

Impact of Non-Standard Forms of Employment on Student Performance

David-Florin CIOCODEICĂ¹
Ștefan-Claudiu CĂESCU²
Mihai-Cristian ORZAN³
Lucia-Nicoleta BARBU⁴

Abstract

This paper debates the benefits and risks regarding non-standard employment for individuals, particularly students. Research shows that students are more likely to choose non-standard employment due to its flexibility, allowing them to have a healthy balance between work and studies. However, this balance needs to be studied, having unpredictable schedules and fluctuating income that can negatively impact academic and overall well-being. While temporary and flexible jobs can enhance employment opportunities and provide financial support, they often come at the cost of job security, lower wages, and lack of social benefits. This study examines the advantages and disadvantages of non-standard employment among students, and its effects on academic performance and career prospects. The results suggest that while flexibility is a key advantage, the challenges associated with non-standard employment necessitate improvements to ensure better support for student workers.

Keywords: non-standard employment, balance, academic performance, flexibility, advantages, disadvantages.

JEL classification: M51, M54

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1. Introduction

There is a controversial debate on the benefits and risks of non-standard employment for individuals. On the one hand, non-standard jobs can be beneficial for unemployed individuals. Taking up a fixed-term or temporary agency job is more favorable with regard to subsequent employment chances than staying unemployed and continuing to search for a permanent job. On the other hand, a large body of literature indicates that this new flexibility comes at the cost of reduced job quality, notably with regard to wages. Non-standard workers often earn less than standard

¹ David-Florin Ciocodeică, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, David.ciocodeica@mk.ase.ro

² Ștefan-Claudiu Căescu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, School of Marketing, stefan.caescu@mk.ase.ro

³ Mihai-Cristian Orzan, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, School of Marketing, mihai.orzan@ase.ro

⁴ Lucia-Nicoleta Barbu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, School of Marketing, lucia.barbu@mk.ase.ro

workers, even when differences in qualifications or work experience are taken into account. Another risk factor is job insecurity, which can contribute to precarious living conditions and can be disadvantageous with regard to old-age provision. Workers with fixed-term and temporary agency contracts have an increased risk of becoming unemployed at the end of their jobs. (Gundert, 2019).

While there is ample evidence that non-standard jobs provide comparatively unfavorable employment conditions, more research into equal treatment regarding basic employment rights is needed to determine if these non-standard employment methods really affect the performance of the students who apply for this type of jobs.

2. Types of non-standard employment and reasons why students work.

Many new forms of non-standard work with a variety of titles emerged in workplaces in the last few decades making meaningful comparisons between these seemingly different types of work difficult.

In 1983, the Federal Minister of Labour established the Commission of Inquiry into Part-time Work in Canada under the Commissioner Joan Wallace to analyze into improving the employment positions of part-time workers. and to determine whether or not part-time workers are treated fairly in terms of pay, benefits and pensions compared to full-timeworkers.

The survey of workers was exploratory, used a non-random sampling approach, and received usable responses from 1.884 workers with a 20% response rate. It found that the major problems associated with part-time work were lack of benefits and pensions, and, poorer benefits relative to full-time workers. These were reiterated in the briefs and letters submitted by individuals. Submissions from 54 unions, and a telephone survey of the 41 largest unions in Canada found that unions supported benefits for part-time workers (on a prorated basis), and inclusion of part-time workers in the public pension system. Submissions from women's organizations were unanimous in their support for prorated benefits and pensions (both public and employer-sponsored) (Zeytinoglu, 2005).

Employers nowadays have capitalized on students' need for flexible work. Students constitute a preferred workforce as they bring particular attributes to the job, such as intelligence, personality, communication skills, as well as flexibility. The majority of student employment, however, is considered unskilled work with almost no connection to the student's field of study (Winkler, 2008)

For many undergraduates, working is perceived a responsibility. When it comes comes to educational performances it is difficult to determine why students choose to work. But understanding how it affects educational performances is complicated in comparison by why students work. A part of the students have to work in order to ensure for the payment of tuition fee. (Perna, 2010). There are difficulties in determining the true impact that work has on academic performance, largely because the number of hours that an individual works is endogenously chosen. For example, it is sometimes posited that individuals who fare well academically in school tend to be blessed with high levels of motivation that may also make them more likely than other students to become more involved in all types

of nonacademic activities. In empirical work, if motivation is not fully observed, some of the variation in academic performance that should be attributed to differences in motivation may mistakenly be attributed to differences in work status (Stinebrickner, 2003).

3. Positive effects of working on Academic Performances

Based on (Douglas, 2019), some of the students (62%) work while being in college. A research that observed the temporary outcomes of employment during college reflected on number of credits taken and grades. A significant benefit of working student is focusing on earnings after they graduate. Statistics show that later in life, the students who worked during college have more advantages, compared to those who did not.

Moreover, this wage is a sign of experience accumulated over the years of working during college, rather than a result of college majors or academic performances. Therefore, the increase of earning advantages can be easily observed right after college graduation.

4. Negative effects of working on Academic Performances

The greatest toll of outside employment appears to be on the student's available study time, the study reports. Pipkin found that for each hour worked, a student gave up about 30 minutes of study time. Despite that sacrifice, the working students said their jobs enhanced their legal reasoning, motivation and efficiency. Two-thirds of the students surveyed had jobs in law settings or in the law school itself. The study involved 1,370 full-time students at seven law schools, which were not identified. Two of the schools were public, two were private and three

were classified as elite. Students in the elite schools were least likely to have part-time jobs. Students in the public schools were only somewhat more likely to have jobs than those in the private school (Winter, 1983).

It is sometimes argued that greater involvement in unpaid work, especially within the family, means that students from certain ethnic backgrounds will be less involved in paid part-time work. Our research does not bear this out. A specific comparison of the students who worked and never worked students, found little difference between their levels of unpaid work (Howieson, 2012)

5. Factors that influence the impact of work on studies

The studies conducted in the last few decades show a considerable rise in the number of students who are part of the work market during their college years. A relevant example in this sense is represented by a study from the 1980^s. According to this study, between 1980 and 1984, 8% of the students had full time jobs. At the same time, a quarter of the students who took part of the study worked less than 20 hours a week. There are immense differences indicated by recent studies. Two decades later (2003-2004), the number of American students who have jobs while also going to college has increased ten times. These results offer a new perspective

over the economic changes. In such circumstances, it is essential to mention not only that there are advantages to having a job as a young individual, but it has become an actual necessity. Having a job ensures gaining independence from one's family, helping the young person cover their essential expenses. Moreover, having a job implies developing a network of new social and professional opportunities, gaining valuable experience in the work field and also developing practical skills necessary in a working environment (Tessema & Astani, 2014).

An increasing amount of students try to minimize the gap between available financial resources and college costs by choosing to work. The biggest majority of students tend to work while being in the studying years, and nowadays, students are pressured to work more hours than in the past.

For some students, working is beneficial regarding academic achievement. The benefits are shown especially as the student takes part in practical activities, and moreover it might help the student learn time management skills. As the young person is part of the work environment, there a set of skills that they get to develop, such as being more responsible, more organized, learning how to adapt to new situations, managing stress and problem-solving (Darolia, 2014).

6. Methodology

In order to implement our research, we implemented an extended, nationwide survey, based on an online questionnaire implemented in Google Forms, a digital tool commonly used to collect and analyze data. The survey was conducted over a ten-day period from October 1st to October 10th, 2024. Respondents were able to access and complete the questionnaire from any internet-connected device. The questionnaire was distributed using digital channels such as student social networking groups, institutional emails and other learning platforms used by students. By using Google Forms, responses were distributed quickly and their analysis benefited from the platform's built-in features, such as the automatic generation of statistics and the ability to export data for further interpretation. This method of data collection allowed for an efficient, accessible and anonymous method of collecting information, which allowed the participants' responses to be very candid.

The study's purpose was to examine the nonstandard employment forms from employees', employers or policy decision-makers point of view in Romania, with a specific focus on their effect on students who work in such settings.

7. Research Objectives and Hypotheses:

Next, in the preliminary phase, the purpose of the paper will be defined. The purpose reveals the issue analyzed and shows the information collected to solve the decision-making problem, respectively finding the answer to the question: what should the decision-maker do?. The decision-making problem and the purpose of the research are two different concepts, having a different meaning, but they are in close interdependence. More precisely, the purpose of the study is established according

to the decision-making problem, it follows from it. The purpose of the study will be defined in such a way as to indicate the information necessary for the decision-maker to choose a course of action. Examples of decision problems and research goals are presented in the following table. (Cătoi, 2009)

Research Objectives:

- O1. Identify the prevalence of non-standard employment experience among respondents.
- O2. Determine the frequency of non-standard employment use for key positions.
- O3. Identify the primary advantages of non-standard employment from the respondents' perspective.
- O4. Identify the main disadvantages of non-standard employment for respondents.
- O5. Assess the impact of non-standard employment on the balance between personal and professional life.

Research Hypotheses:

- H1. The majority of respondents have experience with non-standard employment forms.
- H2. Over 35% of respondents rarely use non-standard employment forms.
- H3. Nearly half of respondents consider schedule flexibility the main advantage.
- H4. More than 45% of respondents see fluctuating income as the main disadvantage.
- H5. Over 35% of respondents believe non-standard employment affects the balance between personal and professional life.

8. Results and discussions

Prevalence and Reasons for Nonstandard Employment



Figure 1. Non-standard employment experiences

Source: Authors' own research

41% of respondents reported experience with non-standard employment, while 59% did not.

The essential causes for choosing nonstandard employment include increased flexibility (43%) and cost reduction (21%), emphasizing the need for adaptability and financial proficiency. Other reasons include access to specialized talent for temporary projects (15%) and evading long-term commitments (11%), followed by risk reduction (10%). Flexibility is exceptionally essential for students who work under non-standard employment conditions, as it allows them to manage academic responsibilities in parallel with work commitments. Nevertheless, this flexibility often comes at the expense of job stability and predictable income, which can increase stress levels and impact academic performance.

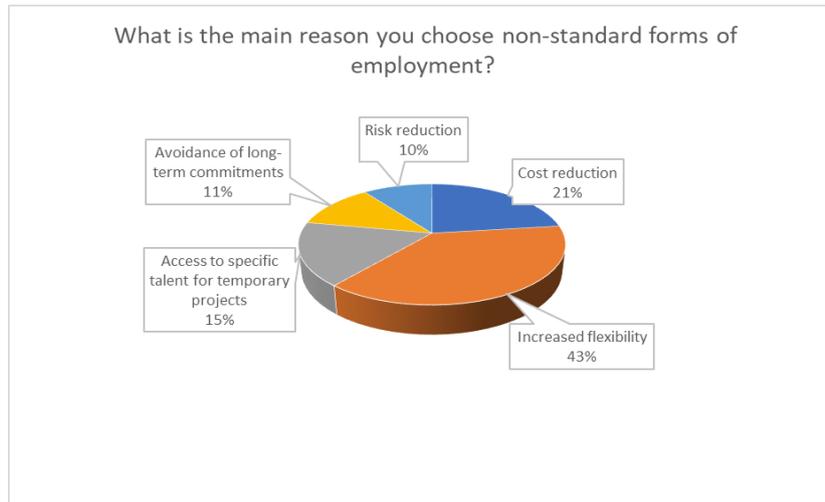


Figure 2. The reason of choosing non-standard forms of employment
Source: Authors' own research

Disadvantages of nonstandard Employment

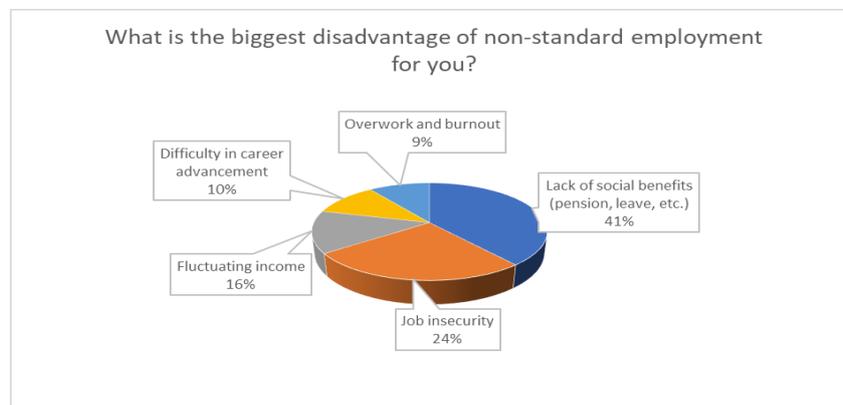


Figure 3. Disadvantages of non-standard employment
Source: Authors' own research

The greatest limitation of non-standard employment is the lack of benefits (41%), followed by job insecurity (24%) and fluctuating income (16%). Other downsides include difficulty in career advancement (10%) and overwork and burnout(9%).

For students, these challenges translate into recurring job changes, lack of career progression, and uncertainty about future employment opportunities. The instability of nonstandard employment may force students to emphasize work over studies, negatively affecting their academic achievements.

Impact on Performance and Work-Life Balance

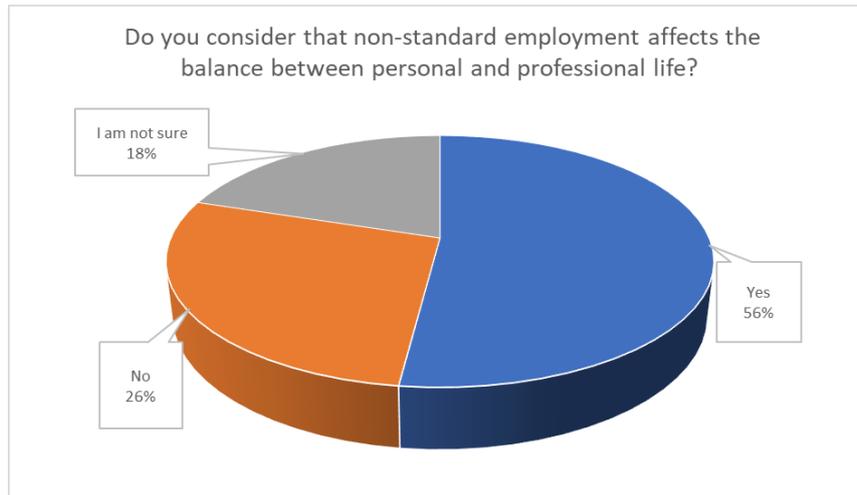


Figure 4. The impact of non-standard forms of employment on the balance between personal and professional life

Source: Authors' own research

56% of respondents believe nonstandard employment affects the balance between personal and professional life. Among students, this impact is even more prominent. While flexibility allows them to balance out coursework and employment, the pressure of oscillating hours and job insecurity can lead to burnout. Additionally, working nonstandard jobs may result in diminished focus on studies, lower academic performance, and delays in completing their education.

41% of respondents believe nonstandard employment is an effective solution for short-term projects, and 38% agree that it provides employees with greater professional freedom. However, a significant percentage of people (40%) agree that the lack of social benefits (such as pensions and paid leave) is an essential concern. For students, the absence of advantages can mean fewer protections in case of illness or unexpected circumstances. Furthermore, without structured career improvement opportunities, students working in nonstandard employment may find it challenging to secure stable, long-term employment after graduation.

Perceptions of Atypical Employment

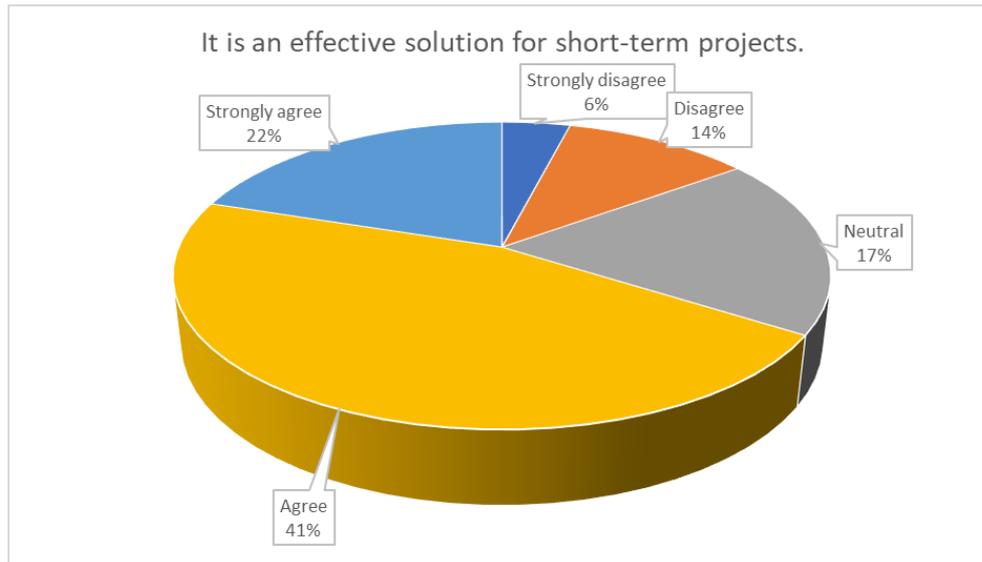


Figure 5. The importance of non-standard forms of employment regarding short-term projects

Source: Authors' own research

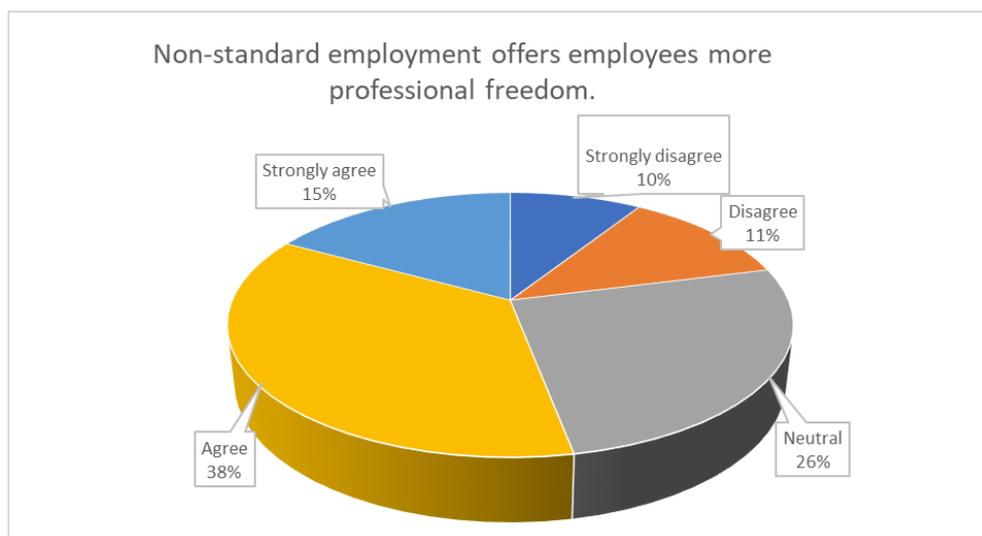


Figure 6. Professional freedom of non-standard employment

Source: Authors' own research

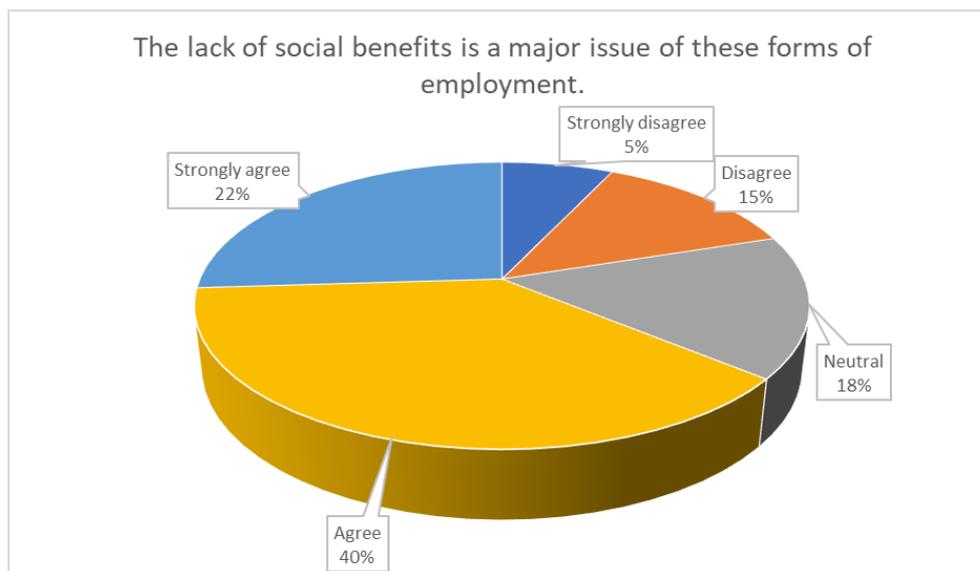


Figure 7. The lack of social benefits
 Source: Authors' own research

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

While non-standard employment offers flexibility and cost savings, it presents major challenges for students. The instability, fluctuating income, and limited career opportunities may obstruct academic progress and long-term career prospects. To reduce these risks, policymakers and employers should consider the following measures: Providing social benefits related to nontraditional employees. Developing clearer regulations to provide greater job security. Offering career development programs for students engaged in atypical work. To encourage educational institutions to provide resources and guidance for students balancing work and studies.

Ultimately, non-standard employment is a major factor in the student workforce, providing both opportunities and obstacles. It trains students to be financial independents and prepares them for the workforce after they graduate.

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