European Research Studies Journal
Volume XX, Issue 2B, 2017

pp. 411 - 428

Survey of Public Awareness of Services Provided by Employment Centers

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Abstract:
Background: *The relevance of the study stems from the necessity to inform people about the work of the employment centers regarding the implementation of an effective state policy on the labor market. Thus, the article aims to identify the most and least popular public services provided by employment centers. This method of research on public awareness can be applied to study other public services in any city or region.*
Methodology: *The basic approach used in the following study involved polling people on the streets of Moscow, the method of comparative and correlation analysis and statistical data analysis. Respondents were selected according to the requirements of the study, which enabled a detailed consideration of the awareness of people in Moscow regarding the public services provided by employment centers/local branches, as well as people's opinion on the quality of services provided by employment centers/local branches people applied to. Choice of the region – the city of Moscow – was made due to the highest concentration of people from different social strata, as well as representatives of different cultures. Findings: The paper presents the findings of the comprehensive study conducted during 2016 that allowed distinguishing three levels of demand for public services:*

- Level 1 including the most popular public service – "Assistance in job search";
- Level 2 which embraces services providing information on the labor market;
- Level 3 covering public services that make it easier for people to find work.

Little demand for public services "Vocational training of the unemployed" and "Career advice" prevents increasing the labor mobility in the times of crisis.
The material of the article can be used in developing measures to improve the availability of information on job offers and the variety of services, as well as when preparing documents for the study of public awareness on operation of various government agencies.

Keywords*: social management, employment, public services, employment center, level of satisfaction, survey.*

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1. Introduction

Employment management is a form of social management, linked with socio-economic, political and spiritual life of the society. People's poor awareness of how employment services function hinders the effective implementation of the state policies on the labor market.

Moreover, the lack of information on employment services does not allow vulnerable groups to fully use the services provided by the state. Social justice, enshrined by the state, manifests itself through the quality of interaction between the state and the society (Morev and Kaminsky, 2015; Topcu, 2015; Sultanova and Chechina, 2016).

2. Methodology

In this research we have polled people from all districts of Moscow meeting the requirements of the study. The sample was made up of 255 people, with uniform distribution by sex, age and educational level. The survey was carried out in accordance with the administrative districts of Moscow. The average number of citizens surveyed in each district was 23 people.

Active part of the working population was chosen as respondents and quotas were distributed as follows:

Surveyed women aged 16-54 were uniformly distributed within the following categories:

- 16-29 years of age (a younger group) – 60 people;
- 30-54 years of age (a senior group) – 75 people.

Surveyed men aged 16-59 were uniformly distributed within the following categories:

- 16-29 years of age (a younger group) – 60 people;
- 30-59 years of age (a senior group) – 60 people.

Other requirements to the respondents (Maslennikov and Antonov, 2008; Guskova *et al.*, 2016) referred to their educational level, according to which over 60% of the respondents had a university degree or secondary vocational education, and not less than 30% –general secondary education, primary and basic general education.

Professional interviewers uploaded the filled questionnaires to an internet portal where the data were processed using the SPSS software. Research tools included interview forms, cards used with the forms, instructions to interviewers.

The data were processed according to the following parameters:

1. The distribution of respondents by sex.

2. The distribution of respondents by the level of education.
3. The distribution of respondents by age within the age intervals.
4. The distribution of respondents by their social status.
5. The average age of respondents who applied to employment centers/their local branches.
6. The number of people that obtained information on the services of employment centers/their local branches.
7. Reasons for not using employment services.
8. The average number of services the respondents got information about.
9. Rating of services provided by the employment center/local branch, the respondents are potentially interested in.
10. The correlation coefficient between the respondents' gender and how actively they use the services provided by the employment centers/their local branches.
11. The correlation coefficient between the respondents' level of education and how actively they use the services provided by the employment centers/their local branches.
12. The correlation coefficient between the respondents' age and how actively they use the services provided by the employment centers/their local branches.
13. The correlation coefficient between the respondents' social status and how actively they use the services provided by the employment centers/their local branches.

3. Findings

3.1. Analysis of the current situation in the Labor market of Moscow with focus on employment services

Assessment of the public awareness in the field of employment services was carried out in 2016. According to Russian surveys, in the previous years there had been changes in the relationship between employers and workers, accompanied by the rising number of dismissals, increasing workload on those keeping their job, wages dropping along with rising prices, more frequent cases of infringing the workers' rights (Tikhonova, 2015; Akopova and Przhedetskaya, 2016).

Over the first nine months of 2015, employment centers were approached by 163,227 people, which exceed the number for the same period in 2014 by 37,382 people of which 53% were women (52% in the same period in 2014) (Table 1).

Table 1. *The number of people who applied for employment services over 9 months of 2014 and first 9 months of 2015*[6]

The number of people applying for employment services	2014				2015			
	Applied for assistance		Found a job		Applied for assistance		Found a job	
	total	of which women	total	of which women	total	of which women	total	of which women
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	125845	65336	84023	41963	163227	86458	114701	57510
byage - 14-15	1977	811	933	404	1135	443	706	281
- 16-17	3619	1340	2167	769	3202	1195	2241	821
- 18-24	22558	10214	17127	7727	24957	11176	20160	8808
- 25-29	12019	6365	8363	4226	16521	8440	11962	5779
- 30-44	39962	22983	28319	15633	54554	30738	38963	21116
- 45-49	11071	6508	7371	4216	14840	8758	10167	5793
- 50-54	17217	10208	11019	5976	23083	14075	14847	8090
- 55-59	11824	4458	6685	2249	15215	5358	10212	3730
- 60 and older	5598	2449	2039	763	9720	6275	5443	3092

Over the first nine months of 2015, employment centers assisted 114,701 people in finding a job, which is 30,687 people less than for the same period in 2014. In this total number of the employed, women make up 50% (there have been no changes compared to the same period of 2014) (Kalinina, 2015).

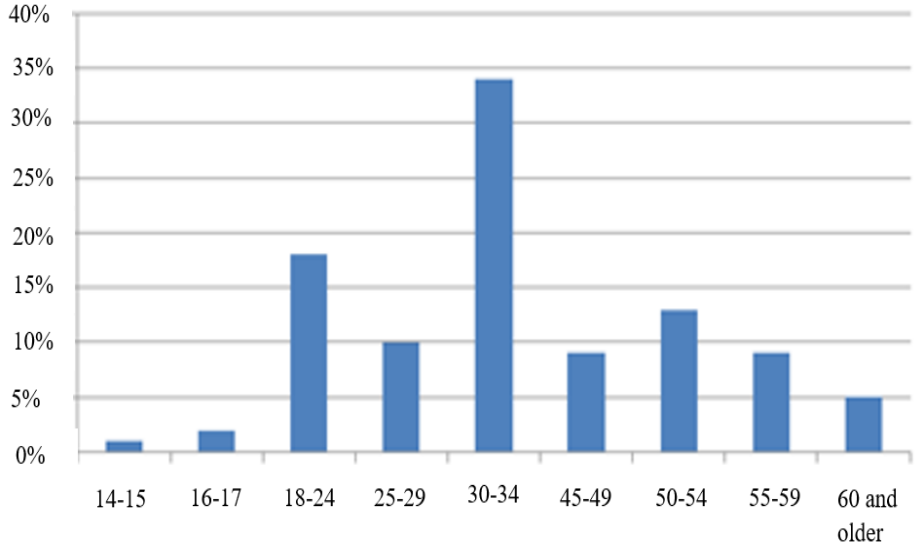
Along with the growing number of appeals to employment centers in 2015 that amounted to 23%, the number of people employed declined by 27%. It should be noted that most of those applying to get assistance in finding employment over the first 9 months of 2015 belonged to the age group of 30-44 that totaled to 54,554 people, followed by the age group of 18-24 a total of 24,957 people.

The smallest number of applications was received from the age group of 14-15 which amounted to 1,135 people and from 16-17 year-old, a total of 3,202 people. A

[6] Operational records of Moscow Department of Labor and Employment

significant number of requests were received from people of 50-54 years of age, a total of 23,083 people as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Distribution of the people who found a job with the assistance of an employment center by01 October, 2015, by age*



Among those who found a job with the assistance of employment centers, 34% of people aged30-44 years, 18% were at the aged group of 18 to 24. The smallest number of those who found a job was among the minors: 1% – young people aged 14-15, 2% – young people aged 16-17. In addition to that, a small percentage of this number, namely 5%, was people over 60.

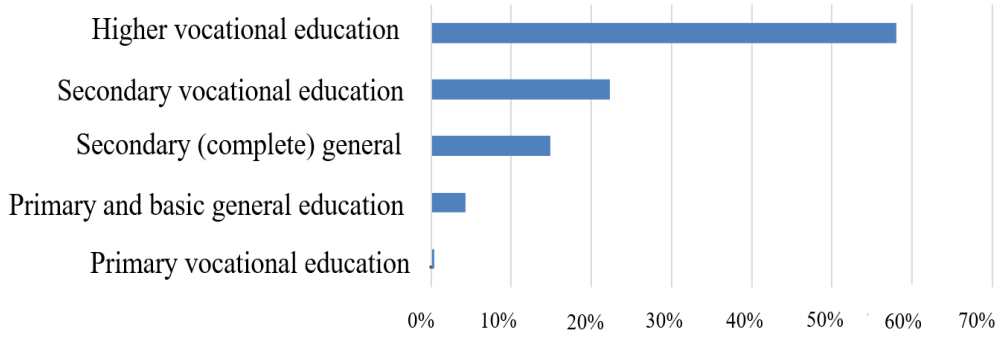
In 2015 the total number of the unemployed was 36,008 people; 57% of which were women (20,687), which is 36% more than in the same period of 2014. At the same time 23,188 people were registered as unemployed of whom 13,464 were women.
The lowest number of unemployed people is registered in the Southern Administrative District (3%) and in Zelenograd Administrative District (4%). Besides, there is a small percentage of the unemployed in the Central Administrative District, about 5%.

Among the total number of the registered unemployed there are 956 people with disabilities, including persons with level one disability – 17 people, level two– 455, and level three – 484 people. The distribution of the unemployed according to the level of education in 2015 shows that more than half of the unemployed (52%) have higher education, 31% have secondary vocational education, 12% have secondary (complete) general education, 4% have basic general education and 1% have basic vocational education.

3.2. The survey results

Survey on the people's awareness of the operation of employment centers was held in 11 districts in the city of Moscow. The average number of those polled in each district amounted to 23 people. People with different levels of education took part in the study. The distribution of respondents by level of education was organized according to the following categories: higher education, secondary vocational education, secondary (complete) general education, primary and basic general education, primary vocational education (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Distribution of respondents by educational level*



We found out that in a random sample the largest number of respondents have higher education, which amounts to 60% of the total number and secondary vocational education of about 22%. The smallest number of respondents had primary and basic education (4%), and there wasn't a single person with basic vocational education. The random sample also included respondents, which had previously used public employment services; they amounted to 30% of the total number of the respondents.

When the survey was held, the largest number of the respondents had a job (62%); students represented another large group of the respondents (16%). The unemployed, both not registered and registered in the employment centers, amounted to 9% and 4% of those polled, respectively. The sample excluded pensioners, since they belong to another age group while public employment services are targeted at other age groups.

3.3. The respondents' awareness of the services provided by employment centers

To assess the public awareness of the existing employment centers and services provided by them, we used the following question: "Do you know there is such state agency as an employment center"? (Kalinina and Maslennikov, 2015). All of the respondents were aware there are such employment services, while only 28% of people had undertaken a targeted search for information about the work of employment centers.

Information on employment services is provided by the website of the Department of Labor and Employment of Moscow, job fairs, information stands in the prefectures and other organizations, recommendations of relatives / friends / acquaintances, recommendations of the personnel department at work, the media and others.

Having ranked the ways to get information about employment services, we can conclude that the most common way to obtain informing is from the media – 19% of the responses, the next in rank is the website of Moscow Department of Labor and Employment – 16%, attending job fairs and recommendations from previous jobs – 10% and 9% respectively, information stands in prefectures and other organizations are used by no more than 5% of the respondents.

Despite all this, the most popular way to learn about employment services is through the recommendation of relatives, friends and acquaintances, which amounted to 32%. It should be noted that most of the respondents did not mention the opportunity to obtain information from any source, saying that they have known about the employment center for a long time and understand its purpose (58%).

Spreading information on job fairs is most effectively carried out in the Northern Administrative District, which is 48%, and the North-West – 22%. There is a similar pattern of providing information through the stands in the prefectures, among which are the Northern District, accounting for 30%, and the North-West Administrative District, which accounts to 9% of the respondents. People do not get any information from the stands in the institutions in the following districts: North-East, West, South-West, Center, Troitskiy/Novomoskovsk.

Recommendations from relatives are a more familiar way of obtaining information for people living in the North-West and North-East Administrative Districts, with 61% and 48%, respectively. Respondents in the Eastern and South-West Administrative Districts mentioned it is least likely to get a recommendation from relatives and friends, respectively, 9% and 4% of the respondents. These results may indirectly characterize the work of the employment centers in various districts on creating their public image.

Respondents searching for additional information on the services of employment centers were asked to assess how easy it was to receive the information concerning the center work from various sources. In general, the assessment was positive: 49% of the respondents consider to be “rather good”, 41% estimated the availability of information as “good”; negative answers (“bad” or “rather bad”) were given by 7% of the people.

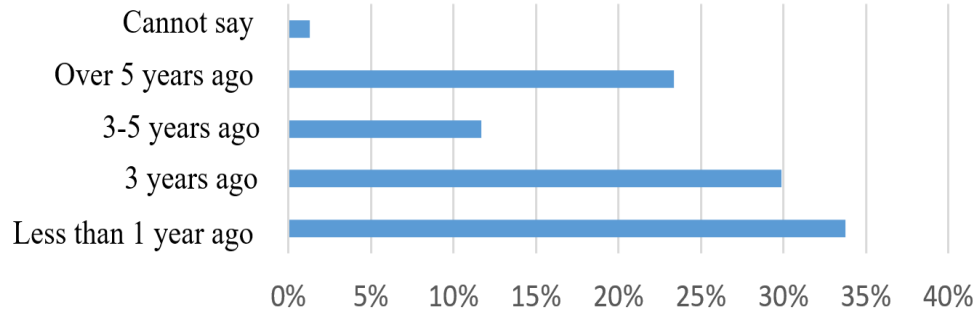
The average assessment of information availability is 1.65 out of 4 points. The highest estimate of the awareness of the employment centers’ work can be found among the respondents from the North-East Administrative District, it was 3 points

out of 4, and the lowest figure was 1 point out of 4, given by the respondents in the South-East Administrative District. People, evaluating the information availability on the employment center services as "bad" or "rather bad" gave the following reasons: "it is difficult to find information", "the information was incomplete", "I could not get answers to all my questions".

3.4. Analysis of the appeals to employment centers

People who do not apply to employment services explain it as unnecessary (37%). It is understandable that one does not apply for employment services in case of current employment (35%). A small number of respondents named inefficiency of the employment center operation as the reason why they do not apply for employment services (3%). The respondents from the North-West, South-West, South-East, Zelenograd and Western Administrative Districts most often described its work as "ineffective". As for the last time of applying to an employment center, in most cases it is no more than 1 year (34%), while 30% of the respondents applied for public services over 3 years ago (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *The last time the respondents applied for public services*

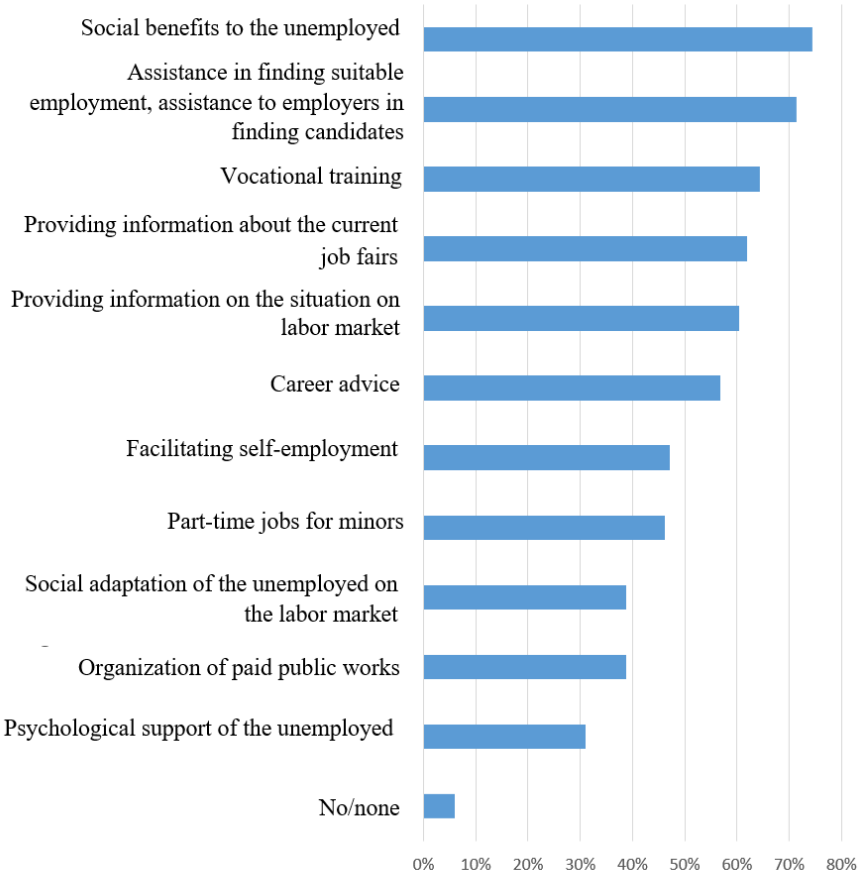


Research on the quality of public employment services showed that the awareness of all kinds of public services is the most important indicator (Figure 4). Respondents recognized best the service "Social benefits to the unemployed"; it was named by 75% of people, 71% of the respondents was familiar with the service "Assistance in finding suitable employment, assistance to employers in finding candidates".

"Vocational training of the unemployed" and "Providing information about the current job fairs" was also familiar to the respondents: these services were named by 64% and 62% of people polled, respectively.

The least-known public services are "Psychological support of the unemployed", "Organization of paid public works", 31% and 39%, respectively. Among the respondents there were those who could not name any services provided by employment centers, this number estimating 6%.

Figure 4. *Awareness of public services types provided by employment centers*

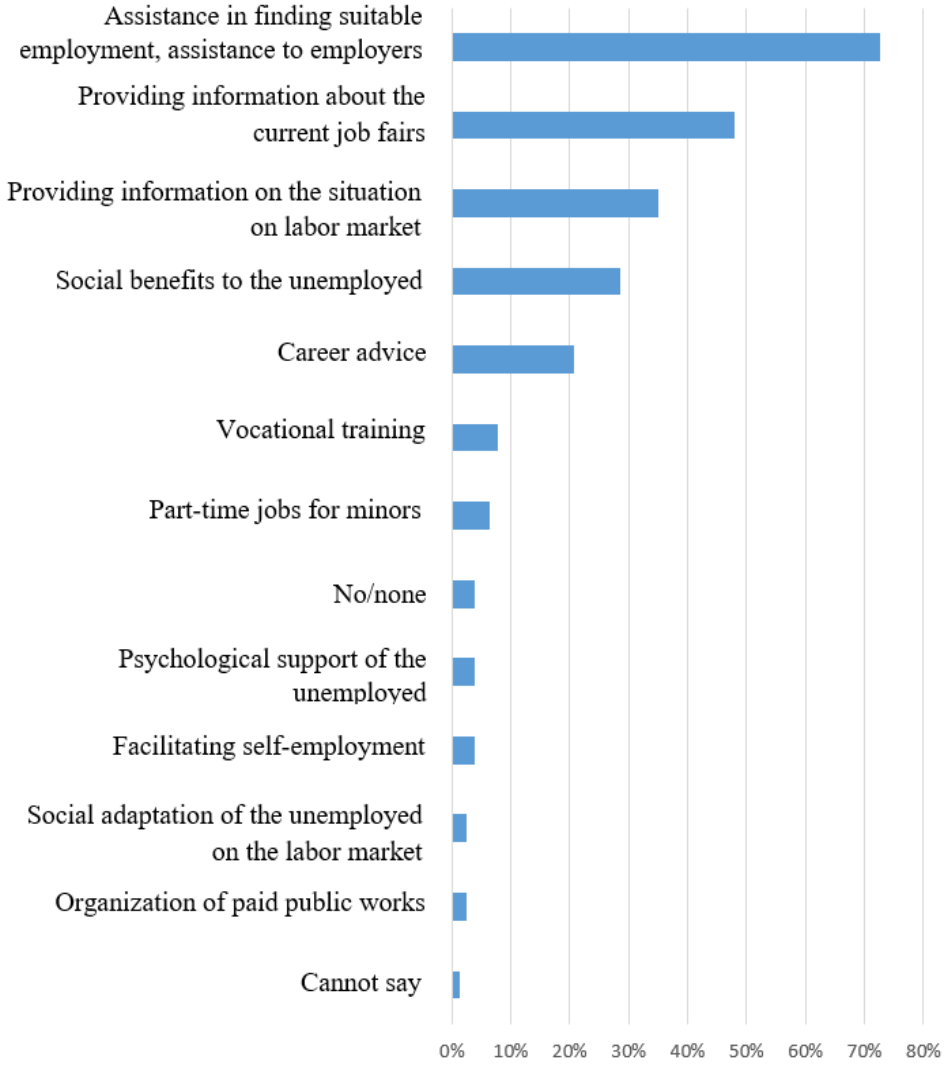


3.5. The demand for public services

To study the demand for public services provided by the employment centers, we asked the following question: “What services have you ever used?” (Figure 5). Anticipation of expectations of those applying for public services enables the employment center to provide these services more efficiently.

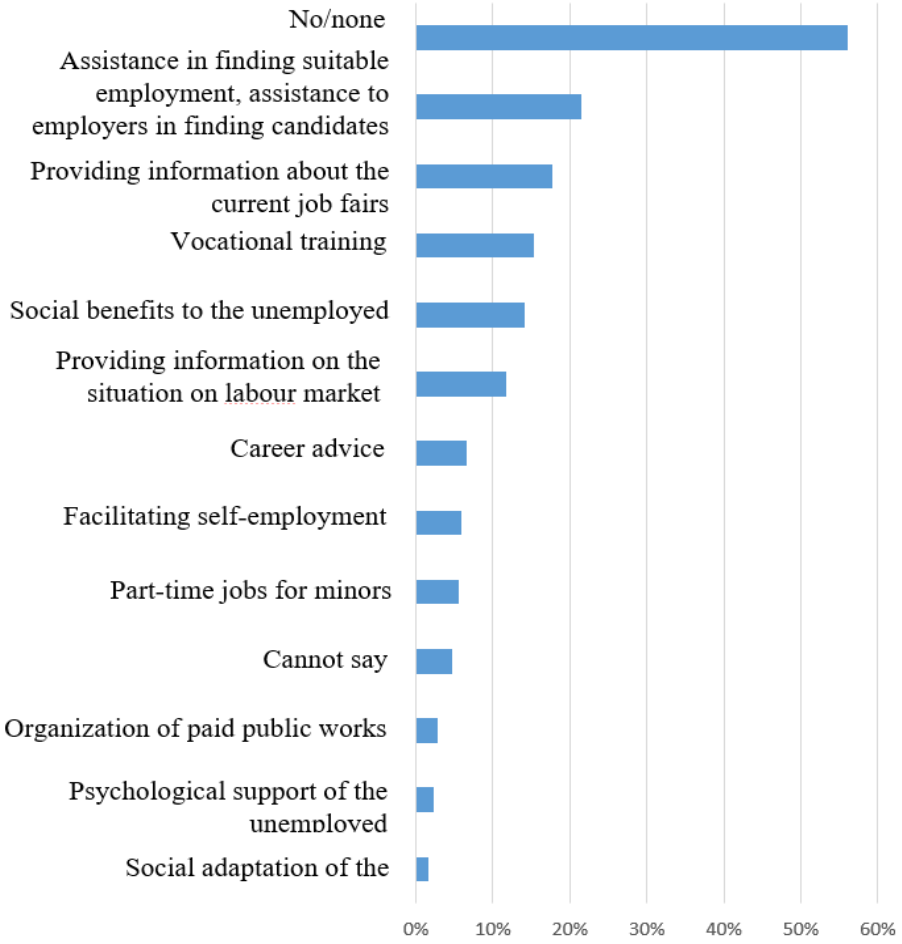
The survey results (Figure 6) show that the most popular service the respondents were going to use was “Assistance in job search”, with the least popular “Social adaptation”.

Figure 5. *Types of public services, used by the respondents*



The structure of public services the respondents were planning to receive remains practically unchanged. Most respondents in the near future are not planning to use any public services. At the same time, the answers to the question: "Are you planning to apply to an employment center in the next 6 months?" allowed us to identify the time period within which public services are demanded. For instance, only 19% of the respondents are going to use these services within next 6 months. The smallest part of the respondents was interested in public services "Provision of temporary employment" (40%), "Psychological support of the unemployed" (39%), "Social adaptation" (38%). The ratio of public services demanded previously and those that respondents were planning to obtain suggests there are no changes in the public services structure (Figure 7).

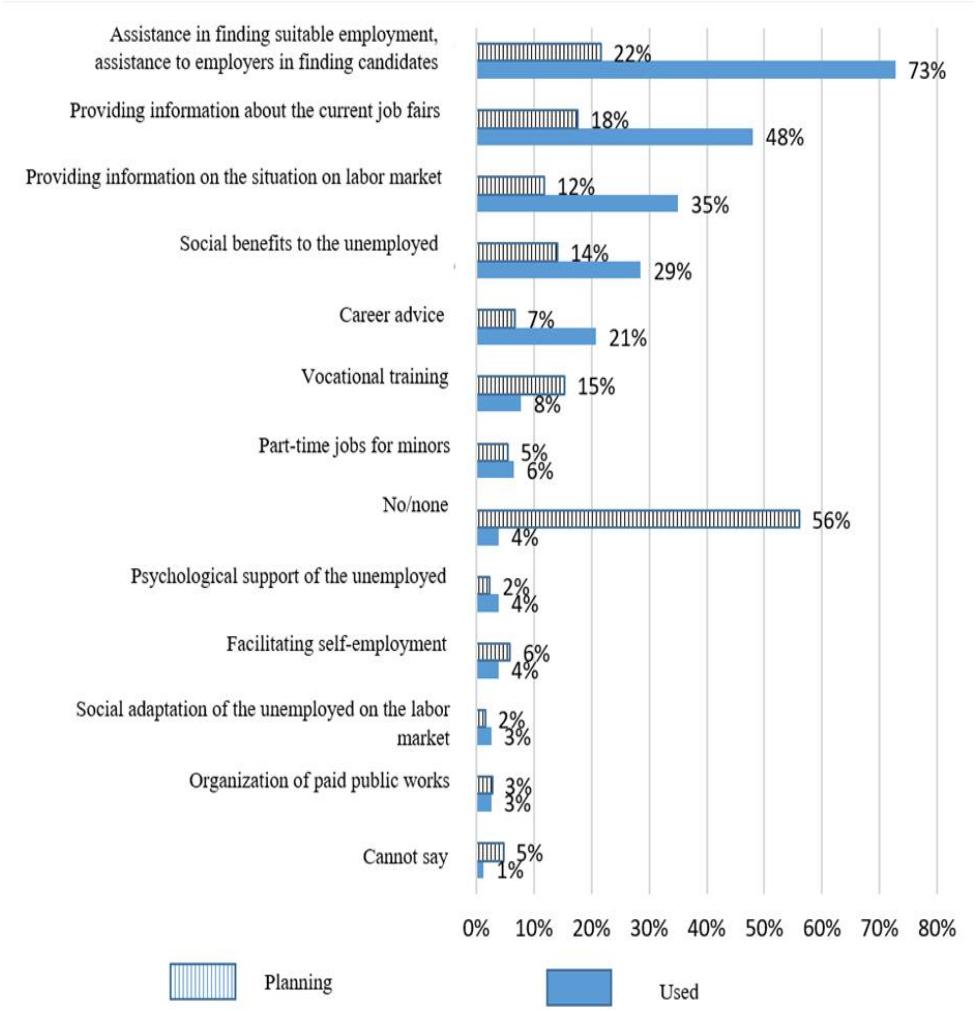
Figure 6. *Public services the respondents were planning to receive*



3.6. Analysis of the employment centers location

Despite the fact that the proximity to home is not a significant criterion for providing information on employment services, the question “Do you know where your local employment center is?” allowed us to evaluate how important the territorial accessibility of public services is for applicants. The results of the survey show that 67% of the respondents know the location of the employment center in their area, while 33% of people do not have such information. It should be noted that 93% of the respondents consider this location convenient, while only 7% say the opposite. The analysis of the responses to the question “How long does it take you to get from home to the employment center?” allowed us to identify the reasons for negative assessments of the center location. In Moscow for most respondents (79%) it takes about 30 min to get to the employment center, 1 hour – 14% of the respondents, more than 1 hour – only 4%.

Figure 7. *The ratio of public services people previously used and are planning to receive*



3.7. Assessment of satisfaction with public services

In order to study the quality of public employment services we assessed people's satisfaction as service receivers according to their answers to the question "Have you found suitable job offers in the employment center?". The analysis of the responses shows that 63% of people did not find jobs that would suit their qualifications. The satisfaction of those using public services correlates with the question "Have you found offers that meet your financial needs and expectations in the employment center?". Most responses imply that these offers could meet their financial expectations, since 58% of respondents gave a positive answer and only 23% of people answered negatively.

3.8. Evaluation of the indicators impact for those using public services

In order to increase the level of satisfaction of public service users, in the framework of this analytical study we selected some indicators that can measure the loyalty to the employment center (Maslennikov, 2012).

1. Availability of information on job offers and other employment services.
2. The quality of information and career advice during a personal visit to the center.
3. The quality of information and advice by phone.
4. Queue management.
5. Working hours of the employment center.
6. Friendly and professional staff.
7. Compliance with the terms of the service.
8. Accessibility of the center in terms of location and infrastructure.
9. Ability to compete with commercial employment agencies.
10. Providing free services.

According to the respondents' answers, the average value of how important the indicator "Availability of information about employment opportunities and other services" is 4.38 points out of 5. The answer "very important" was given by 57% of people, "absolutely unimportant" – 2%.

The average value of how important the indicator "Quality of providing information and advice during a personal visit to the center" is 4.56 points out of 5. The answer "very important" was reported by 69% of the respondents, as "absolutely unimportant"– by 2% of people.

The average value of how important the indicator "The quality of information and advice by phone" is 4.07 points out of 5. "Very important" estimates 48%, "absolutely unimportant"–by 5% of the respondents. The average value of how important the indicator "Queue management" is 4.4 out of 5 points. The answer "very important" was given by 56% of people, "absolutely unimportant"– by1%.
The average value of the indicator "Working hours of the employment center" is 4.29 points out of 5. The answer "very important" was given by49% of people, "absolutely unimportant"– by1%.

According to the respondents, the average value of the indicator "Friendly and professional staff providing the service" is 4.56 points out of 5. The answer "very important" was reported by 67% of the respondents, "absolutely unimportant" –by 1% of people. The average value of the indicator "Compliance with the terms of the service" is 4.57 points out of 5. "Very important" was reported by 69% of the respondents, "absolutely unimportant" –by 1% of people.

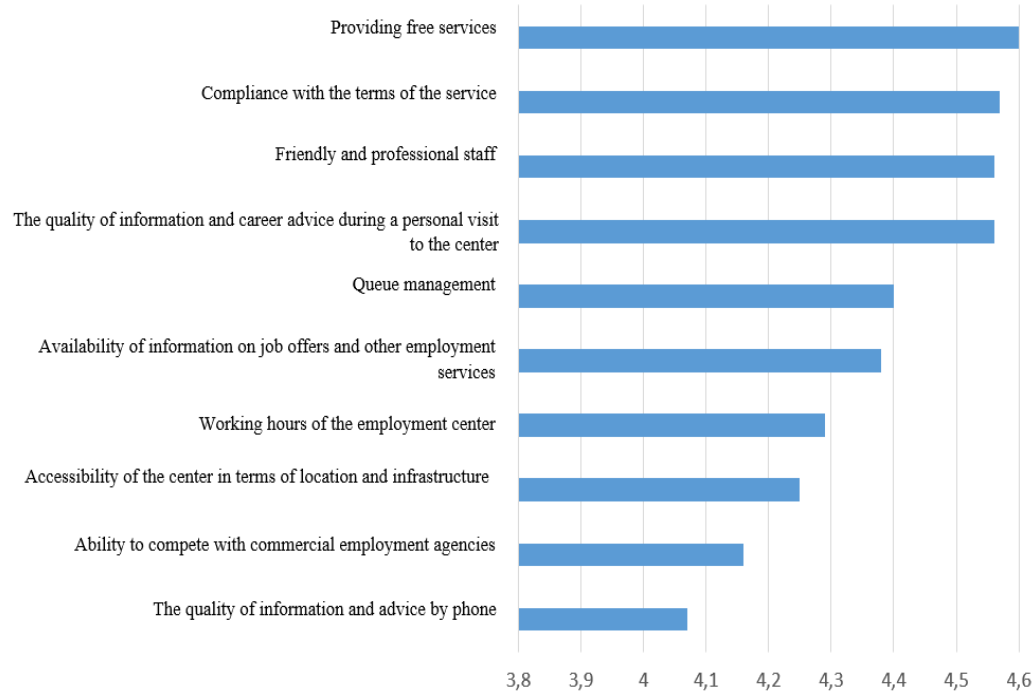
The average value of the indicator "Accessibility of the center in terms of location and infrastructure" is 4.25 points out of 5. "Very important" was reported by 51% of the respondents (Rating of ***the answers "very important" when evaluating the satisfaction of people applying for public services***), "absolutely unimportant"– by 1% of people.

The average value of the indicator "Ability to compete with commercial employment agencies" is 4.16 points out of 5. "Very important" was reported by 47% of the respondents, "absolutely unimportant"– by 2% of people. The average value of the indicator "Providing free services" is 4.6 points out of 5. The answer "Very important" was reported by 74% of the respondents, "absolutely unimportant" –by 1% of people.

3.9. Rating of the answers "very important" when evaluating the satisfaction of people applying for public services. The quality of information and advice by phone

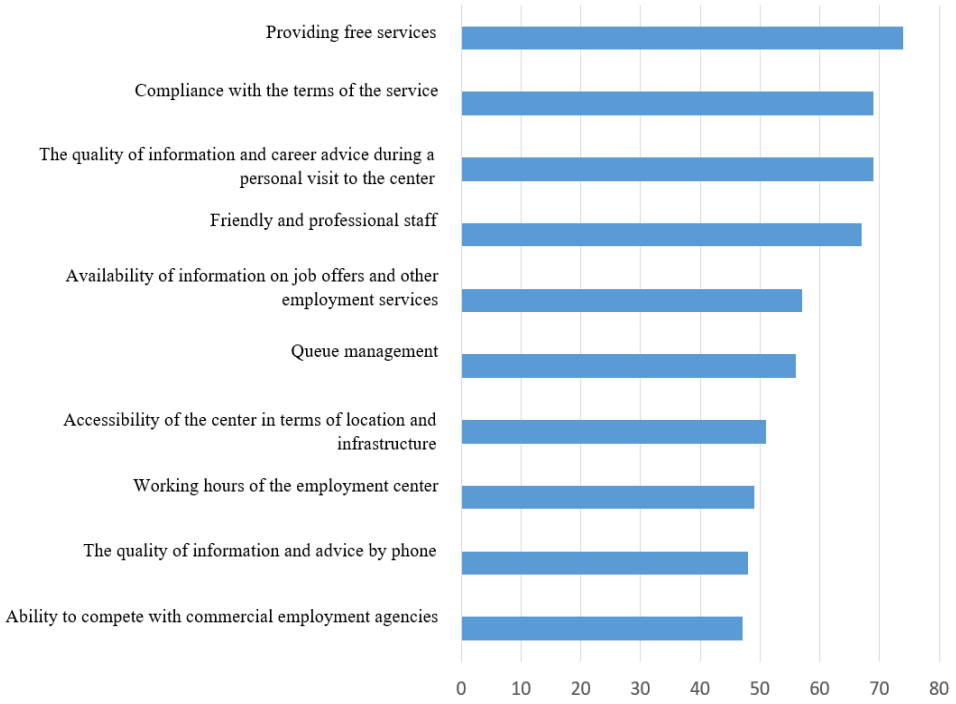
The ranking of the answer "very important" (Figure 8) confirms the result obtained when evaluating the parameters. "Providing free services" (4.6 of 5), "Compliance with the terms of the service" (4.57 out of 5) and "The quality of information" (4.56 out of 5) are important aspects in providing public services.

Figure 8. *The ranking of the answer "very important"*



Analysis of the indicators that determine the satisfaction of public services users allowed us to identify the most important of them (Figure 9).

Figure 9. *Rating of the average values of indicators when assessing the public services by their recipients*



According to the ranking of the response "It does not matter" as shown in Figure 10, the most insignificant parameter is the question: "The quality of information and advice by phone" (5 out of 5). Most likely this is due to the fact that the center staff interacts with applicants face-to-face, while communication by phone is seen as another aspect of personal interaction.

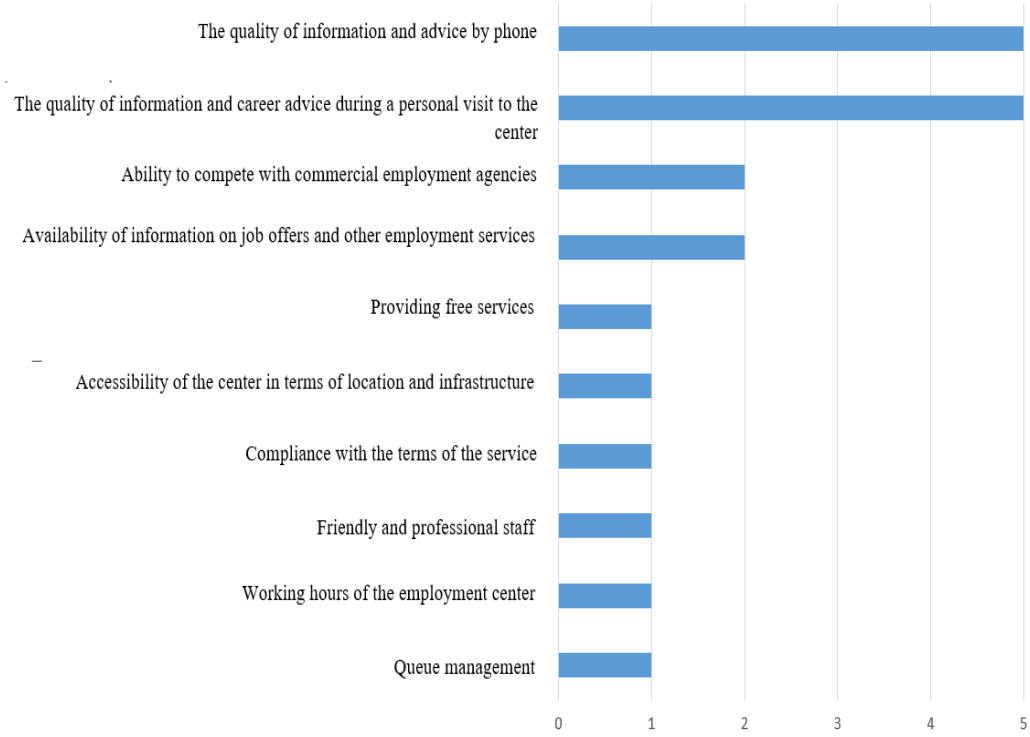
Conclusion

Having studied the public awareness of employment services, we have arrived at the following conclusions on the ways to improve the quality of public employment services.

First of all, it is necessary to increase the availability of the information on the work of employment centers. The availability of information may be increased by the following: improving the organization of the official website of the Employment Department that would enable a quick search of the required information by people; unification of information at the stands in employment centers, and other organizations attended by applicants. It is necessary to consider the viability of

installing these stands in the prefectures, while providing such information in the Multi-Service Centers could be more efficient.

Figure 10. *Rating of the answer "Absolutely unimportant" when assessing the satisfaction of public services users*



It should be mentioned that public works are among the least recognizable services (Maslennikov, 2012), which definitely affects the efficiency of these activities. In times of economic crisis and loss of jobs, also resulting from ongoing job cuts, one should pay particular attention to the creation of temporary jobs and public works that can act as a tool to support unemployed people.

The survey allowed us to identify three levels of demand for public services.

Level 1: The most popular public service which is "assistance in job search"; 73% of the people surveyed has used it.

Level 2: Services that give information about the situation on the labor market include "Providing information on current job fairs" (47%), "Providing information on the situation on the labor market" (35%).

Level 3: Public services that help people search a job more efficiently. These include the “Career Advice” (21%), “Vocational training” (8%), “Psychological support of the unemployed” (4%).

The fact that the third level of demand for public services includes vocational training of the unemployed and career advice should cause concern by the Department of Labor and Employment of Moscow. It is these activities that enable to increase labor mobility, especially in times of crisis, providing real assistance to people in finding employment.

Familiarizing people with the benefits of public services is one of the basic requirements in the employment center specialists' regulations. Therefore, it is necessary to further examine the organization of employment services in accordance with the administrative regulations.

Conflict of interest. The authors acknowledge that the data do not contain any conflict of interest.

Acknowledgement. The study was conducted with support of the Department of Labor and Employment of Moscow[7].

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