Russian Labour Market Outlook

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Abstract. The article analyses the major trends on the Russian labour market today and in the short-term. In order to assess the situation on the labour market, the article analyses the results of the research conducted by the authors together with the recruitment agency Hays in Russia. The competences and professions that will be needed in the future have been reviewed, the paths to success for the modern market actors are analysed, as well as the issues associated with the changing mode of operation and factors that are going to directly impact this transformation.

1. General tendencies in the labour market
Research of the labour market is a pertinent and important subject for both elements of the labour market, that is potential employees and employers. The outcomes of the research allow to answer the questions, in particular the ones regarding what the potential employees and employers want. The today's market actors say that the market shows positive trends. We cannot but agree with the opinion of Gleb Lebedev, Research Director in HeadHunter, that the labour market is a reflection of trends and expectations in the economy rather than of the real economic situation, and its fluctuations show how businessmen and employers see their future, whether they are ready to find new directions and hire new staff [14]. The number of jobs for young experts is growing in the labour market. Today the labour is gaining momentum without having to face the post-crisis problems. In the years after the crisis employers tried to reduce their risks as much as they could and were not ready to employ staff whose productivity they could not predict. As a result, the unemployment level among professionals younger than 25 years old used to be much higher than among older employees.

Today, employers have realized that, if the labour market itself does not foster professionals, then another salary race is inevitable, as they will have to outbid competitors to hire a good employee [2]. The crises also influenced higher requirements for candidates that were ready to go down a few organizational steps, both in terms of salary and status, in order to get a job.

Let us consider the results of the research of the Russian labour market and its main trends that has been conducted together with the Hays recruiting agency in Russia.

This paper is called "The challenge of labour, and professions of the future". The research is aimed at identifying the future trends in the current activities of the participants in the study and the measures they take to keep up with the changes. The poll was carried out among clients and candidates in Hays in Russia. As a result, 2550 respondents answered questions about the trends on the labour market in the following 10 years.

1.1. Research methodology
The research has been conducted from February to March 2018.

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The information was collected by an internet opinion poll. The respondents were employees of Russian and international companies that operate on the Russian market.

Geographical distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

| % respondents | Geographical region of the respondent                                      |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 67%           | Moscow and the Moscow Region                                              |
| 10%           | Saint Petersburg                                                          |
| 6%            | Central Federal District                                                  |
| 5%            | Privolzhsky Federal District                                               |
| 3%            | Crimea, South Federal District, North Caucasian Federal District           |
| 3%            | Urals Federal District                                                    |
| 3%            | Siberian Federal District                                                  |
| 2%            | North-Western Federal District                                            |
| 1%            | Far Eastern Federal District                                               |

Professional groups of the respondents are shown in Table 2.

| % respondents | Professional groups              |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 37            | Function supervisor              |
| 31            | Expert                           |
| 27            | Manager/team leader              |
| 5             | Director General                 |

The data shows that respondents work in management, e.g. they are experts and CEOs. However, the majority of the participants are represented by mid-level executives.

2. Approaches to understanding the labour market model

Jobs and unemployment, and therefore the labour market operation and its state regulation are studied by almost all scientific schools [4].

The founding fathers of the labor theory of value, Arthur Pigou and Adam Smith, viewed the labour market as an absolutely perfect mechanism that can operate without any interference from the state. In other words, the creators of the labour market theory believed that there was no need for the state to interfere into the operation of the market, as it was self-adjusting and self-regulating [7].

Later, the Keynesians and the Monetarists confronted each other, arguing whether the state was responsible for the regulation of the labour market, or the state's influence on the economy as a whole and the social and labour relations in particular must be out of the question as a matter of principle. The laws of development of the processes in the labour market as a rule were developed on the basis of the operation of the US economy in the middle of the 20th century [16]. We have considered the evolution of approaches to the labour market and factors that cause its changes, and we should say that the laws based on the statistics of the middle of the 20th century for the unemployment in developed economies (the correlation between the unemployment and inflation, average earnings, minimum earnings, labour productivity and GDP) and are actively used by many Russian researchers to analyse the national labour market cannot produce a verified assessment of the labour market in the present day Russia.

Today Russian scientists believe that an adjustment model has developed in the national market that is based on the following interrelated pillars:

– labour legislation of the Russian Federation;
– established minimum earnings;
– small unemployment benefits that show the passive role of the state as a whole and employment services in particular;
– fluctuations of the level of the salary and instruments for its formation [4, 12].

The authors in their report claim that in previous years Russia has had a labour market model that is substantially different from the Western models. The main characteristic trait of the labour market model today, is that the labour market adjusts to the economy fluctuations by changing the cost of labour rather than by transforming the supply and demand. This model creates a high and consistent share of employment and low level of unemployment with insignificant fluctuations of earnings.

This is why the major trends in the Russian labour market is very pertinent, as the results of this research confirm the main difference between the existing Russian labour market that is associated with the remuneration of labour in various industries. The research also helps to better understand other important factors that are taken into account by employers and employees today when acting in the labour market [8]. Moreover, it shows both the main fears and possibilities for the candidates and employees and the requirements for the labour conditions and for the organization as a whole, it also indicates the trends in modern professional interests and creates a basis for the development of methodological and practical recommendations for public authorities that address the issues associated with the regulation of the labour market.

3. Research outcomes

The first question that was posed by the researchers in this area concerned the Russian labour market model and who and how shapes it.

The majority of the respondents (38%) share the opinion that today the labour market model is a result of the joint actions and expectations of the state, the system of vocational training and higher education as well as business actors (employers). As for the business model, the respondents believe that the second place is occupied only by the business community itself. 30% of the respondents feel that the labour market model today is developed by the business only, and only the employers can influence the transformation of the existing model. Further, the votes varied insignificantly (Table 3).

Table 3. Who shapes the model of the Russian labour market in the short-term.

| % respondents | Labour market actors that influence the development of the labour market model the most |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 38            | all the labour market actors                                                       |
| 30            | employers                                                                           |
| 17            | state                                                                               |
| 11            | employees                                                                           |
| 2             | the system of vocational training and higher education                              |
| 2             | political factors                                                                  |

As is shown in Table 3, quite a lot of respondents (17%) believe that the state plays the main role in the creation and transformation of the Russian labour market. Some respondents (11%) say that employees themselves have the real power to change the current trends. If we take into account the fact that the votes given to all the labour market actors also give the state and employees themselves a power to influence the labour market, then we can assume that today the respondents rely more on the known facts and the real-life situation in Russia, that is professionals becoming freelancers and active propaganda and popularization of alternative forms of employment, namely small businesses and self-employment.

The collected data allows us to come to a conclusion that the education system is not accounted for and does not influence the development of the labour market model. The existing system of vocational training relies only on the current needs of the business, and, moreover, is too complex to adjust to the changes quickly. The main task for the education system as an actor in the Russian labour market, is to
adjust itself to the new needs of the business, to develop systems for both training and retraining of employees. It also should ensure a more close connection between education and jobs [5].

The answers to the next question of the research helps to understand how strong the respondents' desire to adjust to future changes is and how well they meet the modern professional standards.

The relevant results are shown in Table 4 (what skills and areas of learning will be in demand in the following 10 years to build a successful career). It must be said that the respondents had an opportunity to choose several options when answering this question.

**Table 4. Skills and development areas necessary to build a successful career in the short-term.**

| % respondents | Necessary skills and areas of learning |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 66            | To improve professionally by becoming a uniquely skilled expert |
| 61            | To embrace new technologies            |
| 56            | To speak several foreign languages     |
| 40            | To be professionally flexible, to be able to learn and change your profession |
| 38            | To be a flexible employee              |
| 35            | To prefer your own professional interests |
| 33            | To have a professional vision of the future |
| 30            | To develop your business skills        |

Today every young person with higher education degree or even degrees becomes a fully competitive candidate and employee. Almost any young person nowadays wants to go up by a career ladder and develop in one or several professional areas. Now the activities of the HR-service in professional development management is not enough to address the issues of professional development of workers. According to the accumulated results, the function of the staff management service in the selection of skills and development trends will be to design trending training development programmes and courses that would help to acquire necessary skills. As for the senior managers, he should give the employee an opportunity to develop the necessary professional and personal competences by working with case files and in real-life situations. Employees themselves realize that they themselves are as responsible for their promotion as other labour market actors. As it is their motivation and effort that determine how they can show their skills, how ready they are to learn something new and take responsibility for unique non-standard tasks. It is the unique professional skills that are viewed by the respondents as the key success factor in the Russian labour market. A company should help its employee to both develop and value his or her professional qualities. Moreover, today more and more companies begin to use the services of recruiting agencies that seek to provide high-quality services as fast as possible.

**Table 5. Factors that determine the fluctuation in the labour market, in the opinion of its actors.**

| % respondents | Factors that determine the fluctuation in the labour market |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 20            | Inevitable in-process response to the changes in the requirements for knowledge and skills in the professional environment |
| 20            | Economic and political situation                          |
| 17            | New hardware and technologies, latest developments        |
| 13            | Higher competitive level in the labour market             |
| 11            | Automation, and, consequently, more machines instead of people |
| 5             | Need for speaking several foreign languages               |
| 4             | A new generation coming to the labour market              |
| 4             | Jobs in the changing environment with a huge masses of data |
| 3             | Older age                                                 |
| 3             | Competitiveness in the market of goods and services       |
The next question in the research concerns global factors that will shape the fluctuations on the labour market for all its actors in the future. Here, as well as in the previous question, you could select several answers; the results are shown in Table 5.

All the factors mentioned by the respondents cannot be controlled by them. They cannot influence these forces and therefore have to adapt. The majority of the respondents said that a changing external environment and the need for working in it today is a prerequisite. This confirms the answers to the previous question, when the majority chose their personal development as a priority. Unstable economic and political situation, sanctions are the factors that have been listed as the most influential.

Less trust between Western investors and the Russian economy that resulted from a tense political atmosphere along with economic sanctions imposed by Europe and the US, makes the life harder for Russian companies.

Significant impact of the sanctions and the political attitude in Western countries towards Russia influence the employment in international companies. Import substitution policy also affected the employment rate. Local offices of Western companies that used to work in many Russian industries now more and more often have to close their companies, and as a result highly-qualified Russian experts, who have worked in those offices for many years, become unemployed. They viewed Western companies as quite reliable, stable, with a transparent payment system and high salary. As for now, national companies cannot provide them with similar jobs that have such working conditions and salaries. Unstable currency exchange rate also affects all the companies operating in the Russian market. As a result, advertisement costs, staff and recruitment rate are going down.

The respondents are also concerned about the automation risks, e.g. they believe they can be substituted by machines, robots and technical equipment. However, this factor is also associated with the transition to the next level of a new technological mode in the economy.

One company can surely put off the transition to new technologies by trying to continue as before, but in the industry as a whole such a transition is inevitable. The transition is also important for the company itself, as it offers new opportunities in terms of expansion and additional revenues. The state does not support companies just so they could pay their employees. For hiring companies, the transition to automation opens up new horizons, as it makes processing and transferring information faster, and that, as a result, makes faster the production and services for the clients. There is a possibility now to change the line personnel quickly, as the automated technologies do not require a long period of adaptation for the newcomers, who from the very start get a mechanism that regulates their work and allows them to fully and quickly become part of the labour process.

We should also say that the development of automated technologies can lead to the extinction of whole industries. Thus, the elimination of resale chains between manufacturers and buyers is the most prominent example [20].

As for speaking several foreign languages, the present-day labour market really requires that of the employees, and there is even such a notion as "foreign language competency" [13].

Employees in the modern Russian labour market that possess such a competence are regarded as second to none (in other words, they compete within their own group), they are not subject to unemployment and can expect to find a stable job under any circumstances. This can be explained by the globalized economy in particular, but also by the drive for inter-cultural engagement in all the areas of the life of the modern society. Such a competence makes an employee indispensable on the cross-cultural level and helps him to go beyond the Russian labour market.

Foreign languages give a person an opportunity to get a job in major international companies and be part of their development.

In various business spheres, in particular in trade and production, certain foreign languages are key for the employees to communicate in. Today the most popular languages are English and other basic European tongues. In the nearest future, according to expert forecasts, the languages of the Middle and Far East will take the lead. In this case, the labour market in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other major Russian cities will need professionals with foreign language competence the most.
The Olympic Games in Sochi have shown the extent to which the multilingual employees were sought after. Professionals with multilingual skills from various fields were needed to support the Games.

The Department of Labour and Employment of the Krasnodar region helped to recruit such staff, and the employment service also quickly responded to the existing need and provided additional linguistic training for catering workers. Thus employment was generated, new jobs created, and that was very important for the regional labour market [3].

A new generation coming to the labour market, the fact pointed out by the respondents, is very interesting from the point of view of the modern situation in the labour market and its possible future trends. To be fair, only 4% of the respondents mentioned it, however, its very existence in the list of the factors is telling, and we should pay attention.

Characteristics of the new generation's behaviour, or of those who was born after 2000, in the labour market has not been studied enough, but even now psychologists point out some traits that only the new generation has:

- they adapt easily to a huge flow of information, they can differentiate and sort and find what they were looking for;
- they are oriented towards a quick result and minimum effort;
- but psychologists also point out their lack of patience and insufficient concentration span.

They also have other benefits in comparison with older generations, in particular, the younger professionals develop quickly and can manage a few things at the same time. Many young people prefer to do things on-line, with the help of communication devices. This means that they are oriented more towards a job with a flexible schedule or, quite often, remote work [18]. In other words, employers face the problem of poor adjustment of graduates to rigid schedule and workplace discipline, and on a greater scale this means that they are less adapted to the economic and social environment as a whole. Many graduates easily move to the so-called "grey economy", and that, certainly, affects the employment rate in the official labour market.

Employers in the labour market should find ways to encourage their interest and engagement of the younger generation in their companies, because as for today it is extremely flexible in terms of changing jobs. Unlike older generations in Russia, they do not feel the responsibility towards their employer [5].

Besides the new generation, the respondents also pointed out the older age of employees as one of the factors that set the trends in the labour market. This factor is associated with the so-called "age discrimination" of the older generation that exists in the national labour market. In 2013 amendments were introduced into the Law "On the employment of the population in the Russian Federation" that banned setting any age limits in the course of recruitment. However, the approved amendments have not solved the problem. Older employees (45 years and older) are the most precarious population group in terms of job cuts and employment in the labour market. More than 80% of the employers agreed that [6].

### Table 6. Answer distribution. "Do you plan to stay in the profession in the next 10 years?"

| I do | I do not |
|------|---------|
| % respondents | answer | % respondents | answer |
| 44 | Yes, I do, but I realize that my functions will change significantly | 11 | I am going to change the profession |
| 39 | I see the trends in my profession and I am going to improve only my professional skills | 5 | I am learning a new profession |
|  |  | 1 | I am going to open my own business |
Moreover, lack of post-graduation education in Russia also contributes to the situation. As knowledge becomes obsolete so fast, many older workers, in particular in engineering, lag behind the modernization of equipment and technologies, and their knowledge is no longer sufficient.

From that point of view, the most interesting question of the research concerns the respondents' opinion on the possibility of changing jobs in particular, and profession as a whole (Table 6).

As the data shows, the majority of the respondents truly want to stay in the profession, but realize the inevitable transformation and are ready to develop to keep up with the times. The transformation of their professional functions is not an obstacle in their path. However, 11% of the respondents fully intend to change their profession, and 5% of them are currently learning a new profession.

Let us consider the steps taken by the contemporary labour market actors in order to prepare for the transformation (Table 7). We should also note that the respondents could select several options.

**Table 7.** The distribution of answers to the question "What steps do you take now to better prepare yourself for the future changes in your profession?".

| % respondents | Alternative steps that the respondents take |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 66            | I study related areas, learn about new trends in other expert areas |
| 64            | I participate in promising complex new projects |
| 62            | I regularly engage in capacity building activities, take training courses |
| 30            | I adopt practices and share my own experience with others, for example with foreign experts |
| 7             | I always consult with an career building expert |

The respondents realize that in the labour market today and in the future what matters is both personal and professional skills and knowledge. They see that the changing labour market will only grow and provide themselves with a launchpad to be ready for the coming change. This is why, along with more professional skills, the respondents try to acquire some practical experience, in particular with foreign partners.

The data shown in Table 8 demonstrates what modern educational methods and technologies the labour market actors prefer today. Here you could also select several answers.

**Table 8.** The distribution of answers to the question "What educational methods and technologies are going to be the most efficient in the Russian labour market in 10 years?"

| % respondents | Alternative steps that the respondents take |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 57            | Online seminars, programmed education, remote education technologies |
| 49            | Mentoring and coaching |
| 44            | Free remote online courses (for example, on an open education platform) |
| 43            | In-house training programmes |
| 40            | Virtual and augmented reality technologies |
| 28            | Gamification |
| 27            | Case files |
| 25            | Networking |
| 17            | Education automation |
| 1             | Traditional education |
| 1             | Self-education and practice |

The respondents answered this question in compliance with the latest trends with only 1% of the respondents voting for the traditional ways of acquiring new knowledge. In the respondents' opinion, remote education and on-site training are the most convenient educational methods and technologies. The respondents believe that despite the total coverage of education and capacity building activities, they must remain professional or aimed at the development of skills and knowledge that can be used on the job. Individual approach to education and its gamification are one of the most important
requirements imposed by professionals for the education system. Individualization and gamification of educational curriculum allows to reduce the duration of capacity building courses by using the approaches that take into account challenges and opportunities in students' professional experience. Today students do not focus on principles and theories, but want to get only the information necessary for their future job, preferably in a very concise form.

The authors have already mentioned the current poor performance of the systems of higher education and vocational training in the labour market. Let us consider the opinion of the respondents on this issue (Table 9).

**Table 9.** The distribution of answers to the question "In your opinion, what education will be valued in Russia in 10 years?"

| % respondents | Respondents' opinions                                  |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 42            | Higher education institutions will not play a significant role in recruitment |
| 24            | Corporate universities will train staff that meet the requirements of the profession |
| 19            | Top 100 International higher education institutions    |
| 15            | Top 10 Russian higher education institutions           |

The Table shows that the respondents are not favourably disposed towards the Russian educational system. One of the major reasons behind the inefficiency of the existing education system in the national labour market is associate with the fact that the needs of the Russian market actors are given the absolute priority [1]. Parents do their best to provide their children with a higher education, and higher education institutions need to find as many students for their commercial places as they can. As a result, graduates cannot find a job in their area of expertise, employers have to retrain such employees to meet their requirements, by creating in-house corporate universities that, as we can see, are going to have a signifigicant role to play in the future.

Not being able to work in his/her own profession contributes to facing challenges in their future search for jobs. Let us consider how the respondents see the changes in the search for a job in the labour market in the short-term (Table 10).

**Table 10.** Distribution of answers to the question "How will the process of searching for a job change in the next 10 years?"

| % respondents | Respondents' opinions |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 71            | it will become more difficult |
| 24            | it will become easier   |
| 4             | it will not change     |
| 1             | other                 |

Expectations about future employment are not great. As the main challenges, the respondents see significant transformation of labour functions that will occur under the influence of the market, a need in new professions that are not taught anywhere, fewer jobs as a result of automation, and population migration. Previous experience can become obsolete, therefore you will have to develop flexibility and adaptiveness as the basic professional qualities.

The respondents also proposed their ideas regarding the possible changes of the working routine due the development of new forms of employment. In particular, the researchers asked the question on the changes that can be introduced into the working hours (Table 11).
Automation and needs of employees will significantly affect the working hours. As the poll shows, many respondents are certain that there will be no working hours in the traditional sense in the future. It is caused by many of the factors that have already been considered by the authors above. For example, the need of the new generation to work where and when it is comfortable for them, the accelerated information exchange and the shift from the need to stay at the working place to the more outcome-oriented approach.

Even the professions themselves will not be the same. What professions are going to appear and be attractive in the next ten years is one of the key questions associated with the fluctuations on the labour market in the short-term. See the expectations of the new professions in the near future in Table 12.

### Table 11. Distribution of the answers to the question "In your opinion, what changes will be introduced into the working hours in the next 10 years?"

| % respondents | Respondents’ opinions |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 53            | working hours will become flexible |
| 48            | there will be no established working hours as new communication and information exchange systems will be used |
| 20            | there will be no significant changes |
| 16            | working hours will become longer as there will be more tasks and responsibilities for an employee |
| 12            | working hours will be reduced as the role of artificial intelligence and automation of many operational processes will become bigger |
| 1             | it depends on the profession |

Today the advent of new professions in the labour market and significant changes in the existing ones is determined by the on-going transformation in all the areas of professional activities. Professions in IT, robotics and bio engineering are the most attractive.

Unfortunately, we must say that today's educational system plays virtually no role in the labour market. Here serious changes are necessary that are associated with the transformation of curricula, active engagement of practicing professionals, capacity building opportunities for professors,
generating students' interest in new knowledge, changing the structure and contents of curricula. It is also essential to develop the post-graduate studies system, to provide on a regular basis real opportunities to develop in any chosen direction. The respondents believe that the possible solution is to create corporate universities that will provide the employees with necessary skills and knowledge.

It is necessary to create and develop information systems in unemployment services both in the regions and in the capital on the basis of constant monitoring of the following parameters: information about the available vacancies, forecasting the future demand for the working force, forecasting the number of graduates of higher education institutions and vocational training organizations, data on the status and development of smaller businesses and self-employment in a region [17].

A new forecasting method must be developed on the federal level to predict the balance of the working force that will become a sound foundation for future needs in staff and ensure efficient distribution of the working force in the country.

As a whole the conducted research clearly shows that at the moment the respondents themselves quite positively assess the current situation, however, they realize that their current professions will change in the future, and are ready to make efforts to self-improve.

The respondents believe that the most important thing that would help our employees to keep and improve their position in the short-term is the development of their unique professional skills, multifunctionality, including multilingual skills that allow to conduct cross-cultural engagement with other actors in the global market.

The new generation of workers should adapt quickly to the social environment and respond to accelerating processes in all the spheres.

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