

STAFFING INFORMATION OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

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Abstract

The concept of information society development and the concept of digitalization of public administration are being implemented in Russia. Openness of municipalities is regarded as one of the characteristics of the lawful state and as a sign of the level of civil society's development. We were interested in the work of local authorities related to the formation of municipal staffing, namely, its organization and procedure based on the Russian legislation. We applied the analysis method, used 9 parameters and 3 criteria of information openness. We also used methodological recommendations for the implementation of the principles of openness in the Federal Executive Authorities and the methodology for monitoring and assessing the openness of the Federal Executive Authorities of the Russian Government. These allowed us to develop a technology for the study of information openness of the local governments. We determined whether the content of information on applicants for municipal service on the official websites of authorities meets the requirements of current legislation. The results indicated that Russia has a sufficient legislative framework for the implementation of citizens' rights to receive information about municipal management.

Key words: information openness, staffing, local authorities.

JEL Code: H75, I2, I21

Introduction

The right to information about staffing in local government bodies is one of the main constitutional rights of Russian citizens. The main tool of that interaction is the official website of municipal authorities which reflects the structure and content of information on personnel changes. It is legally fixed.

Federal laws and other documents have been adopted to establish rules for the admission of citizens to municipal service in Russia. We set the purpose of the study, that is to determine the sufficiency of legal framework in Russia in the field of information openness of

personnel support for municipal authorities and the ability to monitor the processes in this type of municipal activity. The digitalization is growing globally and businesses have an interest in utilising it. Managers require a deeper understanding of such opportunities.

The problems of information openness are widely discussed in all spheres of human life and activity: from politics and public administration to social services and applicants in municipalities. The principle of information openness in the modern world provides citizens with access to various types of information, as well as ensures transparency of the activities of municipal government bodies. These include: the staffing of these bodies, the results of the activities of municipal employees, the readiness of human resources for the process of digitizing the results of their activities and working with digital data, the readiness for public assessment of the quality and analysis of the provision of municipal services (Palíšková, 2018, Badulescu, Kolozsi, Badulescu & Lupau, 2016; Kankanhalli, Zuiderwijk & Kumar Tayi, 2017; Kromidha & Córdoba-Pachón, 2017, Panova, Lustina, Borisova & Doronkina, 2018, Rezer, 2017, 2018, 2019).

Information exchange between the state and local government and society is an important factor from the point of view of state functioning and development (Irving-Clarke, 2017; Jaeger, Lyons & Wolak, 2017; Nisar, 2015; Jēkabsone & Sloka, 2015; Merkus & Veenswijk, 2017). Integral information environment becomes a city-forming feature in the era of information society formation and introduction of “e-government” into the state management, this is confirmed by the actions and decisions taken by the authorities, especially in emergency situations or in pandemics, which are typical for our time.

1 Methods

We studied the current legislation which stipulates the information openness and transparency of the local government official websites. To analyze whether the information openness of the local government complies the legislation we applied several research methods. The first method is the analyses method (monitoring of the local government official websites on the criteria of presence, completeness, navigational availability). The second method is the legal comparative method (comparing the information content of the local government official websites to the requirements of the current legislation). The third method is the comparative method (comparing the local government official websites information openness within the group, identifying leaders and outsiders). We also used the statistical analyses method (analyses of the obtained results of the governmental body’s official website research). And

the final method is the observation method (monitoring of the local government official websites updates).

We monitored the work in the field of information openness of staffing of local authorities in the Sverdlovsk region. The monitoring was carried out from December 2016 to January 2020. We analyzed 16 official sites. The cities and towns were grouped by population: the first group includes a population of more than 97,000 people; the second group – from 57,000 to 90,000 people; the third group – from 37,000 to 57,000 people. We were interested in the work of local administrations in the field of information transparency of personnel support of municipal authorities, namely, its organization and procedure based on the Russian legislation.

When monitoring the method of analysis was applied, 9 parameters and 3 criteria were used. The first criterion is the criterion of availability: the actual availability of information or service at the local governments' official website (0 – information isn't placed, 1 – information is placed); the second criterion is the criterion of navigation comfort: easiness of information search at the website, structure of the website, number of clicks from the home page to particular sections of the website (1 – bad navigation (it is hard to find required materials), 2 – average navigation (it is possible to find information with small efforts), 3 – good navigation (it means fast finding of the necessary information). The logic of the section, and also number of transitions from the main page to the necessary subsections of the official site are considered. The third criterion is criterion of completeness: the integral volume of data published at the local governments' official websites (1 – a little information is placed, 2 – the most of information is placed, 3 – all information is placed). The comparative and legal methods help to establish whether the information content of official websites complies with legislation requirements.

We also applied the method of deduction. It was the transition from the general requirements established by legislation to a specific official site of a specific municipal body on issues of openness. This made it possible to find out the information about the level of qualifications, education and official income of applicants for a municipal position, as well as the income of their family members.

We were interested in two important parameters. Firstly, we aimed the presence of the section of questions on corruption in the appointment of citizens to municipal service. We monitored the availability of this information from the home page. Secondly, we looked for a link to the official website of the federal state information system "Federal Portal of

Managerial Staff”, where all the documents and official requirements of candidates for state and municipal service are published.

Tab. 1: List of parameters for the HR (Human Resources) issues section

Evaluation parameter	Explanations on the official websites of local authorities
Description of the procedure for enrolling citizens in the municipal service	Information about the personnel support of the local government body, including the procedure for citizens' admission to the municipal service
Vacant positions of municipal service in executive and administrative bodies of local authorities	Information on the staffing of the local government body, including information on vacant municipal service positions available in the local government body
Description of qualification requirements for candidates for vacant municipal service positions in the executive and administrative body of local authorities	Information about the staffing of the local government body, including qualification requirements for candidates for vacant positions in the municipal service
Terms of the competition for vacant positions of municipal service in the executive and administrative body of local authorities	Information on the staffing of the local government body, including the terms of competitions for vacant positions in the municipal service
Results of the competition for vacant positions of municipal service in the executive and administrative body of local authorities	Information on the staffing of the local government body, including the results of competitions for vacant positions in the municipal service
The phone number where you can get information about filling vacant positions in the executive and administrative body of local authorities	Information on the staffing of a local government body, including phone numbers where you can get information about filling vacant positions in a local government body
Information about the income, property and property obligations of persons who hold municipal positions, as well as their family members	Data on incomes, about property and obligations of property character

Source: the table was developed by the author

Table 1 shows examples of evaluation parameters in the field of information openness of the personnel support of municipal services in Russia based on current legislation.

All the evaluation parameters shown in the Table 1 were used when analyzing information openness of local government bodies.

2 Results

We analyzed the Federal law of 09.02.2009 No 8-FZ “On the access to information on the activities of state bodies and local governments”; the Federal law of 06.10.2003 No 131-FZ “On the general principles of local government organizations in the Russian Federation” of 06.10.2003 No 131-FZ; the Federal law of 27.07.2010 No 210-FZ “On the organization of state and municipal services”.

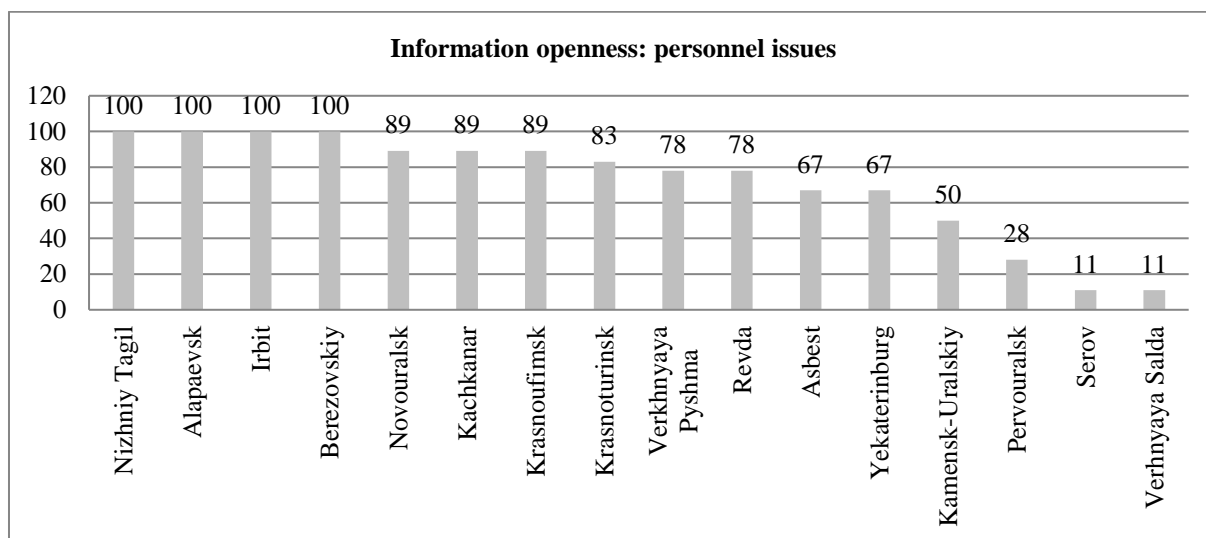
In the letter of the Ministry of Economy and Development of the Russian Federation of 29.04.2011 No 8863-OF/D09 “On methodological recommendations for the organization

of monitoring the quality of public (municipal) services” we got the information about the rules of monitoring the quality of public and municipal services.

The comparative and legal method allowed to determine correspondence of information content on the official websites of municipal authorities to legislative requirements in the work with citizens’ appeals in obtaining timely information by citizens about applicants for municipal service.

Figure 1 shows the indicators for the parameter block-personnel issues.

Fig. 1: Indicators for the parameter block: personnel issues



Source: the figure was developed by the author

The leaders are Nizhniy Tagil, Gornouralskiy City District (100%), Alapaevsk, Municipal Unit (100%), Irbit, Town District (100%), Berezovskiy, Town District (100%), among the outsiders there are Serovsky, Town District (11%), and Verkhnyaya Salda, Town District (11%).

Pervouralsk, Town District has reached 28% information openness on the official website of personnel issues. Personnel work is one of the tasks that determines the formation of the management team, and, consequently, the motivation of municipal employees who are focused on results and service to the state in their professional activities.

We were also investigated the “Personnel issues. The “Personnel issues” section includes 9 parameters of information openness. The total score is 36, the evaluation criteria are: Availability (0; 1), Navigation accessibility (1; 2; 3). Table 2 shows all the cities’ and towns’ official websites investigated with total points and we converted all the points to percentages.

The first group of cities and towns does not reflect 100% content of information on official sites.

Tab. 2: Coefficient of openness for the parameters in the Personnel Issues section

City or Town	Total points (max 36)	Coefficient, %
The First Group		
Nizhniy Tagil	36	100.00
Yekaterinburg	24	66.67
Kamensk-Uralskiy	18	50.00
Pervouralsk	10	27.78
Serov	4	11.11
The Second Group		
Novouralsk	32	88.89
Krasnoturinsk	30	83.33
Verkhnyaya Pyshma	28	77.78
Revda	28	77.78
Asbest	24	66.67
The Third Group		
Alapaevsk	36	100.00
Berezovskiy	36	100.00
Irbit	36	100.00
Kachkanar	32	88.89
Krasnoufimsk	32	88.89
Verkhnyaya Salda	4	11.11

Source: the table was developed by the author

Several cities do not include information in full on the parameters: Pervouralsk for six parameters (order of admission, vacant positions, terms of the competition for positions, results of the competition, phone number, anti-corruption on the main page of the site), Kamensk-Uralskiy for four parameters (vacant positions, terms of the competition for positions, phone number, anti-corruption on the main page of the site), Yekaterinburg for three parameters (terms of the competition for positions, phone number, anti-corruption on the main page of the site). Serov has got only one filled parameter out of 9 parameters required on its official website (anti-corruption on the main page of the site).

The second group of cities and towns on official websites has five parameters that are 100% complete (order of admission, vacancies, qualification requirements, availability from the main page of the anti-corruption section, link to “Federal portal of managerial personnel”). The following cities or towns do not have information on the official site for the parameters of block 7: Asbest for three parameters (the result of the competition, phone number, income information); Novouralsk for one parameter (the terms of the competition for replacement); Verkhnyaya Pyshma for two parameters (phone number, income information); Revda for two

parameters (the results of the competition, income information); Krasnoturinsk for one parameter (income information).

The third group of cities and towns on official websites contains one parameter that has 100% occupancy (a link to “Federal Portal of Managerial Personnel”). Official websites do not include information about the following cities: Kachkanar for one parameter (income information), Krasnoufimsk for one parameter (phone number). Verkhnyaya Salda has only one filled parameter (link to “Federal portal of managerial personnel”).

The results of the monitoring are: the indicator of information openness in the sphere of personnel support is 100 % due to the official websites of local authorities of Nizhniy Tagil, Alapaevsk, Irbit, Berezovskiy.

Serov and Verkhnyaya Salda have become outsiders, because the indicator of information openness in the sphere of personnel support is 11 %, and in Pervouralsk, the town located on the border of Europe and Asia, the indicator has reached 28 %. Personnel work is one of the activities that determine the formation of the management team, and, therefore, the motivation of municipal employees who are focused on the results in their professional activities.

Conclusion

In the present study, we investigated the sufficiency of legal framework in Russia in the field of information openness of personnel support for municipal authorities and the ability to monitor the processes in this type of municipal activity. We have come to the conclusion that Russia has a sufficient legislative framework for the implementation of citizens' rights to receive answers to the questions raised in the field of information openness of personnel support for municipal management and feedback using information and communication technologies, which are actively used in modern public administration in the era of management digitalization.

Using a large dataset, we showed that the implementation of the principles of openness of local government bodies does not take place at the same level. Not all Russian government bodies understand the importance of information openness. But the implementation of these principles in the practice has an additional anti-corruption potential, which is expressed in increasing the legal awareness of the population of the municipality, enhancing public control over the activities of local governments, as well as providing independent expertise of municipal regulations and their projects.

Acknowledgment

The validity and reliability of the results and conclusions contained in the article are confirmed by the consistency of the results with the theoretical sources and empirical results of the author obtained earlier in the study of information openness of public administration, as well as a comprehensive level of analysis of the phenomenon under study.

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