

ATYPICAL FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT IN SLOVAKIA BASED ON THE SURVEY OF SLOVAK RESPONDENTS OF GENERATIONS X, Y AND Z

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Abstract

The work and employment are very important factors in people's lives. The atypical forms of employment began to spread significantly in the 1990s and 2000s. In this study, we focused on the national and international directions of atypical forms of employment and freelancers. The most common forms are part-time employment, teleworking, job-sharing, labour hire, student work and freelance job. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive picture of the knowledge of today's Slovak citizens about atypical forms of employment. Among the observation methods, the questionnaire survey was chosen. In our research, we compared the responses of generations X, Y and Z. Based on the results, we can say, that the presence of atypical forms of employment is still low in Slovakia, however, we can say that future employees are open to new forms of employment. The results of the hypotheses suggest that generations think similarly about the form of freelance employment. In order to maintain this openness, we believe that each atypical form of employment will be promoted in several ways.

Key words: atypical employment, freelancer, generations X-Y-Z, Slovakia

JEL Code: J21, J42

Introduction

Employment and work are important factors in the life of the individual since most of the weekdays (often the weekends) are spent with work. For a long time, being employed was a nine-to-five work from Monday to Friday. Even nowadays, this pattern is considered to be the typical. However, in the past few years, the economic crises or the current pandemic situation initiates the companies to look for alternative employment solutions. As a result, in addition to typical employment patterns, the so-called atypical forms of employment have emerged on the labor

market. The emergence of atypical work patterns was also facilitated by the development of the legal background and the adaptation to the EU trends. The characteristics of labor force have changed as a result of increasing market instability and the spread of information technology. Traditional employment patterns worked well in the traditional capitalist economy. The changing labor market trends required the introduction of the atypical forms of the employment as the businesses had to develop an ability to adapt to flexible changes (Lipták, 2011).

Atypical forms of employment started to spread significantly in several countries in the 1990s and 2000s. While advancing ahead, atypical forms of employment are becoming more and more widespread. The younger generation is familiar with atypical forms of employment patterns e.g. home office, part-time job, job-sharing etc. Atypical forms of employment can benefit the marginalized groups on the labour market, and also those who were completely excluded from the labour market. As a result of atypical forms of employment, mobbing and workplace harassment can be avoided or minimized (Fapohunda – Soares, 2018). These forms of employment created opportunity for the companies to decrease their costs and invest the saved finances into innovative projects.

The main objective of the study is to provide a comprehensive picture how the Slovak citizens think about the atypical patterns of employment.

1 Theoretical background of the problem

When defining the concept of atypical employment patterns, the problems occurs that not all aspects of the concept will be described or a broader meaning of the concept will be introduced. Defining the concept of atypical employment relationship is even more difficult. The published studies and monographs in most of the cases indicate a different subject as an atypical employment relationship, as a result we get a broad picture of definitions regarding the concept. The atypical employment relationship has become a popular and frequently addressed issue by different research fields (Labour Law, Sociology, Economics). Different expressions are used by different literature, as well as the definitions are approached from different perspectives (Bankó, 2008); (Kazuya, 2005).

Before defining the atypical employment patterns, we can start with the description of the typical work framework. This group is formed by the employees working 40 hours a week, have indefinite-term employment contract and work anti-social hours e.g. evenings, weekends (Filius, 2012). According to the definition of Eurofond, the atypical form of employment refers to an

employment relationship that does not correspond to the „standard or typical” full time employment model. The latter can be defined as a socially secure, indefinite-term, full-time work contract with standard working hours that guarantees a regular income. The pension payment is ensured through social systems, it provides security in the case of illness and unemployment (Eurofound, 2017), so the eight hours working day for indefinite-term employment contract is considered employment. Those employment forms, which are different from the above defined standard are considered atypical (Hárs, 2013).

Many perceive the different forms of atypical employment as a long-term form of employment, replacing the „standard work”. Most of those supporting atypical forms of employment emphasize the rapid adaptation to market changes as a benefit, and treat it as a tool supporting the interest of production and the employee. However, a family-friendly feature of atypical employment pattern is also emphasized. First of all, it is beneficiary for graduates and female workforce (Antalík et. al., 2014).

Table 1 provides a brief summary of the basic features and characteristics how typical and atypical forms of employment differ.

Tab. 1: Comparison of the features of typical and atypical patterns of employment

Typical employment pattern	Characteristics	Atypical employment pattern
Indefinite-term employment contract	Term of employment contract	Definite-term employment contract
One employee	Number of employees	More employees possible
Office	Place of work	Home office/changing location
Fixed/defined working hours	Daily working hours	flexible
Fixed salary	Salary/remuneration	Performance-based salary
Employee	Type of employment	Employee or self-employed

Source: Karoliny – Poór, 2010

Table 1. shows that we compare the typical and atypical patterns of employment on the basis of 6 characteristics. The main feature the employment patterns differ is the validity of the employment contract. While typical form of employment is characterized by indefinite-term employment contract, the atypical employment form provides a project-based work with definite-term employment contract. The typical employment pattern is characterized by one employer (employee works for one company), while in atypical form of employment the employee can be employed by more companies. In the case of standard type of work, the employee has the routine of going to the same office of the same company every day and starts work at the same time as a routine. Atypical forms of employment pattern do not determine the location of work. The employee can work from home, cafe and different locations, while applying flexible working time. There are also differences in employment forms and remuneration. While an average employee is employed for a fixed hourly/monthly wage in the status of employee, the new employment forms are characterized by a project-based wage, flexible hourly wage and self-employment status prevails (Karoliny – Poór, 2010).

We would also like to mention the results of an earlier research conducted, where atypical patterns of employment were examined in terms of corporate perspectives by the employees and employers. Poór et al. (2017) during their research came to conclusion that the age alone does not determine the attitude towards the atypical forms of employment, but there is a difference between the age groups in terms of attitudes towards atypical employment patterns. Korcsmáros (2018) applied corporate perspectives to examine which companies are interested in atypical forms of employment. The study revealed that the lower number of employees the company has, more interest the company has in applying any form of atypical pattern of employment. However, it can be said that the age of existence of the company does not influence the measure how widespread the different forms of atypical employment are. It is necessary to mention that those companies offering both financial and non-financial benefits (e.g. introduction of flexitime) (Mura et al, 2019) are more attractive among the employees and remain competitive on the market compared to those companies providing no fringe benefits for their employees. The attractiveness of flexible forms of employment are reduced by the gaps in social protection (Tamayo-Tumino, 2020). Based on the study (Korcsmáros, 2018) in Slovakia the legal framework, high administrative burden and bureaucracy reduces the interest of atypical forms of employment.

2 Research methodology

The number of employees choosing an atypical pattern of employment is increasing in different parts of the world.

Our main objective was to obtain information from the respondents about the extent to which atypical forms of employment are present in the public consciousness. Do they know or have ever heard about resp. have experience with atypical patterns of employment as employees?

As a basis of our research, we examined 5 frequent types of atypical employment patterns, which were the following: teleworking, part-time employment, student work, job sharing and employee-hiring through a temporary employment agency, but we also discussed the freelance work in Slovakia.

A questionnaire survey was used as an observation method. A total of 260 questionnaires were sent to the target group (Slovak residents), and 213 filled questionnaires were obtained to be examined. It means a 81,92% response rate, which is adequate to conduct our analysis. Our questionnaire research was conducted online.

We outlined three hypotheses in our research related to the freelance lifestyle, which were the follows:

H1.1 – Generation X is represented by smaller number of freelancers on the labour market than Generation Y.

H1.2 – The representatives of Generation Z are more open to freelance work than representatives of Generation X.

3 Research results

Taking into account the date of birth, 47 of our respondents belong to Generation X, 78 respondents represent Generation Y and 88 respondents were from Generation Z. 2/3rd of the respondents were women, Generation Z was represented by the highest ratio of female respondents. The distribution by place of residence shows that 49,77% of the respondents are from villages, while 50,23% of them live in a town. The qualification of our respondents is presented in the table below. It clearly shows that among the representatives of Generation X we can find the most respondents with low qualification. Most of our respondents representing Generation Y have higher qualification than the representatives of 2 other generations in our survey.

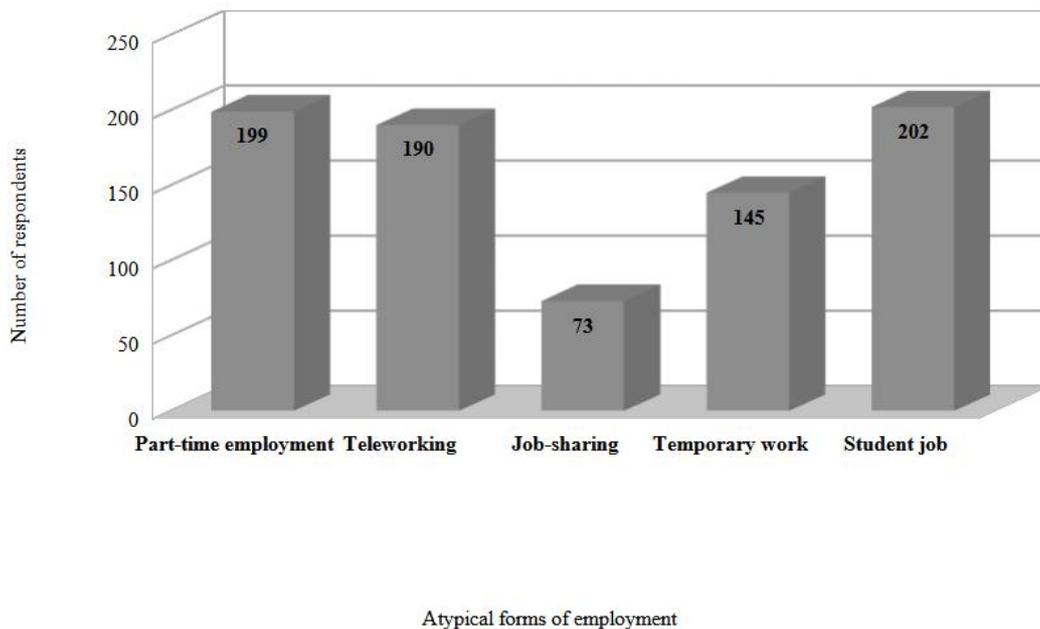
Tab. 2: Percentage of respondents based on type of generations and qualification

	Primary school	Vocational School	Secondary Technical School	Secondary Grammar School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
X gen.	0,00 %	31,92 %	29,79 %	10,64 %	14,89 %	6,38 %	6,38 %
Y gen.	0,00 %	7,69 %	19,23 %	3,85 %	26,92 %	37,18 %	5,13 %
Z gen.	4,54 %	1,14 %	38,64 %	34,09 %	20,45 %	0,00 %	1,14 %

Source: own research

The primary goal of this study was to get informed about the awareness of our respondents on atypical forms of employment. The following figure presents how many of our respondents have heard about the part-time employment, teleworking, job-sharing and student job. The figure clearly presents that the most familiar the respondents were with the part-time employment and student job. It is followed by teleworking, labor hiring and job-sharing.

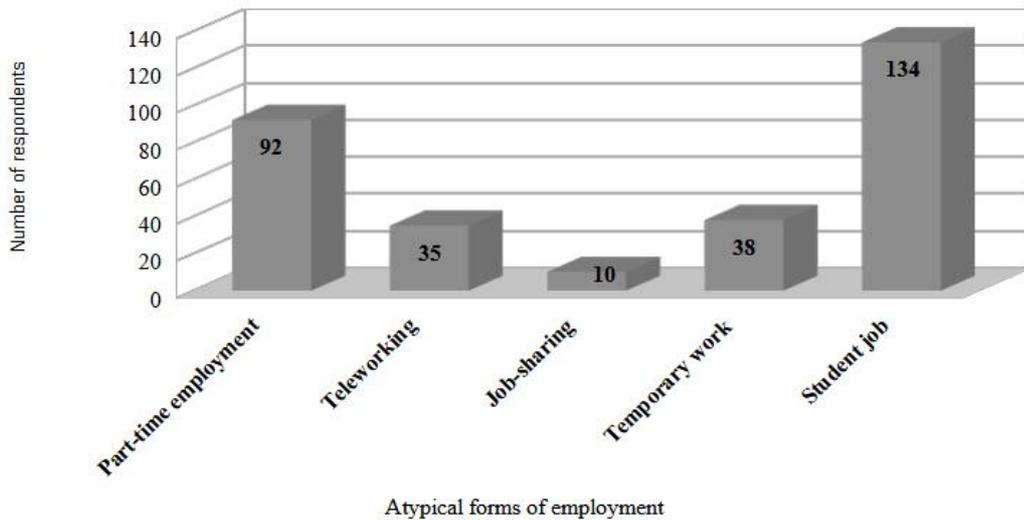
Fig. 1: Number of respondents based on distribution of knowledge of atypical forms of employment



Source: own research

As a further part of our research, we also examined which atypical forms of employment our respondents are experienced with.

Fig. 2: Number of respondents based on distribution of experience of atypical forms of employment



Source: own research

The results show that each generation had a representative who had experience at least with one of the atypical forms of employment.

The most common atypical form of employment was the part-time job and student job. 63% of the respondents had experience with student job, and 43% had a part-time employment.

Our hypotheses were tested by using SPSS software. To test our first hypothesis (H1.1 - Generation X is represented by smaller number of freelancers on the labour market than Generation Y.) a cross-table analysis was applied, where generations (nominal variable) figure as independent variables, and employment as a freelancer (nominal variable) is a dependent variable. Based on the research 12,8% of Generation X respondents have already worked as a freelancer. 31,9% of the respondents were open to accept a freelance work in the future as well, while 55,3% would reject this type of work in the future. As a contrasting result, 7,7% of the representatives of Generation Y is currently working as a freelancer, and 2,6% of them had an experience with this atypical form of employment in the past. Those, who have not had experience with a freelance job had open and positive attitude towards this type of employment. 47,7% of the respondents were open to accept a freelance work, while 42,3% have not considered this option yet.

The Pearson's chi square test was applied to check the relationship between the variables. The results are presented in the table below.

Tab. 3: Result of H1.1 hypotheses

	Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance level
Generations	4,742	3	0,192>0,05

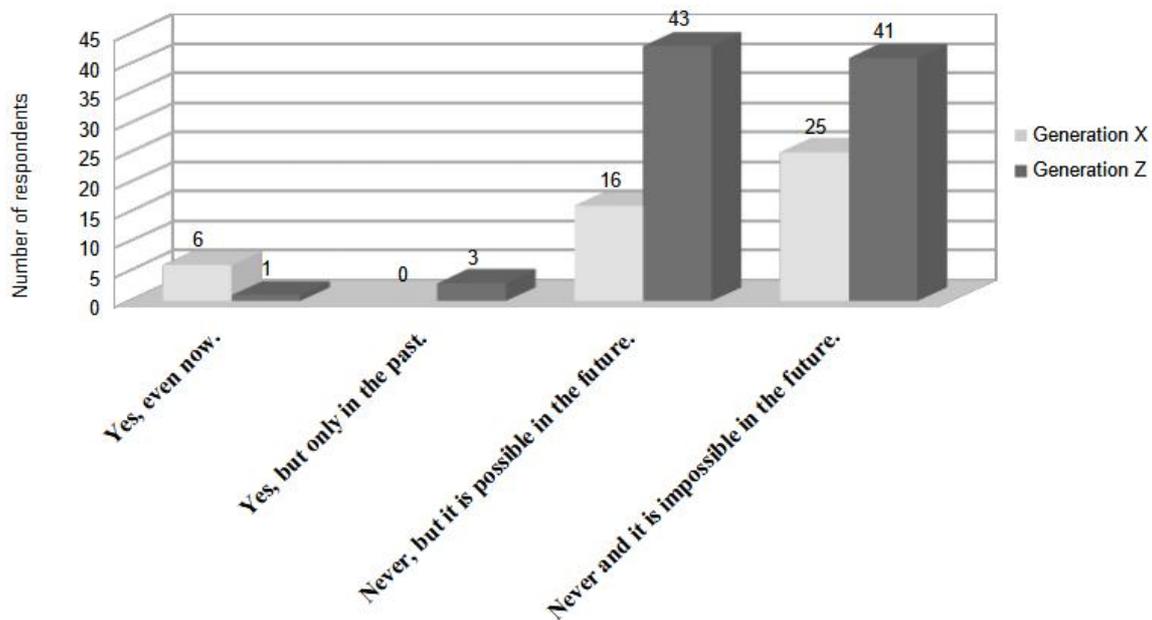
Source: own research

Since the significance level is higher than expected (5%), there is no relationship detected between the variables. As a result, H1 hypothesis can be rejected.

As a following step, H2 hypothesis was tested, according to which the representatives of Generation Z are more open to freelance work than representatives of Generation X.

The following figure shows the answers provided by the representatives of Generation X and Z for the question whether they have already had a freelance job and if not, do they have willingness to accept.

Fig. 3: Number of respondents of generation X,Z based on they have already had a freelance job and if not



Source: own research

The figure shows that more representatives from Generation X than Generation Z work as freelancers, but it is also worth to mention that those who do not have a freelance job, representatives of Generation Z seem to be more open to consider it as a future option. The

following table shows the percentage distribution of the respondents.

Based on the results of the Chi-Square Test (value: 12,112, df: 3, p: 0,007<0,05), there is a relationship between the age (belonging to generation group) and accepting a freelance lifestyle or being open to accept a freelance job. The value of Cramer's V is 0,3000 refers to a moderately weak relationship between the variables. According to this, H2 – The representatives of Generation Z are more open to freelance job than representatives of Generation X, can be accepted.

Conclusion

Atypical employment patterns have been present on the labor market for years, but still a resistance can be observed in Slovakia towards these forms of employment, both from employee and employer perspective. Even nowadays, in the era of digital world, there is a feeling of resistance if telework, freelance lifestyle or any other atypical form of the employment is mentioned. Our questionnaire survey provided an opportunity for a large number of respondents to express their attitude and knowledge about these forms of employment patterns. Our main objective was to get feedback about the awareness of atypical employment patterns, and whether the respondents have experience with any of them.

The atypical forms of employment are mostly present in the consciousness of Generation Z followed by Generation Y and X. This is most likely due to the fact, that representatives of Generation Z have already grown up in a digital world and received more information from the web and are much more open to novelties.

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