A new workplace is a result of changing a work post or undertaking a new job. Direct indices of adaptation to this situation (average mood at the workplace and job satisfaction) and the indirect ones (costs like health complaints and the level of depressing or facilitating anxiety) are analysed with regard to reactivity and values-motives coherence at work. Sixty bank workers were investigated. The obtained results confirm that mood and costs depend on reactivity, but satisfaction with work depends on coherence. Only achievement values-motives coherence at work differentiates direct and indirect indicators of adaptation. Considering both kinds of variables modifies dependencies. Some theoretical and practical conclusions resulting from the research are included.

1. INTRODUCTION

For most people, a job is one of the fundamental aims in their lives. A loss of job is, after death and diseases, the most serious event that influences psychological distress (Thoits, 1983). Changes in the job situation are also significant life events located relatively high on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale developed by Holmes and Rahe (1967). A new workplace is a consequence of changing the work post or undertaking a new job. Thus, adaptation to a new workplace seems to be a difficult situation that can cause stress.

A difficult situation may be treated as an imbalance of situation demands—its stimulating value—and a person’s possibilities delimiting his or her need for stimulation (Strelau, 1988). The need is designated by an optimum level of stimulation: the range of stimulation that is accompanied by a person’s well-being and high efficiency of action (Eliaz, 1985; Strelau, 1983). Dealing with too high or too low stimulation can cause stress and decrease effects of actions as well as increase psychosomatic costs, which emerge as a result of the efforts to maintain high efficiency of activity.

It is assumed that a new workplace is connected with high stimulation because of the importance and quality of changes a person has to adapt to: new tasks, social
expectations, and new social relations with coworkers. Therefore, a new workplace can cause stress resulting from too high stimulation. This kind of stress is especially linked with costs in the form of anxiety and lack of emotional stability (Strelau, 1983), psychosomatic diseases (Eliasz & Wrzesniewski, 1988, 1991), or somatic complaints (Zalewska, 1995, 1996b). Considering their effects on action, two kinds of anxiety are distinguished: facilitating and depressing. Only depressing anxiety, which is related to lack of emotional stability, leads to lowering effects of a person's activity and is associated with overstimulation. The facilitating anxiety results in an optimum tension level in unstructured situations (new, unclear, complex) and, thus, allows better achievements than in normal circumstances. It is negatively correlated with costs resulting from overstimulation (Zalewska, 1995).

In view of those statements, I suppose that adaptation to a new workplace should be considered not only in terms of indices that are directly connected with work (e.g., satisfaction with work and the level of well-being at work), but also in terms of indirect indicators, which reflect general costs resulting from this situation (e.g., the level of depressing or facilitating anxiety and health complaints). The following questions were asked:

1. Does reactivity influence adaptation to a new workplace?
2. Does values-motives coherence at work influence adaptation to a new workplace, and are the dependencies modified by reactivity?

### 2. Reactivity and Adaptation to a New Workplace

The data collected by Klein (1986) indicate that from infancy to young adulthood temperament is very important in adaptation to changes of life situations. It determines the level of activity, emotions, and social relations as well as satisfaction with being in the altered situation. The data allow to expect that temperament influences adaptation to work in the new place in adulthood, too.

According to Eliasz (1985) and Strelau (1983), reactivity is a basic dimension of temperament. It determines the intensity of reactions and delimits the need for stimulation. People who are high in reactivity (HR) need a smaller amount of stimulation to perform best in comparison to those who are low in reactivity (LR). Moreover, Eliasz (1985) claims that HR people have a narrower range of optimum stimulation and their reactions to deviations from the optimal level are stronger than those of the LRs. Furthermore, findings presented by Strelau (1983, 1988) indicate that HR people are more susceptible and less resistant to stress than LR people. Data from students (Zalewska, 1995) indicate that the HRs in comparison to the LRs pay higher costs as a result of overstimulation: They complain more about health, they more often feel depressing, but rarely facilitating anxiety. Data from bank workers related to their health also confirm that the HRs complain more about somatic symptoms and their average mood in different situations is worse than the mood of the LRs, although no differences in satisfaction with life have been found (Zalewska, 1996b).
Considering theoretical and empirical premises, I suppose that adaptation to a new workplace is connected with more frequent and more intensive stress among the HRs than among LR workers. As a consequence, the former manifest worse direct and indirect indicators of adaptation connected with costs resulting from overstimulation.

**Hypothesis 1.** HR workers in comparison to the LR ones evince worse indices of adaptation to a new workplace that are connected with costs: They show worse average mood at work and feel depressing anxiety more often, but they rarely experience facilitating anxiety.

It is evidenced that people dissatisfied with work, in comparison with those satisfied with it, complain more about health and experience more frequently depressing anxiety, but rarely facilitating anxiety (Zalewska, 1996a). It is possible that stress resulting from overstimulation decreases satisfaction with work. Since HR people are more often in danger of overstimulation during the process of adaptation to a new workplace, I expect the following regularity:

**Hypothesis 2.** HR workers at a new workplace are less satisfied with work than LR ones.

### 3. VALUES-MOTIVES COHERENCE AT WORK AND ADAPTATION TO A NEW WORKPLACE

The second independent complex variable considered in the current analysis is values-motives coherence at work. I assume (Zalewska, 1996b) that values and motives fulfil the same functions, especially induce importance and valences (subjective values) on events and objects (Feather, 1990): motives at the affective level and values at the cognitive one, and they can be inconsistent. Thus, the importance or valence of the same object may be different on cognitive and affective levels. Values-motives coherence at work denotes a level of consistency between the importance of work values and the importance of proper motives actualized at work. High coherence is understood as a balance of the importance of the two kinds of variables. Low coherence appears in two forms: Motives are more important than values or, inversely, values are more important than motives. There is quite a common opinion that high coherence facilitates people’s well-being and effective activity. On the contrary, low coherence probably leads to inner conflicts, hesitations and, thus, makes people’s activity and achieving goals at work difficult. However, it seems reasonable to assume that an impact of the values-motives coherence on adaptation depends on the kind of the values and motives that are considered, the type of inconsistency between the importance of values and motives as well as the kind of adaptation indices. The aim of this analysis has been to explore these connections and because there are no data yet, no hypotheses have been proposed with regard to this problem.

It can be also assumed that low coherence increases stimulation, which is already high during the process of adaptation to a new workplace. Then, it probably contributes to making adaptation more difficult than it is for people with high
values-motives coherence at work. Considering this, one can also expect that coherence is a more important factor for the HRs than for LR workers in a new workplace.

Hypothesis 3. Coherence differentiates indices of adaptation to a new workplace more strongly among the HRs than among LR workers.

There are data confirming dependencies between somatic complaints and reactivity (Zalewska, 1996b). However, in order to assess the impact of the values-motives coherence at work and the interactions between the coherence and reactivity on them, health complaints will be considered here as an index of adaptation as well.

4. METHOD

4.1. Instruments and Indices

The Strelau Temperament Inventory—Revised (Strelau, Angleitner, Bantelman, & Ruch, 1990), now called Pavlovian Temperament Survey, was used to assess reactivity: the higher score in “Excitation Scale,” the lower reactivity. People high (HR), moderate (MR), and low (LR) in reactivity have been distinguished on the basis of the mean and half of the standard deviation.

The Work Description Inventory (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) allows to estimate satisfaction with life, with different aspects of work, and with work generally, on 7-point scales. A score in the last scale is the index of job satisfaction.

The Somatic Symptom List (Cofta, 1992) comprises 16 somatic symptoms that are most frequently cited in literature and in everyday life situations (e.g., headache, stomach disorders, backache). Each symptom is provided with two 5-point scales (0–4), which measure the symptom’s frequency and intensity, respectively. Total score has been the index of somatic complaints.

Two scales, F+ and F−, of the Achievement Motivation Test (Hermans, Petermann, & Zielinski, 1978) were used to estimate facilitating and depressing anxiety (the higher the scores, the higher the level of variables).

Importance of values was assessed with the Orientation to Work Values Inventory, developed on the basis of the Work Values Inventory by Super (Seifert & Bergmann, 1983). It comprises 16 values (compared to Super’s technique one value is modified: “orientation on a leisure time” instead of “style of life”; there is also one additional value: “possibility of promotion”). Each value is described by three 5-point scales: from 5 (very important) to 1 (not important). On the basis of factor analyses, six dimensions have been revealed:

1. External Values (prestige, management, income, possibility of promotion, work assurance),
2. Autonomy and Stimulation (autonomy, intellectual stimulation, creativity),
3. Social Relations and Work Conditions,
4. Altruism,
5. Aesthetics,
6. Achievements.
The total score for every dimension divided by the number of scales is the index of its importance (1–5).

The Time Sampling Diary (TSD) by Brandstaetter (1989) allows to diagnose the emotional state in everyday life situations, actualized motives, and abilities that are perceived necessary in those situations. Participants answered 7 questions at randomly selected moments (different for each day and person), on average, 4 times per day for 40 days during 6 months (about 160 measurements per person). The questions were (Brandstaetter, 1991, p. 178):
1. Is my mood at the moment rather negative, indifferent, or rather positive?
2. How can I describe my momentary mood state using one or two adjectives?
3. Why do I feel as I have indicated?
4. Where am I?
5. What am I doing?
6. Who else is present?
7. To what extent do I feel free to choose to stay in or leave my present activity?

Answers to the first question coded from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive), and answers to the fourth question coded as “a workplace,” were the basis for estimating the average mood at work. Each person made up a code of attributions of emotional states according to a list of 26 motives causing positive mood and a similar list of 26 motives causing negative emotions. From among 26 motives, I selected six categories that are contextually similar to the six dimensions of values: 1. Control (social, e.g., power, prestige; behavioral, e.g., organizing time; cognitive, e.g., understanding things), 2. Autonomy and Stimulation (activity, sentience, autonomy), 3. Affiliation (affiliation, sex, love), 4. Nurturance, 5. Aesthetics, 6. Achievements (achievements, new tasks).

The importance of a given category of motives at work was estimated by the relative frequency of actualization of this category of motives regarding the sum of all actualized motives at work. The indices of values-motives coherence at work were calculated as the differences between standardized scores of proper values dimension and the importance of the motives’ category. Seven indices were calculated: one for each category (C1 to C6) and an index of general coherence (GC, the mean of all 6 categories). Scores within half of the standard deviation (SD) from “zero” indicate high coherence. Positive scores above 1/2 SD indicate that values are more important than motives. Negative scores below 1/2 SD denote a reverse regularity: Motives are more important than values.

4.2. Participants and Procedure

Sixty bank workers (aged 20–55) who—when research started—had worked at their posts for 1–3 months were involved. For each of them, the research lasted half a year. Questionnaires were administered between succeeding phases of completing TSD.
5. RESULTS

In order to gain information about dependencies between adaptation to a new workplace and independent variables or their interactions, ANOVA analyses were performed. Their results are presented in Figures 1–4 and Tables 1–2.

![Figure 1. Average mood at work related to reactivity and general values-motives coherence at work.](image)

**TABLE 1. Average Mood at the Workplace in Relation to Reactivity (R) and General Values-Motives Coherence at Work (GC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.402</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC × R</td>
<td>3.411</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>4.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>9.056</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.318</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/V &lt; M</td>
<td>2.066</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td>5.58**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/V = M</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.510</td>
<td>2.75*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/V &gt; M</td>
<td>2.142</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.071</td>
<td>5.79***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC/HR</td>
<td>2.096</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>5.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC/MR</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC/LR</td>
<td>1.707</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>4.61*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01; V < M—motives are more important than values (low coherence), V = M—values are as important as motives (high coherence), V > M—values are more important than motives (low coherence), HR—high-reactive, MR—moderate-reactive, LR—low-reactive people.*
Figure 2. Two kinds of anxiety related to reactivity and Achievements values-motives coherence at work.

Figure 3. Satisfaction with work related to values-motives coherence at work: results of one-way ANOVA.
The results of one-way ANOVA indicate that
1. Reactivity differentiates average mood at work ($F = 2.78$, $p < .07$), depressing anxiety ($F = 13.01$, $p < .0001$), and facilitating anxiety ($F = 13.91$, $p < .0001$) as
well as somatic complaints \( F = 2.40, \ p = .10 \). The higher reactivity, the worse the mood and facilitating anxiety, but the higher the depressing anxiety and the more complaints.

2. Achievement values-motives coherence at work (C6) differentiates satisfaction with work \( F = 2.78, \ p < .07 \), facilitating anxiety \( F = 4.10, \ p < .02 \), and depressing anxiety \( F = 2.74, \ p < .07 \). High coherence (balance of the importance of values and motives) is linked with the highest work satisfaction, the highest facilitating, and the lowest depressing anxiety.

3. External Values-Control Motives coherence at work (C1) influences only job satisfaction \( F = 3.43, \ p < .04 \): The higher the index of coherence, the lower satisfaction with work. This means that low coherence is associated with extreme scores in satisfaction: When motives are more important than values, satisfaction is high, but when values are more important than motives, it is low.

Results of the two-factor ANOVA supply us with some additional information about the impact of interactions between the variables on:

1. Average mood at work: It depends on interactions between reactivity and general values-motives coherence at work. Among the HRs, high coherence is associated with the best well-being. Among the LRs, the best mood occurs when values are more important than motives actualized at work but the worst mood is associated with high coherence.

2. Health complaints: They depend on interactions between reactivity and Altruism values-motives coherence at work. The HR workers for whom Altruism values are more important than Nurturance motives complain the most about their health—more than other HR people and more than the LRs with the same kind of incoherence, for whom the index of somatic complaints is the lowest.

6. DISCUSSION

The data fully confirm hypothesis H1, which says that HR workers, in comparison to the LR ones, manifest worse cost-related indices of adaptation to a new workplace. This is so because they experience more frequent and intensive stress associated with the process of adaptation.

Hypothesis H2, which says that the HRs are less satisfied with work during the process of adaptation to a new workplace than LR workers, is not confirmed.

Satisfaction with work does not depend on reactivity but it is differentiated only by values-motives coherence at work. This means that like satisfaction with life (Zalewska, 1996b), job satisfaction depends much more on contextual variables than on the frequency and intensity of stress, which is considered as a nonspecific reaction resulting from disorders on the energetic level of behavior.

However, only some kinds of values-motives coherence at work are important for adaptation to a new workplace. The Achievement values-motives coherence seems to be the most important one. It influences the direct (satisfaction with work) and indirect indices of adaptation (two kinds of anxiety). It is only for this type of coherence that the results are congruent with the common opinion: High coherence is
associated with the optimal indices of adaptation. Another regularity is observed for job satisfaction with regard to External Values-Control Motives coherence: During the process of adaptation, people are satisfied with work the most when they value the various ways they can control the environment at work on the affective level higher than on the cognitive one.

The interactions’ effects are congruent with the expectation that reactivity modifies the role of the values-motives coherence for adaptation to a new workplace. The data partly confirm hypothesis H3, which says that the coherence differentiates adaptation more strongly among the HRs than among the LRs: The hypothesized regularity has been found true only for health complaints regarding the Altruism values-motives coherence. Probably HR workers for whom Altruism values are more important than Nurturance motives concentrate on their own condition and demand help from others but miss the needs of others. It is difficult to infer about causality: Both directions seem possible. The interactions' effects mainly inform us that for the LRs, low coherence (values are more important than motives), both general and with regard to Altruism, is favourable to adaptation. For the HRs it makes adaptation difficult: High coherence is favourable to them. Among MR workers, the level of coherence in these kinds of values and motives has no impact on the indices of adaptation to a new workplace.

The regularities detected for adaptation to a new workplace seem specific and different from the ones observed for subjective indices of health (Zalewska, 1996b). If the values-motives relations at work, advantageous for adaptation, are generalized to all other situations, they are unimportant (Achievement values-motives coherence) or even unfavourable for feelings of health (External Values-Control Motives incoherence). And, conversely, general values-motives relations that are important or advantageous for feelings of health prove to be unimportant (low general cohesion) and unfavourable (high External Values-Control Motives cohesion) for adaptation to a new workplace, if they occur in the same form at work. These results lead us to general conclusions that need further research:

1. Work setting, especially connected with a new workplace, is so different from other settings that it demands from people specific values-motives relations to adapt.
2. People do not need a high values-motives coherence, but they need flexible relations in the valuation system-between the importance of values and the importance of motives-different in various settings or for different aspects of functioning.
3. Favourable level of values-motives coherence or its flexibility is likely to depend on reactivity.

The received effects also lead us to more specific reflections. They inform us that among the HRs mostly high values-motives coherence (general, in Achievements, in Altruism) favours the best indices of adaptation to a new workplace. This fact is likely to be connected with the smallest additional internal stimulation (inner conflicts, hesitations). The only exception to the rule is the dominance of the Control Motives over the External Values, which generally favours the highest job satisfaction. Among the LRs, various kinds of values-motives relations (high coherence and both forms
of low coherence) are favourable for different aspects of adaptation. So, at a new workplace the LRs need more flexibility in their valuation system than the HRs. Moreover, the results regarding the indices of adaptation connected with costs indicate indirectly that the LRs are more effective in this respect than the HRs, although they do not differ in satisfaction with work. The issues mean that the same level of job satisfaction during the process of adaptation to a new workplace is associated with more frequent stress and greater costs among HR workers than among the LRs. It is likely that in the first period of adaptation, positive social and individual meaning of the facts of "being promoted" or "getting a job" allows the HRs to ignore the significance of the costs they bear. However, over a long period of time this kind of situation creates for the HRs a danger of a decrease in job satisfaction as well (Zalewska, 1996a). Probably some actions can help them to improve the adaptation process and prevent further bad effects. First of all, they need some knowledge about stress, its consequences, and styles of coping with it as related to reactivity, as well as coping with stress and anti-stress training to practise skills. It seems that they also need some changes in their valuation system, which would lead to increasing flexibility in various settings and a higher level of values-motives coherence at work.

The findings also indicate that adaptation to a new workplace is a complex process and its different aspects have various conditions. That leads us to the question which aspects provide best information about the process of adaptation. This question becomes very important from the practical point of view when we want to change some factors to improve this process. The answer is imperative for deciding about changes, especially when the same factor facilitates one aspect of adaptation, but hinders another, which is possible, although it does not occur in this study in a direct way.

REFERENCES


