more detail. Other career planning management practices, such as so-called zig-zag career paths, that could be supported by the present findings are also briefly discussed.

#### 4.8.2.1 Leadership development interventions

Based on findings of this dissertation, organizations could encourage employees to explore their own leadership motivation through leadership development program or interventions. As the nature of MTL is both stable and dynamic, scholars (e.g., Stiehl et al., 2015) have stated that MTL, especially Affective-Identity MTL, can be influenced via a leadership development intervention. As described in the previous section on the individual-level implications of this study, broadening and cultivating one's self-awareness by exploring one's motivational resources can also benefit the organization as a whole in the long run. There is some evidence that leader self-awareness is positively related to follower leadership emergence and nomination for promotion to a leadership position (Bracht et al., 2021). In other words, a self-aware leader may foster the leader emergence process in their followers so that the organization is eventually equipped with a sufficient pool of potential leaders-to-be (on the "leader shortage"

that may loom in some sectors, see Isaacs et al., 2021; Woodring, 2004, as examples).

A leadership development intervention that includes familiarizing individuals with their own MTL can also help foster a leader's self-efficacy, which is known to be associated with MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). Hannah et al. (2008; 2012) suggest that in addition to action-related efficacy, leader self-efficacy as a construct should incorporate aspects of self-regulatory efficacy (e.g., producing the requisite motivation) and means efficacy (e.g., generating and organizing the resources needed to succeed). These aspects of leader self-efficacy go hand in hand with agency, which can be further cultivated in a leader development program.

Exploring one's own leadership motivation as a part of a leadership development program (henceforth, *training*) has already shown promising outcomes. My colleagues at the MOTILEAD research group and I were fortunate in being able to plan and organize leadership training for academic leaders and leaders recruited from executive MBA training. This pilot training scheme aimed at providing participants with means, tools and support in identifying their personal leadership motivation and understanding its importance as part of their leadership identity. The training was targeted at increasing participants' awareness of their own motivational factors in building a sustainable career as a leader. The training was carried out as either a one-working day workshop or as two separate workshops arranged at monthly intervals. A detailed description of the content and structure of the training is presented in the final report of the MOTILEAD project (Toropainen et al., 2023). Here, I will highlight some of the findings that are relevant from the perspective of utilizing the concept of MTL as a component of such training.

As a first step, the participants completed the MTL-9 (Auvinen et al., 2020) survey before the training workshops and received their personal MTL profile as feedback before the workshop days. This feedback included a cover text and a profile pattern depicting three aspects of leadership motivation. In the training workshops, the profile feedback was then discussed and the concept of MTL was further introduced to the participants. With the aid of core questions (e.g., "Did you recognize yourself from your MTL profile?", "Why has your MTL profile developed into its current form?"), they then discussed their thoughts arising from their personal MTL profiles. These questions were also used to serve the data collection aims of the training workshop days, as the training workshop was a part of the MOTILEAD project. The discussions were recorded and analyzed via content analysis. The training also included written reflection tasks.

Sixty-nine percent of the university leaders and 76 percent of the leaders recruited from the eMBA training program recognized themselves from their profile. The rest were somewhere in between: in other words, everyone recognized themselves to some extent from their profile, most without any doubt. Both groups contained participants who doubted either the reliability of the profile (a major concern was the reliability of such a brief scale) or the stability of

leadership motivation in general. Some participants were also surprised by the results, such as the low level of a specific MTL dimension. The discussion on why the participants MTL profile has taken its current form led to insights on the role of the contextual factors (especially in the academic context) as well as on personal factors and agency (especially among the eMBA leaders).

The utility of the training was assessed from the perspective of constructing a leader identity, which was one of the reflection tasks for the participants. Nearly two out of three participants reported that they had learned something about themselves during the training: content analysis of their responses revealed topics such as "increased self-awareness", "new perspectives on leadership" and "the conceptualization of leadership-related topics". One-fifth reported that that they did not learn anything new during the training, and 17 percent were again in between: these respondents felt that they did not learn anything new, but when their responses were content analyzed, it seemed that something beneficial had been gained during the training (e.g., "clarification of something previously known"). These results are promising and support use of the concept of MTL as a part of leadership training targeted at increasing leader's self-awareness and consolidating leader identity.

The outcomes from the pilot training program suggest that while it was mostly beneficial, the usefulness of the training could be further developed by modifying the training time frame. Long-term training (e.g., workshops at monthly intervals for one year) would also enable adding behavioral aspects to complement reflection tasks and discussions: exploring one's own leadership motivation may be a good start but integrating the theme into opportunities for receiving feedback (e.g., 360-degree assessments) and gaining new experiences as a leader could also be included in the intervention. As leadership takes place outside the classroom, this kind of long-term training with regular meetings and integration between "theory and practice" may increasingly deepen self-awareness and consolidate leader identity.

#### 4.8.2.2 Intra-organizational career path management

Including the assessment of leadership motivation in an organization's repertoire can offer a streamlined way of managing human resources, eventually leading to practices that I term "intra-organizational career path management". Despite the current trend of shifting the responsibility for career management from the organization to the individual, it remains the reality that organizational career management practices are needed, and career management is either a shared employer-employee responsibility, or even in some cases more organization-driven (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). Therefore, knowledge on employees' resources from their career perspective can be considered as valuable for organizations' HRM in helping employees to steer and navigate their careers towards sustainability.

From the moment of selecting candidates for leadership onwards, assessing their MTL with a reliable questionnaire provides valuable information on their motivational factors and leadership career potential. While the inclusion of a tool for assessing MTL is axiomatic when selecting executives, also it could also be used in recruitment processes for professional or technical staff. Thus, assessment of leadership motivation could help HRM to construct meaningful career paths for all employees. The valuable information about employees' career motivations obtained in this way could be utilized in, e.g., formal education or in advertising internal job openings, thereby focusing on the internal rather than external labor market. Furthermore, knowledge about who is motivated to occupy a potential leader position in the future can aid HR in succession planning, whether the need is due to retirement or some other reason, such as organizational restructuring, loss of key figures, leader turnover etc. In general, acknowledging and supporting the individuality of career paths can benefit substantially from the assessment of individual leadership motivation – this also applies to other career-relevant motivations, such as professional and entrepreneurial motivations (for a detailed description, see Chan et al., 2012; 2015; Ho & Chan, 2020) and for individuals who are not motivated to pursue leadership.

Depending largely on the organization's HR policies, the use of MTL assessment will likely differ across organizations. At the minimum, the assessment would be made as a part of the recruitment and selection process, and the findings discussed with the candidate, even when selection is still in progress, as is possible in modern, high quality personnel selection processes. If the candidate is selected for an open leadership position, the range of uses broadens. Potential uses include 1:1 leadership development in the form of coaching or mentoring, and in the formal (group) program or training discussed above. Motivational resources and MTL assessment can also be included in performance appraisal discussions, with a specific focus on constructing a meaningful and tempting career path for individuals in the organization. Moreover, if MTL assessment is combined with performance measurement (e.g., 360-degree feedback, objective organizational performance measures), an organization may start to gather data that could be used as an aid to decision-making in a stricter way. At best, this could lead to organization-specific pool of "sufficient values" or "adequate level of MTL" that could be used as an information source in selection, although with a few reservations. If such values are used in decision-making, the dynamic and developing nature of MTL should be kept in mind. MTL was found to be rather stable over the present two-year follow-up period (test-retest correlations .73 for AI-MTL, .59 for SN-MTL and .56 for NC-MTL; Toropainen et al., 2023), and hence a sensible interval for collecting performance measurements for joint study with MTL would be around two years. After this two-year period, the relative stability of each MTL dimension started to decrease (.66, .50 and .46, respectively), with AI-MTL continuing to show the highest level of stability (Toropainen et al., 2023). Based on my own expertise, I consider such a procedure for conducting organization-specific measurements most probable

for AI-MTL, as it showed the strongest associations with several positive outcomes as well as the highest stability. For the other aspects of MTL to be used in a similar manner, further research on their roots is needed.

Assessing leadership motivation can also be beneficial from the so-called zig-zag career path perspective. Zig-zag career paths can be built in an environment where vertical career mobility can be pursued via managerial, expert or project ladder (e.g., Quataert & Byuens, 2020; also "triple ladder", see Heilmann, 2006). Parallel to Chan et al.'s (2012, 2020) conceptualization on boundaryless careers of leadership, professionalism, and entrepreneurship (EPL), in zig-zag career path thinking the boundaries between the three ladders are eliminated resulting in possibility for both horizontal and vertical career moves. The term *dual ladder* refers to the organizational structure and career system that is used to motivate technical or professional employees (e.g., in R&D, IT) in their work and ensure their career progression without their moving into a managerial position (Baruch, 1999; Hebda et al., 2012; Pluut et al., 2018). The *triple ladder* system has also been introduced, being similar in concept to the dual ladder system but with the addition a ladder emphasizing project work (e.g., Hall & Louis, 1988; Heilmann, 2006), which can be understood as a hybrid of an expert-administrative role. MTL could be used as an assessment tool for support employees in their career choices between different ladders, according to their primary motivations and talents. As long as two decades ago, Baruch (1999) stressed that the need for an alternative career system, such as dual ladder structure, may be even more pronounced in the future, as new roles and positions, i.e., crucial, non-managerial roles that nevertheless share a level of responsibility and salary similar to those of managers, will be entering organizations. Still today, these ideas seem relevant: the findings of this dissertation also support the need for these kinds of organizational structures, as could be seen from the very low leadership motivation (in total or, especially, intrinsic leadership motivation) of leaders in the academic context as well as in social and health care sector.

Assessing employees' MTL could help identify the right people for such non-managerial tracks. Screening employees' leadership motivation and tailoring career management practices based on their leadership-related aspirations could also aid in retaining "high flyers", i.e., those with high potential and capability of making a unique contribution (e.g., Baruch, 1999) in-house. High-potential individuals, especially those with no managerial intentions, may find traditional career advancement practices (i.e., upward mobility into managerial position as a reward for excellence) as a major turn-off and demotivator. In the best-case scenario, MTL assessment combined with a dual or triple ladder career system can thus enhance sustainable careers.

## 4.9 Avenues for future research

As can be seen from the review summarized in Table 2, the majority of the MTL studies that have been conducted with working populations have utilized a cross-sectional design. This leaves many ways for further research to elaborate our understanding of MTL. Broadening the ways of studying the concept of MTL will also have practical value.

First, the majority of MTL studies have treated the concept as an outcome rather than as a predictor (Table 2). To me, this is rather odd, given the traditional definitions of motivation. According to the dictionary of the American Psychological Association, motivation is "the impetus that gives purpose or direction to behavior and operates in humans at a conscious or unconscious level - -" as well as "a person's willingness to exert physical or mental effort in pursuit of a goal or outcome" (APA Dictionary, 2023). Hence, as I see it, greater interest should be shown in leadership motivation as a cause or initiator of behavior, thoughts, and feelings. Such an approach is well suited to career research, in which the concept of MTL, and more broadly, EPL, a framework of career-related motivations for entrepreneurship, professionalism and leadership (Chan et al., 2012; 2015; 2017) could be more closely integrated. In the context of career research, we could usefully broaden our understanding of the role of career- or role-specific motivation in the different career stages, as the findings of this dissertation suggest that younger leaders experience greater leadership motivation than older leaders. Exploring the reasons and root causes for this finding could aid in, for example, personnel selection, if the "optimal level of leadership motivation" is to be determined. For a more senior leader, is a lower level of MTL sufficient for well-being and good leader performance? On the other hand, is there a dark side to being over-motivated to lead when entering the labor market?

Longitudinal studies would enable various possibilities for statistically interesting research and elaborate our understanding of the *processes* that relate to leadership motivation. Initially, the construct of MTL aims at explaining individual differences in who will emerge as a leader and what kind of an input they will deliver in the role (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). As the findings of this dissertation strongly suggest, contextual and non-personal factors cannot be ignored in the leader emergence process, and therefore longitudinal designs with carefully chosen measures would help to create a more detailed theoretical model of this process. These would also complement career construction theories, as they have been criticized for being excessively focused on personal factors (see Inkson et al., 2012). Longitudinal research with sufficient measurement points would enable finer-grained information to be gathered on the role that MTL plays in leader emergence and how leadership motivation acts as a personal resource. Such study designs would also allow the use of sophisticated statistical methods, such as latent growth modeling, to investigate stability and change at

the same time, and also further integration of the concept of MTL into career research, as it is impossible to conduct research on processes like career-building without including the time component.

Despite the extensive research by Chan and Drasgow (2001) and by Badura et al., 2020) on the antecedents of the three MTL dimensions, the novel perspective of MTL as a *resource* for sustainable leader careers calls for further investigation of their distinctive features of these motivational aspects. It would be intuitively tempting to focus solely on the intrinsic component of leadership motivation, i.e., AI-MTL, as has been done by many previous MTL studies. However, more investigation of the nuances of, in particular, NC-MTL and SN-MTL and their resource (or vulnerability) potential would again further broaden our understanding of the "optimal combination of leadership motivation", should such exist. The present findings suggest that these dimensions differ with respect to agency, as intrinsic leadership motivation associates with the agentic pursuit of leader positions whereas extrinsic leadership motivation associates with a non-agentic stance on leadership. Then again, based on the odds ratios (Study I), the selfless leadership motivation included both agentic and non-agentic stances on leadership positions. Selfless motivation also seemed to act as a fruitful personal resource for leaders: when leaders were facing both career-related and job planning demands, it buffered against cynical attitudes and feelings of low professional efficacy. Examining all three MTL dimensions would even more closely integrate the concept of leadership motivation into the sustainable careers literature, as it is important to gain understanding about how the different MTL dimensions relate to the experience of meaning in one's work, which is an essential component of a lasting career. Such research would also broaden our understanding of the resource potential of MTL.

Integrating MTL into career research could further benefit from designs that could all the components of sustainable careers (person, context, time) and MTL to be studied within an appropriate time frame. With the present results in mind, it seems evident that the interplay between these components (especially the person-context interactions) should be a focus of further research and that looking at these interactions the field could yield a broader understanding of the complexity of evolving leader careers. Not only from the viewpoint of leader development and behaviors but also more broadly, that of building a lasting leadership career, the individual, agentic perspective on leadership motivation should be augmented by contextual factors that may affect the resulting career path and its sustainability.

To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation research is the first effort to measure leadership motivation according to Chan and Drasgow's framework and to utilize the MTL Scale in the Finnish context. Although it is unquestionably an asset to have a well-established survey instrument that has been proven to be reliable also in the Finnish culture and context, further development of the MTL scale could nevertheless be beneficial. In my studies, the short version comprising the nine best fitting items from the abbreviated MTL-15 Scale (Bobbio

& Rattazzi, 2006; derived from original 27-itemed scale by Chan and Drasgow, 2001) was used. The most significant difference between the MTL-27, MTL-15, and the MTL-9 concerns the measurement of Non-Calculative Motivation to Lead. In both the MTL-27 and MTL-15, the majority of the items measuring NC-MTL are worded in a calculative direction (e.g., "I will never agree to lead if I cannot see any benefits of accepting that role", "I would want to know 'what's in it for me' if I am going to agree to lead a group"). These items were then reverse-coded to measure non-calculative motivation. However, problems of negatively worded statements are well-known: reverse-coded items have been shown to have lower scale reliabilities (DiStefano & Motl, 2006; Weems & Onwuegbuzie, 2001) and may not even measure the same underlying trait or concept compared to positively worded items (Weems & Onwuegbuzie, 2001; Zickar, 2020). Therefore, when aiming to shorten the MTL scale for my studies, I first looked at the positively worded statements of the NC-MTL scale. Fortunately, the results of several CFAs supported the use of these two items from the MTL-15 scale that measured non-calculativity and addition of only one negatively worded item. At this point, I was happy to use the scale that measures non-calculativity in a manner resembling that of the other scale dimensions. However, looking at the scale in-depth was unsettling, as I would have liked more multifaceted wordings for the scale items. Thus, further developing the scale items and measures of, especially, non-calculative leadership motivation in line with the current knowledge of reliable scale development is a task that merits further effort (see e.g., Zickar, 2020). After careful validation studies of the concise MTL measure have been conducted, it would be possible to focus on its predictive validity and examine "the critical values of MTL" for predicting indicators of, e.g., occupational well-being (criterion-validity research).

To better understand the optimal level or combinations of MTL in different sectors and contexts, further research should investigate the concept of MTL among more diverse samples of working adults, such as those with different levels of education, at different stages in their career, in different cultures and on a wider range of managerial levels. For successfully putting MTL-related findings into practice, it would be beneficial to broaden the scope of basic research to the populations that the study results are planned to support. As my research has shown, leadership motivation is not a "one size fits all" phenomenon, and from the perspective of optimal motivational resources and configurations of the MTL dimensions, it may be misleading to presume that knowledge about MTL in one sample or population can be equally applied to diverse populations. In addition, broadening the perspective outside of the "leadership box" may enrich our understanding on the importance of MTL. For example, preliminary research has shown that leadership motivation can also be relevant for individuals not in formal leadership positions, as many of the work roles of highly educated professionals require self-leadership, self-directedness and entrepreneurial behaviors, blurring the borders between formal leadership positions and professional work. In some cases, an intrinsic leadership

motivation also acted as a resource for professionals who were not in a formal leadership position, but for those professionals, who became leaders during the study period, intrinsic motivation strengthened the association of career-related demands and burnout (Lehtiniemi et al., 2023). Further exploration on the root cause of this resource and vulnerability potential of MTL for non-leaders is needed.

Finally, an interesting but still largely unexplored avenue for further research is the relationship between MTL and leader self-awareness. It is theoretically plausible to suggest that these go hand in hand, and some preliminary indications on the association can be drawn from the pilot training program that we organized for leaders (discussed earlier in chapter 4.7.2.1). Bracht et al. (2021) supported the view that leader self-awareness had a positive effect on follower leader emergence and leadership self-nomination. However, their study utilized unnested data in which employees assessed their leader's self-awareness, which questions on the reliability of measuring a leader's intra-psychic process of self-awareness. To investigate this intangible concept more thoroughly, I would recommend including other information sources in such study designs. That is, in addition to leader self-ratings, other-ratings from immediate followers or peers would allow the phenomenon to be seen from the behavioral and interpersonal level. Connecting leader's self-ratings on their leadership motivation to other-ratings would enable the investigation of self-other rating agreement (SOA; Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Fleenor et al., 2010). SOA has been linked with both individual level outcomes, such as leader performance and effectiveness and organizational level outcomes, e.g., followers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Fleenor et al., 2010). Whether exploring one's own leadership motivation increases leader self-awareness should be assessed with pre- and post-measurements conducted within an intervention (e.g., training, 1:1 coaching or leader development program). Self-aware leaders are possibly better at navigating their careers in the desired direction, but also more likely to have a positive effect on working life in general in the form of satisfied, committed employees (Fleenor et al., 2010).

## 4.10 Conclusions

The aim of my dissertation research was to investigate leadership motivation, conceptualized as Motivation to Lead (MTL; Chan & Drasgow, 2001), as a resource that would enable leaders to build a sustainable career. Until now, in career theories, motivational factors have been presented as important career resources at a more general level (including emotional attachment towards one's working role, career continuity, and career clarity; Hirschi et al. 2018). In this dissertation, three different aspects of leadership motivation, namely Affective-Identity MTL, Social-Normative MTL and Non-Calculative MTL, are seen as key personal resources that support leader career construction. This research

revealed that paying attention to the (past) career path can also lead to future actions. Exploring one's own leadership motivation with the help of the three different MTL dimensions can expand self-insight: What is my "why" of being a leader? Am I willing to pursue a career as a leader? This variety in leadership motivation seemed to have its consequences for both leaders themselves and their direct followers and was visible in their everyday leadership behaviors. The different dimensions of motivation are also thought to be central to the experience of meaningfulness in one's work and the building of new resources. In addition, familiarizing oneself with one's leadership motivation can help leaders to build more resources, achieve important goals, and eventually promote the sustainability of their career by bringing about happiness, health and productivity.

## YHTEENVETO (SUMMARY)

# Kestävää työuraa rakentamassa: Johtamismotivaatio johtajan voimavarana

2000-luvulta alkaen työelämä on muuttunut niin teknologisten kehitysharppausten, yleisen (työ)elämän tahdin kiihtymisen sekä viimeistään koronapandemian myötä epävarmemmaksi ja vaikeammin ennustettavammaksi yksittäisen työntekijän näkökulmasta. Aiemmin työntekijä saattoi luottaa työuransa vakauteen ja oman työpaikkansa pysyvyyteen työskentelemällä yhdessä organisaatiossa, mutta tämän päivän työelämässä moinen ennustettavuus, vakaus ja pysyvyys ovat harvinaisempia ilmiöitä (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014a; 2014b; Cascio, 2020). Työurat ovat muuttuneet pirstaleisemmiksi, ja on esitetty, että nykyisenlaisten työurien piirteet (mm. yksilön korostunut vastuu urastaan, jatkuva uudistuminen, liikkuvuus organisaatioiden sisällä ja välillä) riskeeraavat työntekijöiden hyvinvointia mm. lisääntyneen työuupumuksen muodossa (Baruch & Vardi, 2016). Yksilökeskeisyyden aikakaudella vastuu oman työuran hallinnasta on valunut yhä enemmän yksittäisen työntekijän harteille, minkä voidaan nähdä myös yhtenä työntekijää kuormittavana vaatimuksena (Pongratz & Voß, 2003).

Johtotehtävissä toimivat henkilöt kokevat edellä kuvattujen haasteiden ohella asemastaan ja roolistaan käsin kumpuvia vaatimuksia, jotka liittyvät mm. organisaation kilpailukyvyn ja tuottavuuden varmistamiseen sekä työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista ja sitoutumisesta huolehtimiseen. Johto- tai esihenkilötehtävien houkuttelevuus onkin vähentynyt joidenkin tutkimusten (Chudzikowski, 2012; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Sutela & Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014) mukaan sekä Suomessa että maailmalla. Kuitenkaan tarve johtajuudelle ja esihenkilötyölle ei vaikuta vähenevän (esim. Hodges & Howieson, 2017; Jensen et al., 2020; Pearce et al., 2008; 2009). Tällainen ”johtajakato” on radikaaleimmillaan rinnastettu ruttoon, ydinsotaan ja ekologiseen katastrofiin ja esitetty yhtenä neljästä mahdollisesta uhasta nykyisenkaltaiselle sivilisaatiollemme (Jones, 1998). Mahdollisen kohtaanto-ongelman voittamiseksi on ensiarvoisen tärkeää löytää keinoja, joilla rakentaa *inhimillisesti kestäviä työuria* (De Vos ym., 2020) heille, jotka jo tällä hetkellä toimivat johtotehtävissä. Työelämän piirtyessä epävakaana ja lisääntyneiden vaatimusten sävyttämänä, on työntekijän – toimi hän johtotehtävissä tai ei – näkökulmasta arvokasta pystyä rakentamaan työuraa, jonka seurauksena työntekijä voi kokea onnellisuutta, terveyttä ja tuottavuutta.

Johtajuutta ja työuria on pitkään tutkittu erillään toisistaan, ja johtajien työuran rakentumista tarkasteleva tutkimus on toistaiseksi ollut vähäistä (ks. esim. Parry ym. 2003). Niin johtajaksi nousemista (engl. leader emergence) kuin työuria koskevassa tutkimuksessa on painottunut yksilöllisten tekijöiden merkitys, eikä esimerkiksi toimintaympäristöön liittyviä tekijöitä ole riittävästi huomioitu. Väitöskirjassani pyrin paikkaamaan aiemman tutkimuksen aukkoja sekä

tuottamaan uutta tietoa kestävien työurien rakentumisesta erityisesti johtotehtävissä toimivilla henkilöillä.

Tässä tutkimuksessa johtajaura nähdään yhtenä rajattomien urien (engl. boundaryless career) ulottuvuutena ja osana yksilön subjektiivista ”ura-avaruutta” (Chan et al., 2012; 2020) kahden muun ulottuvuuden, asiantuntijuuden ja yrittäjyyden (vrt. Kanter, 1989) rinnalla erotuksena perinteisestä organisatorisesta urasta. Yksilön työura voidaan nähdä ikään kuin vektorina henkilökohtaisessa kolmiulotteisessa ura-avaruudessa: esimerkiksi yliopistojohtajan ura muodostuisi vektorista asiantuntijuuteen ja johtamiseen liittyvien motivaatioiden ulottuvuuksissa. Johtajuuden ymmärtäminen yhtenä yksilön subjektiivisen ura-avaruuden osa-alueena eikä yksinomaisena tai kilpailevana vaihtoehtona muille uravaihtoehdoille mahdollistaa kokonaisvaltaisemman näkökulman työuraan. Tällainen näkökulma on uran kehittymisen kannalta hyödyllinen nykyisessä toimintaympäristössä, jossa meihin kohdistuu erilaisia uraroolivaatimuksia ja -mahdollisuuksia (Chan et al., 2012; 2020), ja myös asiantuntijuuteen liittyy itsensä johtamisen vaateita.

Kestävien työurien teoreettisen mallin (De Vos ym., 2020) mukaan yksilö muovaa omaa uraansa sekä omalla aktiivisuudellaan että sopeutumisen kautta. Työuran inhimillinen kestävyys muotoutuu systeemisenä vuorovaikutuksena yksilön, hänen toimintaympäristönsä sekä ajan kesken: emme ole irrallisia ajasta, paikasta tai olosuhteista, joissa työuramme rakentuu. Onnellisuus, terveys ja tuottavuus nähdään kestävän työuran kuvaajina ja ne heijastavat yksilön ja hänen työuransa välistä yhteensopivuutta. Tätä yhteensopivuutta tukee se, että työntekijä voi kokea merkityksellisyyden kokemusta työurallaan. Kestävän työuran mallin näkökulmasta yksilön toimijuus näyttäytyy niin työntekijän aktiivisesti muovatessaan uraansa haluamaansa suuntaan kuin hänen reagoidessaan ja sopeutuessaan ulkoisiin, itsestä riippumattomiin tekijöihin työuransa varrella.

Tässä väitöskirjatutkimuksessa tarkastelin johtajien inhimillisesti kestävän työuran rakentumisen edellytyksiä: tutkimus huomioi yksilöllisten tekijöiden lisäksi toimintaympäristöön liittyviä seikkoja, jotka myötävaikuttavat työuran muotoutumiseen. Teoreettisena tausta-ajatuksenani oli, että kestävän työuran rakentumista edesauttaa kunkin työntekijän *työrooliaan kohtaan kokema motivaatio,* jonka ajatellaan voimavarojen säilyttämisteorian (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001, 2011) mukaisesti olevan työntekijän henkilökohtainen voimavara. Tutkimukseni aineistona olivat suomalaiset korkeasti koulutetut johtajat, joiden johtamismotivaatiota (Motivation to Lead, Chan & Drasgow, 2001) tarkasteltiin henkilökohtaisena voimavarana kestävän työuran rakentumisessa. Väitöskirjassa hyödynnetty aineisto koostui 1031 johtajasta, hierarkkisesta johtaja-alaisaineistosta (242 johtajaa ja heidän yhteensä 990 alaistaan) sekä johtajien seuranta-aineistosta (N=250). Tutkitut johtajat edustivat useita eri toimialoja yliopistojohtajista liike-elämän johtajiin.

Chanin ja Drasgown (2001) mukaan *johtamismotivaatio* kuvaa yksilöllisiä eroja johtotehtäviin hakeutumisessa sekä siinä, millaisen panoksen yksilö antaa johtotehtävissä toimiessaan. Heidän määritelmänsä mukaan johtamismotivaatio sisältää kolme eri osa-aluetta. Identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio

(Affective-Identity MTL) kuvaa myönteisten tunteiden sävyttämää suhtautumista johtotehtäviin sekä kokemusta johtajaroolista luontevana osana omaa itseä. Identiteettipohjaisen johtamismotivaation voidaan ajatella olevan sisäsyntyisin johtamismotivaation komponentti, vaikkakaan Chanin ja Drasgown (2001) mukaan johtamismotivaatio ei ole yksilön synnynnäinen ominaisuus: kokemus, ympäristö, normit ja oppimishistoria voivat muovata ja kehittää johtamismotivaatiota.

Sosiaalisnormatiivinen johtamismotivaatio (Social-Normative MTL) rakentuu yksilön valintojen takana vaikuttavien sosiaalisten normien pohjalle. Tällöin johtotehtäviin voidaan päätyä esimerkiksi velvollisuuden tunteesta tai siksi, että johtajan roolia pidetään yleisesti tavoiteltavana ja arvostettuna asemana. Näin ollen sosiaalisnormatiivinen johtamismotivaatio kuvaa motivaatiota, jossa yksilö on sisäistänyt ulkokohtaisempia sosiaalisia normeja osaksi itseään.

Laskelmoimaton johtamismotivaatio (Non-Calculative MTL) kuvaa yksilön myönteistä suhtautumista johtotehtäviin siitä huolimatta, että johtotehtävässä toimimiseen liittyy tiettyjä kustannuksia tai siitä koituisi vain vähän selkeitä hyötyjä (Badura ym., 2020; Chan & Drasgow, 2001). Laskelmoimattoman johtamismotivaation voidaan ajatella heijastelevan eräänlaista epäitsekkyyttä, sillä johtotehtäviin tartutaan ilman henkilökohtaisten hyötyjen ja haittojen puntarointina.

Väitöskirjatutkimuksellani oli kolme päätavoitetta: Ensiksi tarkastelin johtajaurien yksilöllisyyttä tutkimalla johtajana toimimisen taustavaikuttimia sekä näiden yhteyksiä kestävän työuran indikaattoreihin (Osatutkimus I). Osatutkimus I selvitti, millaiset tekijät olivat myötävaikuttaneet johtotehtävässä toimimiseen sekä tarkasteli, miten nämä yksilölliset syytekijät olivat yhteydessä johtajien johtamismotivaatioon sekä tutkittuihin kestävän työuran kuvaajiin. Näitä kuvaajia tutkimuksessa olivat johtajan terveys (työuupumus ja työn imu) sekä johtajan tuottavuus (johtajan suoriutuminen työssään, joka mitattiin alaisten kokemana työhyvinvointina). Kyselytutkimukseen osallistui kaikkiaan 1031 johtajaa. Avointen kyselyvastausten laadullinen analyysi osoitti, että johtotehtävissä toimimisen taustalla vaikuttivat hyvin monenlaiset tekijät: kaikkiaan aineistosta tunnistettiin 26 erilaista teemaa, jotka heijastelivat erilaisia syytekijöitä johtotehtävissä toimimisen taustalla. Nämä teemat luokiteltiin edelleen teoriaohjaavan luokittelun keinoin kestävän työuran komponenttien (yksilö, toimintaympäristö, aika) sekä toimijuuden asteen (toimijuus vs. oman toimijuuden puute) mukaan kvantitatiivisia jatkoanalyysejä varten.

Itsestä kumpuavia ja toimijuutta heijastavia syitä mainittiin eniten teemojen lukumäärän mukaan tarkasteltuna, mutta teemojen yleisyyden perusteella mainituimpana oli teema, joka kuvasi oman aktiivisen toimijuuden puutetta suhteessa johtotehtävään (Teema ”Pätevyys ja osaaminen”; 20 % annetuista vastauksista, esimerkkilainaukset ”Osaamiseni hallinnollisista tehtävistä --”, ”asiantuntijuus”). Näissä vastauksissa vastaajat korostivat suoritetun tutkinnon, substanssiosaamisen tai asiantuntijuuden merkitystä johtotehtävissä toimimisen taustalla ilman kuvausta omasta aktiivisesta panoksesta johtotehtävien tavoittelussa. Viiden mainituimman teeman joukosta neljässä kuvastui vastaavalla tavalla

toimijuuden puute ja kaksi teemaa kuvasi toimintaympäristöön liittyviä syitä johtotehtävässä toimimisen taustalla.

Johtamismotivaation ulottuvuuksista identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio ennusti sisäisten syiden mainitsemista: mitä enemmän identiteettipohjaista johtamismotivaatiota raportoitiin, sitä todennäköisemmin johtaja toi esille itsestä kumpuavia ja toimijuuteen liittyviä syitä johtotehtävässä toimimisen taustalla. Vastaavasti suurempi identiteettipohjainen motivaatio laski todennäköisyyttä mainita ympäristöön liittyviä syitä sekä syitä, jotka heijastivat oman aktiivisen toimijuuden puutetta. Laskelmoimaton motivaation kohdalla yhteys oli lähellä merkitsevän rajaa ($p$= .07) itsestä kumpuavien syiden mainitsemiseen siten, että korkeampi laskelmoimaton motivaatio lisäisi itsestä kumpuavien syiden mainitsemisen todennäköisyyttä.

Kun tarkasteltiin syytekijöiden yhteyttä kestävän työuran indikaattoreihin, kävi ilmi, että niin itsestä kumpuavat kuin omaa toimijuutta heijastavat syyt yhdistyivät parempaan johtajan terveyteen (matalampi työuupumus sekä korkeampi työn imu) sekä johtajan suoriutumiseen (alaisten matalampi työuupumus). Mikäli johtaja oli maininnut pääasiassa toimintaympäristöön liittyviä syitä johtotehtävässä toimimisen taustalla, hänen kokonaistyöuupumuksensa oli korkeampi ja hänen alaistensa työn imu oli matala. Tämän osatutkimuksen tulokset korostivat yksilöllisten tekijöiden ohella myös toimintaympäristön vaikuttavan työuran muotoutumiseen: etenkin akateemiset johtajat toivat esille toimintaympäristöstä kumpuavia syitä johtotehtävissä toimimisensa taustalla. He myös toivat esille enemmän oman toimijuuden puutetta heijastavia syytekijöitä verrattuna liike-elämän johtajiin. Johtotehtävässä toimimisen syytekijöillä oli niin ikään merkitystä kestävän työuran edellytysten näkökulmasta. Sekä määrälliset ja laadulliset analyysit osoittivat myös motivaation tärkeyden johtotehtäviin hakeutuessa: kuitenkaan oma motivaatio ei ollut monellakaan johtajalla pääasiallinen syy johtotehtävässä toimimiselle.

Väitöskirjan toisena tavoitteena oli fokusoida yksilön työrooliaan kohtaan kokemaan motivaatioon kestävien työurien teoreettisen mallin osana. Osatutkimus II tarkastelikin johtamismotivaatiota yksityiskohtaisemmin yksilöllisellä tasolla sekä sen yhteyksiä erilaisiin kestävän työuran kuvaajiin. Henkilökeskeinen tutkimusote (latentti profiilianalyysi) toi esille johtajien (N = 1003) erot johtamismotivaationsa suhteen: neljä toisistaan eroavaa johtamismotivaatioprofiilia tunnistettiin tutkitusta johtajien joukosta. Ensimmäistä profiilia (42 % johtajista) kuvasi keskimääräistä voimakkaampi identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio muiden osa-alueiden ollessa keskimääräisellä tasolla (”Identiteetiltään johtajaksi itsensä kokevat”). Toiseen profiiliin sijoittuneilla johtajilla (41 %) kaikki johtamismotivaation osa-alueet olivat tutkitun joukon keskiarvoa matalampia, identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio erityisesti (”Alhaisen johtamismotivaation omaavat”). Kolmanteen profiiliin kuuluivat johtajat (12 %), joiden identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio oli hyvin alhainen ja puolestaan laskelmoimaton johtamismotivaatio korkeampi kuin muilla tutkituilla johtajilla (”Haluttomat johtajat”). Neljäs profiili koostui johtajista (5 %), joiden sekä identiteettipohjainen

että sosiaalisnormatiivinen johtamismotivaatio olivat keskimääräistä korkeammalla (”Vahvan identiteetin ja normien ohjaamat johtajat”). Näiden eri profiilien johtajat erosivat toisistaan tutkituissa kestävän työuran indikaattoreissa: työhyvinvoinnissa, johtajuuteen liittyvissä urasuunnitelmissaan sekä alaistensa antamissa suoriutumisarvioissa.

Identiteetiltään itsensä johtajaksi kokevat (profiili 1) ja vahvan identiteetin sekä sosiaaliset normit omaavat (profiili 4) johtajat raportoivat suotuisimpia työhyvinvoinnin kokemuksia: alhaista työuupumusta sekä korkeaa työn imua. Profiilin 1 johtajat lisäksi halusivat jatkaa johtotehtävissä tai hakeutua entistä vaativampiin johtotehtäviin uransa seuraavien vuosien aikana. Myös heidän alaistensa arviot niin keskinäisestä yhteistyösuhteestaan kuin erilaisista johtamiskäyttäytymisen aspekteista olivat suotuisimpia muiden profiilien johtajiin verrattuna. Haluttomien johtajien profiili (profiili 3) oli kestävän työuran näkökulmasta huolestuttavin: he raportoivat korkeaa työuupumusta, vähäistä työn imua ja halukkuutta siirtyä pois johtotehtävistä. Myös heidän alaistensa antamat arviot yhteistyösuhteestaan tai johtamiskäyttäytymisestään olivat kauttaaltaan negatiivisia. Myös alhaisen johtamismotivaation omaavien johtajien profiiliin (profiili 2) kuuluneet johtajat raportoivat korkeaa työuupumusta ja vähäistä työn imua. Tämän poikkileikkaustutkimuksen tulokset antoivat viitteitä siitä, että johtamismotivaatiolla olisi merkitystä henkilökohtaisena voimavarana johtajan työuralla kestävän työuran edellytysten näkökulmasta.

Väitöskirjani kolmantena tavoitteena olikin empiirisesti tarkastella aikaisemmista osatutkimuksista noussutta ajatusta johtajan työrooliaan kohtaan kokemastaan motivaatiosta henkilökohtaisena voimavarana ja kestävien työurien rakennuspalikkana. Osatutkimus III oli johtajiin kohdistunut kahden vuoden seurantatutkimus (N= 250), joka keskittyi laajemmasta toimintaympäristöstä kumpuavien haasteiden, eli työelämän intensiivistymisen, sekä työuupumuksen väliseen yhteyteen (ns. voimavarojen menettämisen kehä): lisääntyneen työn intensiivistymisen ajateltiin lisäävän työuupumusta (kestävien työurien riskitekijä; suora yhteys), joka taas altistaa yksilöä työn intensiivistymisen kaltaisten stressorien epäedullisille vaikutuksille. Johtajan työrooliaan kohtaan kokemansa motivaation ajateltiin olevan yhteyttä muuntava (moderoiva) voimavaratekijä, joka voisi suojata johtajaa työuupumukselta hänen kokiessaan lisääntyneitä intensiivistymisvaatimuksia. Lisäksi tarkasteltiin johtajan toimintaympäristön (akateeminen vs. liike-elämän toimintaympäristö) mahdollisesti tuottamia eroja näissä moderaatioyhteyksissä.

Osatutkimuksessa III havaittiin, että mikäli johtajat kokivat oman uran suunnitteluun liittyviä intensiivistymisvaatimuksia, he raportoivat enemmän työuupumuksen oireita (kyynistyminen, ammatillisen itsetunnon heikentyminen). Vastaavasti oman työn suunnitteluun liittyvät vaatimukset eivät olleet yhteydessä korkeampaan työuupumukseen. Muuntavien yhteyksien osalta identiteettipohjainen ja laskelmoimaton johtamismotivaatio suojasivat johtajaa työuupumukselta tilanteessa, jossa johtaja koki intensiivistyneitä oman työn tai uran suunnittelun vaatimuksia. Sen sijaan ulkokohtaisempi sosiaalisnormatiivinen

johtamismotivaatio ei toiminut suojatekijänä työuupumukselta intensiivistymisvaatimuksia kohdattaessa. Osatutkimus antoi myös viitettä siitä, että akateemiset johtajat hyötyivät korkeasta identiteettipohjaisesta johtamismotivaatiosta silloin, kun he kokivat lisääntyneitä oman työn suunnittelun vaatimuksia: korkeampi identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio suojasi heitä tällöin ammatillisen itsetunnon laskulta. Liike-elämässä toimivien johtajien kohdalla korkealla identiteettipohjaisella johtamismotivaatiolla ei ollut vastaavaa suojaavaa roolia lisääntyneitä oman työn suunnitteluvaatimuksia vastaan.

Yhteenvetona voidaan todeta, että johtamismotivaatio on lupaava henkilökohtainen voimavara, joka luo ja vahvistaa johtajan kestävän työuran edellytyksiä. Yksilön ominaisuutena se selittää johtotehtäviin hakeutumista nousten esiin selkeänä syytekijänä johtotehtävissä toimimiselle. Identiteettipohjaista johtamismotivaatiota kokevat raportoivat todennäköisemmin myös muita itsestä kumpuavia ja toimijuutta heijastavia syitä johtotehtävissä toimimisen taustalla oman motivaationsa lisäksi. Johtamismotivaation tason sekä yksilöllisten yhdistelmien huomioiminen on tärkeää, kun halutaan tunnistaa kestävän työuran edellytyksiä johtajan terveyden (työhyvinvointi), onnellisuuden (johtotehtäviin liittyvät uraaikeet) ja tuottavuuden (johtajan suoriutuminen johtotehtävissä) näkökulmasta. Nykytyöelämän haasteiden ja vaatimusten keskellä johtamismotivaatio voi toimia henkilökohtaisena voimavarana suojaten johtajaa työuupumukselta, joka itsessään on riski kestävän työuran rakentumiselle voimavarojen ehtymisen muodossa.

Väitöskirjatutkimukseni teoreettinen arvo kumpuaa johtamismotivaation käsitteen integroimisesta kestävien työurien teoreettiseen malliin: tähän asti johtamismotivaatiota on tutkittu johtajuuskirjallisuudessa pääasiassa vallitsevan paradigman mukaisesti, joka korostaa johtajan tehokuutta, johtajaksi nousemista ja johtajuutta sosiaalisena vaikuttamisen prosessina. Johtajuutta uran näkökulmasta on tutkittu huomattavasti vähemmän, ja tämä tutkimus laajensi johtamismotivaatio -käsitteen tutkimusta uudelle alueelle osoittaen, että väitöskirjassa valittu uranäkökulma on johtajuuden tutkimuksen kannalta tärkeä ja hyödyllinen.

Väitöskirjani tulokset taipuvat käytännön sovelluksiksi sekä yksilö- että organisaatiotasolla. Yksilötasolla johtamismotivaatioon tutustuminen voi lisätä johtajien itsetuntemusta, syventää johtajaidentiteettiä ja auttaa omalla uralla navigoimisessa. Organisaatiotasolla käytännön sovellusarvo liittyy johtamisen kehittämisen toimiin sekä työntekijöiden erilaisten urapolkujen johtamiseen. Johtamismotivaation tarkastelu voi paitsi auttaa organisaatioita tunnistamaan tulevaisuuden johtajapotentiaalia, mutta myös luomaan mielekkäitä urapolkuja heillekin, joita johtaminen ei kiinnosta.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: The Finnish version of MTL-9 measure used in original publications

**MTL-9**

1. Yleensä olen työryhmässä mieluummin johtaja kuin seuraaja. (AI)
2. Haluan yleensä olla johtaja ryhmissä, joissa työskentelen. (AI)
3. Minulla on tapana ottaa ohjakset ryhmissä tai tiimeissä, joissa työskentelen. (AI)
4. Suostun johtamaan muita, jos muut pyytävät tai ehdottavat minua siihen. (SN)
5. Johtajarooli tai johtotehtävä kuuluu ottaa vastaan, jos siihen pyydetään. (SN)
6. Johtajan roolista ei ole oikein kieltäytyä. (SN)
7. Haluan tietää, miten hyödyn asiasta, jos otan ryhmän johdettavakseni. (NC*)
8. En odota saavani lisähyötyä siitä, että otan ryhmän johdettavakseni. (NC)
9. Jos otan ryhmän johdettavakseni, en odota saavani siitä lisähyötyä tai etuja. (NC)

Vastausasteikko 1= Täysin eri mieltä … 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

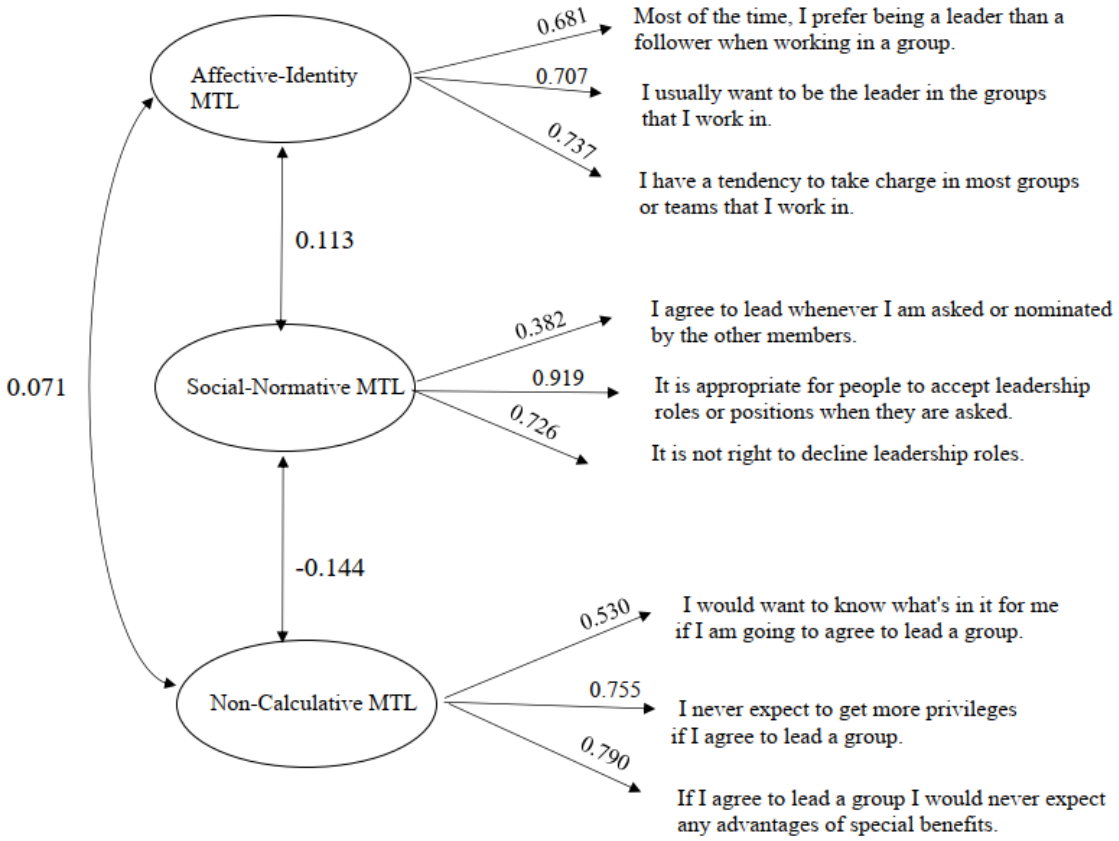
* = käännetään laskettaessa summamuuttujaa laskelmoimattomasta johtamismotivaatiosta.

AI= Identiteettipohjainen johtamismotivaatio
SN= Sosiaalisnormatiivinen johtamismotivaatio
NC= Laskelmoimaton johtamismotivaatio

Mittariin viittaaminen alkuperäislähteen (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) ja tämän väitöskirjan lisäksi:

Auvinen, E., Huhtala, M., Kinnunen, U., Tsupari, H., & Feldt, T. (2020). Leader motivation as a building block for sustainable leader careers: The relationship between leadership motivation profiles and leader and follower outcomes. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 120, 103428. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103428

## Appendix 2: Factor structure, factor loadings and item content of MTL-9




If cited, please use the following reference in addition to Chan and Drasgow (2001) and this dissertation:

Auvinen, E., Huhtala, M., Kinnunen, U., Tsupari, H., & Feldt, T. (2020). Leader motivation as a building block for sustainable leader careers: The relationship between leadership motivation profiles and leader and follower outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 120*, 103428. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103428

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# ORIGINAL PAPERS

# I

## DRIVERS OR DRIFTERS? THE "WHO" AND "WHY" OF LEADER ROLE OCCUPANCY—A MIXED-METHOD STUDY

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# Drivers or Drifters? The "Who" and "Why" of Leader Role Occupancy—A Mixed-Method Study

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This study investigated the reasons that leaders have given for their leader role occupancy. By using a mixed-method approach and large leader data, we aimed to provide a more nuanced picture of how leader positions are occupied in real life. We examined how individual leadership motivation may associate with other reasons for leader role occupancy. In addition, we aimed to integrate the different reasons behind leader role occupancy into the framework of sustainable leader careers and its two indicators: leader's health (occupational well-being) and performance (measured indirectly as followers' occupational well-being). The survey data consisted of 1,031 leaders from various sectors of working life. Qualitative analysis revealed that leaders mention various factors behind their leader role occupancy, resulting 26 themes. After inductive investigation of the data, theory-driven analysis focused on the sustainable career components (person, context, time) and agency vs. non-agency. Qualitative data was quantitized based on the theory-driven categories for statistical analysis. Based on the these analysis, we found out that only Affective-Identity MTL predicted all of the studied reasons behind leader role occupancy, whereas the other motivation types (Non-calculative MTL and Social-Normative MTL) did not. All of the reasons for leader role occupancy except non-agentic ones were related to both leaders' own and their followers' occupational well-being. Leaders with more person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy experienced better occupational well-being. Person- and context-related and agentic reasons behind leader role occupancy associated also with followers' occupational well-being, but the associations differed from those of leaders' well-being: person-related and agentic reasons associated with followers' exhaustion, but this association was not found among leaders. Our study provided important information for practitioners in the field of human resources and development, as it has shown that if the reasons for leader role occupancy mainly reflect circumstances or other non-person-related reasons, the experienced occupational well-being and person-career fit may remain weak. It is necessary to try to support the leadership motivation for those leaders, or to shape the job description in such a way that it can also offer the experiences of meaningfulness from aspects other than self-realization through a managerial role.

**Keywords: leader emergence, leader role occupancy, motivation to lead, sustainable career, occupational well-being, person-career fit**

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite the long research tradition on leadership, empirical and scientific research has not led to a conclusive understanding of how leadership emergence actually takes place among individuals who are acting in complex environments, such as employees and managers working in different organizations. Most of the research on leadership emergence is based on artificial, situation- and participant-specific group simulations, especially leaderless group discussions (e.g., Ensari et al., 2011). For a thorough exploration of who emerges as a leader, other techniques or perspectives in addition to leaderless group discussions are needed.

Leader emergence is not a straightforward, static phenomenon, and this makes it more difficult to capture and examine. As Acton et al. (2019) summed it up, "leadership emergence is more than a trait, an exchange, or a symbol—leadership emerges through dynamic interactions (Lichtenstein et al., 2006) at multiple levels" (p. 146). Thus, the *process* perspective of leader emergence deserves more attention than it has previously been given. The studies conducted so far have treated concepts of leadership emergence and leader role occupancy either as a predictor or as an outcome variable (Tuncdogan et al., 2017; Zaccaro et al., 2018). However, it is clear that approaching an emergent, process-like phenomenon (the question of who will eventually occupy a leader position) by reducing it to a single factor or one end result is likely to lead to the omission of relevant aspects. In addition to understanding the process of leader emergence more systematically, it is important to investigate how the leader emergence process associates with leader careers, and how these careers unfold.

Recently, the overemphasis on individual reasons and the under-emphasis on the situational or contextual factors of leader emergence has received attention in the literature (Hanna et al., 2021). Hanna et al. (2021) also called for the need for conceptual clarification and sound ways to operationalize leader (ship) emergence. As a way to address these shortcomings in the literature and to provide a more realistic and balanced view of the leadership emergence process, we adopted a mixed-methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the reasons the leaders gave for occupying their leadership role as a starting point for our analysis. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) defined mixed methods research as a process "in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry" (p. 4). We used a merged concurrent nested approach (Castro et al., 2010; Fetters et al., 2013) to be able to analyze the real-life experiences of leaders with accurately measured constructs (Castro et al., 2010). More specifically, we examined the leaders' qualitative descriptions about their reasons for occupying their leadership role and, after theory-driven classification, we quantitized (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) their descriptions to investigate their associations to sustainable leader career components and personal leadership motivation. Integrating different reasons behind leader role occupancy into the wider framework of sustainable leader careers (De Vos et al., 2020) is, to the best of our knowledge, a novel perspective in this research area. This integration of qualitative and quantitative data through data conversion enabled us to capture a richer and more detailed picture of why, how, and under what circumstances leader positions are occupied in real life and how the reasons the leaders provided are associated with the sustainability of their careers as a leader and their personal leadership motivation.

How a person's career actually unfolds over time is determined by individual choices made at a specific moment in time and affected by various factors, such as social or organizational context (Rudolph et al., 2019; Urbanaviciute et al., 2019; van der Horst and Klehe, 2019). Leader role occupancy can be viewed as one kind of choice, and it (and more broadly, the whole process of leader emergence) may therefore act as a stimulus to a further career as a leader. Thus, in addition to provide a nuanced picture of how leader positions are occupied, our specific interest is especially to investigate the *sustainability* of leader careers (De Vos et al., 2020) in relation to the reasons that have affected leader role occupancy. As indicators of career sustainability, a leader's health (occupational well-being) and performance (reflected in followers' occupational well-being) are studied. We begin by introducing the individual factors, specifically personal leadership motivation, that associate with leader emergence and how leader emergence relates to sustainable leader careers and its focal indicators.

### Motivation to Lead as a Personal Factor Behind Leader Emergence

Motivation to Lead (MTL) provides one perspective to explain leader emergence (Chan and Drasgow, 2001). Chan and Drasgow (2001) have stated that MTL is "an individual-differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities" (p. 482). Thus, it is a central concept of leader development, highlighting its process-like, dynamic nature. MTL is a multidimensional concept that consists of three distinct but related dimensions with different antecedents and related outcomes (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; for a meta-analysis, see Badura et al., 2020). *Affective-Identity MTL* refers to positive valence toward leadership and leading others and is considered the most intrinsic motivational dimension of leadership motivation. Those with high Affective-Identity MTL usually consider themselves natural born leaders. *Social-Normative MTL*, as a more extrinsic motivational component, is based on social norms: an individual with high Social-Normative MTL might lead out of a sense of duty or responsibility, or because they consider leader status to be normatively valued. Lastly, *Non-calculative MTL* refers to positive perceptions of leadership roles and formal positions, regardless of their potential costs or negative consequences (Badura et al., 2020). Because those with high Non-calculative MTL are likely to lead out of a general willingness, without weighing the possible costs and benefits related to leading others (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; Porter et al., 2019). Non-calculative MTL can be considered a "selfless" aspect of leadership motivation.

Some earlier studies have investigated the role of MTL in the leader emergence process (Hendricks and Payne, 2007;

Hong et al., 2011; Oh, 2012; Luria and Berson, 2013; Mohan and Carter, 2019) using individual MTL as a predictor variable, mostly in cross-sectional settings, but the perspective of leader careers has not received much research attention in the MTL literature. Also, the existing research has failed to establish how an individual's MTL associates with other factors that can affect leader role occupancy in complex environments, such as unanticipated organizational restructuring or sudden needs for personnel changes. In the original model by Chan and Drasgow (2001), only limited attention was given to the contextual factors that may shape and affect leader role occupancy in practice, in addition to MTL. Not only individual motivational factors, but also situational triggers or events in an organization may lead to one taking up the leader role.

From the broader career perspective, leader role occupancy at a certain time may (or may not) associate with future career decisions, when an individual weighs up future possibilities of pursuing leader roles. So far as we know, previous studies have not investigated MTL or reasons for leader role occupancy from a perspective that would capture future leader-career orientations. This gap in the literature needs to be addressed, as evidence shows that pursuing leader positions is not the most important career goal of the majority of students or employees (Chudzikowski, 2012; Sutela and Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019). If we are going to lack sufficient candidates for leader positions in the future, we need more information on how to make careers more lasting and how to support the construction of a sustainable career for those leaders who already occupy the position. To extend research on MTL and integrate that research into research on leader careers, we examine how individual factors, particularly individual leadership motivation, may associate with other reasons for leader role occupancy. In integrating these different perspectives in this study, we apply the conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020).

## Sustainable Leader Career as an Outcome of Leader Emergence

The conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020) explains how careers unfold in the interplay of three dimensions: the individual, context, and time (Chudzikowski et al., 2019; De Vos et al., 2020). The individual is seen as an agentic career actor, whose career possibilities are likely to be influenced by and to interact with his or her particular context (e.g., occupation, work group, organization) and time (e.g., career stage). The conceptual model of sustainable careers includes four central concepts: agency, meaning, proactivity, and adaptation (De Vos et al., 2020). Constructing a sustainable career is a dynamic process in which the interrelationship between these four focal concepts is manifested as person-career fit. In order to create and retain a good person-career fit, the individual as an agentic subject both proactively shapes his or her environment and, on the other hand, adapts to external forces. From the perspective of person-career fit, the importance of meaning cannot be overemphasized, as knowledge of one's personal values and needs generates experience of what one understands to be meaningful work, and provides important knowledge for one's further career decisions (De Vos et al., 2020).

Thus far, career theories have emphasized the role of individual agency in shaping a career from the vocational perspective, without paying much attention to organizational and institutional perspectives, which presume that also organizations and wider institutional forces affect individual careers (Inkson et al., 2012). In seeking to develop an understanding of how careers unfold, we need to apply the ideas of systems thinking to acknowledge the role of various factors affecting the career unfolding process. The sustainable careers framework acknowledges that individual agency and proactivity are likely to be affected by contextual demands and resources, and in addition to the individual's own active endeavors, it also highlights adaptation and adjustment to environmental factors (De Vos et al., 2020). From the perspective of leader emergence and career continuity, we are interested in investigating whether individuals deliberately drive their way toward leader roles as active agents, or if they drift toward these roles under the influence of external forces. In addition, we examine if these processes of "driving" vs. "drifting" are associated with the focal indicators of sustainable careers, to which we will now turn.

## Indicators of Sustainable Leader Careers: Leader's Health and Productivity

According to De Vos et al. (2020), the sustainability of a career can be assessed through three indicators: *happiness, health,* and *productivity.* Happiness refers to one's personal satisfaction with one's career and subjective career success, health is associated with both physical and psychological health and well-being, and productivity refers to performance in one's current job, and the fit between the career and the organization's needs for human capital. These three indicators of sustainable careers reflect the dynamic person-career fit and an individual's success in adapting and/or proactively shaping contexts and dealing with environmental influences (De Vos et al., 2020). In this study, we focus on two of these career sustainability indicators, a leader's *health* and *productivity,* the second of which was not measured directly but was inferred indirectly from leader performance.

As a *health* indicator, we examined leader's occupational well-being, namely burnout and work engagement. Burnout develops in response to chronic job-related stressors, which result in experiences of emotional exhaustion (feelings of strain and fatigue), cynicism (a distal attitude toward one's work or colleagues and a general loss of interest in one's work), and reduced professional efficacy (feelings of incompetence at work) (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). Work engagement is a three-dimensional concept of positive well-being at work, which is described as having high mental energy while working (vigor), a sense of significance, pride and inspiration (dedication) and immersion in one's work (absorption) (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006). Burnout and work engagement are both known to be associated with career-relevant outcomes, such as organizational commitment, but each one in its own way: burnout is negatively associated with commitment, whereas

work engagement increases commitment to one's organization (Hakanen et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2013). In addition, burnout is associated with a growing intention of leaving the profession (Reinardy, 2011).

From the perspective of *productivity* and one of its indicators, performance, we are interested on how a leader performs his or her leadership-related duties and how this is manifested in the followers' occupational well-being. We argue that this is a central viewpoint because leaders are influential figures in organizations and their performance and behaviors are relevant to their employees' well-being and to the organization as a whole (e.g., Skakon et al., 2010; Ashford et al., 2018). Although performance can be assessed from various perspectives, we consider followers' occupational well-being (low burnout, high work engagement) to be an important output of leadership because, in general, occupational well-being is an important indication of sustainable careers. Moreover, occupational well-being is one of the values that is essential to integrate into the leadership-related debate alongside the hard performance figures that are measured in money or profit.

We propose that the link from the leader's performance to the occupational well-being of followers could be via the leader's motivational resources, which may affect actual performance as a leader and various leadership behaviors. How well a leader performs his/her role-related duties in the workplace may be manifested in several ways: for example, in the quality of social relationships, such as the quality of the leader-member exchange (LMX) (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), and in the leader's transformational leadership skills, that is, his/her capacity to inspire, provide a clear vision, initiate structure, and support his/her followers (Bass, 1999).

The effort that leader puts into the relevant performance and leadership related behaviors might be dependent of leader's motivational resources (Auvinen et al., 2020). According to the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001, 2011) and its principles concerning resource loss, if a leader has low (motivational) resources for leading others, these scarce resources have to be actively defended to avoid progressive resource loss. Defending initially scant resources is energy-consuming and it may result in the leader putting less effort into his or her work, that is, into leadership-related duties. There is some cross-sectional evidence that the leaders that had low or inadequate motivational resources for leadership reported more burnout symptoms and less work engagement (Auvinen et al., 2020), thus highlighting that those resources have a significant impact on the well-being of leaders. One meta-analytical review (Harms et al., 2017) examined leader stress as an antecedent of leader behaviors; they found preliminary support for the negative relationship between leader burnout and self-reported transformational leadership behaviors. This finding is also in line with the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001).

Despite the ambiguity concerning the actual moderating mechanism, the link from leader behaviors or leadership style to followers' well-being has been strongly supported by previous research. According to a systematic literature review, positive leader behaviors and transformational leadership style were positively associated with employee affective well-being and low stress; the opposite was found for negative leader behaviors (Skakon et al., 2010). One cross-sectional study (Auvinen et al., 2020) showed that the leader's motivational resources for leadership was associated with the followers' assessment of their leader's people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and LMX quality: when leaders had low motivational resources, they received inferior ratings from their followers for their leadership behaviors and LMX quality. There is also meta-analytical support for leader behaviors as the cause of follower well-being. For example, Harms et al. (2017) found strong support for the association between transformational leadership style and high LMX quality and lower levels of follower burnout and stress. Specifically, poor LMX showed stronger associations to followers' inferior occupational well-being in comparison to transformational leadership; it seems that LMX could buffer follower stress better than transformational leadership. However, as these findings were based on same-source information, they should be evaluated with caution. Previous research has also supported the link between LMX and followers' occupational well-being, namely, burnout and work engagement (Ellis et al., 2019). However, although the suggested link between the leader's resources to perform in the leadership role and its consequences for followers' occupational well-being is theoretically grounded, its empirical verification lies outside the scope of the current study.

## Research Questions

In this study, we aimed to answer four focal questions. First, in order to gain a wider understanding of the various reasons behind leader emergence, we wanted to explore what kinds of factors leaders themselves put forward as having affected their leader role occupancy. Thus, the first research question (RQ 1) was a qualitative investigation of the kinds of reasons that could be identified from leaders' descriptions of the reasons behind their leader role occupancy. This qualitative approach enabled us to identify the diversity of leader emergence in real world surroundings, as instead of relying on artificial simulations, qualitative research was used to analyze the actual expressions that individuals used in real contexts (Flick, 2014).

Secondly, to assess the role of individual factors and how they are related to the description of reasons for leader role occupancy, we combined quantitative analysis with the aforementioned qualitative descriptions of the reasons for leader role occupancy The qualitative data was quantitized for further analysis (data conversion; see, e.g., Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) to enable methodological triangulation. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data sources (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), we aimed to leverage the strengths of both methodological approaches: we strived to accurately measure and operationalize the constructs of our interest while simultaneously examining the leaders' experiences in a way that would capture their original, real-life context (Castro et al., 2010). Using statistical analyses, we examined whether leaders' personal motivation to lead (conceptualized as Affective-Identity MTL, Non-calculative MTL, or Social-Normative MTL) predicted their reasons for leader role occupancy (RQ2).

Finally, to bring together the various reasons behind leader role occupancy and the construction of sustainable leader careers, we explored whether leaders' different reasons for their leader role occupancy associated with two career sustainability indicators, *health* and *productivity* (De Vos et al., 2020). More specifically, we explored whether the reasons behind leader role occupancy were related to the leader's health (conceptualized as work engagement and burnout; RQ3) and performance as a leader (conceptualized as followers' work engagement and burnout; RQ4). To benefit from methodological triangulation and deepen the understanding of different reasons to leader role occupancy and their associations with career sustainability, we will aim to interpret the quantitative findings in the light of the themes identified from the qualitative analysis (integration through data transformation; Fetters et al., 2013).

# MATERIALS AND METHODS

## Data Collection and Participants

We used multiple sources of data collection to gather data that would be representative of the highly educated leader population in Finland in various fields and industries. An electronic survey was sent via trade unions to gather data that would be representative of different sectors, as the trade unions are organized by industry in Finland, and most Finnish employees are unionized (Ahtiainen, 2015). The survey was composed of carefully chosen self-evaluation inventories and open-ended questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. In the first phase, a link to the survey was sent to the members of four trade unions: the Finnish Union of University Professors, Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, Finnish Business School Graduates, and Academic Architects and Engineers in Finland. An additional round of data collection was conducted to increase the number of participants. In this additional data collection phase, we used three different data collection sources. One of these was another trade union: the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava), which is a confederation of trade unions for those with a university degree or other higher education. This trade union was used to target the survey at social and health care sector leaders. Participants were also recruited from an executive MBA (EMBA) program, and finally, psychology students volunteered to recruit highly educated leaders from among their acquaintances. Altogether, the data collection was conducted during a 6 month period. Participants from the EMBA program and the leaders recruited by students represented various sectors (e.g., the service sector, media and marketing, finance, and insurance, industry) and they were combined for the purposes of this study to constitute one data source. A detailed description of the data collection and response rates for each data source is presented in Auvinen et al. (2020).

### Leaders

This study focused on leaders who answered the open-ended question about leader role occupancy ($n$ = 1,219). Of these 1,219 leaders, 132 had to be omitted from the study as their answer consisted in practice of only a failure or refusal to answer (e.g., "???" or "N/A"), resulting in a study population of 1,087 leaders. Of these participants, 56 gave an answer that, could not be understood in this context (e.g., "Look at my response to the previous open-ended question"). That left a total of 1,031 individual descriptions that could be analyzed. Of the participants, 375 (36%) were professors, 99 (9%) university teachers and researchers, 186 (18%) business sector leaders, 100 (10%) academic engineers, 110 (11%) social and health care sector leaders, and 161 (16%) were "other" highly educated leaders; that is, they had been recruited by psychology students or had an eMBA degree. 51% of the studied leaders were women, the mean age in the sample was 51.4 ($SD$ = 8.8) years, and the mean length of past leadership experience was 12.9 years ($SD$ = 8.5). Ninety six percentages were working full-time and 99% had a permanent job. Every leader who participated was asked to recruit their followers to the survey anonymously. Leaders were given the information about data privacy and they were requested to send a link to the survey to their followers. The surveys for leaders and followers were identical regarding the focal measures related to the research project, but followers' survey also included measures to assess their leader's behaviors and performance.

### Followers

To assess followers' experiences, we used hierarchical leader-follower data. Of the leaders who participated in the study, 233 were willing to recruit their followers to participate, and they forwarded an electronic link to their subordinates. The responses were collected in such a way that they were visible only to the researchers, via an electronic survey tool. The data from the leaders and followers were matched by means of code identifiers: followers' ratings were combined with the data of their closest supervisor who had recruited them to participate in the study. The hierarchical sample included altogether 987 followers of the aforementioned 233 leaders. The number of follower participants per leader ranged between 1 and 14 ($M$ = 4.2). Of the followers studied here, 67% were women, the majority (58%) were aged 31–50 years, and the average duration of the relationship with the supervisor who had sent the invitation to take part in the survey was 3.5 years ($SD$ = 3.4).

## Measures

### Reasons Behind Leader Role Occupancy

We used one open-ended question to capture the variety of personal reasons behind leaders' current leader role occupancy: "What factors have contributed to your having your present position as a leader?" This question was followed by an empty space in which the leaders could type their answers, and there was no word limit. The respondents were thus able to describe as many factors as they chose as having affected their leader role occupancy.

### Motivation to Lead

We measured leaders' leadership motivation by using the Finnish translation of the Motivation to Lead Questionnaire (Chan and Drasgow, 2001). A shortened nine-item version of the scale

(MTL-9) was used, which has been found to provide a good factor structure validity (see Auvinen et al., 2020). Each sub-dimension of the MTL-9 includes three items; e.g., "I am the type of person who likes to be in charge of others" (Affective-Identity MTL), "It is appropriate for people to accept leadership roles or positions when they are asked" (Social-Normative MTL), and "I never expect to get more privileges if I agree to lead a group" (Non-calculative MTL). All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree—5 = totally agree), higher scores indicating higher motivation. All of the scale items are available on request from the first author. The Cronbach's alphas for leaders' MTL dimensions were 0.92, 0.89, and 0.74, respectively.

### Work Engagement

Both leaders' and followers' work engagement were measured with the nine-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Seppälä et al., 2009). The scale was used to measure three dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption. Each dimension was measured with three items; e.g., "At work, I feel that I am bursting with energy" for vigor, "I am proud of the work I do" for dedication, and "I get carried away when I'm working" for absorption. Items were answered on a frequency-based scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = never, 7 = daily), higher scores indicating more frequent experiences of work engagement. In the leader data, the Cronbach's alphas for work engagement dimensions were 0.87, 0.89, and 0.83 for vigor, dedication and absorption, respectively. In the follower data, the comparable figures were 0.87, 0.88, and 0.85.

### Burnout

Both leaders' and followers' burnout were measured with the nine-item Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI-9), which has shown time- and sample-invariant factor structure (Salmela-Aro et al., 2011; see also Feldt et al., 2014). It captures three dimensions of burnout: exhaustion (3 items; e.g., "I am snowed under with work"), cynicism (3 items; e.g., "I feel dispirited at work and I think of leaving my job") and inadequacy (3 items; e.g., "My expectations for my job and my performance have reduced"). All of the items were answered on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree), higher scores indicating higher burnout. In the leader data, the Cronbach's alphas for the dimensions of burnout were 0.75, 0.83, and 0.79 for exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy, respectively, and for the follower data, the comparable figures were 0.72, 0.81, and 0.77.

### Control Variables

Of leaders' demographic factors, we investigated age (continuous; in years), gender (dichotomous; 0 = male, 1 = female), past leadership experience (continuous; in years) and occupational sector (membership for each studied sector as a dummy-variable) in relation to focal outcomes. Dummy variables (0 = not a member, 1 = member) were used to following occupational sectors: professors, university teachers, and academics, business sector leaders, academic engineers, social and health care sector leaders and eMBA alumni, and others. These demographic factors were chosen based on their previously found significance in leader role occupancy: gender differences regarding leadership still exist (Kossek et al., 2017) and, on the basis of earlier results from the current data (Auvinen et al., 2020), leaders of different ages and from different occupational sectors differ in their leadership motivation. Those demographic factors that were related to the leader outcomes studied here were controlled for in further analyses.

For the analysis of the followers' data, the following demographic factors were examined: the follower's gender (dichotomous; 1 = female, 2 = male), age (categorical; under 20 years, 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, over 61 years) and duration of the relationship with closest supervisor (who provided the research request; continuous in years). Correlations and descriptive information about the study variables for the follower data is available from the first author on request. Those demographic variables that associated with followers' occupational well-being were controlled for in subsequent analyses.

## Analysis

### Qualitative Analysis: Categorization of Factors Affecting Leader Role Occupancy

We used the merged concurrent nested approach (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Castro et al., 2010), which enabled us to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the varying nature of the reasons why leaders occupy their leadership role. By choosing this approach, we were able to overcome some of the common shortcomings of the mixed-method research design and complement the existing literature on leader emergence. The possibility of simultaneously gathering qualitative and quantitative data enabled us to tackle the general limitation of the *sequential* temporal order of data collection (Bryman, 2007). In concurrent nested approaches, both data sources are collected simultaneously, but greater importance is attached to one type of data over the other (Creswell et al., 2003; Castro et al., 2010). In the present study, we quantitized the reasons the leaders named for occupying their leadership role and we statistically analyzed the associations between these reasons and the indicators of leader career sustainability and personal leader motivation. This approach enabled us to explore how leader role occupancy occurs in the real world; it also allowed us to generalize the findings to a wider population (Fetters et al., 2013). The concurrent approach enabled us to integrate both data sources in an unbiased manner as both were treated as independent entities in the data collection phase, but were brought together for analysis and interpretation (Bryman, 2007). To analyze RQ1, the first author read the leaders' open-ended answers using an inductive approach in order to identify common themes in the answers. These themes were then grouped together around similar content, resulting in 26 themes (e.g., "Leadership experience," "Personal characteristics," "Organizational factors"). After this, two independent coders (psychology students who were trained to do the coding as a part of their studies) read the open-ended answers and coded them according the different themes. Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004a,b) was calculated for each of the 26 themes

**TABLE 1 |** The coding procedure for empirical data: Citations, themes, their descriptions and theory-driven codings.

| Citation | Theme label | Interpretation | Theory-driven coding |
|---|---|---|---|
| "Previous leadership experience and evidence of good performance, —."<br>"Previous success as a team leader" | Leadership experience | Positive experiences of prior leader positions and their importance | Person; Agentic |
| "My own desire to make an impact, to develop and drive things forward" | Strive for impact | Striving to have an impact and develop the present situation | |
| "I've applied for these roles/positions myself"<br>"My own interest in these positions." | Leadership motivation | Personal interest in leading others, one's own motivation for positions of leadership | |
| "(It was) My own goal and hard work to achieve that goal —" | Hardworking attitude | Descriptions of determination and stamina in relation to work | |
| "— the desire to change to more responsible and more demanding duties."<br>"The desire to move on from my earlier job. I'm working in this supervisory position because I wanted a job with challenges!"<br>"Job description." | Nature of the job itself | Highlighting the occupation or the work, increasing or maintaining its meaningfulness | Context; Agentic |
| "My personal characteristics, I believe I am seen as an approachable and positive person.—"<br>"I'm a fit, experienced and reliable person for the job."<br>"My personality and reputation. — My desire to solve matters sensibly. Courage." | Personal characteristics | Respondent's perception of his/her own qualities that are suitable for leader | Person; Non-agentic |
| "A sense of responsibility and duty. My desire to do my part for the administration."<br>"I couldn't say 'no'." | Sense of duty | Accepting a leader role out of a sense of duty and responsibility. | |
| "Chance plays a role. I've gradually drifted towards leader positions. —"<br>"Everyone takes it in turn."<br>"There is no one else to appoint as leader." | Chance or circumstance | Prevailing circumstances that were described as outside of the respondent's active control | Context; Non-agentic |
| "The need for someone else to step in because of retirement, organizational changes." | Organizational factors | Descriptions that highlighted the needs of the organization, stemming from organizational restructuring, the size of the unit/department, filling a void, etc. | |
| "This is a small academic subject and I'm the only one with a professorship."<br>"Leading research projects is a 'natural' part of being a professor–."<br>"Leading a research project is naturally something you have to do if you do research and want to organize the work of your colleagues and postgraduate students, —." | Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia | Factors that are typical of academia and the scientific community and affect leader role occupancy: acquiring research funding, leading one's own research projects, status (e.g., a professorship) | |
| "The desire to move forward career-wise"<br>"My personal interest and desire to advance in my career" | Intentional career advancement | Descriptions that reflected an intentional advancement of one's own career up the hierarchy or towards a better position or status | Time; Agentic |
| "It's a natural progression in my career and the attendant increase in responsibilities."<br>"A long career and its 'normal or typical' progression." | Career evolution | Descriptions that highlighted career progression as "evolution" and a leader position as an inevitable result of long tenure. | Time; Non-agentic |

based on the work of the two independent coders. The mean level of Krippendorff's alpha was 0.52 in the whole data, ranging from −0.02 to 0.77. A negative Krippendorff's alpha indicates a skewness in the variable (Krippendorff, 2004b) and in the present data it concerned two categories that were quite minor in frequency ("Entrepreneurial motives" and "Strive to coach"). After the examination of Krippendorff's alphas, the first author did a second, blind reading of all the responses and, working on the codings of the two psychology students, came up with a final classification of each response into the 26 themes. The

| Agency vs. Non-agency / Sustainable career component | Agentic stance to pursuing leadership | Non-agentic stance to pursuing leadership |
|---|---|---|
| Person | Leadership motivation: 18%<br>Strive for impact: 13%<br>Proactive self-development: 8%<br>Proof of good performance: 7%<br>Managerial competencies: 7%<br>Hardworking attitude: 4%<br>Entrepreneurial motives: 3%<br>Leadership skills: 3%<br>Leadership experience: 3%<br>Social motives: 2%<br>Strive to coach: 1 % | Competence: 20%<br>Personal characteristics: 17%<br>Experience: 13%<br>Sense of duty: 4% |
| Context | Nature of the job itself : 4% | Procedurestypical to scientific organization or academia: 15%<br>Chance or circumstances: 13%<br>Recognized potential or peer-nomination: 7%<br>Organizational factors: 3% |
| Time | Intentional career advancement: 3% | Career evolution: 3% |

**FIGURE 1 |** 3 × 2 matrix of identified themes in relation to sustainable career components and agentic or non-agentic stance towards leadership. The prevalence of the original theme (one or more mentioning) among all responses presented as %.

26 themes were then reviewed to find out whether they form a hierarchical structure and represent a broader phenomenon (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2012). After the first inductive reading, we were able to identify elements in the data that reflect the key concepts of leader emergence (agency) and sustainable careers (person, context, time), so we took a deductive, theory-driven approach (Braun and Clarke, 2012) to the data to reduce the original number of themes (26), and re-classified the original themes into four new categories: agency vs. non-agency, and the three aforementioned components of a sustainable career.

To answer the criticism of overemphasizing the role of individual agency in career construction (e.g., Inkson et al., 2012), we paid particular attention to differentiating agency from non-agency. A key distinction between agentic vs. non-agentic factors behind leader role occupancy related to whether or not the leaders' answers included an element of active pursuit or striving toward a specifically leader career. For example, one of the original, first-round content categories, "Leadership experience," was coded as agentic, as these answers reflected individual striving for a leader position by acquiring experience that would be relevant to the position. In contrast, the category "Experience" was coded as non-agentic, as the answers in this category lacked the active pursuit of a *leader* career and reflected experience other than that related to leadership.

Of the 26 content categories that were originally identified in the data, 22 could be identified in the theory-driven analysis focused on the sustainable career components (person, context, time) and agency vs. non-agency. Three of the four categories that were omitted from the final classification lacked the element of agency—non-agency ("Other factors," "Collaborative skills" and "International experience") and the fourth one, "Lobbying" (<1% of all responses), was very marginal. Specimen answers and the final theory-driven coding that was used in subsequent statistical analyses are presented in **Table 1**. The theory-driven classification combining sustainable career components and the level of agency resulted in a 3 × 2 (*Person—Context—Time* × *Agency—Non-agency*) matrix, which was discussed and agreed among the research group and is presented in **Figure 1**.

## Integrative Analysis: How Quantitized Reasons for Leader Role Occupancy Associates With Demographics, Leadership Motivation and Sustainable Career Indicators

After theory-driven categorization of themes, the qualitative data was quantitized for further analysis (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Fetters et al., 2013). We used the theory-driven categories of sustainable career components and the coded levels of agency as the starting point for the data conversion and coding. Instead of calculating the exact number of themes in each of the theory-driven categories for every respondent, we used dichotomous coding for each category. This decision was based on our interest in studying whether or not a leader had mentioned each of the themes, not in studying the exact number or distribution of themes within each category. The data conversion procedure resulted in one dichotomous variable (0 = leader had not mentioned this reason, 1 = leader had mentioned one or more

reasons in this category) for each of the categories, that were: *person-related, context-related, agentic,* and *non-agentic* reasons behind leader role occupancy.

All of the statistical analyses were performed in SPSS (version 24). The relationships between study variables were investigated with correlation coefficients (Pearson's *r* and Spearman's *rho*; available on request from the first author), cross-tabulation, Chi square tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the control variables for subsequent analysis (**Tables 2**, **3**). Cross-tabulation with Chi square tests was performed to determine whether occupational background and gender associated with the aforementioned four reason categories. For continuous variables (age, past leadership experience), a similar investigation was performed with ANOVA. Those demographic variables that were found to associate with reason categories were controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Logistic regression analyses were performed to examine whether a leader's personal leadership motivation predicted a specific reason category; that is, the mentioning (no/yes) of a specific reason for leader role occupancy. The logistic regression model was estimated independently for each reason category (person- and context-related, agentic and non-agentic reasons). Based on the investigation of the associations between demographic factors and reasons for leader role occupancy, professors were set as a reference group, as they differed from the other occupational groups and were also older than other leaders in the data. To investigate which reasons for leader role occupancy the leader had mentioned and whether their reasons differed in relation to both the leader's and followers' occupational well-being, we used analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

# RESULTS

## Descriptions of Reasons Behind Leader Role Occupancy

The complete list of themes of reasons behind leader role occupancy and descriptions of their content, together with the theory-driven categorization is provided in **Table 1**. The original themes that were recognized in the open-ended question responses were placed in a 3 × 2 matrix (**Figure 1**), which was based on the sustainable career components in relation to personal agency. Here, all the original text scripts were analyzed based on whether or not the leaders' responses reflected personal agency in their pursuit of a career as a leader. For example, responses reflecting the sustainable career component, "Context," were evaluated to determine if they reflected an active or a passive stance for pursuing a career as a leader. When the respondents described that they were "working in this supervisory position because (they) wanted a job with challenges!," they mentioned a job-related reason, which emphasized the active role they played. This response highlighted the work itself as the main reason for leader role occupancy, which is a context-related factor according to the model by De Vos et al. (2020) with active, agentic elements. Therefore, it was categorized as Context-Agentic. In contrast, the responses that included context-related themes but reflected a

**TABLE 2** | Differing demographic factors (occupational group, gender) according to reasons for leader role occupancy.

| | Person-related reasons | | | Context-related reasons | | | Agentic reasons | | | Non-agentic reasons | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None % (adj. res.) | One or more % (adj. res.) | $\chi^2$ (*df*) | None % (adj. res.) | One or more % (adj. res.) | $\chi^2$ (*df*) | None % (adj. res.) | One or more % (adj. res.) | $\chi^2$ (*df*) | None % (adj. res.) | One or more % (adj. res.) | $\chi^2$ (*df*) |
| Occupational group | | | 133.07 (5)*** | | | 141.89 (5)*** | | | 143.64 (5)*** | | | 29.20 (5)*** |
| Professors (*n* = 375) | 43.5 (10.3) | 56.5 (−10.3) | | 39.0 (−9.9) | 61.0 (9.9) | | 62.5 (9.9) | 37.5 (−9.9) | | 21.5 (−3.9) | 78.5 (3.9) | |
| University teachers and academics (*n* = 99) | 34.3 (2.1) | 65.7 (−2.1) | | 43.1 (−3.2) | 56.9 (3.2) | | 55.9 (2.7) | 44.1 (−2.7) | | 22.5 (−1.4) | 77.5 (1.4) | |
| Business sector (*n* = 186) | 11.3 (−5.1) | 88.7 (5.1) | | 77.8 (6.1) | 22.2 (−6.1) | | 32.0 (−3.5) | 68.0 (3.5) | | 28.9 (0.2) | 71.1 (−0.2) | |
| Academic engineers (*n* = 100) | 15.6 (−2.6) | 84.4 (2.6) | | 81.7 (5.2) | 18.3 (−5.2) | | 38.5 (−1.0) | 61.5 (1.0) | | 39.4 (2.7) | 60.6 (−2.7) | |
| Social and health care (*n* = 110) | 16.8 (−2.3) | 83.2 (2.3) | | 61.9 (0.9) | 38.1 (−0.9) | | 28.3 (−3.4) | 71.7 (3.4) | | 29.2 (0.2) | 70.8 (−0.2) | |
| EMBA alumni's and other (*n* = 161) | 6.7 (−6.1) | 93.3 (6.1) | | 73.2 (4.2) | 26.8 (−4.2) | | 14.6 (−8.0) | 85.4 (8.0) | | 40.2 (3.7) | 59.8 (−3.7) | |
| Gender | | | 11.15 (1)*** | | | 0.00 (1) *ns* | | | 18.12 (1)*** | | | 0.43 (1) *ns* |
| Female | 21.3 (−3.3) | 78.7 (3.3) | | 58.2 (0.0) | 41.8 (0.0) | | 36.8 (−4.3) | 63.2 (4.3) | | 27.4 (−0.7) | 72.6 (0.7) | |
| Male | 30.1 (3.3) | 69.9 (−3.3) | | 58.1 (0.0) | 41.9 (0.0) | | 49.5 (4.3) | 50.5 (−4.3) | | 29.2 (0.7) | 70.8 (−0.7) | |

***$p \leq 0.001$, *adj. res.* = *adjusted residuals,* ±*2 considered as atypical.*

**TABLE 3 |** Differing demographic factors (age, past leadership experience) according to reasons for leader role occupancy (ANOVA).

| | Person-related reasons | | | Context-related reasons | | | Agentic reasons | | | Non-agentic reasons | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None *M (SD)* | One or more *M (SD)* | *F (df)* | None *M (SD)* | One or more *M (SD)* | *F (df)* | None *M (SD)* | One or more *M (SD)* | *F (df)* | None *M (SD)* | One or more *M (SD)* | *F (df)* |
| Age | 54.4 (8.3) | 50.6 (8.8) | 38.89 (1)*** | 50.3 (8.8) | 53.2 (8.6) | 28.66 (1)*** | 54.0 (8.1) | 49.7 (8.9) | 65.60 (1)*** | 50.5 (9.0) | 51.9 (8.7) | 5.56 (1)* |
| Past leadership experience | 12.3 (7.9) | 13.2 (8.6) | 2.46 (1) *ns* | 13.2 (8.6) | 12.7 (8.3) | 1.08 (1) *ns* | 12.4 (8.3) | 13.4 (8.6) | 3.19 (1) *ns* | 13.7 (8.9) | 12.7 (8.3) | 3.44 (1) *ns* |

*ns, non-significant; *p ≤ 0.05; ***p ≤ 0.001.*

more passive stance (e.g., "Chance plays a role. I've gradually drifted toward leader positions"), were categorized as Context-Non-agentic. Each theme was evaluated in a similar manner. To ensure the validity of constructing this matrix, the theme categorizations and the original text scripts were analyzed. This was done by the first author. All the authors discussed and agreed upon the procedure and the final classifications.

As shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**, the reasons that leaders mentioned for their leader role occupancy could be classified in terms of sustainable career components (person, context, and time) and the presence of agency (agentic vs. non-agentic). For time-related reasons for leader role occupancy, two mutually exclusive categories appeared in the data: "Intentional career advancement," which reflected an agentic stance, and "Career evolution," which reflected a non-agentic stance. Altogether, only 6% of the leaders mentioned a time-related factor (either agentic or non-agentic) that had affected their leader role occupancy. As these categories differed from the others because of their mutually exclusive nature (respondents mentioned either an agentic or a non-agentic stance in relation to time) and limited variation, they were omitted from the subsequent statistical analyses.

Of the sustainable career components, the respondents mentioned more person-related reasons (74%) than context-related reasons (42%) for leader role occupancy. Of the person-related reasons, "Competence" (descriptions of individual qualifications, knowledge, and general or field-specific competencies) was mentioned most often, in 20% of all cases. This was followed by "Leadership motivation," which reflected the respondent's personal interest in leading others (18%), and "Personal characteristics" (related to personality and other personal features that are considered suitable for a leader; 17%). Other person-related reasons were "Striving for impact" (the desire to have an impact and to develop the present situation; 13%) and "Experience" (having general experience of life and work experience, a long work history or job tenure; 13%). Person-related reasons pertaining to leadership were mentioned less often: "Managerial competencies" (related to so-called management skills and competencies, e.g., the ability to organize, make decisions, and direct administrative procedures) was mentioned in only 7% of all of the responses given. "Leadership experience" and "Leadership skills" (focusing on skills and competencies related to people management and leadership in contrast to task management, e.g., the ability to communicate vision to followers) were both mentioned in only 3% of the total responses.

Of the context-related reasons, the most typical categories were "Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia" (15% of all reasons mentioned), "Chance or circumstance" (13%), "Recognized potential or peer nomination" (7%), "Nature of the job itself" (4%), and "Organizational factors" (3%). The category "Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia" described situations where the position of leader was an automatic consequence of the responsibilities associated with conducting research (e.g., leading one's own research group) or having an academic position (e.g., a professorship). The category "Chance or circumstances" included answers that highlighted circumstances outside of the individual's control, such as chance, being the only one who could be appointed leader, or the result of job rotation. This differed from the category "Organizational factors," in which respondents described the specific needs of the organization and organizational changes that had affected their current leader role occupancy. The category "Recognized potential or peer nomination" included answers that highlighted occupying a leader role because of having been recommended by one's own supervisor or colleagues, or resulting from peer nomination. The answers in the category "Nature of the job itself" reflected factors related to the content of the work, the need to keep one's job or increase its meaningfulness, or one's job satisfaction.

Altogether, non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy were mentioned more often than agentic reasons: one or more non-agentic reasons were mentioned in 92% of the responses, whereas one or more agentic reasons for leader role occupancy were mentioned in 73%. A complete list of all the identified categories, example answers, and descriptions of the categories is available from the first author on request.

## Results of the Descriptive Analysis: Relationships Between Study Variables

The differing demographics among the reason categories are presented in **Tables 2**, **3**. Taken together, women mentioned more often than men many person-related and agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy. With regard to occupational background, leaders in academic settings tended to express more context- and non-agentic factors that had affected their current leader role occupancy. It was more common for those working in the business sector or

**TABLE 4 |** Predictors of person- and context-related reasons for current leader role occupancy (logistic regression analysis).

| Person-related reasons for leader role occupancy | | | | | | | Context-related reasons for leader role occupancy | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 95% CI for Exp(B) | | | | | | | 95% CI for Exp(B) | |
| **Predictor** | **β** | **S.E β** | **Wald's $\chi^2$** | **Exp(β) (OR)** | **Lower** | **Upper** | **Predictor** | **β** | **S.E β** | **Wald's $\chi^2$** | **Exp(β) (OR)** | **Lower** | **Upper** |
| Affective-Identity MTL | 0.39*** | 0.12 | 11.41 | 1.48 | 1.18 | 1.87 | Affective-Identity MTL | −0.20* | 0.10 | 3.81 | 0.82 | 0.67 | 1.00 |
| Non-calculative MTL | 0.18† | 0.10 | 3.40 | 1.20 | 0.99 | 1.45 | Non-calculative MTL | −0.01*ns* | 0.08 | 0.01 | 0.99 | 0.84 | 1.17 |
| Social-Normative MTL | 0.07*ns* | 0.11 | 0.44 | 1.07 | 0.87 | 1.32 | Social-Normative MTL | −0.07*ns* | 0.09 | 0.61 | 0.93 | 0.78 | 1.11 |
| Gender | 0.38* | 0.17 | 4.82 | 1.47 | 1.04 | 2.06 | | | | | | | |
| Age | −0.01*ns* | 0.01 | 0.71 | 0.99 | 0.97 | 1.01 | Age | 0.01*ns* | 0.01 | 0.40 | 1.01 | 0.99 | 1.02 |
| University teachers and researchers | 0.24*ns* | 0.26 | 0.86 | 1.27 | 0.76 | 2.12 | University teachers and researchers | −0.18*ns* | 0.24 | 0.55 | 0.84 | 0.53 | 1.34 |
| Business sector | 1.49*** | 0.28 | 28.75 | 4.44 | 2.58 | 7.67 | Business sector | −1.62*** | 0.23 | 51.20 | 0.20 | 0.13 | 0.31 |
| Academic engineers | 1.39*** | 0.32 | 18.70 | 4.01 | 2.14 | 7.53 | Academic engineers | −1.80*** | 0.29 | 39.40 | 0.17 | 0.10 | 0.29 |
| Social and health care sector | 1.25*** | 0.32 | 14.85 | 3.48 | 1.85 | 6.57 | Social and health care sector | −0.94*** | 0.24 | 15.63 | 0.39 | 0.24 | 0.62 |
| EMBA alumnis and other | 1.97*** | 0.35 | 32.40 | 7.16 | 3.64 | 14.11 | EMBA alumnis and other | −1.35*** | 0.23 | 34.08 | 0.26 | 0.17 | 0.41 |
| Constant | 5.32*** | 0.96 | 3.45 | 204.22 | | | Constant | −4.86*** | 0.84 | 33.36 | 0.01 | | |

| Test | $X^2$ | $R^2$ | % | Test | $X^2$ | $R^2$ | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goodness-of-fit test | | | | Goodness-of-fit test | | | |
| Hosmer and Lemeshow | 6.65*ns* | | | Hosmer and Lemeshow | 6.03*ns* | | |
| Nagelkerke $R^2$ | | 0.20 | | Nagelkerke $R^2$ | | 0.18 | |
| Cox and Snell $R^2$ | | 0.13 | | Cox and Snell $R^2$ | | 0.13 | |
| Overall presentage | | | 75.80 | Overall presentage | | | 67.90 |
| Omnibus tests of model coefficients | 142.55*** | | | Omnibus tests of model coefficients | 14.09*** | | |

*ns, non-significant;* †$p \leq 0.07$; *$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.001$.
*All df's for beta coefficients = 1. For person-related reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow and df = 10 for Omnibus test. For context-related reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow and df = 9 for Omnibus test.*

with some kind of formal training in leadership to express person-related and agentic factors as reasons for working in a leader position. Older leaders typically mentioned many context-related reasons and no person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy, and younger leaders mentioned more agentic reasons. Past leadership experience was not related to the reasons studied for leader role occupancy. These differing demographic factors were set as covariates in subsequent analyses.

## Personal Leadership Motivation and Leader Role Occupancy

Our second research question was concerned with whether leaders' personal motivation to lead predicted their reasons for leader role occupancy. The results of logistic regression analyses are presented in **Tables 4**, **5**. Based on the descriptive quantitative analysis, professors were set as a reference group in all the logistic regression analyses as they were older than the other leaders in the study and they differed from leaders with other occupational backgrounds in the reasons for their leader role occupancy in every studied category. Taken together, various factors predicted the mention of person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy, but only occupational background was associated with mentioning reasons that stemmed from contextual factors or reflected a non-agentic stance toward leadership.

Of the controlled demographic variables, gender, age and occupational group predicted the mentioning of person-related reasons (**Table 4**) and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy (**Table 5**). For context-related reasons (**Table 4**) and non-agentic reasons (**Table 5**), occupational background was the only demographic factor to predict the mentioning of these reasons for leader role occupancy.

**TABLE 5 |** Predictors of agentic and non-agentic reasons for current leader role occupancy (logistic regression analysis).

| Agentic reasons for leader role occupancy | | | | | | | Non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 95% CI for Exp(B) | | | | | | | 95% CI for Exp(B) | |
| **Predictor** | **β** | **S.E β** | **Wald's $\chi^2$** | **Exp(β) (OR)** | **Lower** | **Upper** | **Predictor** | **β** | **S.E β** | **Wald's $\chi^2$** | **Exp(β) (OR)** | **Lower** | **Upper** |
| Affective-Identity MTL | 0.62*** | 0.11 | 33.16 | 1.85 | 1.50 | 2.29 | Affective-identity MTL | −0.31** | 0.11 | 8.10 | 0.74 | 0.59 | 0.91 |
| Non-calculative MTL | 0.04*ns* | 0.09 | 0.25 | 1.04 | 0.88 | 1.24 | Non-calculative MTL | 0.09*ns* | 0.09 | 1.08 | 1.10 | 0.92 | 1.30 |
| Social-Normative MTL | −0.17*ns* | 0.09 | 3.15 | 0.85 | 0.70 | 1.02 | Social-Normative MTL | 1.00*ns* | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.10 | 0.92 | 1.33 |
| Gender | 0.37* | 0.16 | 5.57 | 1.44 | 1.06 | 1.96 | | | | | | | |
| Age | −0.02** | 0.01 | 6.10 | 0.98 | 0.96 | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| University teachers and researchers | −0.06*ns* | 0.25 | 0.05 | 0.94 | 0.58 | 1.54 | University teachers and researchers | −0.09*ns* | 0.28 | 1.00 | 0.92 | 0.53 | 1.58 |
| Business sector | 0.70*** | 0.21 | 1.70 | 2.02 | 1.33 | 3.07 | Business sector | −0.26*ns* | 0.22 | 1.45 | 0.77 | 0.51 | 1.18 |
| Academic engineers | 0.65** | 0.25 | 6.74 | 1.91 | 1.17 | 3.12 | Academic engineers | −0.75** | 0.25 | 9.48 | 0.47 | 0.29 | 0.76 |
| Social and health care sector | 1.14*** | 0.27 | 17.55 | 3.14 | 1.84 | 5.35 | Social and health care sector | −0.42*ns* | 0.25 | 2.82 | 0.65 | 0.40 | 1.07 |
| EMBA alumnis and other | 1.79*** | 0.27 | 43.13 | 5.99 | 3.51 | 1.21 | EMBA alumnis and other | −0.83*** | 0.22 | 15.00 | 0.44 | 0.29 | 0.66 |
| Constant | 3.69*** | 0.86 | 18.67 | 4.19 | | | Constant | −0.65*ns* | 0.88 | 0.547 | 0.52 | | |
| Test | | | | $X^2$ | $R^2$ | % | Test | | | | $X^2$ | $R^2$ | % |
| Goodness-of-fit test | | | | | | | Goodness-of-fit test | | | | | | |
| Hosmer and Lemeshow | | | | 5.57*ns* | | | Hosmer and Lemeshow | | | | 2.95*ns* | | |
| Nagelkerke $R^2$ | | | | | 0.23 | | Nagelkerke $R^2$ | | | | | 0.06 | |
| Cox and Snell $R^2$ | | | | | 0.17 | | Cox and Snell $R^2$ | | | | | 0.04 | |
| Overall presentage | | | | | | 67.9 | Overall presentage | | | | | | 71.8 |
| Omnibus tests of model coefficients | | | | 186.35*** | | | Omnibus tests of model coefficients | | | | 39.78*** | | |

*ns, non-significant; *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001. All df's for beta coefficients = 1. For agentic reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow and df = 10 for Omnibus test. For non-agentic reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow, and df = 8 for Omnibus test.*

Of the different dimensions of leadership motivation, only Affective-Identity MTL associated with the reasons behind leader role occupancy. It increased the probability of naming person-related and agentic reasons (with odds ratios greater than one) and reduced the probability of naming context-related and non-agentic reasons (with odds ratios smaller than one). Non-calculative MTL failed to reach statistical significance when predicting the mentioning of person-related reasons for leader role occupancy, but had an odds ratio greater than one, indicating increased probability of naming these reasons.

## Leader Role Occupancy and Leader's Health as an Indicator of a Sustainable Career

The results of the ANCOVA analysis investigating RQ3 are presented in **Table 6**. With regard to the burnout symptoms that we examined, those leaders who had mentioned one or more person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy reported less cynicism and less inadequacy. With regard to the indicators of work engagement, they also reported more vigor compared to those leaders who had not mentioned any person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy. Conversely, those leaders who had mentioned one or more context-related reasons for their leader role occupancy reported more of all of the burnout symptoms (exhaustion, cynicism, and inadequacy) and less vigor compared to those who had not mentioned context-related reasons at all. As for the agentic reasons behind a leader's current leader role occupancy, those who had mentioned one or more agentic reasons for occupying their current role reported less cynicism and inadequacy and more vigor and dedication than those leaders who had not mentioned any of these reasons. Non-agentic reasons behind leader role occupancy did not associate with leader's own occupational well-being.

**TABLE 6 |** Mean differences in leader's occupational well-being according to reasons behind leader role occupancy (ANCOVA; leader's age, occupational background and gender controlled for).

| | Reasons mentioned: None *M (SE)* | Reasons mentioned: One or more *M (SE)* | *F* | $R_a^2$ | Partial $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Person-related reasons** | | | | | |
| Burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.23 (0.08) | 3.14 (0.04) | 1.01*ns* | 0.09 | <0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.47 (0.08) | 2.28 (0.04) | 4.57* | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.73 (0.08) | 2.50 (0.05) | 5.60* | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.50 (0.07) | 5.71 (0.04) | 5.70* | 0.05 | 0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.86 (0.07) | 5.94 (0.04) | 0.867*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.92 (0.07) | 5.88 (0.04) | 0.32*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |
| **Context-related reasons** | | | | | |
| Burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.04 (0.05) | 3.32 (0.06) | 12.50*** | 0.10 | 0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.24 (0.05) | 2.45 (0.06) | 7.18** | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.46 (0.06) | 2.68 (0.06) | 6.25** | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.74 (0.05) | 5.55 (0.06) | 6.02** | 0.05 | 0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.96 (0.05) | 5.88 (0.05) | 1.14*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.91 (0.04) | 5.87 (0.05) | 0.301*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |
| **Agentic reasons** | | | | | |
| Burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.22 (0.06) | 3.12 (0.05) | 1.66*ns* | 0.09 | <0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.52 (0.06) | 2.20 (0.05) | 17.18*** | 0.03 | 0.02 |
| Inadequacy | 2.70 (0.07) | 2.45 (0.06) | 8.18** | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| Work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.50 (0.06) | 5.77 (0.05) | 12.70*** | 0.06 | 0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.79 (0.06) | 6.02 (0.05) | 8.80** | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.83 (0.05) | 5.93 (0.04) | 2.04*ns* | 0.03 | <0.01 |
| **Non-agentic reasons** | | | | | |
| Burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.09 (0.07) | 3.19 (0.04) | 1.68*ns* | 0.09 | <0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.25 (0.07) | 2.36(0.04) | 1.83*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.52 (0.08) | 2.57 (0.05) | 0.327*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |
| Work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.69 (0.07) | 5.64 (0.04) | 0.41*ns* | 0.05 | <0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.98 (0.07) | 5.90 (0.04) | 1.07*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.89 (0.06) | 5.89 (0.04) | 0.01*ns* | 0.02 | <0.01 |

*ns, non-significant; *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001.*

*Mentioning of person-related reasons: none n = 232, one or more n = 687; context-related reasons: none n = 521, one or more n = 398; agentic reasons: none n = 384, one or more n = 535; non-agentic reasons: none n = 256, one or more n = 663. Burnout scores ranged from 1 to 5, work engagement scores ranged from 1 to 7.* $R_a^2$ *= Adjusted R Square.*

## Leader Role Occupancy, and Leader Performance as an Indicator of a Sustainable Career

The results of the ANCOVA analysis for RQ4 are presented in **Table 7**. If a leader had mentioned one or more person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy, their followers reported less exhaustion and less inadequacy with regard to the burnout symptoms than the followers of leaders who had not mentioned person-related reasons at all. On the other hand, if the leader had mentioned context-related reasons for their leader role occupancy, their followers reported less vigor than those who had not mentioned these reasons. The followers of a leader who had mentioned one or more agentic reason for their current leader role occupancy reported less exhaustion, but followers' occupational well-being was not related to a leader's non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy.

**TABLE 7 |** Mean differences in follower-rated occupational well-being according to leader's reasons behind their leader role occupancy (ANCOVA; controlled variables presented in the Table notes).

| | Reasons mentioned: None *M (SE)* | Reasons mentioned: One or more *M (SE)* | *F* | $R_a^2$ | Partial $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Person-related** | | | | | |
| Follower burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.12 (0.10) | 2.81 (0.04) | 8.27** | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.17 (0.10) | 2.17 (0.03) | 0.00*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.73 (0.11) | 2.48 (0.04) | 5.79* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Follower work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.55 (0.10) | 5.74(0.04) | 3.09*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.81 (0.11) | 5.85 (0.04) | 0.084*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.89 (0.10) | 5.77 (0.04) | 1.08*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |
| **Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Context-related** | | | | | |
| Follower burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 2.84 (0.04) | 2.87 (0.06) | 0.25*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.15 (0.04) | 2.21 (0.05) | 0.99*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.52 (0.05) | 2.49 (0.06) | 0.10*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Follower work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.79 (0.04) | 5.59 (0.06) | 7.90** | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.88 (0.05) | 5.78 (0.06) | 1.52*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.78 (0.04) | 5.80 (0.06) | 0.05*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |
| **Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Agentic** | | | | | |
| Follower burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.05 (0.07) | 2.78 (0.04) | 12.44*** | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.21 (0.06) | 2.16 (0.04) | 0.46*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.63 (0.08) | 2.47 (0.04) | 3.33† | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Follower work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.63 (0.07) | 5.75 (0.04) | 2.39*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.86 (0.07) | 5.83 (0.04) | 0.11*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.82 (0.07) | 5.77 (0.04) | 0.38*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |
| **Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Non-agentic** | | | | | |
| Follower burnout | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 2.80 (0.06) | 2.87 (0.04) | 1.12*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Cynicism | 2.16 (0.06) | 2.18 (0.04) | 0.03*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Inadequacy | 2.59 (0.07) | 2.47 (0.05) | 1.98*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Follower work engagement | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.72 (0.06) | 5.71 (0.04) | 0.02*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |
| Dedication | 5.79 (0.06) | 5.87 (0.04) | 1.05*ns* | 0.01 | <0.01 |
| Absorption | 5.72 (0.06) | 5.81 (0.04) | 1.58*ns* | <0.01 | <0.01 |

*ns, non-significant; †p ≤ 0.07; *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001.*

*Followers' responses per mentioning of person-related reasons: none n = 110, one or more n = 854; context-related reasons: none n = 605, one or more n = 359; agentic reasons: none n = 239, one or more n = 725; non-agentic reasons: none n = 302, one or more n = 662. For burnout, the length of leader-follower relationship was controlled for. For work engagement, followers' age, gender and the length of leader-follower relationship was controlled for. $R_a^2$ = Adjusted R Square.*

## DISCUSSION

We had four specific aims in this study. First, we wanted to explore the variety of reasons that leaders would mention when asked to name the factors behind their leader role occupancy. Secondly, in order to assess how individual factors predict the reasons for leader role occupancy, we used mixed method analysis strategy to examine if leaders' personal leadership motivation was one such indication. We also combined the different reasons for leader role occupancy with the model of sustainable leader careers, and explored whether different reasons behind occupying a leader role associated with career sustainability indicators. Thus, our third aim was to investigate the reasons for leader role occupancy in relation to leaders' health. Finally, our fourth aim was to explore the reasons for leader role occupancy in relation to leader performance,

that is, productivity. Let us now turn to our findings in more detail.

## Drivers and Drifters—Various Reasons Affecting Leader Role Occupancy

We found that there was substantial variation in the leaders' descriptions of what had affected their current leader role occupancy, as the preliminary analysis resulted in 26 different themes. After classifying these themes based on the conceptual model of sustainable careers, we were able to identify all the three components of the model (person, context, time) in our data. We could also identify both agentic and non-agentic attitudes toward pursuing a leader role. Four of the original, data-driven categories did not fit the theory-based classification, as they lacked the level of agency or were too vague to be classified according to the components of a sustainable career. One such example was the category of "Other factors," in which we placed all those responses that did not fit into any other content categories, such as one that cited money.

Of the person-related reasons that were mentioned as having an effect on the respondent's present position as a leader, the majority reflected an agentic stance toward pursuing the position. Agency in pursuing a leader role was mentioned in 69% of the responses, while 54% of the responses reflected a non-agentic stance toward leadership. Among the agentic person-related reasons, personal leadership motivation was the one most often mentioned for current leader role occupancy (nearly one fifth of the responses). Personal motivation for leader roles acts as natural fuel for leader emergence, and from the sustainable leader career perspective, for an individual a possibility to activate or verify valued personal identities through work, it provides a sense of meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010).

Factors related to management or leadership skills or competencies were mentioned strikingly less often than other agentic, person-related reasons (in less than one tenth of the total responses). In addition, reasons that involved being suitable for the job (i.e., having the personal characteristics that are considered appropriate for a leader) was only the third most frequently mentioned reason (preceded by "Competence" and "Leadership motivation") among all the person-related reasons. This finding is surprising, even alarming, when we consider whether people who work as leaders are actually suitable for their role. Although having personal motivation is important, also task-related skills, competencies, and appropriate personal characteristics are necessary to succeed in the job, and for good leader performance (Van Iddekinge et al., 2009). In addition, the leaders who participated in the study gave nearly as much emphasis to having personal experience that was not related to previous leadership tasks as to having suitable personal characteristics. For example, leaders stated that they were "qualified to do so," had "acquired experience and competence in such areas (undergraduate education, research, societal interaction) that have provided the prerequisites for academic leadership positions" or generally mentioned "expertise and experience" as a reason for occupying a leader role. This raises questions about the leader's performance and the quality of his or her leadership: general experience of life and work may be helpful when working as a leader, but is it enough to ensure that the person will perform well in a demanding position with multiple staff- and performance-related responsibilities? It has to be noted, however, that the majority of the leaders in our study came from the academic world, such as universities, so their initial career motivations may have been based more on professionalism than on leading others (see e.g., Chan et al., 2012). This might help to explain the prevalence of these reasons in the data.

Striving to make an impact or to develop the existing situation was mentioned fourth most frequently as a reason for leader role occupancy. This may indicate that despite the falling interest in leader positions (Chudzikowski, 2012; Sutela and Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019), among those who are working as leaders, the position is still seen as valuable and appreciated, offering the possibility of having an influence on a whole range of different matters, from having an impact on one's own work community to wider societal issues. Being able to have an impact via one's work gives one a sense of purposefulness, which is conceptualized as the experience that one's work serves a broader purpose and something valuable beyond oneself (Steger et al., 2012; Martela and Pessi, 2018). Making a contribution (i.e., serving a broader purpose) is an essential source of meaning (Rosso et al., 2010; Steger et al., 2012; Martela and Pessi, 2018), which is a key element in supporting career sustainability (De Vos et al., 2020). Another theme that was identified in the data as reflecting the importance of contributing as a source of meaning was the desire to coach or mentor others. Leaders told that they had an "interest in guiding people," "desire to coach and train future leaders and managers" or had an "opportunity to influence and coach subordinates to growth." Although answers that were classified under this person-related theme were reported by only about one percent of the leaders, it is an important motivational factor that includes at the same time both agentic, individual preferences for leading and more communal preferences for supporting others. In sum, leaders who mentioned person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy can be viewed as active drivers toward their leader position. They are also more likely to draw meaning from multiple sources for their current role as a leader.

The majority of the context-related reasons, as expected, reflected a non-agentic stance to pursuing leadership. The two most often mentioned context-related reasons related to conditions that were outside of one's personal control. The first related to the well-established practices or patterns within the leader's organization, which affected their job description and shaped the content of responsibilities within their specific sector. Leaders stated that "it has to be done—(leader positions) fall under the professor's job description" or that "the post is responsible for the laboratory's research." These organizational and/or institutional norms had affected the current leader role occupancy, and they were most prominent among leaders working in academia. The responses of these leaders often included descriptions of adaptation to the current situation and to their work environment. Even though they saw their leadership duties as extra work, beyond their core tasks (such as, for the academics, of conducting research), they did not question or

criticize their leader role. Rather, leader responsibilities were accepted as a matter of course. This is not surprising, as research shows that leaders in academia have varying levels of leadership motivation (see Auvinen et al., 2020). These findings raise the question of how these leaders experience meaning in their work: whether it is possible for them to derive any meaning from a leader career if their original career motivation was not leadership-related but something else (e.g., professional motivation; Chan et al., 2012). Taken together, those leaders who emphasized context-related reasons can be seen as drifters in relation to leadership. Ending up as a leader regardless of the fact that they have not themselves set leading others as a personal goal calls for adjustment and adaptation to external circumstances and contextual demands. This may associate with poorer perceived meaning (see also, De Vos et al., 2020), especially if one's work and the position offer limited openings to other sources of meaningfulness than deriving it from self-actualization or expressing own authentic self (Rosso et al., 2010).

An interesting finding was that women and younger leaders mentioned more person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy than men and older leaders. This may indicate that there is still gender inequality when it comes to occupying leader positions (Kossek et al., 2017). In this study, leaders who were women felt that if they wanted to work as a leader, they had to exert themselves more and demonstrate greater proactivity than their male counterparts. The descriptive statistical analyses of the association between age and occupational background revealed that the professors were significantly older than leaders in other occupational sectors. This is not surprising, as leader positions usually come along later in the course of a university career. However, this association between age and occupational group may partly explain the finding that younger leaders mentioned more person-related and agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy. This would also be explained by the fact that younger leaders are at a different stage in their career from older leaders, and their need to consolidate their position in the labor market is more pronounced, so they are more likely to have more person-related, agentic reasons to get on in their career.

## Intrinsic Leadership Motivation Associated With Leader Role Occupancy

Of the different types of leadership motivation, the intrinsic component, Affective-Identity MTL, had a significant role in predicting all of the four reasons behind leader role occupancy, whereas the other motivation types (selfless, Non-calculative MTL, and extrinsic, Social-Normative MTL) did not. Interesting light can be thrown on the different aspects of leadership motivation when we explore how MTL dimensions predicted mention of the reasons behind leader role occupancy (the odds ratios). All aspects of leadership motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, and selfless) were related to an increased probability of naming person-related reasons behind leader role occupancy, while with context-related reasons, there was a corresponding decrease in probability. In these two reason categories, different dimensions of MTL operated in parallel, but with opposing effects.

Investigating the mention of agentic and non-agentic reasons reveals the different nature of these leadership motivation components, supporting previous research on MTL dimensionality (Badura et al., 2020). Intrinsic and selfless leadership motivations were related to an increased probability of mentioning agentic reasons for leader role occupancy, whereas extrinsic leadership motivation was related to a decreased probability. On the other hand, both selfless and extrinsic leadership motivation were related to an increased probability of mentioning non-agentic reasons, and intrinsic, identity-like leadership motivation was related to a decreased probability. This indicates that the level of agency differs between MTL dimensions: intrinsic, identity-like leadership motivation clearly associates with the agentic pursuit of leader positions whereas extrinsic leadership motivation associates with a non-agentic stance to leadership. Selfless leadership motivation differs from the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as it included both agentic and non-agentic stances to leader positions. These findings support previous research on MTL dimensionality and highlight the importance of studying each MTL dimension separately rather than studying a composite score (Auvinen et al., 2020; Badura et al., 2020). The selfless leadership motivation component, Non-calculative MTL, needs to be studied more extensively, as it differs from the traditional intrinsic –extrinsic classification of motivational constructs.

## Driving or Drifting Toward a Sustainable Leader Career?

Our aim was to connect leader role occupancy to the framework of sustainable leader careers (De Vos et al., 2020) and its key indicators. We examined leaders' own occupational well-being as an indicator of health and followers' occupational well-being as an indicator of productivity, that is, leader's performance as an output of leadership. All of the reasons for leader role occupancy except non-agentic ones were related to both leaders' own and their followers' occupational well-being, but the associations were different.

We found that leaders who had more person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy experienced better occupational well-being (less cynicism and inadequacy, and more vigor). Also, leaders who had agentic reasons experienced stronger dedication. These findings suggest that leaders who have personally chosen their leader position, i.e., drivers, thrive in their current role. Their experienced occupational well-being and willingness to dedicate themselves to their work suggests that their chosen position and career provide them with a sense of meaning and offer good person-career fit. This stands in contrast to leaders who gave context-related reasons for occupying their position, who experienced all of the burnout symptoms and less vigor. Leaders who end up in a leader position largely due to external factors (such as the surrounding context; in other words in a position that they have not actively pursued, i.e., they are drifters) may end up being also "victims of circumstance" as regards their well-being. These findings suggest that for drifters, the necessary

adaptation to the demands of the surrounding context may be costly, and this will be reflected in their poorer occupational well-being and person-career mismatch. Also, deriving a sense of meaning from their career in the long run is left open to question, as it is likely that for them, the source of meaning will not stem from authenticity and self-realization through their work (Rosso et al., 2010). To support the sustainability of the drifter's leader career, it is vital to identify what gives the position meaning for them. Do they derive meaning from "unification," that is, purpose, belongingness and supporting others (Rosso et al., 2010; Martela and Pessi, 2018), and whether acting in a leader position for contextual reasons offers fulfillment of personally important aspects at work (Peterson et al., 2017) other than being in charge of other people and resources?

From the perspective of good leader performance (which we assumed would be reflected in followers' better occupational well-being), the leader's reasons behind leader role occupancy were also significant. Person- and context-related and agentic reasons behind leader role occupancy associated with followers' occupational well-being. The associations for followers' well-being, however, differed from those of leaders' well-being: for example, person-related and agentic reasons associated with followers' exhaustion, but this association was not found among leaders. It could be argued that these findings support the idea of conceptualizing followers' well-being as an indicator or a consequence of (good) leader performance. If a leader is motivated and has proactively chosen the leader position (reflecting the agentic stance), s/he would probably have sufficient and appropriate resources for leadership (see Auvinen et al., 2020) to perform well in the position. According to resource investment principles (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001, 2011), leader may then be able to invest more resources in vital leader behaviors, such as quality interaction and supporting followers, which could result in better occupational well-being for followers (Harms et al., 2017).

## Theoretical and Practical Contribution

This study contributes to our understanding of the leader emergence process by acknowledging the various reasons that can bring about leader role occupancy. Our mixed-method study with over 1,000 Finnish leaders has shed light on the question of what kinds of different pathways may lead to a leader position. Theoretically, our goal was to offer another, more authentic perspective on leader emergence to complement earlier research, which has mostly been carried out in simulated settings (leaderless group discussions, see e.g., Ensari et al., 2011).

A recent review (Hanna et al., 2021) emphasized that emerging leadership is still largely attributed to individual differences. The findings of this study reiterates the message by Hanna et al. (2021, p. 88) about leader emergence research being in the need of more comprehensive review of "situational or contextual factors that are likely to influence the effects of these individual differences." To the best of our knowledge, this study was the first to connect the reasons for leader role occupancy to sustainable career indicators. To tackle the overemphasis on the role of agency in career construction (Inkson et al., 2012), more systematic understanding that acknowledges individual, contextual and time-related factors affecting the *process* of leader emergence is needed. In addition, the question of how the process of leader emergence is tied to the construction of sustainable leader careers deserves more attention. Our findings confirm that all the perspectives related to the individual, the context, and time are relevant for leader emergence. It was beyond the scope of this paper to investigate longitudinally the process-like nature of how these different reasons for leader role occupancy may result in endurable leader careers. However, we sought to offer a starting point for such theoretical and empirical developments in the future.

The findings of this study give practitioners an important perspective on supporting sustainable careers. Overall, it was found that the reasons behind a leader's current leader role occupancy associate with focal career sustainability indicators. It seems likely that those who have actively pursued their leader position, the "drivers," will be able to build a sustainable leader career with positive consequences in terms of occupational well-being for both themselves and their followers. On the other hand, constructing a sustainable leader career seems less likely for the "drifters," who have ended up in the leader position largely due to external reasons. This should be seriously taken into account in human resource management/development processes in organizations.

To ensure the well-being and sustainable careers of "drifters," it is vital to pay attention to two issues: the potential sources of meaning in their work, and the different possible ways of supporting their agency in their current leader role. Regarding the former, it is important to take into account the meanings or needs that are important to individual and how they are fulfilled in one's current employment (task, position, role; Peterson et al., 2017). Acknowledging the possible gap between what is personally important and its realization in one's current employment may prompt a move either to establish a better balance between one's duties and their personal meaning and fulfillment or, alternatively, to make a career shift to a more fulfilling position altogether. The latter, i.e., supporting leader agency, can be done via interventions that help leaders to explore their personal leadership motivation and strengthen the intrinsic component, Affective-Identity MTL (see e.g., Stiehl et al., 2015). This is especially important when designing career practices in those fields where leaders highlighted contextual or non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy, such as academia and other research-oriented organizations, where primary work-related motivations may stem from sources other than leading others.

## Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Our findings were based on leaders' self-reported qualitative, retrospective descriptions of the reasons behind their current leader role occupancy. So far as we know, this was the first study to utilize this kind of qualitative data to examine leader role occupancy, and therefore the original classification of 26 themes cannot be validated against previous research. We tried to minimize any coder-dependent bias that could have occurred from different ways of interpreting the leaders'

responses by calculating inter-coder reliabilities. In addition, based on those reliabilities, the classification was reviewed and finalized by the first author. It must be noted that the classification of qualitative data reflects the sample characteristics and with a different sample, different themes could have been identified (Braun and Clarke, 2012). To develop a wider understanding of the various reasons that affect leader role occupancy, qualitative data must be collected from diverse samples in future studies. Our qualitative thematic analysis combined inductive reading and theory-driven classification with a realist ontological and epistemological stance (King and Brooks, 2018), as in this data we aimed to identify explicit semantic themes (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Future studies could dig deeper into the question of leader role occupancy and apply a relativist, constructionist stance (King and Brooks, 2018), searching for latent themes to examine how the leader emergence process is constructed in a given organizational– or private–context.

Our data collection enabled leaders to name several reasons that had affected their leader role occupancy. This limits possible inferences about the relational value and importance of each reason for a leader. On the other hand, the question was intentionally left at a quite general level because we wanted to capture leaders' experiences in the broadest sense. To extend our understanding of the most important factors in the leader emergence process, future studies could focus on the reason individuals prioritized when considering leader role occupancy. This could also help to create a more detailed theoretical model of the leader emergence process and supplement career construction theories, which have been criticized for being too focused on personal factors (see Inkson et al., 2012).

Lastly, we want to point out that due to the cross-sectional study design, no causal inferences can be made about the reasons for leader role occupancy resulting in the creation of sustainable leader careers. To investigate this process more solidly, longitudinal research designs are needed. Future studies should also pay attention to *happiness* indicators of sustainable leader, such as career subjective career success and job satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2020) which were not in the scope for the present study. In examining how to construct sustainable careers, fruitful themes in future research include the role of people's experience of the meaningfulness of work, the possible differing sources of deriving meaning from work for drivers and drifters, and the costs of adaptation to the context (i.e., working as a leader with low motivational resources or for extrinsic reasons due to the needs of context). These perspectives would both enrich the sustainable careers literature and give insights that would be of practical value in the field of human resources and development.

## CONCLUSION

In order to build and support sustainable careers, it is important to understand the reasons behind people's career choices. Acting in a leadership role is one such career choice, and various explanations have been put forward to explain leader emergence. Individual agency in making career choices has been much emphasized, but it is also important to take into account the existence of other, non-agentic or non-person-related factors affecting individual career choices. This study has shown that leader emergence and leader role occupancy can involve many factors in addition to individual agency. In order to support the building of sustainable careers, it is of paramount importance to consider how the different reasons behind career choices are linked to sustainable career indicators. In this study, person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy associated with sustainable career indicators, namely leader's health (occupational well-being) and the occupational well-being experienced by their followers, which is one way of representing leader performance. The research has yielded important information for practitioners responsible for the development of human resources in organizations, because it has shown that if the reasons for leader role occupancy mainly reflect circumstances or other non-person-related reasons, the experienced meaningfulness of work and person-career fit may remain weak. In this case, it may be necessary to try to strengthen or support the leadership motivation of those in leadership positions, or to shape the job description in such a way that it can also offer the experience of meaningfulness from aspects other than self-realization through a managerial role.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because: the data that support the findings of this study has been collected confidentially and is stored in accordance with GDPR at University of Jyväskylä. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to EA, elina.m.e.auvinen@jyu.fi.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

EA, MH, JR, and TF together conceptualized the article and together edited and finalized the article. EA wrote the first version of it and conducted the analysis as described in the manuscript. The submitted version was approved by all authors and all can be held accountable for the content.

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# II

# LEADER MOTIVATION AS A BUILDING BLOCK FOR SUSTAINABLE LEADER CAREERS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP MOTIVATION PROFILES AND LEADER AND FOLLOWER OUTCOMES

by

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# Leader motivation as a building block for sustainable leader careers: The relationship between leadership motivation profiles and leader and follower outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates leaders' motivation to lead (MTL) as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader. Using a person-centered methodology, we identified different latent profiles of leadership motivation. These motivational profiles were compared with leaders' occupational well-being and leadership-related career intentions, and with follower-rated leader behaviors and LMX relationship quality. The survey data consisted of 1003 Finnish leaders from various sectors of working life. Of these leaders, 233 recruited their followers to participate in this study, resulting in 987 follower participants. Latent Profile Analysis identified four distinctive MTL profiles: 1) *Affective-Identity-based MTL* (42%), 2) *Low overall MTL* (41%), 3) *Low Affective-Identity and High Non-Calculative MTL* (12%) and 4) *High Affective-Identity and Social-Normative MTL* (5%). Leaders in the profile with low affective-identity MTL and high non-calculative MTL experienced the poorest occupational well-being, were likely to resign from their current leadership position or apply for less challenging leadership positions, and received the most unfavorable assessments from their followers regarding their leader behaviors and LMX. Leaders whose motivation was based on high affective-identity and social-normativity had good occupational well-being and were most likely to pursue a more challenging career as a leader. To conclude, personal leadership motivation plays an important role in leaders' well-being and in their followers' satisfaction. Thus to create and support sustainable leader careers, both leader candidates themselves and practitioners in HRM and executive selection should consider the underlying motivational resources for leadership. This can help to better align individual careers with the employing organization and create better person-career fit.

## 1. Introduction

Motivation to lead (MTL; Chan & Drasgow, 2001) refers to an individual's willingness to lead others, which affects their personal decision to pursue leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and the intensity and persistence of these leadership aspirations (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). It therefore has a central role in leadership emergence and effectiveness (Badura, Grijalva, Galvin, Owens, & Joseph, 2019). However, leadership-related career advancement is seen as less and less attractive (Chudzikowski, 2012; Crowley-Henry, Benson, & Al Ariss, 2019; Sutela & Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014), partly because of the increasing demands related to individual leadership behavior and character (Yukl, 2013) and working in societies that are increasingly uncertain, complex, and ambiguous

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(Johansen, 2012). If fewer people want to work as leaders, it is important to understand leaders' motivational underpinnings in more detail to be aware of what makes their careers sustainable. The sustainable careers framework (see e.g., De Vos, Van der Heijden, & Akkermans, 2020) explains how careers are constructed within both contextual and time-related perspectives as a function of individual resources (Hobfoll, 2001) towards happiness, health and productivity and providing meaning to the individual (Chudzikowski, Gustafsson, & Tams, 2019; De Vos et al., 2020; Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015).

If fewer individuals seek leader positions nowadays, it is even more important that those who occupy these positions would make career choices according to their personal needs and inner values to maintain a leader career in a given context. Constructing such a career with good person-career fit that provides meaning to an individual requires awareness of one's motivational resources. On the other hand, maintaining and creating more personal resources in a given work role or position also supports career continuity. Situations or contexts that demand someone to emerge as a leader despite an individual's initial, possibly low or lacking motivational resources may create a risk for non-sustainable leader careers because of poor person-career fit and lack of meaning. These situations may also trigger a negative career spiral, leading to subsequent resource loss and resulting in hampered career construction over time.

We aim to contribute to the MTL and sustainable career literature by investigating differences in leadership motivation among individuals who already work in leadership positions. We examine how differences in leaders' MTL associate with indicators of career sustainability, namely leaders' personal well-being at work and leadership-related career plans. Furthermore, it is presumable that leader's motivation for the job matter also from the followers' perspective, but thus far, we lack the research on the topic. In this study, we investigate MTL in relation to followers' assessments of their leader's people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and their dyadic leader-follower relationship quality. These findings will be of practical interest to recruiters, I/O psychologists, occupational health psychologists, career counsellors, and to those working in the field of human resources management and development: more detailed understanding of motivational resources for leading others is useful for executive selection and career coaching, for leaders themselves and potential leaders-to-be. It is in the best interest of both individuals and organizations that people with high leadership potential, i.e., having a strong leader identity and personal leadership motivation, would pursue leadership positions and stay in their leadership careers with feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment.

### *1.1. Multidimensional leadership motivation as a resource for sustainable leader careers*

MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) is a multidimensional concept consisting of three dimensions that represent distinctive but related motivational constructs, which have different antecedents and outcomes (for a meta-analysis, see Badura et al., 2019). In the next paragraphs, we will provide a novel perspective about different dimensions of MTL acting as personal resources (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll, 2001) in the course of a sustainable leader career (De Vos et al., 2020; Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015).

Chan and Drasgow (2001) defined a three-dimensional concept of MTL based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which posits that intended behavior is influenced by both personal attitudes and social norms. According to Chan and Drasgow (2001), *Affective-Identity MTL* refers to the positive valence associated with leading others. Individuals with high Affective-Identity MTL usually consider themselves natural born leaders and they enjoy leading others. *Social-Normative MTL* is based on social norms: one might lead out of duty or a sense of responsibility, or because they consider leader status to be normatively valued. Finally, *Non-Calculative MTL* refers to positive perceptions of leadership opportunities despite their potential costs or negative consequences (Badura et al., 2019). Individuals with high Non-Calculative MTL are likely to lead out of a general willingness, without weighing the possible costs and benefits related to leading others (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Porter, Gerhardt, Fields, & Bugenhagen, 2019).

These dimensions represent distinctive but related motivational construct with different antecedents and outcomes (Badura et al., 2019). For example, Affective-Identity MTL has shown to correlate positively with extraversion, leadership self-efficacy, and past leadership experience, whereas Social-Normative MTL has associated with agreeableness, conscientiousness and individualism (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). Non-Calculative MTL has been shown to associate with emotional stability and collectivist values, and to act as an antecedent to servant leadership (Amah, 2018). Previous studies have examined these dimensions separately, thus giving limited evidence about how they operate simultaneously at individual level. Studying all three MTL dimensions jointly within the same individual can create a more detailed understanding of the role of different motivational combinations or motivational resources play for leaders' careers.

We approach individual differences in leadership motivation by applying the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll, 2001). According to Hobfoll's theory, people are motivated to protect (conserve) their existing resources while acquiring new ones. In line with the definition in the Conservation of Resources theory, we argue that MTL can be defined a resource that results in leader emergence and effectiveness, because it reflects different reasons ("whys") behind an individual's decision to strive for a leader position and attain certain goals (Hobfoll, 2001; see also Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). MTL captures personal differences in what kinds of individual objectives leaders strive towards: for example, personal satisfaction or positive affect, identification with their work role, higher status, or serving a larger purpose.

In order to answer the question of how different MTL dimensions could act as motivational resources, we integrate the Conservation of Resources theory with the MTL model. We base our theoretical arguments on the current knowledge about different motivational elements of the MTL dimensions (for a meta-analysis, see Badura et al., 2019). Affective-Identity MTL resembles intrinsic motivation, as it is based on the agentic, identity-like motivation for leadership. Intrinsic motivation per se can function as a personal resource, as it relates to self-esteem, positive affect, efficacy, persistence and well-being (ten Brummelhuis, ter Hoeven, Bakker, & Peper, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Social-Normative MTL depicts a more extrinsic motivational component, which integrates both agentic and communal orientations, stemming from external factors such as social norms and supposed responsibilities

to others. Extrinsic motivation can also be autonomous and have a resemblance to intrinsic motivation: motivation is *integrated* when an individual has internalized a cause for a certain behavior (e.g., pursuing a specific work role for a higher status) and adopted it as a part of personal needs or values (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Non-Calculative MTL is viewed as a "selfless" motivational component, which is related to communal orientations and leading others without expecting any personal benefits. To pursue a leader position regardless of possible disadvantages related to the position might indicate that an individual abandons his or her own self-interests for aiming to larger collective good.

Based on the Conservation of Resources theory we can understand why motivational resources are so important for a sustainable leader career. Sustainable careers are defined as careers that enables individuals to stay "healthy, productive, happy and employable throughout its course" (Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015, p. 11; De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2015) and are constructed within both contextual and time-related perspectives (Chudzikowski et al., 2019; De Vos et al., 2020). In the framework of sustainable careers, individual resources are seen as essential for constructing a sustainable career and career continuity. An individual as a career actor represents an agent, whose career possibilities are likely to be influenced by and interact with the context (De Vos et al., 2020) and the function of resource gains and losses (Hobfoll, 2001).

Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll, 2001) is one of the fundamental theories of conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020). According to the theory's main principles, it is more harmful for the individual to lose resources than it is helpful to gain the resources they have lost (Hobfoll, 2001). The resource investment principle means that people tend to invest resources in order to avoid resource loss, to recover from resource losses, and to gain new resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, individuals with high initial resources are better off investing their resources, because then they will be equipped with a larger resource pool (Hobfoll, 2001). For example, leaders who are highly motivated, i.e., have personal resources to lead others can gain more resources. For example, they might experience positive feelings from being able to act in a satisfying leadership role. Consequently, they are likely to invest more resources in their performance as a leader, such as invest more time in interactions with their followers. In contrast, those individuals who lack resources are more inclined to conserve their remaining resources defensively (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, if an individual does not have sufficient motivation to lead others while s/he is employed in a leader position, this can lead to a negative spiral of resource loss and subsequent striving to conserve his/her remaining resources. Consequently, the individual may struggle to cope with his/her leadership responsibilities, and working in a leader position with scarce resources may result in leader turnover and discontinuity of a leader career.

The evidence on previous MTL studies (Badura et al., 2019) led us to suggest that motivational resources, that is, different MTL dimensions, would relate to the key concepts of sustainable career framework – agency, meaning, proactivity and adaptability – differently. Individuals whose motivational resources are characterized with high level of Affective-Identity MTL would be intrinsically motivated to leadership careers. They usually have a lot of past leadership experience, which would indicate that they find leader career meaningful and very probably they would proactively shape their surrounding context to enable maintaining a leader position and a good person-career fit in the future. Those with high Social-Normative MTL, i.e., more extrinsic motivational resources, would represent a combination of agency and collective interests, as their motivational source for leadership careers lies mostly on external factors. However, they usually have past leadership experience, too, indicating that they most likely derive a sense of meaning from such a career. Despite their individualistic values, they are usually also agreeable (Badura et al., 2019), which may indicate higher adaptability to the contextual demands. Individuals with "selfless" motivational resources, reflected by high Non-Calculative MTL, are found to be prone to altruistic motivational stance towards leader positions, which may relate to non-agentic approach and lack of proactivity when it comes to constructing a leader career. They often value harmony and collectivist values (Badura et al., 2019), which could indicate that they would strongly adapt and adjust themselves to the contextual demands, putting their own interest aside for the sake of a greater collective good.

As careers nowadays are rather person- than organization-driven, individuals themselves are more responsible for their career-related decisions and outcomes (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2017). Individuals' motivational resources may have an impact on how they navigate their career, align it with their own and organizational needs and balance between proactivity and adjustment to the contextual demands (De Vos et al., 2020). For example, in some organizations an individual might accept a leadership position if s/he is appointed to it regardless of his/her initial career choices and aspirations (extrinsic motivational resources required), or when no one else will accept the role ("selfless" motivational resources required), especially if the situation urgently requires someone to lead. In order to investigate these differences between MTL dimensions (i.e., motivational resources), how they interact with contextual factors and associate with sustainable career indicators in more detail, we need to consider that individuals can have different combinations of the three MTL dimensions.

### *1.2. Capturing individual differences of Motivation to Lead*

Based on MTL's multidimensional nature and different antecedents and correlations within each MTL dimension, it would be unlikely that individuals in different occupational contexts would all share similar motivations to lead. Thus, we will broaden the MTL literature by examining the three different MTL dimensions simultaneously to see whether individuals in leader positions manifest individual combinations of leadership motivation. Furthermore, because the role of context has been under-acknowledged in previous MTL studies, we study these individual differences in different occupational contexts (i.e., among leaders who work within the sectors of academia, business, the technical field, and social and health care). Based on the dimensional nature of MTL, we propose the following:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Leaders represent different profiles of Motivation to Lead (i.e., individual combinations of Affective-Identity,

Social-Normative and Non-Calculative MTL), i.e. have different motivational resources for leading others.

These individual motivational combinations, or profiles, can be investigated by using a person-centered methodology (Howard & Hoffman, 2018; Wang, Sinclair, Zhou, & Sears, 2013). It enables to examine the existence of individual motivation configurations and possible variation between them. Previous studies on MTL have been conducted using variable-centered methods, which treat the study populations as homogeneous groups (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Wang et al., 2013) and thereby assume that leaders share a similar motivation to lead others. Person-centered methods, on the other hand, allow the possibility that the sample under investigation might be constituted of several subsamples of the phenomenon in question. That is, these methods acknowledge heterogeneity within a population and aim to identify possible sub-populations that represent the studied variable(s) differently (Meyer & Morin, 2016). Of the various person-centered methods, we have adopted Latent Profile Analysis in this research. It enabled us to study whether there are different individual combinations of MTL dimensions that differ from each other. Therefore, person-centered analyses permit us to study the interdependence between variables, which variable-centered methods would overlook (Meyer & Morin, 2016). Because this study is the first attempt to investigate MTL using person-centered methods, we cannot form any confirmatory hypotheses neither concerning the exact number and content of the emerging MTL profiles nor whether a certain dimension of MTL proves to be superior to others as a motivational resource.

### *1.3. Associations between leadership motivation and indicators of career sustainability*

The framework of sustainable careers was designed to develop systemic and dynamic understanding of how individual careers evolve towards *happiness, health and productivity* (De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2015; De Vos et al., 2020). In this study, we examine how individual MTL is related to these indicators of career sustainability. First, we studied burnout and work engagement as indicators of leaders' occupational well-being (related to the sustainable career indicator of *health*; De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2015; De Vos et al., 2020), as they are well established constructs showing both the positive and negative sides of well-being at work. *Burnout* is defined as a psychological syndrome developed as a response to chronic job-related stressors resulting in experiences of emotional exhaustion (feelings of strain and fatigue), cynicism (a distal attitude towards one's work or colleagues and to generally losing interest in one's work), and reduced professional efficacy (feelings of incompetence in one's job) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). *Work engagement,* on the other hand, is defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Vigor refers to high levels of mental energy while working, and the willingness and determination to invest effort in one's work. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride in one's work. Absorption refers to being fully concentrated and deeply immersed in one's work (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Even though previous research has not investigated how MTL relates with occupational well-being, we propose based on the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001) that leaders with low MTL (i.e., low motivational resources) are likely to show poorer well-being than leaders with high MTL.

**Hypothesis 2a (H2a):** The poorest occupational well-being (high burnout and low work engagement) is related to profiles with low motivational resources while in a leader position.

**Hypothesis 2b (H2b):** The highest occupational well-being (low burnout and high work engagement) is related to profiles with high motivational resources while in a leader position.

Next, we investigated the leaders' career intentions as an indicator of *happiness* in the sustainable careers model (De Vos et al., 2020). These career intentions include whether current leaders will seek less or more challenging leadership positions in the future compared to their current position, or whether they intend to resign from their leadership position altogether. Thus, we propose that these intentions capture the leaders' satisfaction with their position and their aspirations towards career continuity. They are therefore essential outcomes of motivational resources, and central indicators of subjective career satisfaction. Hitherto, only one (variable-oriented) study has investigated how MTL associates with leadership aspirations (Cziraki, Read, Laschinger, & Wong, 2018). However, Cziraki et al. (2018) assessed leadership aspirations only as a generic concept, associating it with only one MTL component (Affective-Identity). As we examine different combinations of the MTL dimensions in relation to the aforementioned three types of career intentions, we provide a wider understanding of how different motivational bases for leadership associate with leader careers. The above-discussed role of resources for career sustainability led us formulate the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3a (H3a):** Career intentions directed away from leadership positions (i.e., aiming to resign from the leadership position or applying to less demanding leadership position) are related to profiles with low motivational resources while in the leader position.

**Hypothesis 3b (H3b):** Career intentions directed towards leadership positions (i.e., applying for more demanding leader positions) are related to profiles with high motivational resources while in the leader position.

Finally, we investigated follower-rated leader performance as an indicator of *productivity* (De Vos et al., 2020), in this study. As leadership does not take place in a vacuum, it is also important to consider how leaders' personal motivation affects their followers' perceptions of their leader. Thus far, this kind of hierarchical approach to MTL and follower outcomes has been ignored in MTL research. We focused on the follower perspective on a leader's performance by exploring whether followers have different perceptions of their leader, depending on the leader's MTL profile. We also investigated how followers rated their leader's people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors, and the quality of their leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). People- and task-oriented behaviors are key elements of effective leadership in enhancing the individual employees' and the

company's performance (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). LMX has been related to followers' attitudes and well-being (Schyns & Wolfram, 2008), and it is therefore important to find out more about the potential associations between a leader's MTL and follower-rated LMX. We aimed to expand the existing literature on MTL by exploring how followers evaluate their leaders' behaviors and the dyadic relationship with their leader by combining leader self-evaluations with their followers' ratings, as this also lowers the risk of common method bias (Edwards, 2008). Based on the Conservation of Resources theory described earlier, individuals with high initial resources are better off investing their resources, and individuals who lack resources are more likely to conserve their remaining resources in a defensive manner (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, leader's MTL is likely to associate with their people- and task-oriented behaviors towards and relationships with followers. This led us to hypothesize the following about a leader's motivational profile and its associations with follower perceptions:

**Hypothesis 4a (H4a).** Unfavorable follower ratings on people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and LMX quality are related to profiles with low motivational resources while in a leader position.

**Hypothesis 4b (H4b).** Favorable follower ratings on people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and LMX quality are related to profiles with high motivational resources while in a leader position.

There is no previous research about MTL as a resource or any previous empirical evidence on how different MTL dimensions might vary in the way they function as resources. Therefore, we cannot specify hypotheses with relation to specific MTL dimensions and their associations. Instead, we adopt an exploratory approach to identify what kind of combinations of motivational resources are depicted as good enough to be able to perform and flourish in the leader position from the perspective of sustainable career and its indicators.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Data collection and participants

The sample used in this study was collected from various sources in order to produce data that would broadly represent the leader population in Finland. As a majority of employees in Finland are members of labor unions organized according to industry (64.5% in 2013; Ahtiainen, 2015), trade unions were chosen as collaborative partners in the data collection. The data collection began in spring 2017 in four Finnish trade unions: the Finnish Union of University Professors, Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, Finnish Business School Graduates, and Academic Architects and Engineers in Finland TEK. An electronic questionnaire was sent to all members aged 18–65 years of the first two trade unions mentioned here, and an electronic questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 3000 members of the latter two unions. For the four trade unions, the response rates were 45%, 26%, 17%, and 13%, respectively, and the number of respondents in total was 891. An additional data collection was launched in order to increase the number of participants to whom our study was targeted. This data collection took place during fall 2017 in collaboration with the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava), a confederation of trade unions for those with a university degree or other higher education. The questionnaire was delivered as an open invitation with a link to an electronic questionnaire via Akava's leader network, and altogether 141 responses were collected. Within this trade union, the respondents were leaders in the social and health care sector. Finally, participants were also recruited from an executive MBA (EMBA) program. Contact persons from the EMBA program delivered the questionnaire to potential participants ($n = 644$), of whom 161 responded (response rate 25%). In the very final phase, psychology students volunteered to recruit highly educated leaders ($n = 23$) from among their acquaintances, as a part of their studies. To summarize, we combined different data collection techniques in order to reach a diverse convenience sample of leaders ($N = 1003$) from different sectors with a common background in higher education, because it has been shown that the proportion of highly educated (tertiary level) workers is increasing while the amount of those with less education is decreasing (Eurofound, 2017).

#### 2.1.1. Leader participants

This study focused on those participants who held managerial positions and who had provided data on the MTL measure ($n = 1003$). Of these participants, 380 (38%) were professors, 94 (9%) university teachers and other academics, 175 (17%) business sector leaders, 100 (10%) engineers, 104 (10%) social and health sector leaders, and 151 (15%) leaders either from the EMBA program or recruited by students. Participants from the EMBA program and the leaders recruited by students represented various sectors (e.g., real estate management, media and marketing, finance and insurance, food retailing, industry, and the service sector), and they were combined as one data source in the further analysis. Of the participants, 48% were women. The average age of the participants was 51.5 years ($SD = 8.8$), the mean of past leadership experience was 12.9 years ($SD = 8.4$), 93% had a permanent job and 98% were working full-time.

Of the 1003 leaders who participated, 233 were willing to recruit their followers to participate in the research and provide evaluations on leader behaviors and dyadic relationship with leader. This group of leaders was female-dominated (55%) and had proportionately more leaders from the social and health care sector (26%), the EMBA program, and those recruited by students (38%). There were fewer professors (23%), university teachers and other academics (6%), business sector leaders (3%) and engineers (2%) compared to the whole sample. These leaders were more often (96%) employed in a permanent job than those in the whole sample. All leader analyses were conducted with the whole leader sample.

#### 2.1.2. Follower participants

The hierarchical sample included altogether 987 followers from the aforementioned 233 leaders. The data from the leaders and followers were matched: followers' ratings were combined with the data of their closest supervisor who had recruited them to participate in the study. The number of follower participants per leader ranged between 1 and 14 ($M$ = 4.2). Of the followers studied here, 67% were women, the majority (58%) were aged 31–50 years, and the average duration of the relationship with the supervisor (who had delivered the invitation to take part in the survey) was 3.5 years ($SD$ = 3.4).

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Leader measures

*2.2.1.1. Motivation to Lead.* MTL was measured using a 15-item version of the Motivation to Lead Questionnaire (Bobbio & Rattazzi, 2006), which is the shortened version of the original 27-item version developed by Chan and Drasgow (2001). MTL-15 covers the three subscales of MTL. The original English version was translated into Finnish and later translated back into English. We chose nine items to use in the present study because the confirmatory factor analysis supported the three-dimensional structure of the 9-item version better ($\chi 2$ (24) = 71.003, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.045, SRMR = 0.036, CFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.957) than the three-dimensional structure based on the 15-item version of the questionnaire ($\chi^2$ (87) = 621.543, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.091, SRMR = 0.095, CFI = 0.759, TLI = 0.709). In MTL-9, each subscale includes three items; e.g., "I am the type of person who likes to be in charge of others" (Affective-Identity MTL), "It is appropriate for people to accept leadership roles or positions when they are asked" (Social-Normative MTL), and "I never expect to get more privileges if I agree to lead a group" (Non-Calculative MTL). All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree – 5 = totally agree), higher scores indicating higher motivation. All scale items are available on request from the first author.

*2.2.1.2. Burnout.* A nine-item version of the Bergen Burnout Inventory (Feldt et al., 2014; Salmela-Aro, Rantanen, Hyvönen, Tilleman, & Feldt, 2011) was used to measure three dimensions of burnout: exhaustion (3 items; e.g., "I am snowed under with work"), cynicism (3 items; e.g., "I feel dispirited at work and I think of leaving my job") and inadequacy (3 items; e.g., "My expectations for my job and my performance have reduced"). All items were answered on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree), higher scores showing higher burnout.

*2.2.1.3. Work engagement.* A nine-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Seppälä et al., 2009) was used to measure three dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption. Each dimension was measured with three items (e.g., "At work, I feel that I am bursting with energy" for vigor, "I am proud of the work I do" for dedication, and "I get carried away when I'm working" for absorption). Items were answered on a frequency-based scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = never, 7 = daily), higher scores indicating more frequent experiences of work engagement.

*2.2.1.4. Leadership-related career intentions.* To measure leaders' personal expectations for their future careers, three items were generated for the purposes of this study. The existing instruments for capturing leadership-related career intentions (e.g., Chan et al., 2012) were considered too broad, as they focus on these intentions on a very general level (e.g., "I plan to become a general leader or manager in the near future"). Instead, we generated new items that would capture the relevant context variation within our study population. A large proportion of the participants worked in universities, where leadership positions are found at very different levels (e.g., the dean, the head of department, or the manager of a single research project), all of which involve a different set of demands and personal responsibilities. The universities are not unique in this respect. Different levels of management attract individuals in different ways (see Torres, 2014), and therefore we wanted to ask whether the participants actually sought leadership career advancement, or whether they aimed to avoid leadership tasks in the future. To assess this, first, a brief instruction was presented ("Please assess your career plans for the coming five years") before the following statements: 1) I will resign my leadership role, 2) I will seek more demanding leadership positions, and 3) I will seek less demanding leadership positions. The statements were answered on the scale 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely) and were used as single items in further analysis. The descriptive statistics for all leader measures are presented in Table 1.

#### 2.2.2. Follower measures

*2.2.2.1. Satisfaction with leader behaviors.* Six items based on the previous literature were developed for the purposes of this study to represent both people- and task-oriented leader behaviors (Yukl et al., 2002). Followers were instructed to assess their leader, that is, the person who had recruited them for the study. First, a brief instruction ("Please assess your satisfaction with your leader on the following attributes") was presented, followed by a list of different leader attributes. Followers rated their satisfaction with their leader's behavior on each attribute on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very satisfied). To test the structure of this six-item scale, we first conducted an exploratory factor analysis (using Oblimin rotation), where a two-factor solution emerged. The fit indices provided by confirmatory factor analysis supported also two-factor solution: ($\chi 2$ (8) = 60.530, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.081, SRMR = 0.036, CFI = 0.978, TLI = 0.958). All factor loadings were statistically significant, ranging between 0.68 and 0.96. Thus, two sum scores were used in further analyses: *people-oriented behaviors* (3 items: inspiring others, motivating others and giving feedback) and *task-oriented behaviors* (3 items: ability to make decisions, responsibility and planning).

*Leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship quality* was measured with the LMX-7 scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which has been shown to be psychometrically superior to other LMX scales (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Followers were instructed to assess items that

**Table 1**
Descriptive information and Pearson's intercorrelations of study variables on leader measures (N = 1003 leaders) in whole leader data.

| | *M* | *SD* | α | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. | 11. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation to Lead | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Affective-Identity MTL | 3.37 | 0.72 | 0.75 | – | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Social-Normative MTL | 3.16 | 0.77 | 0.70 | 0.10** | – | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Non-Calculative MTL | 3.39 | 0.84 | 0.73 | −0.05 | 0.13** | – | | | | | | | | |
| Burnout | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Exhaustion | 3.17 | 1.16 | 0.75 | −0.17** | 0.02 | −0.02 | – | | | | | | | |
| 5. Cynicism | 2.33 | 1.11 | 0.83 | −0.21** | 0.01 | −0.06* | 0.49** | – | | | | | | |
| 6. Inadequacy | 2.55 | 1.26 | 0.79 | −0.20** | 0.03 | −0.04 | 0.49** | 0.79** | – | | | | | |
| Work engagement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Vigor | 5.65 | 1.11 | 0.87 | 0.25** | −0.01 | −0.02 | −0.39** | −0.63** | −0.55** | – | | | | |
| 8. Dedication | 5.92 | 1.08 | 0.89 | 0.18** | −0.01 | 0.02 | −0.27** | −0.62** | −0.55** | 0.79** | – | | | |
| 9. Absorption | 5.89 | 0.98 | 0.83 | 0.15** | 0.01 | −0.01 | −0.10** | −0.43** | −0.38** | 0.61** | 0.72** | – | | |
| Career intentions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Resigning leadership position | 1.98 | 1.14 | | −0.23** | −0.04 | 0.04 | 0.24** | 0.36** | 0.28** | −0.26** | −0.23** | −0.15** | – | |
| 11. Applying in less demanding leadership position | 1.90 | 0.98 | | −0.18** | −0.06 | −0.01 | 0.31** | 0.36** | 0.30** | −0.27** | −0.24** | −0.19** | 0.46** | – |
| 12. Applying in more demanding leadership position | 2.61 | 1.27 | | 0.28** | −0.01 | −0.14** | −0.13** | −0.09** | −0.05 | 0.14** | 0.08* | 0.02 | −0.20** | −0.09** |

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Career intentions used as single items in analyses. Motivation to Lead scores range 1–5, Burnout scores range 1–6, work engagement scores range 1–7, career intentions scores range 1–5.

**Table 2**
Descriptive information and Pearson's intercorrelations of study variables on leader's MTL (N = 233) and follower (N = 987) measures in hierarchical data.

| | *M* | *SD* | α | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leader's Motivation to Lead[a] | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Affective-Identity MTL | 3.50 | 0.77 | 0.81 | – | | | | |
| 2. Social-Normative MTL | 3.11 | 0.77 | 0.76 | 0.15*** | – | | | |
| 3. Non-Calculative MTL | 3.42 | 0.85 | 0.68 | −0.03 | 0.16*** | – | | |
| Satisfaction with leader behaviors[b] | | | | | | | | |
| 4. People-oriented leader behaviors | 3.84 | 0.89 | 0.89 | 0.09** | 0.01 | −0.02 | – | |
| 5. Task-oriented leader behaviors | 4.13 | 0.74 | 0.82 | 0.12*** | −0.02 | 0.03 | 0.67*** | – |
| Relationship with leader[b] | | | | | | | | |
| 6. LMX | 4.04 | 0.78 | 0.89 | 0.10** | −0.01 | 0.01 | 0.71*** | 0.68** |

[a]Leaders' self-evaluations.
[b]Followers' ratings of their leader. All scores ranged from 1 to 5.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

concerned their relationship with their closest supervisor (the person who had recruited them for the study) on a five-point Likert scale, higher scores indicating a better relationship quality. Example items were "How well does your leader understand your work problems and needs?" and "How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?". The mean score of the total scale was used in further analysis. The descriptive statistics for all follower measures are presented in Table 2.

#### 2.2.3. Demographic factors

Based on previous research on MTL (e.g., Chan & Drasgow, 2001) and the heterogeneity of the leaders being studied, we investigated the following demographic factors: age (in years), gender (1 = female, 2 = male), occupational background (1 = professor, 2 = university researcher or other academic, 3 = business sector, 4 = engineer, 5 = social and health care, 6 = EMBA alumni or other), and past leadership experience (in years). These demographic factors were used as control variables when investigating the associations between leaders' motivational profile and other variables. In the statistical analyses for followers, we controlled for the following background factors: follower's age (categorical: age groups "-20", "21–30", "31–40", "41–50", "51–60" and "61 + "), gender (categorical: 1 = female, 2 = male), and the duration of the leader-follower relationship (in years).

### 2.3. Statistical analyses

We conducted Latent Profile Analysis with Mplus (version 8) (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) to identify possible homogeneous subgroups (i.e., profiles) among the leaders, based on the three different dimensions of Motivation to Lead. Latent Profile Analysis uses continuous variables to determine the ideal number of subpopulations that is required to give the best possible representation or summary of the individuals in the whole sample (Howard & Hoffman, 2018) and estimates the parameters of these latent groups (Muthén, 2001). Mean sum scores for each dimension of MTL were used to estimate the number and composition of the latent groups. The estimation methods used were full information maximum likelihood estimation and maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). The group solutions were estimated starting from a one-class solution and adding each time one group until the point was reached when increasing the number of groups did not improve the model fit with the data, or the content of the model became theoretically unreasonable.

Several fit indices were used to determine the best fitting model solution, i.e., the number of latent groups: log likelihood, the sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion (aBIC), the Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test (LMR), the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin test (VLMR) and a Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test (BLTR). The classification quality was determined using entropy and average posterior probabilities. The smallest log likelihood and aBIC values indicate the best model. According to Nylund, Asparouhov, and Muthén (2007), the LMR and VLMR tests compare the improvement in fit between k-1 and the k class solutions. They provide a *p*-value that is used to determine if there is a statistically significant improvement in fit after adding one more class. Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test works in a similar manner. Entropy and average posterior probability values range from 0 to 1, and clearer classification is indicated with values closer to 1 (Celeux & Soromenho, 1996). An entropy value of 0.70 is usually considered critical for classification quality, but the reliability of entropy for selecting the correct number of classes has been disputed (Tein, Coxe, & Cham, 2013). Celeux and Soromenho (1996) considered that for a statistically reliable class solution, the critical value for posterior probabilities should be 0.80. In addition, the content, rationality and interpretability of the group solutions were carefully considered when determining the number of latent groups.

After identifying the profiles, the leaders' most likely group membership from the final latent profile solution was used in subsequent analyses, which were performed using SPSS software (Version 24). The aim was to determine whether the latent MTL profiles differed with respect to leaders' background factors (gender, age, past leadership experience, occupational background), their occupational well-being (burnout, work engagement), career intentions and the followers' ratings on leader behaviors and LMX relationship quality. The differences between profiles on background factors were examined using either cross-tabulation with a chi square test (gender, occupational background) or univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA; past leadership experience, age). Further

analyses were conducted with ANCOVA in which the differentiating background factors were set as covariates and the measures of leaders' well-being and career intentions were set as criterion variables. When analyzing differences in follower measures, the follower's age, gender and the duration of the leader-follower relationship and leader's occupational background were controlled for in ANCOVA. To control for possible bias resulting from an unbalanced design in ANCOVA, the Bootstrapping method was used.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Descriptive results

The correlations between MTL dimensions were mainly weak or non-significant in whole leader sample (see Table 1). Weak correlations indicated that the three MTL dimensions represent distinct phenomena, enabling us to use the person-centered methodology. Thus, all three MTL dimensions were investigated simultaneously as separate variables to identify their individual combinations (profiles). Based on leader self-evaluations, Affective-Identity MTL was positively associated with well-being and leadership-oriented career intentions. Social-Normative MTL showed weak and non-significant correlations, whereas Non-Calculative MTL had slightly stronger, yet still weak (ranging from −0.14 to 0.04) correlations with the outcome variables. As shown in Table 2, only Affective-Identity MTL correlated with followers' satisfaction with leader behaviors and LMX quality ratings.

### 3.2. MTL profiles and leaders' background factors

H1 predicted that leaders would have different profile combinations of their individual leadership motivation. Based on the Latent Profile Analysis, four latent profiles were found to represent distinctive combinations of the three MTL dimensions. Information about correlations between MTL dimensions within each profile is available from the first author upon a request. The group sizes and fit indices of alternative group solutions are presented in Table 3. The estimation process was terminated after five groups, as the best Log likelihood value was not replicated with start values used from the fifth group onwards. A non-replicable Log likelihood value might indicate a non-trustworthy model due to local maxima (Muthén, 2001). When comparing other group solutions, a two-group solution was rejected because of low entropy values. A three-group solution had the lowest aBIC value, but a low entropy value indicated poor quality of classification. This solution also included one very small group with only 2% of the participants. The four-group solution had the best entropy value, smallest Log likelihood value and sufficient average posterior probabilities (0.86, 0.83, 0.86 and 0.88, indicating fairly good probability of correctly belonging to one's designated group). In addition, the content of the four-group solution was theoretically interpretive as the model produced four clearly distinctive profiles with different emphasis on each of the three MTL dimensions. The four-group solution was therefore chosen for further analyses. As the results indicated that different MTL profiles were identified from the leader sample, H1 was supported.

The standardized means (z-scores) of MTL dimensions for the four-group solution and descriptive names for the profiles are presented in Fig. 1. A more detailed description of mean differences of MTL in each profile is presented in Table 4. The profile labeled as *Affective-Identity-based MTL profile* included 426 leaders (42% of the whole leader sample). Their Affective-Identity MTL was clearly above the total mean, while their Non-Calculative MTL and Social-Normative MTL scores were only slightly over the total group mean. The profile labeled as *Low overall MTL profile* consisted of leaders ($n$ = 411; 41%), whose scores on all MTL dimensions were below the total group mean. The profile labeled as *Low Affective-Identity MTL, high Non-Calculative MTL profile* consisted of leaders ($n$ = 119; 12%), whose Affective-Identity MTL scores were substantially low and Non-Calculative MTL scores were highest among studied leaders. Finally, the profile labeled as *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL profile* ($n$ = 47; 5%) was made up of leaders, whose Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL scores were clearly higher than in all the other profiles.

There was no association between gender and belonging to a certain MTL profile ($\chi^2$ (3) = 0.679; $p$ = .878), but the relationship between occupational background and MTL profile was significant ($\chi^2$ (15) = 85.38; $p$ < .001). The expected and observed distributions of members in different occupational groups in each MTL profile are presented in Fig. 2. Based on the adjusted standardized z scores (∓2), leaders from the business sector and EMBA program were over-represented in the *Affective-Identity based MTL* profile, while professors, university teachers and researchers and social and health care leaders were under-represented in it. In the profile *Low overall MTL,* professors were over-represented and leaders from the EMBA program and other volunteers were under-

**Table 3**
Fit indices and group proportions of Latent Profile Analysis.

| Number of latent groups | Log Likelihood | Entropy | aBIC | LMR, VLMR | BLTR | Latent group proportions *n* (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | −3487.61 | | 7008.84 | | | 1003 (100) |
| 2 | −3478.33 | 0.63 | 7005.22 | 0.003, 0.003 | 0.000 | 100 (10)/903 (90) |
| 3 | −3470.88 | 0.70 | 7005.25 | 0.189, 0.178 | 0.068 | 834 (83)/20 (2)/149 (15) |
| 4 | −3466.23 | 0.74 | 7010.90 | 0.541, 0.530 | 0.308 | 426 (42)/411 (41)/119 (12)/47 (5) |
| 5 | −3454.67[a] | 0.80 | 7002.71 | 0.269, 0.261 | 0.000 | 118 (12)/18 (2)/416 (41)/396 (39)/55 (5) |

aBIC = the sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion, LMR = the Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test, VLMR = the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin test, BLTR = a Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test.

[a] The best Log Likelihood value was not replicated with the starting values used.

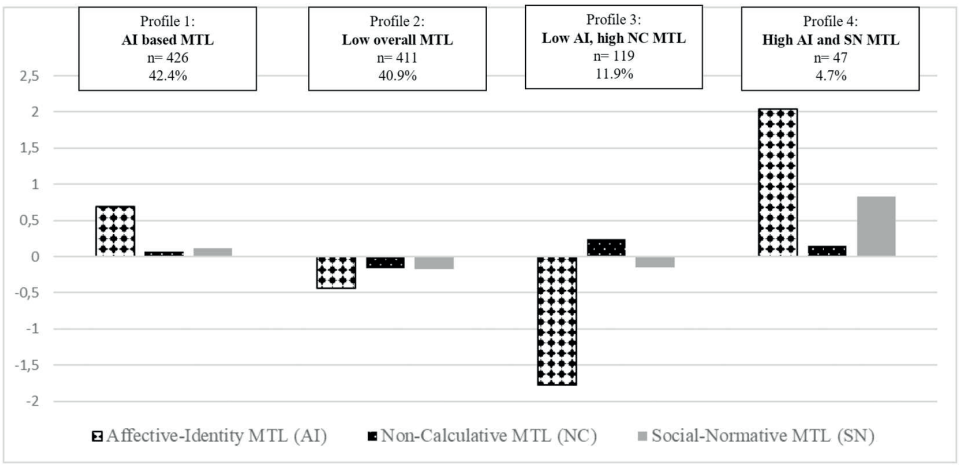


**Fig. 1.** Four latent profiles based on dimensions of MTL. Standardized scores reported to help interpretation.

**Table 4**
Differences of Motivation to Lead dimensions among four latent profiles for leaders (N = 1 003).

| | 1. AI-based MTL $n$ = 426 42% *M* *(SD)* | 2. Low overall MTL $n$ = 411 41% *M* *(SD)* | 3. Low AI, high NC based MTL $n$ = 119 12% *M* *(SD)* | 4. High AI and SN based MTL $n$ = 47 5% *M* *(SD)* | *F* | Mean differences (pairwise Bonferroni comparisons) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation to Lead | | | | | | |
| Affective-Identity MTL | 3.87 (0.28) | 3.06 (0.26) | 2.09 (0.32) | 4.84 (0.19) | 1969.99*-** | 4 > 1 > 2 > 3 *** |
| Social-Normative MTL | 3.25 (0.76) | 3.02 (0.73) | 3.05 (0.73) | 3.80 (0.91) | 18.82*** | 1 > 2*** 4 > 1, 2, 3*** |
| Non-Calculative MTL | 3.45 (0.83) | 3.25 (0.82) | 3.59 (0.82) | 3.51 (0.92) | 6.90*** | 1 > 2** 3 > 1*** |

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. AI = Affective-Identity MTL, NC = Non-Calculative MTL, SN = Social-Normative MTL.

represented. In the profile of *Low Affective-Identity MTL, High Non-Calculative MTL,* university leaders (i.e., professors) and social and healthcare sectors were over-represented and leaders from the business sector and the EMBA program were under-represented. In the *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL* profile, business sector leaders were over-represented and professors were under-represented. To conclude, leaders from specialized expert work context (academia, social and health care sector) were overrepresented in the profiles with low overall motivation to lead and especially low affective motivation to lead.

One-way ANOVA with Bootstrapping showed that the effect of age on profile membership was significant ($F$ (3, 997) = 9.92, $p < .001$). According to bootstrapped mean estimates, leaders with the *Low overall MTL* profile were oldest ($M$ = 52.9, $SD$ = 0.44) while leaders with the *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL* profile were youngest ($M$ = 47.9, $SD$ = 1.43). Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons showed that leaders with the *Low overall MTL* profile were older than leaders in the groups of *Affective-Identity-based MTL* and *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL.* Despite the supposed strong correlation between age and leadership experience, previous experience as a leader (in years) had no significant effect on group membership ($F$ (3, 997) = 1.99, $p$ = *ns*). Therefore, we used only age and occupational background as control variables in further analysis.

### 3.3. MTL profiles and leaders' occupational well-being

H2 predicted the poorest occupational well-being (high burnout and low work engagement) to be related to profiles with low motivational resources (H2a), and on the contrary, the highest occupational well-being (low burnout and high work engagement) to be associated with profiles characterized by high motivational resources in the current leader position (H2b). The results of ANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference in burnout and work engagement between the four profiles (see Table 5) supporting H2a and H2b. The highest level of all burnout symptoms – exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy – was reported by leaders in the *Low*

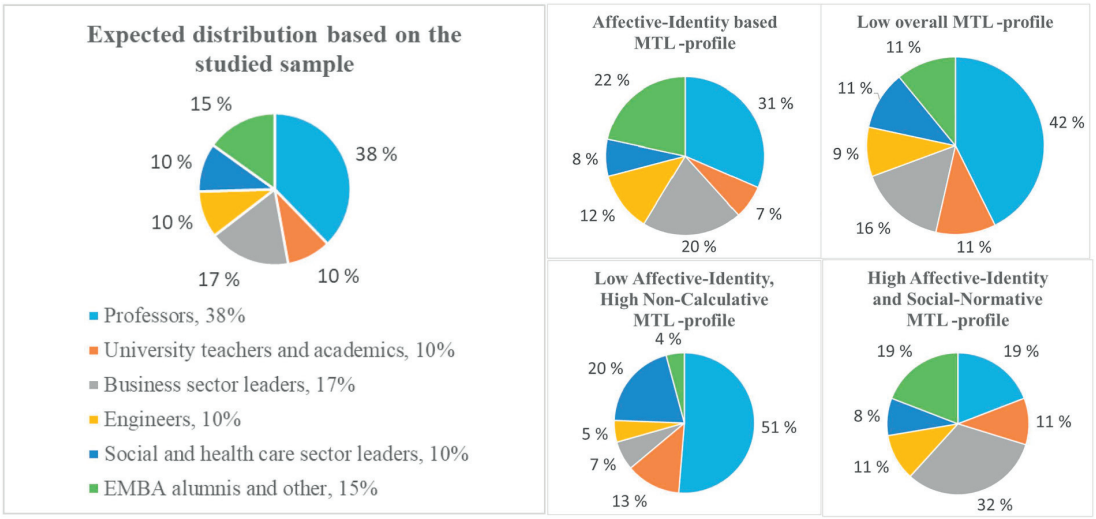


**Fig. 2.** Expected and observed distributions of members in different occupational groups.

*Affective-Identity, High Non-Calculative MTL* –profile. They also reported experiencing the lowest level of vigor (once a week, on average). On the other hand, leaders in the profile with *High Affective-Identity and Social-Normative MTL* reported the lowest level of inadequacy among all the groups and they experienced the highest level of work engagement on each dimension. They experienced especially dedication more frequently than others, several times a week, and absorption and vigor a couple of times a week.

Also, the findings concerning other profiles were in line with our hypothesis: the profile with low resources for leadership, *Low overall MTL* leaders, reported experiencing all burnout symptoms less than did *Low Affective-Identity, High Non-Calculative-MTL* leaders but more than leaders in other profiles. On the positive side, leaders whose leadership motivation was mostly intrinsic (*Affective-Identity based MTL profile)* experienced work engagement frequently and reported feelings of vigor and dedication a couple of times a week. The rank order of leadership motivation profiles according to burnout and work engagement are presented in Fig. 3.

### 3.4. MTL profiles and leaders' career intentions

H3 predicted that career intentions directed away from leadership positions (i.e., aiming to resign or applying to less demanding leadership position) are related to profiles with low resources of leadership motivation (H3a) and, vice versa, career intentions directed towards leadership positions (i.e., applying for more demanding leader positions) are related to profiles with high resources of leadership motivation (H3b). Again, the results of ANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference in leadership-related career intentions between the four latent profiles (see Table 5) that supported H3a and H3b. *Low Affective-Identity MTL, High Non-Calculative MTL* leaders reported being likely to resign their leadership position. *Low overall MTL* leaders also felt that stepping away from a leadership role was a somewhat probable career move for them. These two groups were also most likely to apply for less challenging positions. In contrast, *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL* leaders assessed that seeking more challenging leadership positions was a probable career development for them.

These findings support the use of person-centered methodology: the variable-centered investigation relying only on the negative correlation between Non-Calculative MTL and applying to more demanding leadership positions would have suggested less interest for more demanding leadership positions in *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL* profile, as these leaders reported the second highest level of Non-Calculative MTL.

### 3.5. MTL profiles and followers' evaluations

H4 predicted that unfavorable follower ratings on people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and LMX quality would be related to profiles with low resources of leadership motivation (H4a), and favorable follower ratings on people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and LMX quality would associate with profiles with high resources of leadership motivation (H4b). The results of ANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference in followers' satisfaction with their leader's people- and task-oriented leader behaviors and LMX between the four latent profiles (Table 6). Followers of a *Low Affective-Identity MTL, High Non-Calculative MTL* leader were most dissatisfied with both their leader's people- and task-oriented leader behaviors. These followers rated their LMX relationship with their leader as lower compared to followers of *Affective-Identity-based MTL* and *Low overall MTL* leaders. In conclusion, only H4a gained support. It is worth noticing that leaders with the *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL* profile got the most favorable satisfaction ratings from their followers (as H4b suggested), but the difference failed to reach the level

**Table 5**
Bootstrapped mean differences in occupational well-being and career intentions according to four MTL-profiles using ANCOVA analysis (age and occupational background were controlled for).

| | 1. AI-based MTL $n$ = 426 42.4% *M* *(SE)* | 2. Low overall MTL $n$ = 411 40.9% *M* *(SE)* | 3. Low AI, high NC based MTL $n$ = 119 11.9% *M* *(SE)* | 4. High AI and SN based MTL $n$ = 47 4.7% *M* *(SE)* | *F* | Partial η2 | Mean differences (pairwise Bonferroni comparisons) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burnout | | | | | | | |
| Exhaustion | 3.05 (.06) | 3.23 (.06) | 3.48 (.11) | 2.86 (.18) | 5.47** | .02 | 3 > 1, 2, 4 ** 2 > 1** |
| Cynicism | 2.18 (.05) | 2.41 (.06) | 2.72 (.11) | 1.95 (.17) | 9.28*** | .03 | 3 > 1, 4***, 2** 2 > 1, 4** |
| Inadequacy | 2.42 (.06) | 2.66 (.07) | 2.93 (.11) | 1.91 (.18) | 9.36*** | .03 | 3 > 1, 4 ***, 2 ** 2 > 1**, 4*** 1 > 4 ** |
| Work engagement | | | | | | | |
| Vigor | 5.83 (.05) | 5.57 (.06) | 5.10 (.10) | 6.19 (.16) | 17.64*-** | .05 | 4 > 2, 3***, 1 ** 1 > 3***, 2**, 1* 2 > 3** |
| Dedication | 6.03 (.05) | 5.86 (.05) | 5.54 (.13) | 6.45 (.12) | 9.56*** | .03 | 4 > 2, 3***, 1 ** 1 > 3*** |
| Absorption | 6.00 (.04) | 5.81 (.05) | 5.65 (.12) | 6.25 (.12) | 6.63*** | .02 | 4 > 2, 3***, 1** 1 > 2, 3** |
| Career intentions | | | | | | | |
| Resigning leadership position | 1.82 (.05) | 2.07 (.05) | 2.41 (.10) | 1.68 (.16) | 11.05*-** | .03 | 3 > 1, 4***, 2** 2 > 4, 1** |
| Applying less demanding leadership position | 1.80 (.05) | 1.97 (.05) | 2.21 (.09) | 1.41 (.14) | 10.06*-** | .03 | 3 > 1, 4***, 2* 1, 2 > 4 *** |
| Applying more demanding leadership position | 2.83 (.05) | 2.48 (.06) | 2.21 (.10) | 2.91 (.16) | 12.84*-** | .04 | 4 > 3***, 2* 1 > 2, 3*** 2 > 3* |

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. AI = Affective-Identity MTL, NC = Non-Calculative MTL, SN = Social-Normative MTL. Burnout scores range 1–6, work engagement scores range 1–7, career intentions scores range 1–5.

of statistical significance possibly due to the small group size, which might have reduced the statistical power when comparing these groups.

## 4. Discussion

Our first aim was to gain a more detailed understanding of how leaders differ in their motivational resources for leading others by examining profiles of leadership motivations. Our second aim was then to study how these motivational profiles associate with career sustainability indicators. Focal outcomes were investigated both at the individual (leader self-ratings) and hierarchical (followers' ratings of their leader) level. We found that there is individual variation in leadership motivation among those who are currently working as leaders.

Four distinctive profiles of leadership motivation were identified. The *Affective-Identity-based MTL profile* was the largest, including 42% of the leaders. In this profile, the level of identity-like, intrinsic leadership motivation was substantially higher than the other two motivational aspects. The second largest profile, with 41% of the leaders, was the *Low overall MTL profile,* characterized by a below-average level of leadership motivation altogether. Two smaller profiles were considered atypical: *Low Affective-Identity MTL, High Non-Calculative MTL profile* consisted of 12% of the leaders, including very low levels of affective, identity-like leadership motivation and high selfless leadership motivation. The *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL profile* was the smallest one with only 5% of the leaders, characterized with the highest levels of both identity-like, affective motivation and more extrinsic, normative motivation.

In line with our hypotheses, motivational profile membership associated with leaders' occupational well-being, leadership-related career intentions, and followers' evaluations of leader behaviors and the dyadic relationship with the leader, indicating relationships between motivational resources and career sustainability indicators. In this regard, the most crucial differences were between the *Affective-Identity-based MTL* and *High Affective-Identity- and Social-Normative MTL* profiles, which showed the most positive outcomes, and the *Low Affective-Identity, High Non-Calculative MTL* profile, which was related to the most unsatisfactory outcomes from both the leader's own and the followers' perspective. Leaders in the four profiles also differed from each other in terms of their background factors (age and occupational background). However, unlike in previous studies, we did not find an association between a leader's (higher) age and Affective-Identity MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001).

From the resource perspective (Hobfoll, 2001), leaders in the *Affective-Identity-based MTL* profile seemed to have high enough

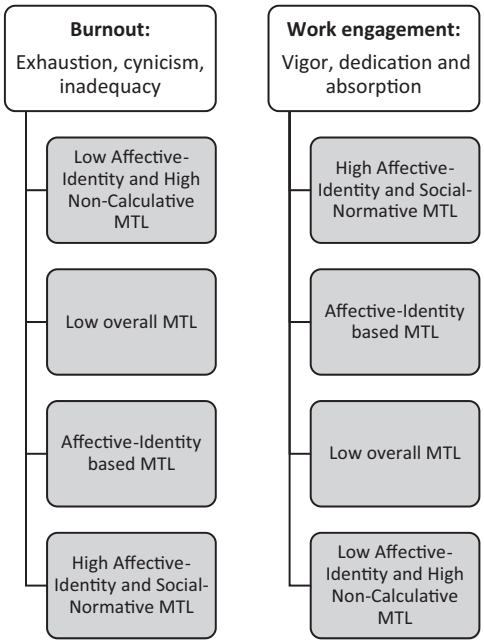


**Fig. 3.** The rank order of leadership motivation profiles according to burnout and work engagement. Higher level in hierarchy indicates higher level of burnout or work engagement.

**Table 6**
Bootstrapped mean differences in followers' (N = 987) ratings on satisfaction with leader behaviors and relationship with leader (N = 233) according to four MTL-profiles using ANCOVA analysis (follower's age, gender and the duration of leader-follower relationship were controlled for).

| | 1. AI-based MTL $n_L$ = 123 52.8% $n_F$= 562 56.9% M (SE) | 2. Low overall MTL $n_L$ = 66 28.3% $n_F$ = 261 26.4% M (SE) | 3. Low AI, high NC based MTL $n_L$ = 30 12.9% $n_F$ = 112 11.3% M (SE) | 4. High AI and SN based MTL $n_L$ = 14 6.0% $n_F$ = 52 5.3% M (SE) | *F* | Partial η2 | Mean differences (pairwise Bonferroni comparisons) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction with leader behaviors | | | | | | | |
| People-oriented leader behaviors | 3.90 (.04) | 3.83 (.06) | 3.59 (.09) | 3.96 (.13) | 3.96** | .01 | 3 < 1**, 2, 4* |
| Task-oriented leader behaviors | 4.18 (.03) | 4.09 (.05) | 3.89 (.07) | 4.32 (.11) | 6.06*-** | .02 | 3 < 1, 4**, 2* |
| Relationship with leader LMX | 4.09 (.73) | 4.01 (.79) | 3.82 (.82) | 4.09 (.97) | 3.88** | .01 | 3 < 1**, 2* |

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. AI = Affective-Identity MTL, NC = Non-Calculative MTL, SN = Social-Normative MTL. $n_L = n$ for leaders, $n_F = n$ for followers. All variables range 1–5.

motivational resources to perform well in their leader position. These leaders frequently experienced work engagement and rated their burnout symptoms to be at the second lowest level among all the studied leaders. They also considered that applying for more demanding leadership positions was likely in their future career and gained favorable ratings on their leadership behaviors from their followers. When leader's motivation is based on the Affective-Identity dimension, it relates with positive outcomes both for the leaders themselves and for their followers. These findings together indicate that identity-based motivation for leadership could be a valuable personal resource: these leaders are likely to experience a good person-career fit and are able to respond to the demands of the position, which may support the construction of a meaningful career via a positive spiral and resource gain process (De Vos et al., 2020; Hobfoll, 1989).

Leaders in the *Low overall MTL* profile seemed to be equipped with low motivational resources to sustain a leader position. Their motivational profile indicated that they may not actually like leading others very much or do not value the status that the position

gives them. They also described the lowest level of selfless motivation. We found that having such a low level of motivational resources can have several negative consequences. First, a low level of overall motivation for leading others associated with poor occupational well-being: These leaders' burnout symptoms were at the second highest level and they experienced work engagement only two or three times a week. This finding is in line with Conservation of Resources theory, because defending existing (initially low) resources demands extra effort and can lead to resource depletion (Hobfoll, 2001). Second, poorly motivated leaders also wanted to resign from their leader position or to seek a less challenging leading position, which indicates poor person-career fit. The association between low motivational resources and leaders' desire to step down from the leadership ladder can be seen as the leaders' attempt to avoid progressive resource loss in the future. Motivational resources are important, when there is an evidence of diminished interest for leader positions (Chudzikowski, 2012; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Sutela & Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014). As presented in the Introduction, leaders are likely to face more and increasingly diverse challenges in modern societies that are characterized by volatility, uncertainty, and complexity. If an individual does not possess sufficient resources for leading others, (e.g., has a low level of intrinsic motivation for leadership), it is possible that leader positions will appear unattractive to these people. Leaders who have low motivational resources can find it difficult to derive personal meaning from their current career. This could further prevent them from constructing a sustainable leader career in the future or even result in a negative career spiral due to resource loss (De Vos et al., 2020; Hobfoll, 1989).

The two remaining profiles represented atypical combinations based on the extreme ends of the motivational dimensions. First, leaders in the *Low Affective-Identity MTL, High Non-Calculative MTL* profile evaluated their Affective-Identity motivation to be very low while their Non-Calculative MTL was the highest among the whole group of participants. This kind of selfless motivation is indeed necessary if a person accepts a leadership position despite a very low positive valence towards it. However, the occupational well-being of these leaders was significantly lower and their desire to resign from their leader position was stronger compared to other leaders. They also received unsatisfactory evaluations of their leader behaviors (both people- and task-oriented behaviors) and the LMX quality from their followers. This raises a concern about how these leaders adapt and adjust to their context over time, as a high level of selfless motivational resources does not seem to be enough for career sustainability. Instead, the combination of high selfless and low affective motivation, which characterized these leaders, seemed to be unfavorable not only to the leaders themselves but also to their followers. As stated earlier (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000b) intrinsic motivation could be a resource itself, or it could help to attain a goal and create more resources. For these leaders, substantially low level of most intrinsic component of leadership motivation, Affective-Identity MTL, could indicate insufficiency of motivational resources. To avoid potential loss of initially scant resources, these leaders would want to detach themselves from the leadership responsibilities by resigning the role altogether, which may also signify lack of person-career fit and personal meaning. In this instance, adaptation to the context (occupying a leader position with low motivation towards it) may pose a severe risk for career that unfolds as non-sustainable in the end.

Lastly, leaders in the *High Affective-Identity MTL and Social-Normative MTL* profile evaluated both their Affective-Identity and Social-Normative MTL as very high, whereas their Non-Calculative MTL was on an average level. These leaders are probably equipped with sufficient pool of resources for a leader position, which also associates with favorable outcomes. Their self-rated work engagement was significantly higher than among the other leaders, they reported the lowest level of inadequacy at work of the burnout symptoms, and they were most likely to pursue an even more challenging career as a leader. These leaders seemed to be highly motivated to work as leaders as they wanted to continue on their chosen track, indicating good person-career fit (De Vos et al., 2020). The combination of experienced work engagement and willingness to seek more challenging leader career may reflect subjective career satisfaction and probability of shaping one's career proactively towards leader responsibilities also in the future. Working in a leader position for an intrinsic reasons and being able to fulfill one's perceived responsibility may give satisfaction and create an upward spiral of gaining resources (Hobfoll, 2001) and a positive spiral from the career perspective. However, this profile consisted of only 47 leaders, giving only limited evidence of the positive effects of leadership motivation as a personal resource.

### 4.1. Theoretical contributions and practical implications

This study has several theoretical and methodological strengths contributing to the existing streams of literature. We examined individual differences in leadership motivation using a person-centered approach where all three dimensions of MTL were investigated simultaneously. Our approach resulted in the recognition of different profiles of personal leadership motivation, including atypical combinations. These minority groups of leaders would not have been identified by using a variable-centered approach (i.e., examining every dimension one at a time or as a one-dimensional composite score). Our findings contribute to a more detailed and nuanced understanding on different manifestations of leadership motivation.

Most MTL studies have thus far applied self-evaluation designs among student samples or within military settings (e.g., Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Hong, Catano, & Liao, 2011; Kasemaa, 2016; Krishnakumar & Hopkins, 2014; Waldman, Galvin, & Walumbwa, 2013). Our study broadened the research on leader motivation to a sample of highly educated leaders who represented various occupational sectors, answering the call of focusing on populations with more diversity beyond military and student populations in MTL research (Bobbio & Rattazzi, 2006). Studying individuals who currently work as leaders improves the possibilities of implementing the findings in practice, giving important new insights into the diverse motivational backgrounds of leaders who are working in different occupations in different sectors. To increase the reliability of the findings compared to using only self-reported data, we also included a hierarchical leader-follower analysis to our study.

Our study also offers a new, resource-oriented and contextually aware perspective on leadership motivation, which can contribute to sustainable careers' research. Thus far, to the best of our knowledge, motivation as a resource for building a sustainable career has not received attention in the literature. In the changing world of careers, it should be of utmost importance to pay attention to the

content and level of motivation and how motivational resources are composed, as motivational resources are linked with key cornerstones of sustainable careers construction: meaning, agency and person-career fit. Investigation of motivational resources also puts the role of agency in the sustainable careers framework (De Vos et al., 2020) in a new light. We found that not all leaders occupy their current position with similar types of (or equally strong) personal motivation. Therefore, we can assume that beyond an agentic, intended pursuit towards the current leader role, also other factors (such as occupational or organizational context) might have affected their leader role occupancy.

The study findings partially contrasts the ideas of Theory of Reasoned Action that lies behind the MTL model and states that intended behavior is influenced by both personal attitudes and social norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The MTL model is based on the idea of agentic leader development and leadership potential (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) and has not thoroughly considered the role of person-context interactions in these processes. Based on these findings, the individual, agentic perspective on leadership motivation should be augmented by contextual factors when investigating the sustainability of leader careers. In order to better understand how (low) personal motivation towards the current position might affect future career choices and career alignment, future studies should examine different organizational and situational factors in addition to agency and individual MTL indicators. For example, organizations might differ in their cultural norms or shared attitudes towards leader positions; in some expert organizations leader positions may be considered unavoidable yet undesired roles that fall to everyone in turn. Future studies could also identify potential "situational triggers" that might affect the process of leader emergence. Such triggers could include stepping into a position of leadership in order to fill a void that has occurred within the organization because of workforce transitions (e.g., retirement). These broader, contextual viewpoints would give us a more systemic understanding of leader emergence and sustainable leader career paths.

From a practical perspective, our findings show that personal leadership motivation as a building block for a sustainable leader career can relate to leader performance, which should be of interest to organizations. Working in a demanding leadership positon with low or insufficient motivational resources may risk an organization for potential loss of income due to reduced organizational performance. Although we did not directly test the association between leaders' motivational resources and objective organizational performance, this argument has been strongly theoreticized (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). On an individual level, low motivation might lead to poor occupational well-being, which can not only cause personal distress, but also result in additional costs for organizations. To summarize, it is beneficial for both the success of the organization and for the individual's well-being and meaningfulness, when one's career is aligned to meet both task-related and personal needs. Thus, creating sustainable careers should be a shared responsibility between individuals and their employing organizations (Straub, Vinkenburg, & Van Kleef, 2019). Therefore, we agree with Badura et al. (2019) in recommending that the multidimensional MTL measure should be included in survey protocols that aim to recognize people with a high potential for leadership in executive selection and human resource management/development.

Another practical point for HRM/D practitioners relates to the dynamic nature of MTL and potential of gaining new resources. There is evidence that individuals with Affective-Identity MTL benefitted more from leadership training, which led to increased leadership-related competencies (Stiehl, Felfe, Elprana, & Gatzka, 2015). This aligns with the idea of MTL as a resource and resource accumulation in the form on resource gain spirals (Hobfoll, 2001; 2011). Coaching or training that is targeted towards fostering leadership motivation could then result in larger resource pool at both individual and organizational levels. Individual tailoring of career opportunities and development possibilities would also benefit those who initially lack motivational resources for leading others. Especially in the context of expert work within different occupations (such as in academia, in the light of this study), individuals can have very different motivation and resources for leadership. Within these contexts, career progression should also be viewed critically. Should all experts be encouraged or even pushed to climb the career ladder towards leader positions, if they lack personal motivation towards leadership? What other options are provided for career advancement and career construction within these fields? Organizations with a sustainable career culture (McDonald & Hite, 2018) would respond to these concerns by fostering employee well-being as well as their career success and longevity.

Lastly, for leaders themselves, it is important to reflect on their personal reasons behind initial leader emergence and decision to become a leader. From the sustainable careers' perspective, motivational resources seem to associate with occupational well-being indicators in a way that can resemble resource gain and loss spirals (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, increasing self-awareness of personal motivational resources could provide useful information for individuals that can help them to better align their careers with the needs of their employing organization (Chudzikowski et al., 2019). This could support them in constructing a meaningful career in the current employment context.

### *4.2. Limitations and further research*

We aimed to integrate the concept of MTL into the streams of literature on sustainable careers and the Conservation of Resources theory by focusing on leader motivation as a leader's personal resource. Although this perspective offered a novel and relevant approach to MTL, our study had limitations, most of which relate to the study design and data collection that restrict the possibility of drawing strong inferences from our findings. Career research usually entails longitudinal settings (De Vos et al., 2020), and our cross-sectional study design did not allow an examination of causal or mediated associations between the focal concepts of this study. Future studies should utilize longitudinal settings and investigate MTL profiles longitudinally to gain understanding of the stability and fluctuation of leadership motivation. It has been suggested that MTL is dynamic by its nature (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), and from the resource perspective, it would be valuable to investigate whether or not MTL profiles change over time: is it possible that initially high leadership motivation would increase over time, which would support the idea of resource accumulation (Hobfoll, 2001)? From the perspective of the sustainability of leader careers, the investigation of the possible changes in leadership motivation and their

association with concurrent changes in well-being is needed. Future studies should also examine whether MTL moderates the association between contextual factors (e.g., support for leaders in the organization, attitudes towards leadership), leader emergence and performance, or if leader's occupational well-being moderates the relationship between leadership motivation and leader performance.

Lastly, focusing only on quite experienced, highly educated white-collar leaders may have affected the resulting number and content of latent profiles, as the findings from a data-driven profile analysis are always somewhat sample-specific. Further studies should investigate MTL profiles among more diverse samples of working adults, with different levels of education, at different stages in their career, and on a wider range of managerial levels. Leaders working at different levels are faced with different challenges, and each level can include different central tasks (such as administrative work, managing operations, and/or personnel management). This may suggest that the composition of the MTL profiles and their associations with different outcomes could vary depending on the leadership level.

### 4.3. Conclusion

Given the contemporary trend of falling interest in leader positions (Chudzikowski, 2012; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Sutela & Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014), individuals with high leadership potential and motivational resources for leadership are needed who will maintain and build a sustainable career as a leader. This study showed that not all leaders share similar motivational resources, even though they all occupy leader positions: there are people working as leaders who experience quite a low desire to lead. Our findings highlight the importance of personal motivation to lead in relation to indicators of career sustainability – occupational well-being, leadership-related career intentions, and follower assessments on leader behaviors. It is likely that low or insufficient motivational resources for leading others can affect the construction of sustainable leader careers, as deriving meaning from a non-motivating career with a poor person-career fit appears unrewarding. HRM practitioners and recruitment experts should acknowledge that leaders can work with different motivational bases (intrinsic/affective, extrinsic/social-normative, and selfless/non-calculative motivations for leading others), and pay attention to motivational resources in the selection of future executives and in supporting their sustainable careers.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Elina Auvinen:**Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing, Funding acquisition.**Mari Huhtala:**Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing.**Ulla Kinnunen:**Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing.**Heidi Tsupari:**Investigation, Data curation.**Taru Feldt:**Conceptualization, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition, Writing - review & editing.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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# III

# TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE LEADER CAREER IN INTENSIFIED WORKING LIFE: PERSONAL RESOURCES PERSPECTIVE

by

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