# Personnel adaptation in the workplace, the quality of working life and subjective well-being

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**Abstract**

The process of personnel adaptation in the workplace is reviewed in this paper. In many works, this question is regarded as involvement in someone's job. The analysis of scientific publications has shown that personnel adaptation in the company directly depends on a company's corporate culture. Successful adaptation influences an employee's quality of working life and professional wellbeing. The model describing professional wellbeing, taken from the field of psychology, has been commented on in this paper. In addition, topical issues regarding personnel adaptation types and stages are addressed. The approaches to designing organizational programmes, which aim at improving and optimising adaptation process, at decreasing stress levels during adaption and at increasing professional wellbeing are outlined in the paper

**Keywords:** Personnel adaptation, quality of working life, motivation, corporate culture, professional wellbeing, job-related stress, involvement in one's job.

## 1 Introduction

Currently, many changes are being brought to economic and political spheres in Latvia. People were actively registering their small size businesses and start-ups during the past years.

The present paper presents the results of the research on personnel adaptation process in the workplace, in small companies in Latvia.

Spulle said in his book that small size businesses directly support every economic entity (Spulle, 2004). Therefore, such issues as personnel adaptation in the workplace, quality of working life and professional wellbeing are topical nowadays. During the research of these issues, it was found that adaptation of newly hired personnel, its training and retention are seen as acute problems that are dealt with by personnel management. In present days, graduates apply for a job in such companies to receive hands-on experience and to acquire length of service in the field relevant to their university studies. Moreover, adaptation period plays an important role even for specialists with secondary adaptation and with hands-on experience. Regardless of the previous job experience, it is successful adaptation that defines a new employee's efficiency, and the time a new employee will stay in the company. It was also noted that personnel adaptation in the company is directly connected with the company's corporate culture, it typology and elements.

Taking into consideration the research findings, it is possible to assume that an employee's quality of working life and professional wellbeing depends on successful adaptation.

All this affects the operation of companies and society. Therefore, the aim of the present research is the following: to study personnel adaptation in the workplace, the quality of working life and professional wellbeing.

The research was carried out in cooperation with small size businesses with limited liability that enrol up to 10 employees and with microenterprises in Latvia. Their employees, from different age groups, participated in the research. The research was anonymous.

## 2 Outlining methodology

The secondary research on personnel adaptation, the quality of working life and professional wellbeing was carried out within the present work.

The following methods were used to achieve the aim of the research:
1. Work-RelationQuality of Life (WRQoL) Scale., Simon Easton, 2012
2. Peter Warr, Job - related affects and behaviours, 2014
3. A questionnaire based on problems arising during adaptation in the workplace was designed.

The employees of limited liability companies participated in the research. The researched companies were comprised of 12 enterprises that had up to 10 employees (63 employees in total) and microenterprises (182 employees). The total number of employees that took part in the research was 245. The research was carried out from October 2016 till February 2017.

The respondents were asked to express their opinion about the quality of the adaptation process in the company and about the connection between personnel adaptation in the workplace and the quality of working life, as well as they were inquired about the quality of working life and job-related emotions.

## 3 Findings of the research

The analysis of both local and foreign scientific publications allowed us to add two new aspects to the list of main issues related to the analysis of such phenomena as personnel adaptation, the working life quality, corporate culture, professional wellbeing and job-related stress. These two aspects are: the previously mentioned issues' problem and the possibility to differentiate between these issues from other notions that have similar contents. These notions with similar contents are seen as close notions, but still they are not identical in their meanings, hence, these are *constructs* (for example, participation in work, employee motivation,

subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction, happiness, etc.)

In her work *Attribution of Sense to Life as a Factor of Subjective Well-being* [2], Borodkina refers to Argail and indicates that such objective factors as income, health, employment and work, social relationships, leisure time, living conditions and education are the most important sources of subjective well-being.

The concept of *wellbeing* is defined as 'the state of being calm and happy', while *happiness* is presented as 'the feeling and the state of being absolutely happy'. Furthermore, *subjective* is seen as something belonging to a person as a subject, but not corresponding to the object under investigation. Hence, *subjective wellbeing* should be understood as the state determined by a person who is a subject; also, it is a state of being satisfied, which is achieved by meeting human needs, but which does not always correspond to the objective conditions (Borodkina, 2009).

Professional wellbeing is a new subject under scientific research. There are few publications in the field of psychology that deal with an individual's wellbeing related to his or her professional activity during his or her work; these publications, considered as scientific studies, appeared in the late 1980s.

A model of professional wellbeing proposed by Peter Warr is one of the widely known approaches developed abroad and used in the psychology to study wellbeing in the professional context. This model was designed in the late 1980s; wellbeing is shown from the perspective of professional activities in the model. The author believes that the structure of professional wellbeing is formed by four primary components: emotional wellbeing, ambitions to grow and to develop, autonomy and competence (Warr, 1990).

In addition, such construct as *motivation* can be found mentioned in the literary sources that describe human activities in the professional context. Nowadays, there are tens of motivational theories found in psychology. Everything depends on the authors' view on the issue.

*Motivation* usually describes human inner psychological powers that encourage him or her to act. Organizational psychology is based on motivational theories that enable a prognosis of a person's behaviour in certain work-related situations, as well as these theories make it possible to organise a considerably efficient system of work stimulation (Renge, 2002).

Furthermore, there is information in the theory about the period, when all the business-related resources develop notably fast, an employee becomes one of these resources who can contribute to or become a competitive advantage of a company. In this period, it is important to understand personnel needs, the ways how to support employees and motivate them to reach new heights; this all should be done to promote company's growth.

This allows us to highlight the importance of understanding personnel motivation and needs.

Generally, *adaptation* is interpreted as a subject's reaction to the changes in his or her life conditions; this reaction resists real or possible decrease of its efficiency (В.Р.Веснин, 2007). Also, having taken into account the research, it can be stated that *adaptation* is a complex psychological process when a newly hired employee enters new professional relationships in the new environment.

The nature of newly hired employee adaptation in the

company has notable peculiarities: it is the time when they begin working for the first time. Professional orientation can be seen as an element of primary adaptation; orientation is a set of measures that encourages recent graduates to take decisions as well as to increase their levels of job-related motivation and the quality of working life. During secondary adaptation, which is meant for experienced employees, the adaptation usually takes less time and does not require any supervisor's help or assistance.

The analysis of publications allowed us to add the notion of corporate culture to the main questions that concern personnel adaptation. This concept of corporate culture is broader than merely psychological climate in the company.

Corporate culture is a prevailing set of company's ideas, its core statement in the entirety of the social system, environment and social norms. These social norms are established and stabilised by means of outer adaptation and inner integration, as well as by means of binding assumptions (Гарлея, 2010).

Adaptation process often involves stress. Employees in the company cannot avoid stressful situations during the adaptation process, when newly hired employees are getting used to new working conditions, new environment and duties. The manager should cope with the employees' stress sources such as inconvenient working hours, intellectual or physical overload, as well as the manager should grant employees with the decent reward for their efforts. The manager should provide the employees with interesting jobs, which can be done independently; in addition, the manager's duty is to maintain the favourable moral-psychological climate among employees and to ensure them with all the necessary information (Nucho and Vidnere, 2004).

This allows us to discuss the importance of understanding personnel needs, the significance of interconnection between adaptation, motivation, the quality of working life, corporate culture and professional wellbeing.

**4 Survey**

The model of emotional wellbeing in the context of professional activities was used in this research. The model of professional wellbeing includes classification of job-related emotions; the model is designed in accordance with such characteristics as pleasure.

**5 Findings of the empirical research**

During the research, the respondents were asked questions and the following results were acquired.

The answers to the question '**What is your length of service in the present organisation?**' were the following: more than the half of the organisations' managers have worked for the present organisation for approximately five years and more. The same answer was received from 84 per cent of the organisations' managers who took part in the survey.

The answers received to the question '**What are the reasons of applying for a job in this organisation?**' were the following: about 17 per cent of the respondents began working after their graduation to advance themselves in the chosen career. Two per cent of the respondents began their employment because of 'being redundant in the previous workplace'. Over the half of the respondents that is 61 per

cent indicated 'a better-paid job' as the main reason for commencing new employment relationships.
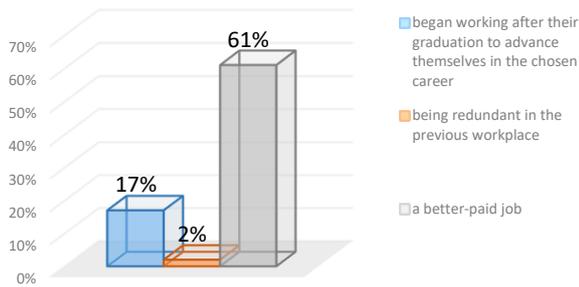


FIGURE 1 What are the reasons of applying for a job in this organisation?

The respondents were interested in the question '**What difficulties did you experience during the introductory stage of adaptation?**' The respondents were offered three answer options from which they have chosen the following: 61 per cent associated difficulties with workload, 21 per cent - with the nature of work and 18 per cent - with the lack of practical skills.
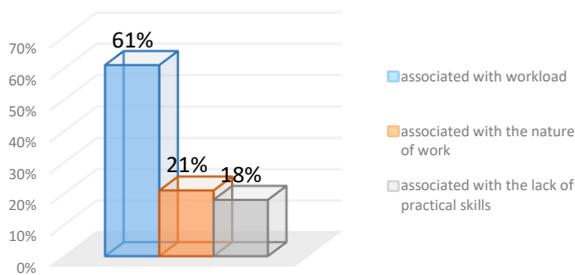


FIGURE 2 What difficulties did you experience during the introductory stage of adaptation?

The question '**On which stages was the supervisor's assistance required?**' was replied in the following way. The absolute majority of the respondents or 97 per cent claimed that they needed advisor's or manager's help during the introductory stage that lasted about a month.
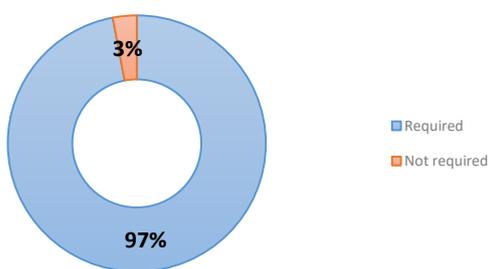


FIGURE 3 On which stages was the supervisor's assistance required? (introductory stage that lasted about a month)

Among those who responded were both employees and employers. On the stage of involvement into work that is about one year, 18 per cent of the respondents pointed out the necessity of help or assistance.
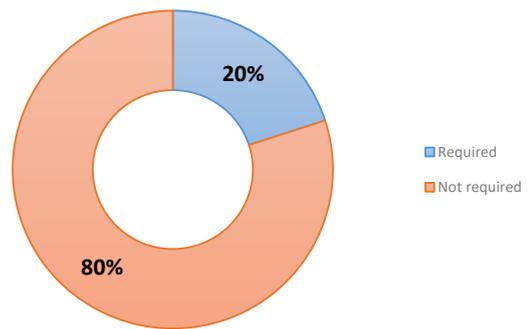


FIGURE 4 On which stages was the supervisor's assistance required? (introductory stage is about one year)

However, 53 per cent of those surveyed claimed advisor's help to be vital in the time period up to six months.
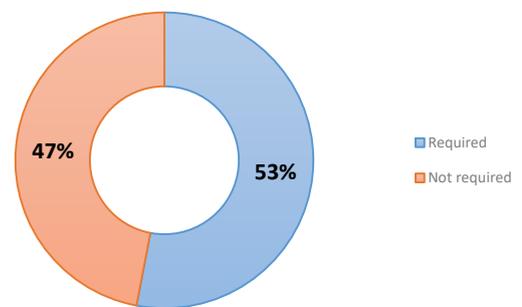


FIGURE 5 On which stages was the supervisor's assistance required? (introductory stage is up to six months)

Almost a half or 48 per cent of the respondents asserted that help from a colleague is necessary on the integrative stage of adaptation, when the required knowledge and skills are being gradually acquired, improved and perfected.
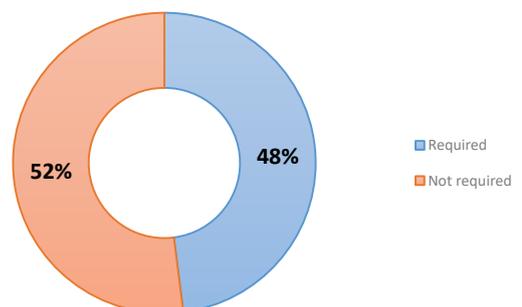


FIGURE 6 On which stages was the supervisor's assistance required? (integrative stage)

Taking into consideration the work specifics of small-sized enterprises, the respondents (97 per cent) marked 'Importance of good relationships with colleagues and the feeling of psychological comfort'.

FIGURE 7 Importance of good relationships with colleagues and the feeling of psychological comfort.

The question '**Have you experienced difficulties in professional adaptation?**' was answered in the following way: more than a half of the respondents (61 per cent) had no difficulties in professional adaptation, 18 per cent of those questioned had some difficulties, and 21 per cent of those surveyed did not manage to respond to this question.
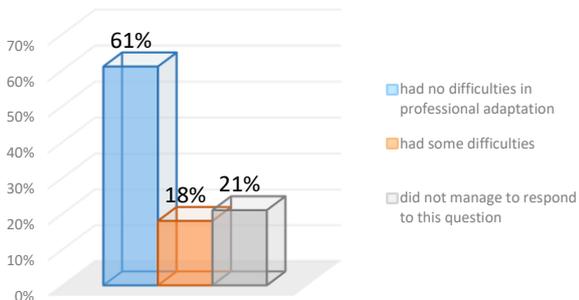


FIGURE 8 Have you experienced difficulties in professional adaptation?

It was significant to find out 'How the adaptation process is carried out in the enterprise?'

Are there any activities or events that help a new employee to be introduced in the organization and in the position? Such results have been acquired: hundred per cent of the respondents received the introductory instructions when being hired in the organization; 35 per cent of them received a more expanded version of a set of instructions, being additionally given printed information about the organization, and they were individually introduced to the company.
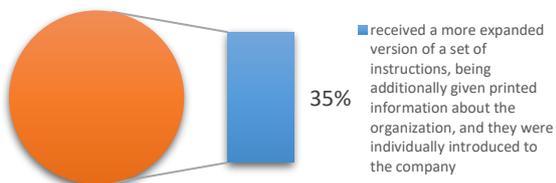


FIGURE 9 How the adaptation process is carried out in the enterprise?

The question 'Have you experienced organizational-administrative difficulties in the adaptation process?' was answered in the following manner.

In terms of organizational adaptation, only seven per cent of the employees experienced challenges because of the working schedule and when resolving disputable questions. Others that is 93 per cent of the employees did not have any of the previously described challenges.
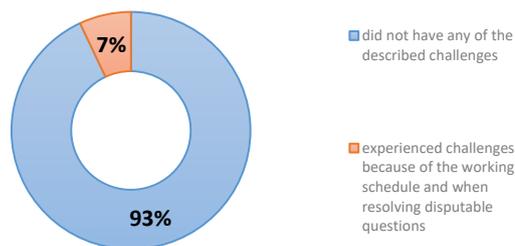


FIGURE 10 Have you experienced organizational-administrative difficulties in the adaptation process?

It was interesting to find out the personnel's opinion about the question '**On which stage did you feel yourself as a part of a team?**' More than a half of the employees (53 per cent) mentioned that they have been accepted into the team after three months of work. Approximately 21 per cent indicated that after having worked for six months, they have become a part of a work team; however, two per cent of the respondents did not feel the unity with colleagues even after one year of work.
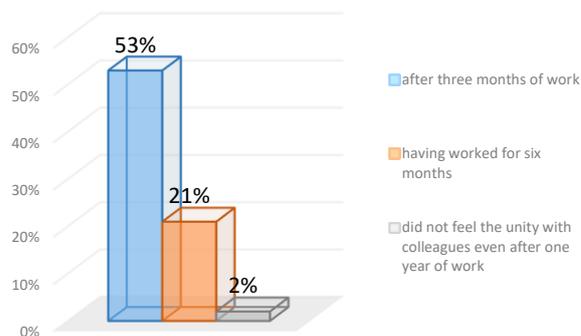


FIGURE 11 On which stage did you feel yourself as a part of a team?

It was important to investigate '**Whether conflicts arise between new employees and their supervisors or managers?**'. The results are the following: the majority of the respondents (87 per cent) did not have any conflict situations; 11 per cent of those surveyed told that these occurred rarely, and two per cent admitted having conflicts with managers and supervisors.
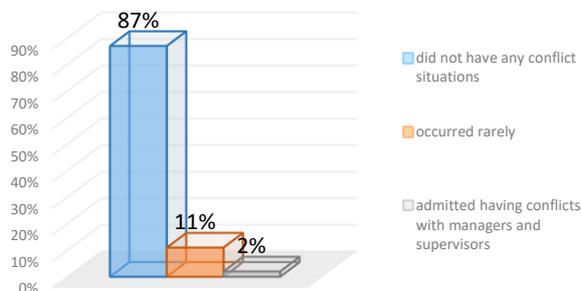


FIGURE 12 Whether conflicts arise between new employees and their supervisors or managers?

The question '**What has helped you during the**

**adaptation process?**' was not of a less importance. All of the respondents (100 per cent) pointed out the significance of initial level of knowledge and skills. They have indicated the significant role of being interested in the new job, of having good perspectives and opportunities to improve their financial situation. Moreover, they mentioned timely help and support from their manager and supervisor to be crucially important.



FIGURE 13 What has helped you during the adaptation process?

The majority of the respondents or 97 per cent replied positively to the question **'In your opinion, does a new employee need a supervisor?'**; solely three per cent of those questioned did not approve the idea of supervision.
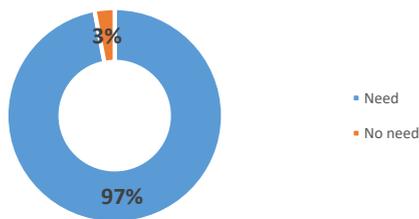


FIGURE 14 In your opinion, does a new employee need a supervisor?

As a result of the research, it was found out that 87 per cent of the employees confirmed the fact that they were assisted by an advisor, who was assigned to them by administration. The previously mentioned indicators define the necessity of a supervisor during the adaptation period in the workplace.

The last question was '**Did you experience difficulties in adapting to a group of new colleagues**?' On the basis of the data analysis, the following conclusion was drawn: the majority of the respondents that is 87 per cent did not experience any difficulties in terms of adaptation; solely two per cent found it difficult to adapt, and 11 per cent had difficulties in answering this question.
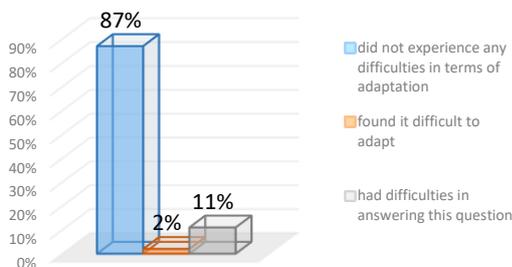


FIGURE 15 Did you experience difficulties in adapting to a group of new colleagues?

# 6 Research results

Thereby, the following suggestions can be made to optimize the personnel adaptation process in the workplace:
1. Adaptation is a complex psychological process during which an employee enters new employment relationships. It is a subject's reaction towards the changes in his or her work life conditions. It is possible to manage this reaction if its main tasks are identified: making the process of integration in a new group of colleagues easier, decreasing the anxiety level and diminishing the lack of confidence, increasing job satisfaction.
2. The adaptation process depends on clear and proper actions of the whole group of colleagues, on the designed personnel adaptation programme and on the introductory instruction.
3. Nowadays, new opportunities to implement the changes in the adaptation process with the aim to improve it are being created.
4. Adaptation success is determined by:
   - High level of initial knowledge and skills
   - Interest in the organization and in a new job, and in the future perspectives
   - Having necessary character traits and psychological characteristic
   - Timely assistance from colleagues, the supervisor and the manager
   - The ability to envisage difficulties and timely react to situations

# 7 Conclusions

1. As the respondents included both personnel with primary and secondary adaptation, their answers to the distributed questionnaire differed.
2. The recent graduates experienced certain difficulties in adaptation to a new workplace. These difficulties include the lack of practical skills, the lack of skills regarding communication with clients and colleagues, as well as they had some difficulties in professional and organizational-administrative adaptation.
3. Newly hired employees who had previous work experience had minor difficulties during adaptation. Newly hired employees usually did not have any difficulties in professional and organizational-administrative adaptation.
4. Regarding supervision, the opinions of respondents were split. A half of the employees believes that a specialist needs a supervisor; this helps the recent graduate to receive work experience and a certain set of practical skills and competences that are necessary in their careers.
5. The majority of the respondents believe that it is necessary to ensure every new employee and a recent graduate with a supervisor for the time period from one to six months in average.
6. The personnel, in general, did not experience any difficulties in adaptation to a new work team.

Features of successful adaptation are:
- Acquisition of professional knowledge and skills
- Showing true interest in the organisation and in work

that begins playing even more significant role in life

- Feeling connection with a profession and satisfaction with the increase in the quality of working life
- Having and understanding your life goals as well as being satisfied with self-fulfilment
- The connection between the adaptation in the workplace, the quality of working life and well-being

It is necessary to plan development and to examine how the set goals can be attained to increase the personnel competitiveness in the labour market, to decrease the influence of stress and to raise and improve personnel well-being. It is crucial to help personnel to adapt to a new workplace, to overcome stress, to strengthen self-esteem and to increase confidence in oneself and in one's profession; thereby, improving the quality of working life and increasing personnel's well-being.

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