

A background image featuring a blue microscope on the left side, with its eyepiece and objective lenses visible. The rest of the background is a warm orange color with a faint, repeating pattern of the letters 'LL' in a light blue or white color.

Workplaces as key transformative learning spaces for facing socioeconomic crisis in post-Soviet contexts: The case of Latvia

Elina Maslo, Genoveva Leví Orta, Aija Persevica,
Alena Nikolaeva, Manuel Joaquín Fernández González

University of Latvia,
Institute of Pedagogical Sciences

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the joint study

*Workplace Learning in Europe
and Asia*

**RESEARCH NETWORK 2 OF THE
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH HUB
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING OF THE
ASIA-EUROPE MEETING
(ASEM-LLL)**





UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

Scientific Institute of Pedagogy of Faculty of
Education, Psychology and Art

**WORKPLACE LEARNING IN EUROPE
AND ASIA:**

**NATIONAL SURVEY REPORT OF
LATVIA**

ASEM-LLL RESEARCH NETWORK 2

SURVEY 2009-2010

REPORT OF LATVIA OF JOINT STUDY BY

UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

PPMF PZI – INSTITUTE OF PEDAGOGY OF FACULTY OF
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND ART OF UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

DS HCALQ- DOCTORAL SCHOOL 'HUMAN CAPACITY AND LIFE-
WIDE LEARNING IN DIVERSE INCLUSIVE CONTEXTS'

August 31, 2011

This study addresses the new workplace learning strategies used to face socioeconomic crisis in the Latvian post-Soviet context.



Methodology

integrated mix-method, combining quantitative and qualitative methods

- the conclusions of the quantitative study, based on the analysis of the questionnaires with SPSS, were confronted with the answers to the open ended questions, searching for similarities within diversity.
- AQUAD software was used in the qualitative analysis.



Questionnaire

For data collection a standardised questionnaire was used, which was jointly developed by ASEM-LLL Research Network 2 members. The aim of this questionnaire was to get a better idea of people's perceptions of workplace learning and the opportunities and restrictions one might experience when integrating learning in everyday working life.



The information contained in the questionnaire referred to the following aspects:

- employee profile: gender, age, education, background, income;
- basic information about working situation, including type of workplace, period of employment, number of employees, correspondence between education/qualification and job, and an estimation of current work situation;
- information about workplace learning, including employee's opinion on workplace learning, opportunities to learn new things at work, encouragement for the employee to learn at work;
- provision and take-up, including opportunities offered by the employer, employee's participation in education and training courses, work-related course required by the employer and chosen by the employee, relevant factors for their decision; and
- effects on people: own benefits, knowledge and skills, and quality of life.



2 different professions

educators and employees of
information technology services

the total number of participants - 487



The paper

is a synthesis of the main findings from the National Latvian Survey on Workplace learning.



The paper

- describes the theoretical and legal frameworks of the study,
- presents the methodology used,
- presents the analysis of collected data,
- **discusses the results,**
- present the conclusions,
- **gives some recommendations to improve workplace learning in the current Latvian context**



RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What do people understand to be "voluntary" and "compulsory" with respect to workplace learning?



RQ 1: aspects

(1) the employees' motivations for engaging in these two kinds of workplace learning, (2) the content and the organisation of voluntary and compulsory workplace learning, and (3) the main concerns of employers and employees when thinking about workplace learning.



Table 1

Understanding of “voluntary” and “compulsory” in workplace learning

Aspects of WPL understanding	Voluntary WPL is related to ...	Compulsory WPL is connected with ...
Motivations for WPL	<i>Involvement for personal development</i>	<i>Avoiding losing work or leading to promotion</i>
Content of WPL	<i>Learning based on mutual support and exchanges of ideas with colleagues, for example during spontaneous meetings</i>	<i>The acquisition of new/difficult skills (technological or organisational)</i>
Organisation of WPL	<i>Self-organised learning (for example, independent usage of manuals during or after working hours)</i>	<i>Attending workshops or seminars (preferably short: one or two days)</i>
The view of employers on WPL ...	<p><i>Supporting their employees in WPL</i></p> <p><i>Concern about relevance for the organisation if expensive or during working hours</i></p>	<i>Seeking improvement in organisational efficiency</i>
The view of employees on WPL ...	<i>Preference for self-decided workplace learning</i>	<i>Positive perception</i>

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What does the company/organisation offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning?



Relationship of “formal” and “non-formal” with “voluntary” or “compulsory” workplace learning

FORMAL

Specially organised
Unimportant whether the participants receive diplomas, certificates, qualifications, or not

VOLUNTARY

General education courses related to the job and/or personal growth
Free choice of time and place

COMPULSORY

Strictly related to the job
During working hours

NON-FORMAL

Not specially organised
Takes place at workplace.
Interchange of work experiences and practice

Outside working hours
Spontaneous meetings
Independent usage of manuals and materials (e-learning)

Improving job-related knowledge and basic skills
Short workshops or seminars
Not lasting longer than one day

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What is “voluntary” and “compulsory” in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning offered by company/organisation?



RESEARCH QUESTION 4

How do objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken?



Positive subjective perceptions

- Need to learn

- To keep updated

- To do the work correctly

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

- Avoiding losing job
- Possibilities of promotion

- Opportunity to propose ideas about improving their work
- Individual exchanges of knowledge and experience

- Support from other employees

Desired objective opportunities

Figure 1: Impact of opportunities and perceptions on employees' motivation

Positive subjective perceptions

- Enjoying learning

- Workplace is a good place to learn
- Getting useful knowledge for work

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

- Possibility of improving the organisation of the work

- Integration of knowledge and skills needed for work
- Knowing what happens in the world

Desired objective opportunities

Figure 2: Impact of opportunities and perceptions on employees' satisfaction

Conclusion 1:

We found empirical evidence for a change in employees' attitudes regarding their workplace learning: subjective perceptions are now more important in the motivation of employees



Conclusion 2:

There is a gap between the objective opportunities offered by employers and the desires of employees regarding workplace learning



Conclusion 3:

Employees need strong personal and social recognition to get involved in workplace learning activities



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Question 1

What do people understand to be "voluntary" and "compulsory" with respect to workplace learning?

Question 2

What does the company/organisation offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning?

Question 3

What is "voluntary" and "compulsory" in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning offered by company/organisation?

Question 4

How do objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken?

About the study:

This study addresses the new workplace learning strategies used to face socioeconomic crisis in the Latvian post-Soviet context. After decades of strong centralisation – when employers and employees were not expected to take any initiative regarding their professional work, especially in the public sector – in the last 20 years, with the regaining of the independence of their country, they have been forced to do so in order to adapt to the changing and challenging economic situation. In Latvia, workplaces exist not simply in companies and public services, but equally across a wide range of organisational and social contexts, including in the third sector (non-profit-making non-governmental organisations, voluntary work, etc.) and in diverse forms of self-employment, which sometimes is carried out under irregular and precarious conditions. These contexts offer very different kinds of learning opportunities. Therefore, the "learning continuum" between formal, non-formal and informal learning is a key framework for understanding how opportunities for professional and personal development at work are distributed, structured, experienced and used nowadays in Latvia.

Methodology:

In this study an integrated mix-method was used, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The design used in this study was a sequential mix-design: the conclusions of the quantitative study, based on the analysis of the questionnaires with SPSS, were confronted with the answers to the open ended questions, searching for similarities within diversity. AQUAD software was used in the qualitative analysis.

For data collection a standardised questionnaire was used, which was jointly developed by ASEM-LLL Research Network 2 members. The aim of this questionnaire was to get a better idea of people's perceptions of workplace learning and the opportunities and restrictions one might experience when integrating learning in everyday working life. The information contained in the questionnaire referred to the following aspects: employee profile: gender, age, education, background, income; basic information about working situation, including type of workplace, period of employment, number of employees, correspondence between education/qualification and job, and an estimation of current work situation; information about workplace learning, including employee's opinion on workplace learning, opportunities to learn new things at work, encouragement for the employee to learn at work; provision and take-up, including opportunities offered by the employer, employee's participation in education and training courses, work-related course required by the employer and chosen by the employee, relevant factors for their decision; and effects on people: own benefits, knowledge and skills, and quality of life.

Two different professions from the public sector were chosen: educators, and employees of information technology services. The first group was selected with consideration to the population of educators in different areas and using the official statistics taken from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia (2008/09). A total of 365 subjects acted as a representative sample of the higher education sector. The second sample was taken from the population related to information technology services using the statistics provided by the Central Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia (2008/09). The number of subjects in this group was 122. The total number of participants in this sample was 487.

Aspect of WPL under standing	Voluntary WPL is related to ...	Compulsory WPL is connected with ...
Motivations for WPL	Involvement for personal development	Avoiding losing work or leading to promotion
Content of WPL	Learning based on mutual support and exchanges of ideas with colleagues, for example during spontaneous meetings	The acquisition of new/difficult skills (technological or organisational)
Organisation of WPL	Self-organised learning (for example, independent usage of manuals during or after working hours)	Attending workshops or seminars (generally short: one or two days)
The view of employers on WPL	Supporting their employees in WPL	Seeking improvement in organisational efficiency
The view of employees on WPL	Concerns about relevance for the organisation if expensive or during working hours	Preference for self-decided workplace learning
		Positive perception

	FORMAL	VOLUNTARY	COMPULSORY
NON-FORMAL	Specially organized Unimportant whether the participants receive diplomas, certificates, qualifications, or not	General education courses related to the job and/or personal growth Free choice of time and place	Strictly related to the job During working hours
	Not specially organized Takes place at workplace Interchange of work experiences and practice	Outside working hours Spontaneous meetings Independent usage of manuals and materials (re-learning)	Improving job-related knowledge and basic skills Short workshops or seminars Not lasting longer than one day



Figure 1: Impact of opportunities and perceptions on employees' motivation

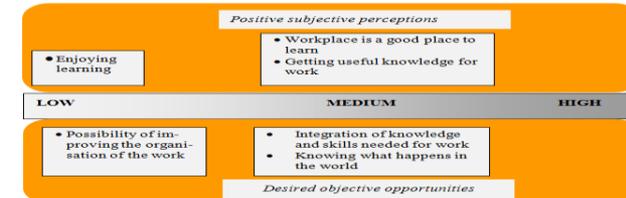


Figure 2: Impact of opportunities and perceptions on employees' satisfaction

The results of the National Survey of Latvia, conducted within the framework of the joint study Workplace Learning in Europe and Asia



Fostering the development of workplaces as transformative learning spaces – based on working with a personally significant content, personal motivation and responsibility, reflecting about one's own learning process, using one's own experiences. Experiencing positive emotions and having the opportunity to work with others is a key issue in the development of personal well-being and economic stability in Latvian society.

Thank you

