

A summary of the results of a survey of unemployed workers in the Auckland Eastern Suburbs TTWA¹

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1 Introduction

OVER THE PAST DECADE a great deal of attention has been given to the effect of skills shortages on the labour market. It is argued that such shortages increase the levels of unfilled vacancies and wage inflation, reduce competitiveness and raise the level of unemployment. Policies to re-skill the jobless would, it is often claimed, reduce these. Previous studies have considered the registered long-term job seekers across New Zealand (New Zealand Employment Service, 1994; Department of Labour, 1989) and the barriers to their gaining employment (Parker, 1997). This article considers the attitudes of a small sample of unemployed people towards the characteristics of potential jobs, how they search for jobs, and which of their own attributes they perceive may be relevant to getting a job. The results are based upon the initial analysis of a survey of unemployed people carried out at the New Zealand Employment Service (NZES) Panmure office in the Auckland Eastern Suburbs 'travel to work area' (TTWA) during November-December 1996.

This survey is part of a wider research project which has been undertaken in two travel to work areas in central Scotland. The main focus of the research is on identifying barriers to employment faced by jobseekers, amongst which skills and qualifications, and the characteristics of potential jobs, are treated as only some, albeit important, barriers (see, for example, Metcalf, 1995). This article merely reports the results of the Auckland Eastern Suburbs part of the study, and, given this small sample, any conclusions made are not intended to apply to New Zealand as a whole.

A random sample of 99 unemployed people were interviewed at the Eastern Suburbs NZES office. When an unemployed person was visiting the office, they were asked if they were willing to be interviewed. A number of questions were

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asked about what search channels the interviewee used and the type of job for which they were looking. In addition, information was collected on skills and qualifications, and the social and educational backgrounds of the interviewees, and attempts were made to measure certain personal attributes which it is felt employers take into account when hiring. The sample characteristics are similar to the NZES data for the Panmure office in terms of both age and gender (Table A1). The distribution of the sample by duration of unemployment shows that 31 percent of males and 39 percent of females in the sample were long-term unemployed (out of work for over 52 weeks), as is shown in Table A2.

This article focuses on: the importance of the characteristics of those jobs for which the sample might consider applying (Section 2); what factors are important to the unemployed when they are considering applying for a job (Section 3); and the channels that they use to search for jobs, in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 presents some brief conclusions.

2 The attractiveness of different types of job contracts to the unemployed

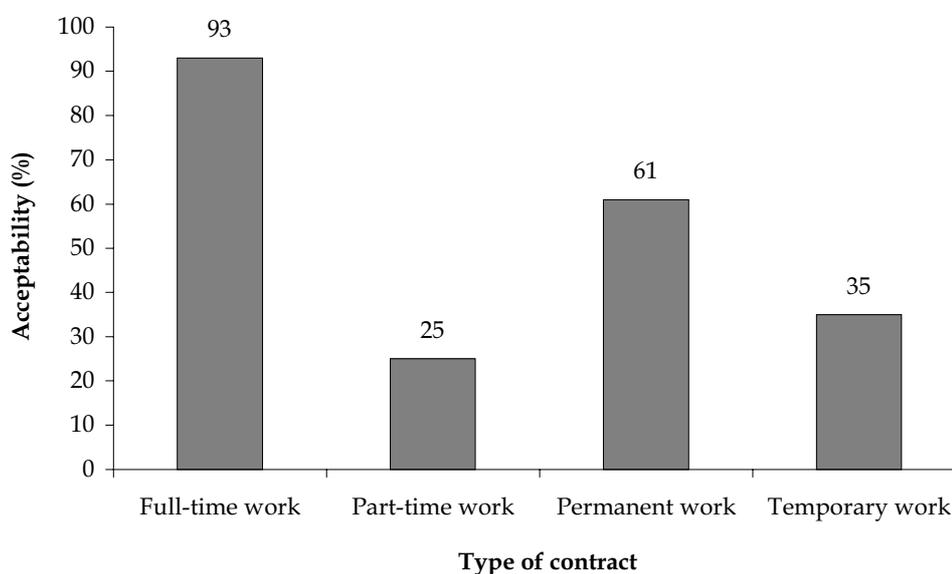
The survey sought to determine what types of contract (eg, full-time or part-time work) the unemployed in the sample find acceptable when searching for work. It is possible that unemployment might be raised because firms are creating types of contracts which do not appeal to the job seekers (see Blau, 1991; Adams *et al*, 1996). In order to examine this, the unemployed were asked whether they were looking for full-time, part-time (fewer than 30 hours per week), permanent or temporary work. Figure 1 displays the results, while Tables A3 to A6 in the appendix show the results for age, duration, gender and status groups respectively.

2.1 Full-time work

Figure 1 shows that virtually all of the Eastern Suburbs sample of unemployed are looking for full-time work.⁴ Table A3 shows, however, that slightly more under-25s appear to be looking for full-time work than older unemployed workers, although difference between the groups appears to be slight. One possible reason for this variation is that there are married women with children in the older age group, and they are much less likely to want full-time work. Finally, when the length of current unemployment and gender are considered (Tables A4 and A5), there is little variation in the proportion of unemployed people in each group looking for permanent work, although the figure is marginally lower for those who have been out of work for fewer than 12 weeks and for the long-termed unemployed, and for females compared with males (perhaps due to domestic responsibilities).

⁴ The questions on type of contract were measured on a yes/no scale, with people asked if they would be prepared to accept a given type of contract (eg, full-time).

FIGURE 1: Percentage of unemployed in Panmure TTWA prepared to accept a particular type of contract



2.2 Part-time work

Increasingly employers are choosing to create part-time positions (see Naylor, 1994). Only 25 percent of the unemployed in the sample would consider taking a part-time job, however. Consequently, three-quarters of the sample would not seek such jobs, and so is an important factor when considering the demand for labour and future job growth or change. Of particular note is the difference between the single and married groups of both genders (Table A6). This is most striking between single females and married females, with 45 percent of the former group being likely to accept part-time work compared with only 8 percent of married women. This suggests that the difference may be associated to specific factors related to marital status, such as greater financial implications for married couples. Many unemployed people may be unable to afford to take part-time contracts if this means they will lose welfare benefits.

Part-time work seems to be relatively unpopular amongst married men and men aged over 24 years. For men this possibly reflects welfare benefits barriers and sociological factors, with many part-time jobs, such as shop work, being regarded by them as predominantly female work.

2.3 Permanent work

Figure 1 also shows that most unemployed workers are keen to find permanent work. There is a significant difference between age groups, with preference for permanent work among over-24s about 20 percentage points higher. There is also a lower probability of looking for permanent work amongst unemployed who

have been out of work for longer periods of time. This may be explained by expectation adjustments as the time in unemployment progresses, or by a possible lack of flexibility on the part of long-term unemployed.

2.4 Temporary work

Thirty-five percent of the Eastern Suburbs sample are looking for temporary work, with some minor variations between age groups, duration groups and gender. However, single males are the group most likely to be searching for temporary work, followed by single females. This may reflect sociological factors related to their marital status. It is also noteworthy that slightly more under-25s and more males than females (especially single females) are looking for temporary work. Those out of work between 13–25 weeks were notably less likely to find temporary work acceptable.

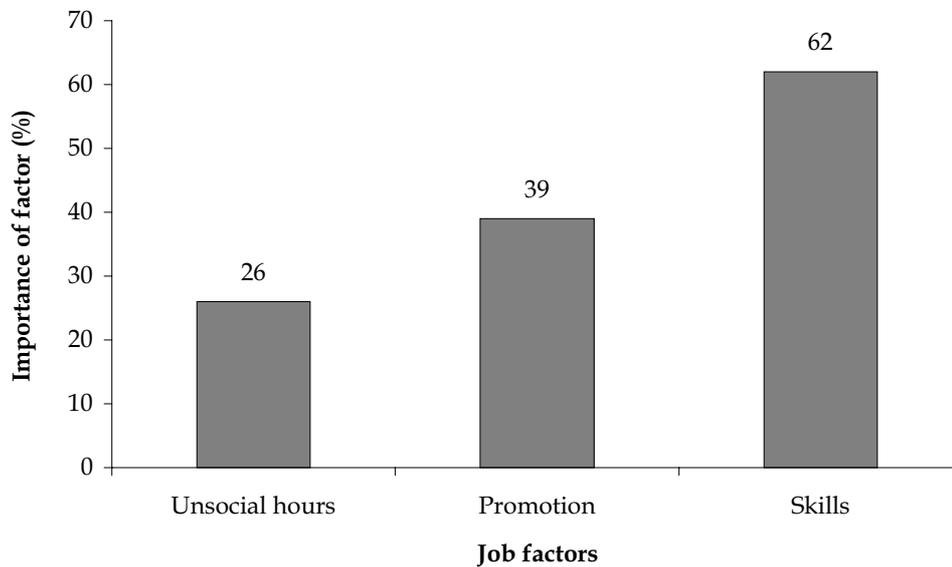
3 The effect of the nature of work on whether unemployed workers apply for a job

In addition to the length of a contract and the number of hours which it involves, other factors may be important to unemployed when deciding whether to apply for a job. In order to examine whether this is the case, unemployed people were asked the importance they attach to unsocial hours of work, to lack of promotion chances and to use of their skills when they were considering whether or not to apply for a job. They were also asked the maximum time they are prepared to travel each way to work. If any one of these factors is important, then firms which fail to take account of it when deciding on the nature of the vacancy and defining job descriptions are more likely to experience difficulties in recruiting unemployed people. Figure 4 shows the results, while Tables A7 to A10 give a breakdown by age, duration of unemployment, gender and marital status.

3.1 Unsocial hours

Figure 2 shows that a quarter (26 percent) of the sample of unemployed said that not having to do unsocial hours or shiftwork was very important when considering whether to accept a job.⁵ Tolerance of unsocial hours very slightly increased as duration of unemployment increased (Table A8), with only 27 percent and 26 percent of the medium- (26–51 weeks) and long-term unemployed, respectively, feeling they were a very important consideration. However, there was a large difference according to gender and marital status. Some 45 percent of females regarded unsocial hours as a very important consideration, compared with 16 percent of males. Married females were

⁵ People were asked how important each characteristic (eg, chance of promotion) was on a four-point scale of 'very important', 'quite important', 'not that important' and 'totally unimportant'.

FIGURE 2: The importance to the unemployed of the nature of work

particularly averse to unsocial hours (62 percent) while married males were least averse at 10 percent. This may reflect domestic responsibilities such as child care.

3.2 Promotion chances

Thirty-nine percent of the sample regard poor promotion prospects as an important factor in deciding whether to apply for a job. Consequently, it is likely to have a wider impact on causing recruitment difficulties and raising the level of unemployment than unsocial hours. The relative impact of promotion chances varies considerably between sub-groups of the sample. There appears to be a greater concern for promotion prospects amongst the older unemployed (43 percent) than the younger (29 percent), and slightly more concern amongst males (42 percent) than females (33 percent). Long-term unemployed placed the lowest level of importance on promotional prospects (30 percent). There is also a considerable divergence between married females (46 percent) and single females (25 percent). Consequently, promotional prospects are likely to be an important factor in deciding whether to apply for a job amongst married females and single males (46 percent), causing possible recruitment difficulties for firms targeting these groups.

3.3 Use of skills

Over 62 percent of the sample regard use of their skills in a job as a very important factor when considering whether to apply for a job. The importance of skills in employment is greater for older unemployed people at 68 percent than

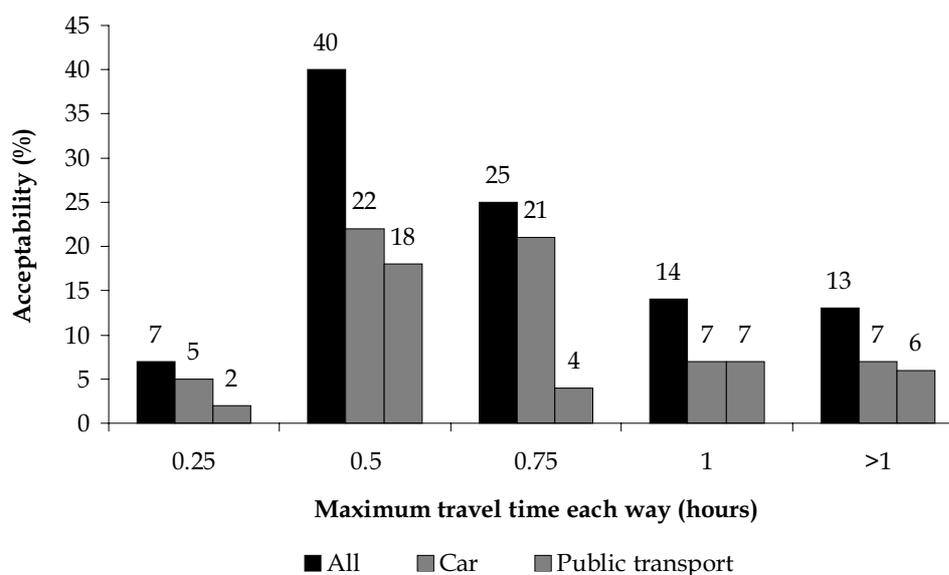
under-25s at 46 percent and greater for females (76 percent) than for males (66 percent). Married females produced the highest percentage for the importance of skills at 85 percent, and single males the lowest at 49 percent. This may reflect lower pressures on married females to take 'any job'. Generally it would seem that poor job design, in particular failing to allow the individual to use their abilities to the full, can result in unfilled vacancies.

3.4 Travel to work time

Finally, unemployed workers were asked the maximum time they are prepared to travel each way to work. In a 1997 study, Parker had found that 72 percent of long-term job seekers said that limited mobility (eg, lack of public or private transport) presented a barrier to searching for and finding work. He had also found that 37 percent could not afford to pay for transport to and from work. In the current study, the sample indicated that access to transport is not a prime issue (which is not surprising given the study location). However, travel time to any new employer was found to be a barrier to seeking or gaining employment. Figure 3 shows that 27 percent of unemployed workers in the sample are prepared to travel for at least an hour each way to and from work, whereas 93 percent were willing to travel at least half an hour each way per day.

Consequently, it appears likely that unwillingness to travel for long periods limits the number and types of job opportunities for many of the unemployed and so may be a source of unemployment. This suggests support for the idea of a spatial mismatch between job opportunities and some unemployed people

FIGURE 3: Maximum travel to work time for the unemployed



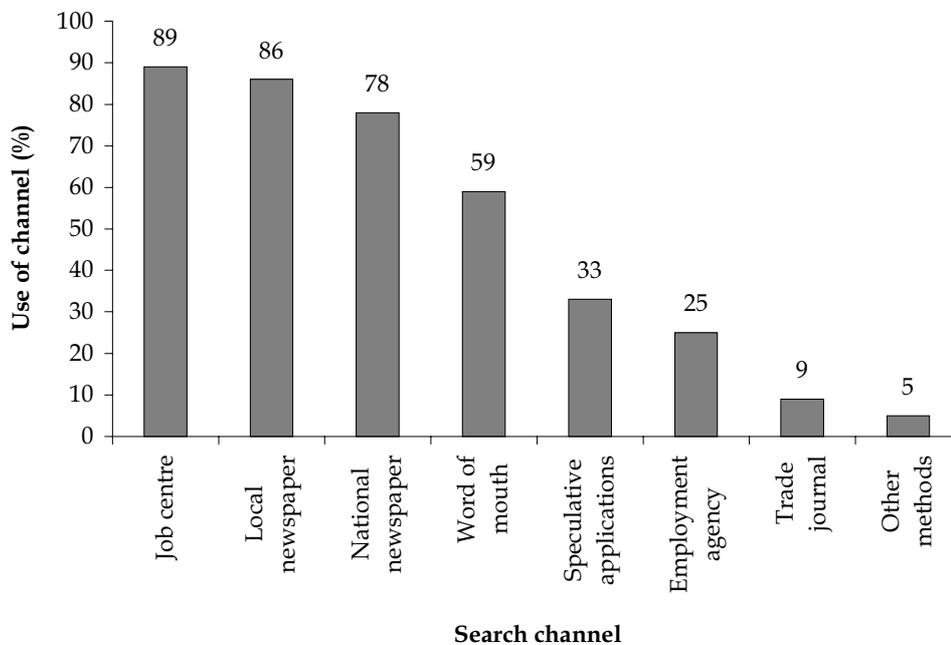
(Holzer, 1991; Ong and Blumenberg, 1998). It is also likely that increased travel time is linked to increased cost for those with access to private transport, and to increased inconvenience and cost to those who use public transport. Such inconvenience is likely to be associated with the difficulty of getting transport to work locations which are not serviced by buses on the individual's travel route, meaning that more than one bus or train must be used to get to/from work.

Interestingly a much higher percentage of public transport users (35 percent) were willing to travel for long periods (one hour or more) than car users (23 percent), albeit bearing in mind that the survey sample size is restricted. Over half (54 percent) of public transport users would only travel a maximum of half an hour or less, compared with 35 percent of car users.

4 Search channels used by the unemployed

An important question is how the unemployed go about searching for jobs (Roper, 1988). Information on this issue is useful because it allows resources to be targeted more effectively by recruiters, and consequently should reduce the number of hard-to-fill vacancies and the level of unemployment. In order to investigate the issue further, unemployed workers were asked which of nine different search channels they use when looking for work. The results from these questions are shown in Figure 4, while Tables A11 to A14 provide a breakdown by age, duration, gender and status, respectively.

FIGURE 4: Percentage of unemployed using a search channel



Job centres are the most popular form of search channels, with 88 (89 percent) of the sample of unemployed in the Eastern Suburbs using them (Table A11). Note, however, that the sample may have been influenced by the interviews being held in the NZES offices. The second most popular method of search is local newspapers, which is used by around 85 (86 percent) of the unemployed. National newspapers constitute the third largest search channel, with about 77 (78 percent) using them. Word of mouth is another search channel used by a significant number 58 (59 percent) of the sample. Employment agencies and trade journals are used relatively infrequently.

4.1 Age groups

For most search channels there appears to be little difference between the proportion in each age group using them. However, more over-25s use local and national newspapers, trade journals, job centres and employment agencies, while younger unemployed workers are more likely to try word of mouth. It should be noted, though, that in none of these three cases is there a substantial difference in the search channel used by the two age groups.

When the mean actual time (minutes in an average week) actually spent using each channel to search for work, then most time was spent on national newspapers (at 148 minutes, perhaps reflecting non-search uses also), then job centres (98 minutes) and local newspapers (82 minutes). Speculative applications took up 80 minutes and word of mouth 75 minutes. *T*-tests were carried out⁶ to determine any evidence of differences in the amount of time that different age groups spent using each type of search channel (note that the discussion concerns whether or not a particular channel is used rather than for how long it is used). There are significant differences between age bands in the mean time spent searching, with older unemployed people (over 24 years) spending more time searching local newspapers and speculative applications (1 percent level of significance), national newspapers (5 percent level) and trade journals (10 percent level). Of course, in addition the effectiveness with which the channel is used may vary, as may errors due to self reporting.

4.2 Duration groups

Although there appears to be no major difference in the use of search channels between the various unemployment duration groups (Table A12a), there are some interesting trends. Those who have been unemployed for longer tend to use most

⁶ The *t*-tests in the relevant tables are to test for a significant difference in the means of the time spent using each search channel (minutes per week) of those surveyed when the data is grouped by age, gender and status. The *p* value, derived from the *t*-statistic, is the probability of wrongly accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the means. So, for example, any value for $p > 0.1$ is rejected at the 10 percent level.

search channels less than other groups (perhaps due to a 'discouraged' effect), but rely more on word of mouth, trade journals and employment agencies (in the case of those unemployed over 52 weeks). However, in terms of time spent using each search channel, none of the differences between the different duration groups were significant (Table A12b).

4.3 Gender and marital groups

There is relatively little difference between each gender and marital status group in terms of the proportion using each search channel (Tables A13 and A14a). However, married females appear more likely than other groups to use job centres, word of mouth and unspecified methods, and less likely to use speculative application.

In terms of the amount of time spent searching through different channels, married men are more likely to use trade journals than other groups (Table A14a). There are only two significant differences (both at the 10 percent level) between genders in time spent searching trade journals (with females spending more time) and making speculative applications (with males spending more time). There is a significant difference between single and married males, with the latter spending more time searching national newspapers (10 percent level). There are no significant differences between single and married females in time spent using search channels.

5 Conclusions

As a part of wider study this survey provides some new information on the position of unemployed workers in the Eastern Suburbs area of Auckland. This article briefly presents results of an initial analysis of some of the survey data. Further research is to be carried out on these and further issues, such as the sample's attitudes, skill levels and required wages of any new jobs. Analysis of the sample of unemployed people interviewed was divided according to age, gender, duration of unemployment and marital status. The main findings were as follows.

Almost all of the unemployed sample are looking for full-time work (93 percent), and over half are looking for permanent work (61 percent). However, 25 percent of the sample are prepared to take part-time work, and 35 percent are prepared to take temporary work. The relative rise in part-time work suggests a possible mismatch between changing employment structures and opportunities and the preferences of the unemployed. Benefit abatement, producing high effective marginal tax rates, might also be acting as a disincentive, and possibly there is some inflexibility in the attitudes of many of those surveyed.

A number of other factors are very important to the unemployed when they consider whether to apply for a job. In particular, nearly two-thirds of the sample

think it very important that any job they apply for should use their skills. Future prospects in the form of chances of promotion are ranked as being important by 39 percent. Also, 26 percent feel that unsocial hours are an important factor when applying for a job. Consequently it may be necessary to consider the types of contracts being offered by firms when analysing labour market changes. Some 27 percent of the unemployed in the Eastern Suburbs sample are prepared to spend at least an hour traveling each way to and from work each day, while about 40 percent were prepared to spend a maximum of 30 minutes. Consequently travel to work time may be another important cause of spatial mismatch and unemployment where jobs are not available fairly closely.

Nearly all the unemployed in the sample use the job centres (89 percent), local newspapers (86 percent) and national newspapers (78 percent) to search for work, while over half also use the word of mouth (59 percent). Trade journals (9 percent) and employment agencies (25 percent) are used relatively infrequently. However, there are significant differences between age groups in the time spent searching, with older unemployed (over 24 years) spending more time searching local newspapers and speculative applications, national newspapers, and trade journals. Females spend significantly (at the 10 percent level) more time using trade journals, but males spend significantly more time on speculative applications. Also, married males spend significantly more time than do single males searching national newspapers. There are no significant differences between single and married females in time spent using search channels. So policies to support job search may need to be carefully constructed to support (or change) different search behaviour by different groups of the unemployed.

Generally, the paper reports a range of findings in the case of the sample which would tend to suggest that a lack of skills among unemployed job seekers is only one of several other obstacles needed to be simultaneously overcome to achieve successful job search. Further research is being carried out upon the role of other characteristics of the unemployed in influencing search channels and travel to work times.

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Appendix: Tables

TABLE A1: Percentage unemployed in each age and gender group

	<i>Age</i>		<i>Gender</i>	
	16-24	25-65	Male	Female
%	24 [29.5]	76 [70.5]	67 [61]	33 [39]
<i>n</i>	24	75	66	33

Note: Figures in brackets are derived from NZES statistics for the area.

TABLE A2: Percentage of unemployed in each duration in each gender and age group

	<i>n</i>	<i>(Missing)</i>	<i>Weeks unemployed (%)</i>			
			0-12	13-25	26-51	52+
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	66	8	23	16	30	31
Female	33	15	25	11	25	39
<i>Age</i>						
Under 24	24	4	22	22	30	26
Over 24	75	12	24	12	27	36

TABLE A3: Percentage of unemployed in each age group who are prepared to accept a particular type of job contract

	<i>n</i>	<i>Age</i>	
		16-24	Over 24
Full-time work	92	96	92
Part-time work	25	29	24
Permanent work	60	46	65
Temporary work	35	38	35
<i>n</i>	99	24	75

TABLE A4: Percentage of unemployed in each duration group prepared to accept a particular job contract

	<i>n</i>	<i>Weeks unemployed</i>			
		<i>0–12</i>	<i>13–25</i>	<i>26–51</i>	<i>52+</i>
Full-time work	92	93	100	100	93
Part-time work	25	31	13	17	30
Permanent work	60	72	53	61	59
Temporary work	35	48	13	59	37
<i>n</i>		29	15	18	27

TABLE A5: Percentage of unemployed in each gender group prepared to accept a particular job contract

	<i>n</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Full-time work	92	95	88
Part-time work	25	23	30
Permanent work	60	59	64
Temporary work	35	38	30
<i>n</i>		66	33

TABLE A6: Percentage of unemployed in each status group prepared to accept a particular job contract

	<i>n</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>	
		<i>Single</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Married</i>
Full-time work	92	97	94	90	85
Part-time work	25	26	19	45	8
Permanent work	60	60	58	70	54
Temporary work	35	46	29	35	23
<i>n</i>		35	31	20	13

TABLE A7: Percentage of unemployed in each age group regarding the nature of work as very important

	<i>n</i>	<i>Age</i>	
		16-24	Over 24
Unsocial hours	26	25	27
Promotion	39	29	43
Skills	62	46	68
<i>n</i>	99	24	75

TABLE A8: Percentage of unemployed in each duration group regarding the nature of work as very important

	<i>n</i>	<i>Weeks unemployed</i>			
		0-12	13-25	26-51	52+
Unsocial hours	26	31	33	27	26
Promotion	39	45	40	50	30
Skills	62	66	67	67	56
<i>n</i>		29	15	18	27

TABLE A9: Percentage of unemployed in each gender group regarding the nature of work as very important

	<i>n</i>	Male	Female
Unsocial hours	26	16	45
Promotion	39	42	33
Skills	62	66	76
<i>n</i>		66	33

TABLE A10: Percentage of unemployed in each status group regarding the nature of work as very important

	<i>n</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>	
		Single	Married	Single	Married
Unsocial hours	26	23	10	35	62
Promotion	39	46	39	25	46
Skills	62	49	65	70	85
<i>n</i>		35	31	20	13

TABLE A11: Percentage of unemployed in each age group using search channel and mean time each channel is used

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Over</i>				<i>P</i> ($\bar{X}=X$)	<i>Sig</i>
			<i>16-24</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Mean</i>		
Job centre	88	98	79	82	92	104	0.491	
Local newspaper	85	82	79	37	88	97	0	***
National newspaper	77	148	75	105	79	162	0.042	**
Word of mouth	58	75	63	55	57	82	0.397	
Speculative applications	33	80	21	19	37	100	0.005	***
Employment agency	25	24	13	20	29	25	0.745	
Trade journal	9	14	0	0	12	18	0.058	*
Other methods	5	13	8	15	4	13	0.863	

t-test: * significant at 10% level; ** significant at 5% level; *** significant at 1%.

Note: $P(\bar{X}=X)$: The *P* value is the probability of wrongly accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the means of the relevant groups. In other words, a small *P* value suggests that there is a significant difference between the relevant groups.

TABLE A12(a): Percentage of unemployed in each duration group using search channel

	<i>n</i>	<i>Weeks unemployed</i>			
		<i>0-12</i>	<i>13-25</i>	<i>26-51</i>	<i>52+</i>
Job centre	88	93	100	92	81
Local newspaper	85	90	100	83	79
National newspaper	77	76	87	83	74
Word of mouth	58	52	67	33	67
Speculative applications	33	38	27	25	35
Employment agency	25	28	13	8	33
Trade journal	9	3	0	17	14
Other methods	5	7	7	0	5
<i>n</i>		29	15	18	27

TABLE A12(b): Mean time of search channel use (hours per week) by duration group

	<i>n</i>	<i>Weeks unemployed</i>		<i>P</i> ($\bar{X}=X$)	<i>Sig</i>
		<i>Under 52</i>	<i>Over 52</i>		
Job centre	88	110	91	0.552	
Local newspaper	85	18	29	0.386	
National newspaper	77	81	87	0.823	
Word of mouth	58	151	133	0.577	
Speculative applications	33	4	16	0.322	
Employment agency	25	82	74	0.826	
Trade journal	9	82	98	0.681	
Other methods	5	16	8	0.46	
<i>n</i>		62	27		

t-test: * significant at 10% level; ** significant at 5% level; *** significant at 1%.

Note: *P*($\bar{X}=X$): The *P* value is the probability of wrongly accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the means of the relevant groups. In other words, a small *P* value suggests that there is a significant difference between the relevant groups.

TABLE A13: Percentage of unemployed in each gender group using search channel and mean time each channel is used

	<i>n</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>P</i> ($\bar{X}=X$)	<i>Sig</i>
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Mean</i>		
Job centre	88	91	109	85	78	0.264	
Local newspaper	85	83	88	91	70	0.387	
National newspaper	77	77	147	79	149	0.967	
Word of mouth	58	55	66	67	91	0.521	
Speculative applications	33	35	98	30	43	0.094	*
Employment agency	25	30	27	15	18	0.427	
Trade journal	9	12	20	3	45	0.067	*
Other methods	5	5	12	6	15	0.829	
<i>n</i>		33		66			

t-test: * significant at 10% level; ** significant at 5% level; *** significant at 1%.

Note: *P*($\bar{X}=X$): The *P* value is the probability of wrongly accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the means of the relevant groups. In other words, a small *P* value suggests that there is a significant difference between the relevant groups.

TABLE A14(a): Percentage of unemployed males in each status group using search channel and mean time each channel is used

	<i>n</i>	<i>Single</i>		<i>Married</i>		<i>P</i> ($\bar{X}=X$)	<i>Sig</i>
		<i>Single Male</i>	<i>Single Mean</i>	<i>Married Male</i>	<i>Married Mean</i>		
Job centre	88	89	114	94	102	0.767	
Local newspaper	85	86	76	81	102	0.31	
National newspaper	77	74	123	81	176	0.081	*
Word of mouth	58	60	75	48	56	0.668	
Speculative applications	33	37	98	32	99	0.974	
Employment agency	25	29	25	29	29	0.812	
Trade journal	9	6	19	19	22	0.871	
Other methods	5	6	23	3	3	0.323	
<i>n</i>		35		31			

t-test: * significant at 10% level; ** significant at 5% level; *** significant at 1%.

Note: $P(\bar{X}=X)$: The *P* value is the probability of wrongly accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the means of the relevant groups. In other words, a small *P* value suggests that there is a significant difference between the relevant groups.

TABLE A14(b): Percentage using search channel (mean time used) of unemployed females in each status group

	<i>n</i>	<i>Single</i>		<i>Married</i>		<i>P</i> ($\bar{X}=X$)	<i>Sig</i>
		<i>Single Female</i>	<i>Single Mean</i>	<i>Married Female</i>	<i>Married Mean</i>		
Job centre	88	75	66	100	97	0.371	
Local newspaper	85	100	49	77	104	0.177	
National newspaper	77	80	140	77	163	0.714	
Word of mouth	58	65	101	69	75	0.633	
Speculative applications	33	35	53	23	28	0.509	
Employment agency	25	10	9	23	32	0.23	
Trade journal	9	0	0	8	1	0.337	
Other methods	5	5	13	8	18	0.819	
<i>n</i>		20		13			

t-test: * significant at 10% level; ** significant at 5% level; *** significant at 1%.

Note: $P(\bar{X}=X)$: The *P* value is the probability of wrongly accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the means of the relevant groups. In other words, a small *P* value suggests that there is a significant difference between the relevant groups.