Natalia Ivanova
National Research University, Moscow, Russia
Higher School of Economics
Faculty of Social Science
School of Public Administration and Department of Psychology
E-mail: sinec@inbox.ru

Anna Klimova
National Research University, Moscow, Russia
Higher School of Economics
Faculty of Social Science
School of Public Administration and Department of Psychology
E-mail: aklimova@hse.ru

IDENTITY FOCUSED ADAPTATION OF NEWCOMERS IN ORGANIZATIONS: RESOURSE FOR PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Abstract

The report addresses the issue of adaptation of newcomers in organizations. This problem is very important now in business and public organizations according to the problem of labor productivity, staff turnover, corporate culture etc. In spite of obvious importance of the adaptation in organization, the studies of this problem require new approaches and methods. Mechanisms are explored that help to retain the staff in organization and to create a desire to continue its activities in this organization. The research is implemented to the framework of the business-psychological approach (S Benton, N. Ivanova, theory of social identity (H. Tajfel, J.C. Turner), concepts of adaptation (T. Bazarov, N. Volkova etc.). Adaptation of newcomers is considered as a natural stage of professional and social self-determination of the individual, as overcoming the identity crisis and identity forming process. In the course of adaptation, an identity is formed that is adequate in relation to the new social roles and goals of activity. The purpose of the study: to develop the identity focused adaptation model, to test the role of this model in the work with newcomers in organization. Methodology: questionnaire (N= 109), Job Satisfaction Survey (N=15), case study in organizations. Results: The role of information and psychological support of a novice from the manager, mentor and team while including a specialist in joint activities is revealed. The directions of improving the system of adaptation of newcomers in the organization are highlighted. An identity focused adaptation model has been developed, which includes the following components:

A) *Preliminary information to newcomers: preparatory briefing about the company; detailed briefing about the company's rules and regulations.*
B) *Information about newcomers to colleagues: about the new employee, his workplace, the tasks of his adaptation, the appointment of a mentor.*
C) *Communications of the mentor: checking the workplace, the initial conversation, monitoring the problems and successes, the employee's initiation into the company's affairs.*

D) *Communications of the manager: aimed at reducing the uncertainty of the newcomer in the first days of work.*

E) *Communication of newcomers: questions, feedback, ideas, doubts, wishes.*

Results of this research can be useful for management, counseling and coaching for development of newcomer's identity, loyalty, and performance.

Keywords: business psychology, identity focused adaptation model, personnel management, loyalty, adaptation of personnel, social identity, strategy of communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

The adaptation (socialization) of newcomers in organization is an important research topic both from the point of view of employee development and the improvement of organizational culture (Wang et al, 2015). For HR departments and management the effective employee adaptation helps to increase the efficiency of staff activities, full membership and involvement in the organization. Newcomer adaptation performs significant socializing role and generally is an effective measure of retaining them in the organization. At the same time some socialization tactics of newcomers were negatively related to role ambiguity, role conflict, and intentions to quit, and positively related to fit perceptions, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and a custodial role orientation (Saks et al., 2007).

Successful adaptation of personnel is a factor that affects the labor productivity and reduce staff turnover (Gusareva, 2016), the level of involvement and loyalty of personnel in the organization (Volkova, 2013), the duration of the employee's work in the company and its competitiveness (Fateeva, 2012) etc. In this regard, in scientific and practical terms, much attention is paid to the problem of personnel adaptation management. Companies are implementing adaptation programs (Khramov, 2017), aimed at helping employees to understand the working conditions, norms of behavior, etc.

From the experience of many companies, it becomes clear that the painful problems are centered on staff satisfaction, loyalty, turnover and quality of work. For instance, a high rate of staff turnover does not allow forming permanent and well-coordinated professional team; creating a favorable atmosphere to work and as a result decries the performance. Organization spends resources to adjust the specialist and needs to improve the efficiency of this process. That is why it is very important to study how in the period of adaptation we can avoid this situation and find good instruments to influence the personnel desire to work in organization and to realize professional aims on higher level of performance.

The study is addressed to the adaptation of newcomers in organization by the new approaches to effectiveness of one. Our research generally is based on the comprehensive approach. On the base of business psychology approach (S Benton, N. Ivanova,), social identity approach (H. Tajfel, J.C. Turner), and concepts / research of adaptation (T. Bazarov, N. Volkova etc.) a model of adaptation which is focused on development of newcomer's social identity (Identity Focused Adaptation, IFA) has been developed. Social identity is an important factor of conscious behavior of new employees in the organization. The IFA can help new staff in clear understanding of values, professional and social roles and patterns of organization. Conditions studied for the development of those human qualities that allow employees to be capable of personal growth, effective communication with people, maintaining human values, etc.

On this theoretical basis mechanisms that help specialists in human resources management finding new instruments useful for maintaining relative stability of personnel and improving the level of their performance, personnel engagement and loyalty have been developed.

1.1. Adaptation of newcomers in organization

In general, the adaptation of new employees is considered as the process of their adaptation to professional, social, organizational, economic, domestic and other working conditions. This means that the employees learn the content and working conditions, the requirements of the social environment. But they also learn about themself and personal qualities within these conditions and requirements. In the process of adaptation, there is a cross adjustment of the employee and the team, based on mutual activity and interest in each other.

As a technology, personnel adaptation is a process incorporated into the human resource management system, and also as a process through which an organization trains an employee, and the employee learns the subtleties of his role in the organization. Personnel adaptation is considered as a certain restructuring of the self-consciousness and behavior of the individual during the development of a person in a new professional activity and entering organizational relations (Bazarov, Eremin, 2012). This process has its own structure, sequence, and features of the flow. It is aimed at obtaining a certain economic and social result in the organization and is limited to the time slot after which the expected effect should be achieved (Volkova, 2013).

There are two perspectives of considering the process of personnel adaptation, namely, from the point of view of the adaptation of the individual to social conditions and from the point of view of the transformative influence of the new employee on the organizational culture (Bazarov, Eremin, 2012). Actually, adaptation is a mechanism for the development of a young specialist through interaction with the organizational environment and at the same time, one of the methods for developing the potential of the organization's human resources (Sopoev, 2013).

In fact, the stability and effectiveness of the organization as a whole depends on the ability of the organization to qualitatively socialize new members (Petrovskaya, 2013). Properly organized staff adaptation leads to a positive attitude of the new employee to the choice of their place of work and the desire to successfully fulfill professional requirements (Volkova, 2013), to clear understanding of the role performed (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007), to reduce uncertainty, to bring the goals of the employee closer to the goals of the organization (Cable, Parsons, 2001). The adaptation of an employee in an organization is of a social nature and is carried out through the mechanisms of social and professional identification (Dmitrieva, 2003) and the development of professional self-awareness (Blokhina, 2008).

Our research is based on business psychology approach according which business is considered as a professional and social environment that affects the formation of the personality of all business entities. Studies are focused on the factors and conditions under which people in an organization successfully cope with their tasks. Results should be useful for the personal development and at the same time for the business efficiency, for development of new methods of management in organization (Ivanova, Benton, et al, 2019).

Within the framework of the business-psychological approach, we consider the personnel's adaptation as a process that ensures the inclusion of a person not only in a new profession, but also in a broader environment of his life: social, physical, household, information. It is important to emphasize that the newly hired employee occupies several positions in the system of roles and relationships in the organization at the same time. The effectiveness of adaptation will be related to how quickly a person is able to recognize these roles and relationships, personally accepts them and builds his behavior accordingly. In addition, when entering a job in an organization, a person has certain goals, needs, and norms of behavior. In accordance with them, the employee makes certain requirements to the organization: to the working conditions and motivation.

It is also important for the organization to consider these requirements as much as possible in order to build a long-term relationship with the new employee. Therefore, in the course of adaptation, there is a mutual adaptation of the employee and the organization. The employee's vision of his personal and professional qualities can change. And in the organization, either certain

values or requirements for personnel are strengthened, or new nuances of their application in specific conditions appear. A significant result of adaptation is related to how quickly and efficiently a new employee accepts his social roles in the organization.

1.2. Identity focused adaptation (IFA)

Many programs of adaptation are aimed on the development of newcomer's professional and social competence (such as hard and soft skills). In research and practice this kind of adaptation is named complex model of adaptation (CMA). At the same time, there is a demand for adaptation programs, where more attention is paid to the personality of the newcomer, his internal connection with the company (identification, engagement, loyalty etc.). A number of approaches use the concept of organizational socialization to describe the adaptation processes associated with personnel, which is characterized by the assimilation of the organization's values, behavioral characteristics, attitudes, and other aspects of a person's acceptance of his status in the organization and perception of himself as a full member of a new group (Ashford et al., 2007). Adaptation programs which follow this approach are very close to type as we named the Identity Focused Adaptation (IFA). Being studied how to strengthen the work with the personality, self-awareness in the course of adaptation.

According to the theory of social identity, membership in any groups is supported by a system of intra-group and intergroup attitudes and actions. Social identity reflects a person's involvement in professional, socio-political and other communities (as family, country, ethnic group, etc.) and may be a factor of individuals and groups' behavior in organizations. This phenomenon manifests a complex of status-role interpersonal and intergroup relations of a person included in certain groups (Tajfel, Turner, 1986). The popularity of the theory is explained by the appeal to the constantly relevant topic of "friends and strangers" and is based on the idea that each individual has certain social characteristics that demonstrate his belonging to a group or category (Ivanova, Morton, 2010). This approach led to a new understanding of organizational problems related to the career of employees, their productive relationships, etc., and the survival of the organization in a competitive environment (Haslam, 2004).

Despite the fact that researchers are paying more and more attention to the problem of identity formation in the process of adaptation (Zhu, Tatachari, Chattopadhyay 2015, Dmitrieva 2003), the question of the factors and mechanisms of the formation of newcomer's desire to continue their activities in the organization after adaptation is still poorly studied.

Taking into account the above-mentioned specifics of the interaction between an employee and an organization when entering into a new activity, we can say that the process of adaptation is accompanied by a crisis of the person's existing ideas about himself and his place among other people, which causes the need to adapt to new conditions. In this sense, the process of adaptation acts as a natural stage of professional and social self-determination of the individual when he enters any new organization and when mastering any new activity. Therefore, the main focus of work with new employees should be to help them in self-determination, the formation of social identity. The positive social identity of newcomers in a new social and professional environment is the basis of their desire to continue own activities in the organization. In our work, the adaptation of personnel is considered from the perspective of this issue.

Actualized identity is a cognitive basis for the understanding own professional level and competence, and accepting the values and behavioral standards in organization. All of these are important for commitment and performance in organization (Ivanova, Klimova, 2019).

It is possible to say that the acquisition of social identity is manifested in the subjective distinction of one's social and professional group, positive acceptance of a new status, values, traditions of the organization, conscious performance of activities, and understanding of one's

level of professional development. On this basis, the employee develops positive attitudes towards the new organization, a desire to continue working in it, etc.

The process of entering a new position and profession is characterized by a person's awareness of its real attitude to the chosen field of activity, the image of his future career. It closely intertwines the various aspects of adaptation, since performing professional duties, a person adapts to the requirements of the social environment of the organization, values, norms, traditions of interaction with others (socio-psychological adaptation), to the living conditions of work and recreation, the workplace (household adaptation) , etc.

It might be argued that adaptation focused of identity is useful resource for personnel management because it helps to activate the self-determination process of personality and the identity formation. The main view of this model is concentrated on the organizational work for developing cognitive, value-motivational and behavioral characteristic of social identity of newcomers. It can help to employers in clear understanding of values, professional and social role and pattern of behavior in organization. This is important to increase a conscious employee behavior in relation to the new organization and to maintain stability and performance of personnel as well.

These theoretical foundations formed the basis of the empirical research on the peculiarities of the personnel adaptation in modern conditions.

1.3. Model and Data

The aim of the empirical study was to identify the most significant adaptation factors of newcomers, which have a direct impact on the formation of their positive social identity.

Main suggestion was tested on the programs of adaptation focused on forming the positive social identity aimed to improve personnel satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty of newcomers.

Methodology: a secondary analysis of the data from our adaptation studies (2017-2018) in various organizations was carried out with an expert interview and statistical analyses in last years. Qualitative and quantitative methods were combined such as case study, observation, expert's evaluation, analysis of documents, questionnaires, statistical analysis (SPSS, Excel).

The study consisted of two parts. In the first part, we studied some aspects of adaptation based primarily on the competence-based model (CFA). Indicators taken into account were accepting a new status, motivation, and factors of adaptation (N=109). Method: the expert analyses of adaptation model, the author's questionnaire (N. Ivanova, A. Klimova, 2018), expert's evaluation (N=5), confirmatory factor analysis. In the second part, the effect of applying the IFA model in personnel management in organizations was studied. The new program was implemented in the company with the participation of M. Makeev and under our leadership (Makeev, 2019). Then we compared the effect of two programs - CFA and IFA in an organization on the same sample (N=15) at intervals of six months, when the new program was implemented. Methods: the self-report based on the Spectrum methodology (Job Satisfaction Survey; JSS), which evaluates job satisfaction as an emotional response to various aspects of work (Spector, 2008). In addition, changes in the average number of employees, the number of accepted and retired employees were taken into account.

2. RESULTS

Part 1: A survey of newcomers (N=109) who passed the initial adaptation in organizations where the competence-based model of adaptation (CFA) is used showed that employees need a psychological assistance for self-determination and overcoming the identity crisis. The set of

indicators were considered, including the acceptance of a new status and professional motivation (cognitive and motivational indicators of identity) and factors of adaptation.

The correlation analysis showed that the acceptance of the status is associated with the level of the department (0,199*), the presence of an internship (0,375**), good working conditions (0,206*), the attachment of a mentor (0,186*), the performance of responsible tasks (0,188*), and mentoring (0,186*), (**p<0.01, *p<0.05).

The complex indicator of satisfaction of motives is stylistically associated with a good information system in the organization (0.192*), the possibility of receiving various assistance (0.283*), and the attentive attitude of the manager (0.191*), execution of one-time assignments and development of contacts (0.210*). The significance of employees' remuneration is related to the stability motive (0, 326*), (*p<0.01).

The survey revealed a high need for a new status, as well as awareness and satisfaction of the newcomer's motives. But expert analysis has shown that these aspects of adaptation are less satisfied in practice. This can be seen from the factor analysis and expert assessments (Table 1)

Table 1 Factors of adaptation and expert's evaluation of implementation this factor on practice

Name with proportion of explained variance	Statistically significant variables	Explanation of a newcomers need	Expert evaluation (5-point scale)
Leadership and collaboration (0.113)	Good attitude of the manager (0.845), collaboration with a supervisor (0.741), mentor (0.725), collaboration with colleagues (0.679), responsible tasks (0.667), having friends in the department (0.658).	Networking and support from management and colleagues	4,3
Meeting expectations (perspectives, relationships) (0,073)	Knowledge of requirements (0.644), satisfaction of motives (0.554), understanding of career prospects (0.468), friendly relations (0.479), assistance from the team and management (0.461), difficulties in joining the team (-0.531).	Knowledge about various activity and the ability to satisfy all their motives	3,7
Public activities (0,066)	Significance of social activity (0.614), experience of social activity (0.537), age (0.567), problems of seeking help from colleagues (0.530).	Newcomers need diverse communication	3,9
Certainty of requirements (0,062)	Clear understanding of the new working conditions (0.684), clear requirements, job responsibilities (0.369), ambiguity of professional responsibilities (- 0.664).	Clear knowledge of working conditions, job requirements, and their readiness	4,1
Material expectations (0,051)	Work information (0.465), well-organized workplace (0.353), knowledge of the organization (0.403), desire for stability (0.479), desire for a career (0.381), non-compliance with expectations (-0.331).	Information for self-determination about salary and workplace	3,8

Results of this part showed that positive factors of adaptation are associated with information about many aspects of organization, and job as well as about own motivation and results. That is why the following components of the IFA model were considered: cognitive elements (information about profession, social roles, perspectives etc.), values (information about moral norms, ethic, mission, vision as well as emotional background of interactions), behavioral elements (personal brand, standards of conduct). At this stage, positive identity indicators were developed such as: conscious acceptance of new status, wide range of social and cognitive

motivations, desire to achieve a high level of performance, focus of interaction on expanding contacts with management and colleagues, social and labor activities.

Part 2: A comparison of the effectiveness of the adaptation of newcomers in two different programs was carried out. The research was of a practical nature at the request of a concrete company. The HR management was asked to develop the new program of adaptation to improve the effectiveness of staff. The indicators were considered both subjective (emotional satisfaction) and objective (staff turnover, efficiency of the company).

The company pays great attention to the work with the staff and especially to the adaptation of new employees. The existing adaptation program has shown its effectiveness. But we faced the problems of taking into account the individual differences of newcomers, as well as increasing of their awareness and responsibility. Therefore, a new program with focus on identity was developed. The program included some indicators of positive social identity which were identified in part 1. The IFA program includes the following components: *Preliminary information to newcomers*: preparatory briefing about the company; detailed briefing about the company's rules and regulations; *Information about newcomers to colleagues*: about the new employee, his workplace, the tasks of his adaptation, the appointment of a mentor; *Communications of the mentor*: checking the workplace, the initial conversation, monitoring the problems and successes, the employee's initiation into the company's affairs; *Communications of the manager*: aimed at reducing the uncertainty of the newcomer in the first days of work; *Communication of newcomers*: questions, feedback, ideas, doubts, wishes.

The new program was developed and implemented within six months. Then we compared the effectiveness of the programs on the employees who underwent adaptation (N=15). Self-reports were compared based on the Spectrum methodology (Job Satisfaction Survey; JSS). Indicators were considered: salary, promotion, management, additional benefits, dependent rewards, conditions of execution, colleagues, the nature of the work, informing the public, average annual number of employees per year, number of employees accepted, number of retired employees, profit.

The data obtained before and after the implementation of the program were compared with respect to: JSS scales, the average annual number of employees, the number of employees accepted and retired. Results show that there some differences in dates (table 2).

Table 2 Average values of the measured parameters of self-reports before and after the implementation of the new adaptation program (N=15)

	Before implementation	After implementation
Salary	16	18
Promotion	13	18
Managements	14	21
Additional benefits	16	20
Dependent rewards	12	19
Conditions of execution	14	18
Colleagues	16	21
The nature of the work	15	19
Informing the public	13	21
Average annual number of employees per year	40	57
Number of employees accepted	7	17
Number of retired employees	4	1
Profit (million rubels)	2,3	3,9

Significant differences were found in the indicators (p<0.05): promotion, management, additional benefits, dependent rewards, conditions of execution, colleagues, the nature of the work, informing the public. Thanks to the new adaptation program, the employee becomes more aware of the values of the

organization, the opportunities for his career growth and development. He learns his management, the specifics of the work, gets acquainted with colleagues, etc. The main thing is that he has a desire to continue working in the organization even after the adaptation period.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The main reasons for leaving for a newcomer: the discrepancy between reality and expectations and the difficulty of integrating into a new organization. To help an employee to successfully integrate into a new organization is the most important task of personnel management. The adaptation focused on the identity can be useful in this process.

It should be emphasized that the research was practically oriented and pilot in nature. But the results of this study show that business psychology (a comprehensive view of adaptation factors) and social identity approaches (understanding people behavior in organizations through their identity structure) help us to find a new type of adaptation in organizations which we named identity focused adaptation model (IFA). The model of IFA includes the following components: cognitive elements (information about profession, social roles, perspectives etc.), values (information about moral norms, ethic, mission, vision as well as emotional background of interactions), behavioral elements (personal brand, standards of conduct).

Based on the study, it is possible to present several indicators of positive social identity that need to be taken into account in the process of adaptation such as: conscious acceptance of new status, wide range of social and cognitive motivations, desire to achieve a high level of performance, focus of interaction to expand contacts with management and colleagues, social and labor activities. The study shows that an effectively organized communication process about important elements of newcomers' organizational life is very important in creating a satisfactory level of organizational identity. The communication in the adaptation process is to be organized to provide the newcomer with the information about the organization (to understand rules and regulations, norms, values), to ensure a feedback from managers and mentors (to reduce uncertainty) and to contact his colleagues (to create his network). All these elements ensure positive effects of the adaptation process.

Also, we consider adaptation as an important factor of specific influence on the motivation and behavior of employees and as a process that ensures the inclusion of a person not only in a new profession, but also in a broader environment of his life: social, physical, household, information. Effective adaptation in organization is important for employees in their self-determination. Moreover, it helps newcomers to find their own place in organization especially in professional and social environment and behave accordingly.

The developed approaches allows to outline an empirical research program aimed to determine the characteristics of effective adaptation for decline turnover of personnel in organization. During IFA personnel goes throw diffenert understading of their knowledge, emotions, professional skills and surrounding people.

Results of our work can be benefissial for consultants and coaches who work with the problems of turnover, professional identity, loyalty, and performance. The results will be usefull for the personnel management in creating of new adaptation programs, developing training programs based on IFA model.

Limitations of the study

The study was practice-oriented. It can be attributed to a pilot project, which identified important parameters for improving the effectiveness of the adaptation system. The data obtained can be considered as a pilot to build new hypotheses and further research on a broader sample and with the use of experimental procedures.

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