

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Employment: Human Development Trends

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on almost every aspect of the socio-economic lives of people in many countries around the world. Russia was no exception, where in just 2020-2021. There has been a qualitative transformation of employment, the structure of demand and supply for labor has been deformed, the institutional conditions for hiring personnel have changed, remote work has become widespread, and large-scale government support for employment has increased. Contrary to the forecasts of the famous Russian scientist R. Kapeliushnikov (Kapeliushnikov, 2023) that the highly adaptive Russian labor market model of 2000-2020 will be restored, the opposite conclusion is drawn in the work. It is shown that after the COVID-19 pandemic, a historically low level of unemployment, more than 10% year increase in wages and a decrease in inequality of regional incomes of the employed population are recorded. These three most important trends will be reflected in the value systems of employees, which should be taken into account in corporate programs and regional personnel development strategies. Based on a thorough study of the dynamics of social payments for personnel, qualitative content analysis of a large range of analytical materials and a sociological survey of 231 employees of 39 Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, recommendations were made for the implementation of a proactive employment policy, taking into account the expectations and values of personnel. Key measures include upskilling and retraining, providing greater workplace flexibility, prioritizing decent work and employee well-being, continuously seeking talent and human development. Regional authorities are recommended to stimulate economic growth, increase the share of intellectual labor and corresponding technological modernization; development of human capital by improving the quality of regional education, development of an institute for targeted training of specialists at all levels for effective employment of graduates.

1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on labor markets, leaving millions unemployed. An increase in unemployment, a prolonged decline in the ability to work of people who have suffered from moderate and severe forms of COVID-19, the need for a subsequent period of rehabilitation, a significant decrease in the labor migration flow, increased income inequality, changes in the behavior of personnel as economic agents – all this has led to the need for large-scale government support for the most

vulnerable segments of the population. In 2020, most countries, both developed and developing, carried out additional government spending to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences, and a fairly significant part of it was aimed at implementing social policy measures. In 2020, the share of social spending in relation to GDP on average in OECD countries rose to 23% compared to 19% in 2019. Fiscal consolidation began in 2021–2022, with countries cutting budget spending, returning to pre-pandemic levels. However, to date, expenditures remain above the level of 2019 - the

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share of social expenditures in GDP for 2023 is 21%. Most of the measures directly related to support during the COVID-19 pandemic ended in 2022, but the structure of expenses has changed somewhat - a number of introduced social measures continue to work.

Since the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, fundamentally new conditions have arisen in Russia, primarily due to the new macroeconomic policy of the state aimed at supporting business and employment. The stimulating fiscal policy, which was proposed by most countries in the spring of 2020, played a positive role in economic recovery, maintaining the majority of firms and the level of income of the population. However, as demographic losses grew, mass testing of remote employment modes, rapid changes in types of employment and application of labor, and the formation of an active employment policy, it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to the latest reality in the labor market, and its consequences are not short-term, but long-term character. At the same time, the main adaptation mechanisms for adapting to new working conditions for the most part fit into global trends in the development of labor relations and business processes, which significantly intensified during the pandemic and developed after the end of the acute phases of COVID-19. Perhaps the most important change in the labor market has been the massive spread of remote employment due to the digitalization of business processes in almost all sectors of the economy. In 2022, the analytical company International Data Corporation (IDC) published a study that examines development trends in the global labor market “The IT Labor Shortage: Post-Pandemic Issue or Long-Term Problem?” (<https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=US49093622&pageType=PRINTFRIENDLY>). Analysts note that this area will be significantly impacted by the current macroeconomic environment, the pandemic and the digital transformation of enterprises around the world (Baert S., Lippens L., Moens E., Sterkens P., Weytjens J., 2020; Barrero J. M., Bloom N., Davis S. J., 2020; Bartik A. W., Bertrand M., Cullen Z. B., Glaeser E. L., Luca M., Stanton C., 2022; Campello M., Kankanhalli G., Muthukrishnan P., 2020; Fabeil N.F., Pazim K.H., Langgat J., 2022). Recent Russian works on the labor market focus on the problems of the impact of sanctions on employment (Akhmedov F., 2023; Slatov D., 2022). And only a few authors explore the fundamental impact of COVID-19 on the labor market and the resulting socio-economic consequences (Bylkov V., 2023; Chekmarev O., Ilves A., Konev P., 2023)

The purpose of the work is to explore the main changes in the Russian labor market after the COVID-19 pandemic and develop proposals for a policy for increasing and effectively using Russian human capital.

2 METHODS

To study the dynamics of labor market parameters, the work uses statistical data from Rosstat “Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Russia” (<https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/210/document/13211>), “Labor and Employment in Russia” (<https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/210/document/13210>), and data from our own sociological survey. In the course of the research, a qualitative content analysis of a large range of analytical materials from TAdviser “Main trends in the development of the global HRM market” <https://www.tadviser.ru/index.php>; PWC “Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey” <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/workforce/hopes-and-fears.html>; KPMG “HR actions in a pandemic situation” <https://place.lemma.ru/useful-material/deistviya-hr-v-situacii-pandemii>; International Data Corporation (IDC) “The IT Labor Shortage: Post-Pandemic Issue or Long-Term Problem?” <https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=US49093622&pageType=PRINTFRIENDLY>; McKinsey (MGI Research) “The emerging global labor market” <https://www.mckinsey.com/ru/our-insights/essential-skills-for-the-labor-market-of-the-future-mgi-research>; LinkedIn “Global Talent Trends. Data-driven insights into the changing world of work” <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/global-talent-trends>; Gartner “9-th Future of Work Trends For 2023” <https://www.gartner.com/en/articles/9-future-of-work-trends-for-2023>.

3 RESULTS

According to a study by the consulting company KPMG “HR Actions in a Pandemic Situation” during the pandemic, 59% of Russian companies optimized the work of personnel, 44% switched to a new management model (flexible hours, remote work, online recruitment), and 41% developed plans for automation of personnel management processes after the pandemic (<https://www.vedomosti.ru/management/articles/2020/04/01/826854-kak-pandemiya-rinok-truda>). Note

that remote forms of employment have been used since the early 2010s, however, after the pandemic, remote employment is becoming more widespread, especially in the high-tech sectors of the Russian economy. Thus, in 2023, 40% of the IT sector will be remote work. Such conclusions are contained in a joint study of one of the largest online job search platforms HeadHunter (hh.ru). An increase in the number of such vacancies has been observed since 2021–2022, when their share was 25%. In total, in September 2023, companies posted 76,000 vacancies in IT. In general, according to the state platform Rabota.ru, in Russia more than 50% of companies allow employees to work remotely, and due to the current shortage of personnel, 16% of IT companies and 13% of companies from other segments are ready to attract specialists working from another country (<https://www.vedomosti.ru/technology/articles/2023/10/27/1002810-bolee-treti-vakansii-it-prihoditsya-na-udalenshikov>). Consequently, if during the COVID-19 pandemic remote employment was a forced measure, now it is following global trends in the digital development of the labor market. M.Dudin, S.Shkodinsky and I.Prodchenko studied the impact of economic digitalization processes on modern labor markets and came to the conclusion: the main trends in the development of labor automation not only increase labor efficiency, but also influence the provision of the country's economic sovereignty (Dudin M.N., Shkodinsky S.V., Prodchenko I.A., 2021). At the same time, the state plays a leading role in the digitalization of the economy. During the pandemic, the state and employers have a set of tools that can increase the sustainability of economic development using new forms of employment in the long term.

The head of the Central Bank, Elvira Nabiullina, called the acute shortage of personnel the main problem of the national economy (<https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/12/03/kadrovyy-golod-prinimaet-ugrozhayushchie-masshtaby/>). In our opinion, this is not a problem of crisis stagnation, as it was before, but the problem of "creative destruction" (according to Schumpeter) of a fairly conservative model of the Russian labor market, which should be solved innovatively and effectively. Thus, the pandemic has radically affected the Russian labor market, as a result of which it can be stated that the previous model of the labor market is undergoing a qualitative transformation and a new model of social and labor relations is emerging in Russia. Let us highlight just a few trends that will have a significant impact on the formation of the future model of the Russian labor market.

Firstly, the global talent shortage, which has led to a record drop in unemployment and a significant increase in wages. According to enterprise monitoring conducted by the Central Bank, since the beginning of 2023, industry has experienced the lowest level of personnel in the last 25 years. The shortage of personnel led to record low unemployment, which, according to Rosstat, decreased from 3.9% in September 2022 to 3.1% in September 2023. At the same time, the average accrued nominal salary in Russia in April was 71,204 rubles, which is 13% higher than the same figure in 2022

(https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries). The growth of real wages (adjusted for inflation) reached a record level in fifteen years - more than 10% in annual terms. Individual companies and industries showed even greater growth (<https://www.rbc.ru/economics/02/08/2023/64ca49b39a79470969138f40>). Thus, PJSC Severstal increased the wage fund (payroll) from 54.3 billion in 2020 to 65.4 billion rubles. in 2022, in 2023 it is equal to 72.4 billion rubles, that is, by 33.3% over two years. In the Russian electronics production sector, salaries increased to 30% only in the period 01.01.2023–06.01.2023, while the number of vacancies is growing here. Industry representatives attribute this to a shortage of personnel: according to them, companies are fighting for every employee and in some cases luring workers from other regions, paying for their relocation and rent (<https://www.forbes.ru/tekhnologii/491722-zarplatyna-proizvodstve-elektroniki-v-rossii-vyrosli-na-20-30-za-polgoda>). A similar situation has developed in many sectors of the economy.

The ratio of the number of vacancies to the number of unemployed people, according to the digital platform hh.ru, over the three months of 2023 increased by 14% and amounted to 2.752 in April (<https://stats.hh.ru/>). Due to the high demand for workers in the second quarter, the number of unemployed and idle people stabilized at the minimum values for the year. The number of idle workers in May decreased by 36% compared to the March level, and in June decreased by another 57% from March. Finding and/or replacing personnel becomes even more difficult. At the same time, the priority of the task of attracting and retaining personnel increased by 42% in June 2023 from December 2022

(<https://manpower.ru/media/blog/russian-labor-market-q2-2023.html>). This means that a qualitatively new ratio of employment and wages is actually emerging, which has accelerated Russia's

movement towards decent work indicators (<https://rosstat.gov.ru/sdg/data/goal8>). And this ratio is reversed for the previous model of the Russian labor market.

Secondly, the expansion of remote, flexible, platform forms of employment. In the pre-pandemic model of the labor market, part-time and reduced work hours were determined by the employer's conditions to preserve a job; now companies more often offer various formats of employment: part-time, hybrid schedule, free or remote work according to the requirements of applicants, in addition, companies are expanding age limits and geography of hiring. If we compare 2023 to 2022, then the volume of "flexible vacancies," according to the director of development of the digital platform "Avito Works", increased by 69% (<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5927131>).

The distinctive features of platform employment—flexible hours, frequency of payments for completing various types of tasks, the possibility of cooperation with several platforms, the possibility of receiving additional income in the form of "tips"—undoubtedly have a positive impact on the growth of citizens' well-being. A large number of people (including those who find themselves in difficult life situations) can receive legal income by quickly and without unnecessary formalities registering on one or another digital platform.

Among the main characteristics of platform employment are (The platform economy and precarious work, 2019):

- paid activities organized through an online platform;
- three-way interaction: online platform, client and performer;
- use of an application (technology) belonging to the online platform;
- the goal is to perform specific tasks or solve specific problems;
- work is carried out on a contract basis;
- work is divided into tasks;
- services are available upon request.

Over its more than ten-year history, the platform economy has offered the market many unique business models. This variety of forms creates a high level of uncertainty regarding the activity being performed. To reduce the level of uncertainty, experts formulate typologies of platform employment, which focus on the nature of services and tasks.

Digital platforms are gaining popularity in Russia, as well as around the world, as a means of stimulating economic development, along with the expansion of information technology in many

countries (Baert, S., Lippens, L., Moens, E., Sterkens, P., Weytjens, J., 2020.). Thanks to digital platforms, companies have accelerated their entry into the digital economy, thereby increasing their productivity and expanding market share.

Platform employment, among other things, is a factor in the high market demand for workers in the field of information technology. According to all available estimates, the development of the digital economy and the increasing demand for qualified IT specialists will continue (Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey, actions in a pandemic situation, The IT Labor Shortage: Post-Pandemic Issue or Long-Term Problem, The emerging global labor market, Global Talent Trends. Data-driven insights into the changing world of work, 9-th Future of Work Trends For 2023; How to reset HR and change work forever). This means that companies will be looking for specialists in data analytics, programming, cybersecurity and other related fields.

Platform employment provides new opportunities for economic growth and job creation and has the potential to contribute to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8, which is to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work." for all" (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/ru/economic-growth/>).

Thirdly, the extremely slow smoothing of interregional wage inequality, which helps maintain high interregional migration. It should be noted that the pre-COVID-19 model of the Russian labor market was characterized by high regional differentiation of wages: for example, in 2013, the share of workers with a salary of 100 thousand rubles or more in Russia was only 2.3%, in 2017 – 4.5%, in 2019 – 7.2%, in 2021 – 10.3%, and in 2023 – 17.4% (<https://finexpertiza.ru/press-service/researches/2023/zarplat-ot-100-t-rub/>). The number of employees of large and medium-sized enterprises receiving a monthly salary of 100 thousand rubles. (before income tax) and higher, in 2023 amounted to 4.9 million people (this is approximately one in six), increasing by 72% compared to 2021 (<https://finexpertiza.ru/press-service/researches/2023/zarplat-ot-100-t-rub/>). Such rapid changes affect interregional wage inequality, which still persists. The maximum share of employees with earnings of more than 100 thousand rubles. typical for the following leading regions indicated in Figure 1.

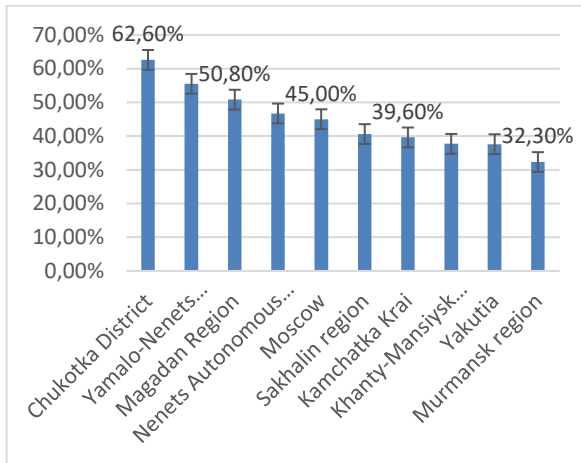


Figure 1: TOP- 10 regions with the largest share of workers with salaries of 100 thousand rubles or more in 2023.

Source: Calculated according to Rosstat Form No. 1 on the distribution of the number of employees of large and medium-sized enterprises by wages.

Salary more than 100 thousand rubles at least every third employee of large and medium-sized enterprises in 10 Russian regions receives a month, at the same time, for most regions, a salary of more than 100 thousand rubles remains extremely rare. As can be seen from Figure 2.

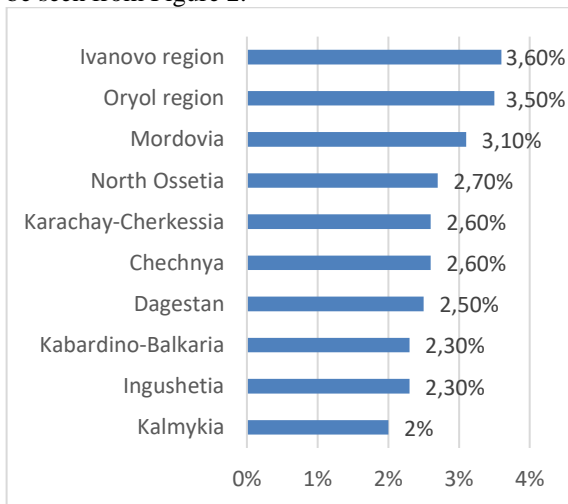


Figure 2: TOP-10 regions with the smallest share of workers with salaries of 100 thousand rubles or more in 2023.

Source: Calculated according to Rosstat Form No. 1 on the distribution of the number of employees of large and medium-sized enterprises by wages.

In the context of federal districts, high salaries are least often found, as can be seen from Table 1, in the

North Caucasus (3.4%) and in the Southern Federal District (6.9%).

Table 1: Number and share of employees with a salary of 100 thousand rubles. in Russian regions in 2023.

Region	Number of employees with a salary of 100 thousand rubles	Share of employees with a salary of 100 thousand rubles
Central Federal District	2 112 383	24,9%
North-Western Federal District	633 411	21,6%
Volga Federal District	416 659	7,9%
Ural federal district	597 388	20,9%
Siberian Federal District	456 911	14,3%
Southern Federal District	171 575	6,9%
Republic of Adygea	2 698	4,4%
Republic of Kalmykia	724	2,0%
Republic of Crimea	13 427	4,7%
Krasnodar region	67 178	7,6%
Astrakhan region	16 377	10,1%
Volgograd region	19 252	5,3%
Rostov region	47 811	7,4%
Sevastopol	4 109	7,2%
North Caucasus Federal District	37 610	3,4%
The Republic of Dagestan	7 097	2,5%
The Republic of Ingushetia	1 135	2,3%
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	2 039	2,3%
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	1 410	2,6%
Republic of North Ossetia-Alania	2 341	2,7%
Chechen Republic	4 812	2,6%
Stavropol region	18 778	5,0%

Source: Calculated according to Rosstat Form No. 1 on the distribution of the number of employees of large and medium-sized enterprises by wages.

According to the HeadHunter service for September 2023, as of September 2023, there is a significant differentiation in the regions in terms of the level of offered salaries. In particular, in 47 out of 89 salary offers are at a level lower than the national average (64,386 rubles). At the same time, the most significant difference is observed in Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia and the Stavropol Territory - there they offer on average 19-23 thousand lower. According to Rosstat, the population with incomes below the poverty line in the second quarter

of 2023 amounted to 15.7 million people (10.8%), compared to the second quarter of 2022, the poverty level decreased by 1.3 percentage points, compared with the second quarter of 2021 – by 1.7 percentage points. At the end of 2022, the overall figure was 9.8% (<https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/313/document/224946>).

Russian companies constantly increased average monthly labor costs, which generally had a positive impact on maintaining the standard of living of the working population in conditions of high financial, economic and socio-demographic turbulence. As can be seen in Figure 3, these costs have been rising steadily since the early 2000s, with only increases occurring in 2019-2021. they increased by 33.5%, or 30,156.7 rubles.

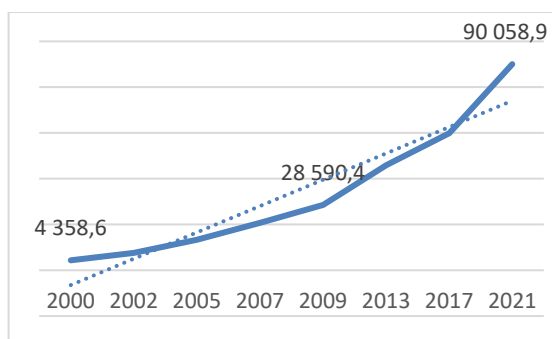


Figure 3: Average monthly labor costs in Russia for organizations (excluding micro-enterprises) of types of economic activity surveyed by Rosstat in 2000-2021, thousand rubles.

Source: Dynamics of the level and structure of labor costs of organizations https://rosstat.gov.ru/labour_costs

Technology is rapidly changing the forms, methods, objects and processes of human work, and this has a significant impact on the development of the workforce. The use of technology leads to increased productivity, efficiency and collaboration, but it also changes the types of skills that are in demand. Therefore, one of the key ways to achieve an organization's competitiveness goals is to develop human resources. Businesses need to invest in new knowledge, skills and abilities of their employees if they want to remain competitive in today's digital landscape. The World Economic Forum estimates that 85 million jobs could be transformed by 2025 due to changes in the division of labor between humans and machines. The effects of these technological changes on the workforce are so non-linear and large that for now we can only predict trends. But even today it is obvious that people, as labor resources, will be one of the most significant drivers of national and

regional development, therefore, in industrialized economies, state and corporate institutions of human-oriented (or human-centered) management are actively developing. As our research shows, Russia is still lagging behind in building similar institutions. This alarming conclusion is convincingly confirmed by the analysis of the costs of social development of the workforce, which we conducted using official data from Rosstat for 2000-2021: in the total structure of labor costs of Russian organizations over a 20-year period, there was a decrease in the share of expenses for social protection of workers by almost 8% (from 29.4% in 2000 to 21.5 % in 2021) with an increase in the share of wages by 10.6% (from 65.8% in 2000 to 76.4% in 2021).

An analysis of the key costs of organizations in the Russian Federation for the accumulation of human capital also confirms our conclusion: for the period 2000-2021. expenses for providing workers with housing in the overall structure of labor costs decreased from 0.7% to 0.1%, expenses for cultural and public services fell from 1.1% to 0.2% (for comparison: in 1996 they amounted to 3.6%), finally, the share of costs for vocational training, as shown in Table 2, is extremely low throughout the entire period - only 0.3%, and in 2021 dropped to 0.2%.

Table 2: Share of human-oriented expenses in the overall structure of labor costs of organizations in 2000-2021, in percent.

	2000	2002	2013	2017	2021
Expenses for providing workers with housing	0,7	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,1
Vocational training expenses	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,2
Expenses for cultural and community services	1,1	1,0	0,3	0,3	0,2
Other expenses	2,7	2,0	2,4	2,2	1,6

Source: Dynamics of the level and structure of labor costs of organizations https://rosstat.gov.ru/labour_costs

It is noteworthy that other expenses of the labor cost structure in the Russian Federation also decreased from 2.7% to 1.6%, respectively.

Rosstat data indicate a significant lag in the share of expenses for vocational training in the overall structure of labor costs of manufacturing organizations (0.3%), scientific and technical professional activities (0.2%), and activities in the field of information and communications (0.2 %), activities of hotels and catering establishments (0.1%).

In order to find out to what extent general trends are reflected in the value orientations of employees,

we conducted a sociological survey of 231 employees of 39 companies in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in August-October 2023. The sample size allowed us to obtain data representing the working adult population of the region with a statistical error not exceeding 3% in the 95% confidence interval. Let's dwell on some important points. To the question "What life guidelines are the most important for you?" The following answers were received (% of all respondents; several answer options could be selected): family, children (78%); physical and psychological health (69%); high earnings (55%); professional self-realization, career (48%); friendship (34%); independence, freedom (23%); education, intellectual development (19%); spiritual development, knowledge of life and oneself (17%); vibrant life, entertainment (12%); positive contribution to society (13%); power, influence, status (11%); fame, fame (7%).

To the question "What gives you the greatest motivation and inspiration to work?" we received the following TOP-10 answers, % from all respondents (you could select several answer options): decent earnings, bonuses (78%); the opportunity to see the results of their work (29%); support from family and loved ones (26%); strong business relationships with colleagues (24%); comfortable working conditions (21%); do something useful for people and society (19%); feeling of being needed (17%); developing your skills (15%); career growth (15%); bringing your idea or plan to life (12%).

To the question "What can become an external barrier to building a career?" (% of all respondents; multiple answer options could be selected) respondents answered as follows: lack of support from the manager, company management (56%); lack of a suitable vacant position (43%); difficulty combining family and professional life (39%); lack of necessary acquaintances and connections (39%); age (too young/old) (36%); work in a small company (31%); family circumstances, child care (27%); gender, property, social inequality (23%).

At the same time, when asked about satisfaction with our career, we received the following answers (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of answers to the question about satisfaction with one's career, error 3%.

Satisfied with career - 70%	Not satisfied with career - 27%
The share of those satisfied with career development is higher among:	The share of those dissatisfied with career development is higher among:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • older workers (55+ years); • middle and senior managers; • employees with 4-7 years of experience; • workers with a high level of well-being; • are married with children; • women chose the answer option more often than men; "rather satisfied", and men – "completely satisfied". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workers aged 45-54 years • qualified; • specialists and workers; • 1-3 years of experience; • medium and low level of well-being.
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Source: Compiled based on the results of a sociological survey

As a result of a sociological survey, without disclosing the gender and age profile of the answers, we identified the life priorities and professional guidelines of working people in North Ossetia, compiled a rating of personal factors of motivation to work and external barriers; the attitudes and plans of employees regarding their career development have been determined. These features must be taken into account in the corporate and regional policies for the development of human resources in the region.

3 DISCUSSION

Technology is significantly impacting workforce development by increasing demand for digital skills and other independent abilities such as critical thinking, creativity and problem solving.

Increasing automation of jobs is leading to job transformation, especially in industries such as manufacturing and transportation. Modern information and communication technologies have a significant impact on workforce development, increasing the demand for digital skills and other independent abilities such as critical thinking, creativity and problem solving.

The existing gap between the dynamics of costs for digitalization of the Russian economy and the regressive structure of costs for the social development of the workforce, primarily vocational training, reduces the efficiency of the use of labor, projects qualification restrictions of the labor market and actualizes the problems of forming human-oriented management models.

Saadia Zahidi, head of the Center for New Economy and Society at the World Economic Forum said: "Companies need to complement their plans with comprehensive expansion strategies. For businesses to remain dynamic, differentiated and competitive in the machine age, they must actually invest in their human capital. There is both a moral and an economic imperative for this. Without

proactive approaches, businesses and workers risk losing the economic potential of the Fourth Industrial Revolution”.

Business leaders surveyed in 2022 for the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs report said around 40% of their workforce will require retraining in the near future. This conclusion is also contained in the the KPMG study “HR Actions in a Pandemic Situation”, in studies of the online job search platform HeadHunter (hh.ru), the state platform “Rabota.ru”, and the digital platform “Avito Rabota”.

Every company and region need a set of change management strategies to develop human resources. One of the most effective ways to develop a skilled workforce is through training and education programs. These programs should be used to improve the skills of existing employees and to train new employees. By improving the skills and knowledge of their workforce and investing in the capitalization of human resources, businesses can reliably count on increased productivity and efficiency.

Strategies to create and maintain a positive work environment can also play an important role in workforce development. This can reduce employee turnover and improve employee morale. The longer an employee works, the more necessary skills and experience he acquires, which avoids the need to hire and train new employees. This can be achieved by developing a sense of purpose in employees, providing recognition for their work and opportunities for growth and development.

In our opinion, an important strategy for people-oriented management is to encourage employee engagement; this is perhaps the most effective strategy for the intellectual development of labor resources. In this way, businesses can create a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Regular employee feedback, open communication, opportunities for employees to contribute and participate in group initiatives are essential to this.

By investing in decent work and the quality of life of employees, companies can create a skilled and motivated workforce that can adapt to and even stay ahead of constantly evolving technologies and unpredictable market trends.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that employment during COVID-19 has significantly impacted the value of staff in the company, who began to value work-life balance more. To remain competitive, companies must adhere to the principles

of partnership, taking into account the self-realization of employees. A sociological survey conducted allows us to describe them as follows:

1. Professional self-realization is among the TOP 4 life priorities of North Ossetia workers, giving way to values such as family, health and high earnings.

2. Among the factors of motivation to work, the leading ones are obtaining decent work (78%) and the opportunity to see the results of one’s work (29%); support from family and loved ones (26%). At the same time, the following are ranked by a large margin: development of one’s skills (15%); career growth (15%) and implementation of one’s ideas and plans (12%).

3. 70% of blue-collar workers are satisfied with their current career development. There is a correspondence between the level of material support, the prestige of the position held and the level of satisfaction with one’s own career.

4. At the same time, 84% of young people declare interest in career prospects. Among them are exceptionally educated young people, specialists with up to 7 years of work experience and those who already occupy leadership positions.

The lack of interest in building a career is most often expressed by workers over 45 years of age, representatives of blue-collar professions, without higher education, and living in families with children.

5. For the vast majority of workers, the main priority for career development in the near future is increasing wages. We believe this is the effect of a low base against the backdrop of rising inflation and falling living standards in the region.

6. Key external factors contributing to successful career, according to employees - support from management, family, and the presence of a professional team. Internal – self-confidence, interest in the chosen professional field and personal desire for career growth.

7. There are still a number of restrictive measures, including gender, property, and social, which are barriers to career development. These include: fear of holding government or high positions, associated with increased risks, the need to choose a career or family as a priority, stereotypes that women are “not created” for leadership positions and achieve their attractiveness by achieving professional success, etc.

The human resources of any company is formed under the influence of the business and intellectual environment of the region. We consider it necessary to continuously improve the situation in the regional labor markets. Achieving this goal involves a proactive government employment policy:

- stimulating economic growth (at least 3-5% per year);
- increasing the share of “complex labor”;
- modernization of production;
- development of human capital by improving the quality of regional education;
- formation of an institute for targeted training of specialists and employment of graduates.

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