

## **An in-depth Study of Non-Standard Forms of Employment Among Romanian Students**

**Lucia Nicoleta BARBU**

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies  
lucia.barbu@mk.ase.ro

**Ștefan Claudiu CĂESCU**

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies  
stefan.caescu@mk.ase.ro

**Mihai Cristian ORZAN**

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies  
mihai.orzan@ase.ro

**Florina BOTEZATU**

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies  
botezatuflor@gmail.com

**David Florin CIOCODEICĂ**

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies  
david.ciocodeica@mk.ase.ro

### **Article history**

Received 31 March 2025 | Accepted 15 September 2025 | Published online 29 September 2025.

### **Abstract**

As of late, with the advancement of the labor showcase, but too the increment in contracted adaptability, increasingly understudies are inclined to select atypical shapes of work. Digitization, financial changes, but moreover the modern prerequisites of managers are vital variables that impact their choice of work environment. Outsourcing, part-time contracts, regular work or online collaborations are fair some illustrations of atypical business sorts. This consider appears how these diverse sorts of work impact the improvement of proficient aptitudes on the one hand and the adjust between instruction and work on the other. The results of the investigate appear that increasingly understudies select an partner work from the point of view of the fact that it offers openings construct up to construct up involvement, but moreover proficient freedom, but in spite of all this, in spite of the fact that it offers budgetary independence, this sort of business can have long-term negative impacts, affecting scholastic execution and proficient soundness.

**Keywords:** Atypical employment, students, flexibility, freelancing, online work, part-time contracts, education.

**JEL classification:** M51, M54.

### **Introduction**

In the current economic and social context, where digitization and flexibility are the main elements around which the labor market revolves, atypical employment has become an increasingly popular option among students, with a large proportion of them choosing alternative forms of work, such as example: freelancing, part-time jobs, seasonal jobs, especially during the summer or different collaborations through Social Media platforms. Financial autonomy, professional and personal development are some of the reasons behind choosing an atypical form of employment (Stoica et al., 2015).

The flexible work schedule, the diversification of work tasks, but also the professional development represents some essential advantages that determine the choice of such a job, but this type of employment also has disadvantages such as: the instability of the workplace, the lack of certain social benefits, but also the discrepancy between professional and academic life. This study aims to highlight the impact of atypical forms of employment on Romanian students, highlighting both the opportunities and the risks associated with this new phenomenon.

### **1. Atypical employment in Romania – advantages and disadvantages**

Agreeing to later think about, it is illustrated that increasingly undergraduates are choosing atypical shapes of business since they offer more prominent adaptability in terms of working hours and area, give a adjust between proficient, individual, and scholastic life, and make a more pleasant work involvement. Numerous undergraduates select this frame of business to extend their salary whereas moreover picking up proficient life involvement nearby their ponders (Ionescu & Marin, 2021).

Agreeing to a think about conducted by the INS (2024) around 40% of undergraduates believe that part-time business may be a appropriate choice amid their ponders, because it permits them to adjust money related pay with college participation.

Many employers require professional experience after completing studies, which is why many students choose to work in order to gain relevant professional experience in their field of interest, so that after graduation, they will have skills that are valued on the job market (Dumitrescu, 2024).

Ionescu & Marin (2021) contend that these shapes of business can have a positive effect on undergraduates since they offer assistance create proficient aptitudes, which can afterward be developed in several proficient areas. In any case, on the other hand, they may have a negative impact, particularly since undergraduates who select to work slowly lose scholastic execution due to the reality that the inspiration for gaining additional salary is higher, and the time apportioned to considering gets to be progressively restricted. Concurring to a consider conducted by the College of Bucharest in 2024, more than 45% of undergraduates who work more than 20 hours per week experienced a altogether lower scholarly execution due to need of time for considering (Orzan et al., 2021).

The same supposition is shared by (Păun, 2023), who, in a consider, presents the impediments of choosing such a work, with the foremost imperative one being the need of monetary soundness. Not at all like changeless business, which guarantees a steady pay and certain benefits, atypical work does not offer as numerous preferences, such as wellbeing protections, paid get-away, or benefits commitments. A consider appears that more than 35% of undergraduates work to pay for their ponders and to cover every day costs, particularly in huge cities where the fetched of living is much higher.

### **2. Atypical forms of employment in Romania**

Atypical work can be characterized as a concept that incorporates any sort of work course of action that does not depend on a standard contract for an uncertain period and full-time work. More particularly, it alludes to those shapes of work that are based on adaptability in terms of working hours, area, or contract length (Mihailov, 2019). Among these atypical shapes of work, we are able list:

#### **Part-time work**

The foremost common frame of atypical work nowadays is part-time work. This alludes to working less than 40 hours a week and is directed by Romania's labor enactment, specifically the Labor Code. Increasingly undergraduates select part-time employments since they offer a adaptable plan that permits them to alter their working hours concurring to their college

courses. Numerous of these occupations can be found in segments such as HoReCa, call centers, or different regulatory administrations. A consider conducted by the National Founded of Measurements (INS) in 2024 appears that over 40% of understudies in Romania are utilized part-time, choosing such employments to cover day by day costs, pick up proficient encounter, and, over all, increment their wage.

### **Freelancing**

Roman et al. (2021) characterizes outsourcing as an autonomous frame of work in which the specialist gives different administrations to companies or clients without having an work contract for a decided period with an organization. It may be a developing frame of business, particularly due to the advancement of innovation and social media systems, which offer numerous preferences. Consultants can work from anywhere and have adaptable working hours. The foremost common areas for this modern frame of atypical work are IT, online showcasing, interpretations, substance composing, counseling, and photography, among others. Compared to conventional employments, outsourcing offers preferences such as expanded salary, independence in choosing ventures to work on, and the capacity to work from anyplace. In later a long time, the number of individuals choosing this work in Romania has expanded altogether, particularly as understudies practicing this calling can learn how to oversee their claim trade, creating different aptitudes such as arrangement, time administration, and promoting.

### **Collaborations on digital platforms**

An arrangement of later considers recommend that working on computerized stages speaks to a modern frame of atypical work. Online work stages like Upwork, Specialist, Fiverr, and Beat permit understudies to offer their administrations in different areas, counting IT, advanced promoting, realistic plan, copywriting, and interpretation. These stages act as middle people between specialists and clients, empowering understudies to construct a portfolio of ventures to display to potential bosses.

A key advantage of working on computerized stages is the capacity to work from domestic or other areas, with adaptable plans. Besides, understudies have got to a worldwide showcase of buyers and can work on numerous ventures at the same time, permitting them to win more in a shorter period. Agreeing to a report by the INS (2024), the number of computerized stage clients in Romania has essentially expanded in later a long time, with dynamic utilize in divisions such as data innovation, computerized showcasing, and realistic plan.

### **Seasonal work**

Regular work is another common frame of atypical work among understudies in Romania. This alludes to work for a constrained period amid the year, ordinarily in an industry with particular regular requests. The foremost common segments where understudies can discover regular work are tourism and neighborliness (inns, eateries, cafes), retail, and farming.

Regular work is regularly prevalent among understudies since it permits them to gain extra wage for brief periods, regularly amid the summer or winter occasions, without essentially interferometer with their ponders. Also, this sort of work offers students an opportunity to memorize approximately diverse areas, pick up encounter working with the open, lead a group, and improve their CV (Țiclea, 2002).

Be that as it may, regular work moreover comes with challenges, such as the need of work progression and the nonattendance of the long-term benefits given by lasting business contracts. Besides, understudies entering these callings may not advantage from satisfactory legitimate security, and working conditions can be more unstable than in other areas (Ionescu & Marin, 2021).

### 3. The impact of atypical employment on academic performance and personal life

Research on the impact of atypical employment on academic performance suggests both positive and negative effects. On one hand, this type of work can contribute to the development of time management skills, which are essential both for academic life and future professional endeavors. Moreover, students who work in their field of study can apply the theoretical knowledge gained during their undergraduate studies and acquire valuable practical experience (Bălan & Ioniță, 2023).

At the same time, research suggests that students who work too much risk becoming overburdened. A study by Ionescu and Marin (2021) found that 38% of students who worked more than 25 hours per week reported symptoms of stress and anxiety, while overall life satisfaction and academic performance were significantly reduced.

For Romanian students, atypical employment is seen as a valuable opportunity to develop professional skills, earn money, and learn how to manage time. However, it is essential to balance work, study, and personal life to prevent negative effects on academic performance and mental health. Time management and establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life are crucial for well-being and optimal academic performance (Marica, 2019).

### 4. Research methodology

The purpose of this study is to analyze the forms of atypical employment adopted by students in Romania and their impact on academic performance, personal life, and professional development. To analyze the atypical forms of employment adopted by Romanian students and their impact on academic performance, personal life and professional development, a quantitative design based on the application of a survey was used.

**Investigated population** The study was addressed to students from various university centers in Romania, regardless of the field of study or form of education (budget/fee, frequency/ID/FR).

**Sampling method:** A non-probability sampling method was used, more precisely convenience sampling, due to the accessibility of the respondents and the resources available to carry out the study.

**Number of participants:** Over 200 students participated in the study, selected from various universities in Romania.

**Data collection:** Data were collected through an online questionnaire, distributed through educational platforms, social networks and student groups. The questionnaire included questions regarding the types of atypical jobs held, the number of hours worked, the impact on studies and personal life.

**Study period and location:** Data collection took place between October 10-30, 2024 and was carried out at the national level, involving students from various regions of Romania.

**Data analysis:** The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods (frequencies, percentages) and inferential methods, where appropriate, to determine correlations between the variables of interest.

**Research limitations:** One of the main limitations of the study is the use of convenience sampling, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Also, the use of an online questionnaire may influence the diversity of respondents, excluding students who do not frequently use digital platforms.

**Future research directions:** For future studies, it is recommended to expand the sample to include students from a wider spectrum of universities and fields of study. Also, a mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative) could provide a more detailed picture of the reasons and perceptions related to atypical employment. Another important aspect would be to investigate the long-term impact of these forms of employment on the careers of graduates.

#### 4.1. Research objectives

O1. Identifying the presence of experience with atypical forms of employment among Romanian students.

O2. Identifying the main advantage of atypical employment for Romanian students.

O3. Identifying the main disadvantage of atypical employment for Romanian students.

O4. Determining the level of influence on the balance between personal and professional life among Romanian students in relation to atypical employment.

The survey serves as the basic instrument for ensuring that the inquiry is both successful and unique. It consists of a series of questions designed to collect the data required to meet the goals of the research (Cătoi, 2009, p.327). Over 200 individuals completed the study.

#### 4.2. Research hypotheses

H1. The majority of students have experience with atypical forms of employment.

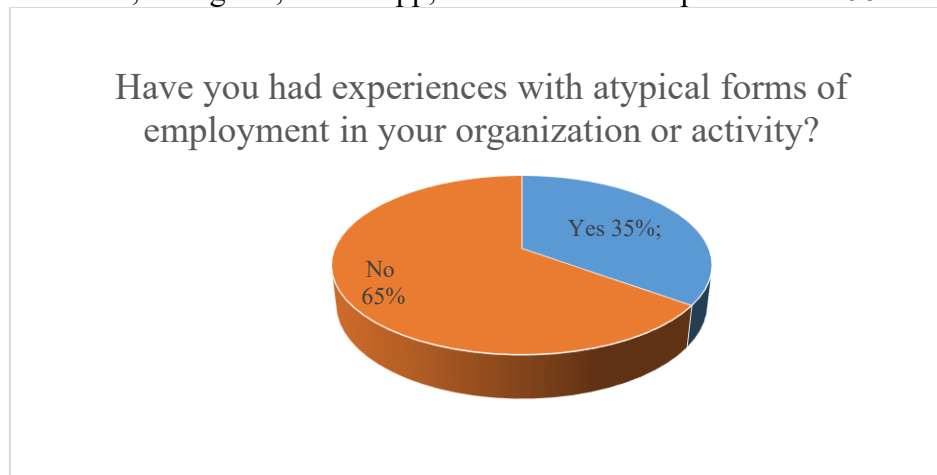
H2. Nearly half of the respondents consider schedule flexibility to be a key advantage.

H3. More than half of the respondents consider fluctuating income to be a primary disadvantage.

H4. Over 40% of respondents believe that atypical employment influences the balance between personal and professional life.

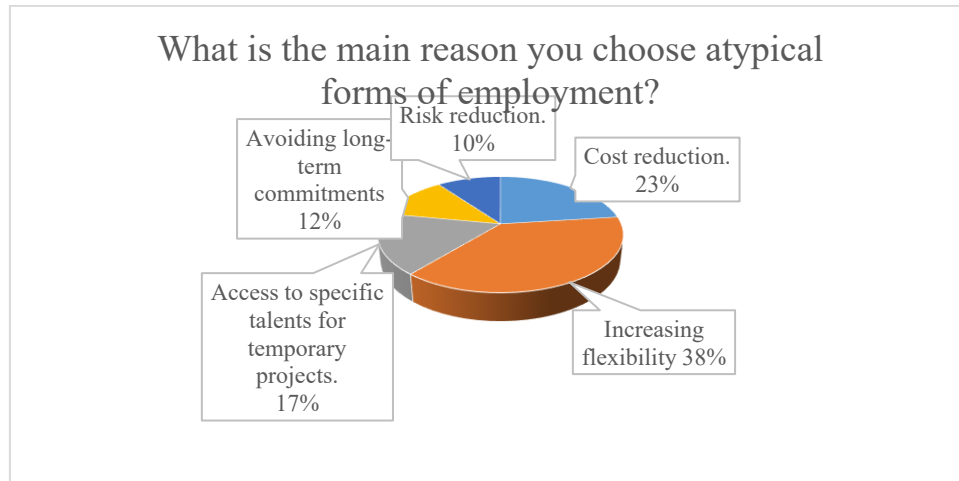
#### 5. Analysis and interpretation of results

The survey was distributed online using the Google Forms platform, between October 10 and October 30, 2024, and the collected data was analysed accordingly. Respondents were able to complete the survey at their convenience, and it was shared through various online channels, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and email. The response rate is 95%.



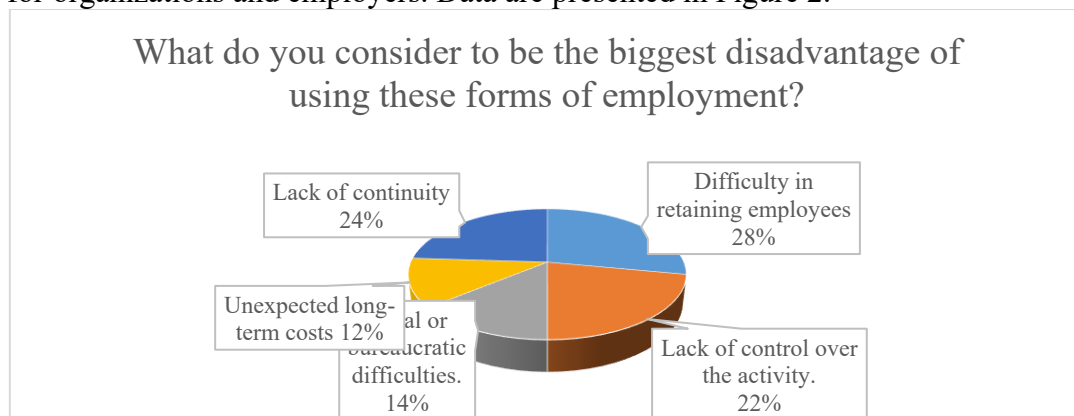
*Figure 1. Experiences with atypical form of employment*

35% of respondents stated that they have had experience with atypical forms of employment, while 65% have not had such experiences. These results highlight a moderate presence of atypical forms of employment, suggesting opportunities for development in this area for organizations and employers. Data are presented in Figure 1.



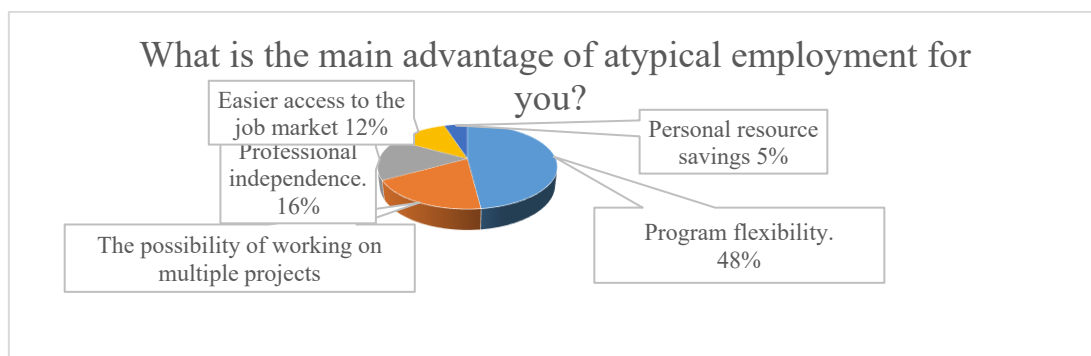
**Figure 2. Choose atypical forms of employment**

35% of respondents stated that they have had experience with atypical forms of employment, while 65% have not had such experiences. These results highlight a moderate presence of atypical forms of employment, suggesting opportunities for development in this area for organizations and employers. Data are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 3. Disadvantage of using these forms of employment**

The biggest disadvantage of atypical forms of employment is the difficulty in employee retention (28%), followed by the lack of continuity (24%) and the lack of control over activities (22%). Other disadvantages include legal or bureaucratic difficulties (14%) and unforeseen long-term costs (12%). These results highlight the challenges associated with ensuring stability and efficiency in the use of these forms of employment. Data are presented in Figure 3.

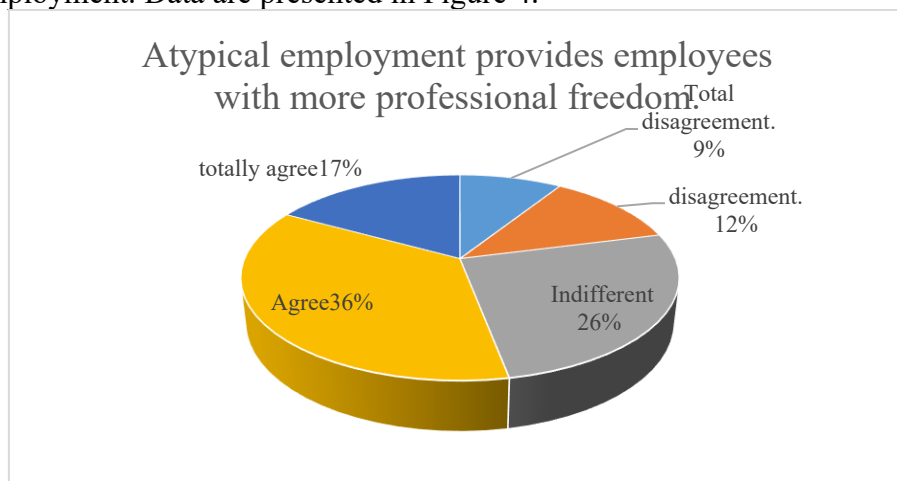


**Figure 4. Advantage of using these forms of employment**



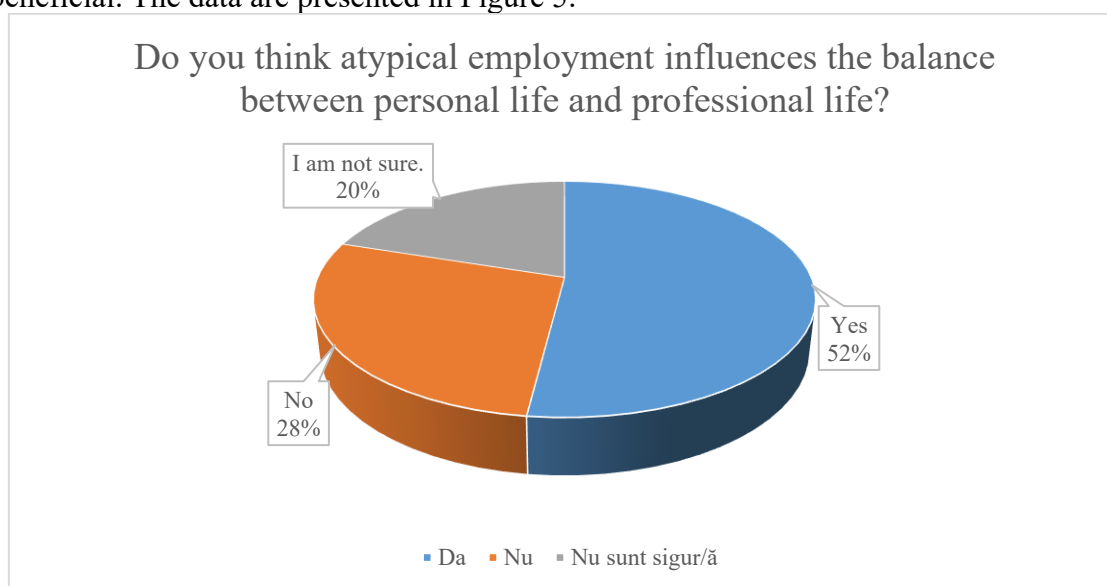
The main advantage of atypical employment, according to respondents, is schedule flexibility (48%), followed by the ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously (19%). Other advantages include professional independence (16%), easier access to the job market (12%), and savings in personal resources (5%). These results highlight the preference for a diversified working style.

The majority of respondents believe that atypical employment provides employees with more professional freedom, with 36% agreeing and 17% fully agreeing. However, a significant percentage (26%) are indifferent, while 12% disapprove and 9% express total disagreement. These data reflect a predominantly positive perception of the professional freedom offered by atypical employment. Data are presented in Figure 4.



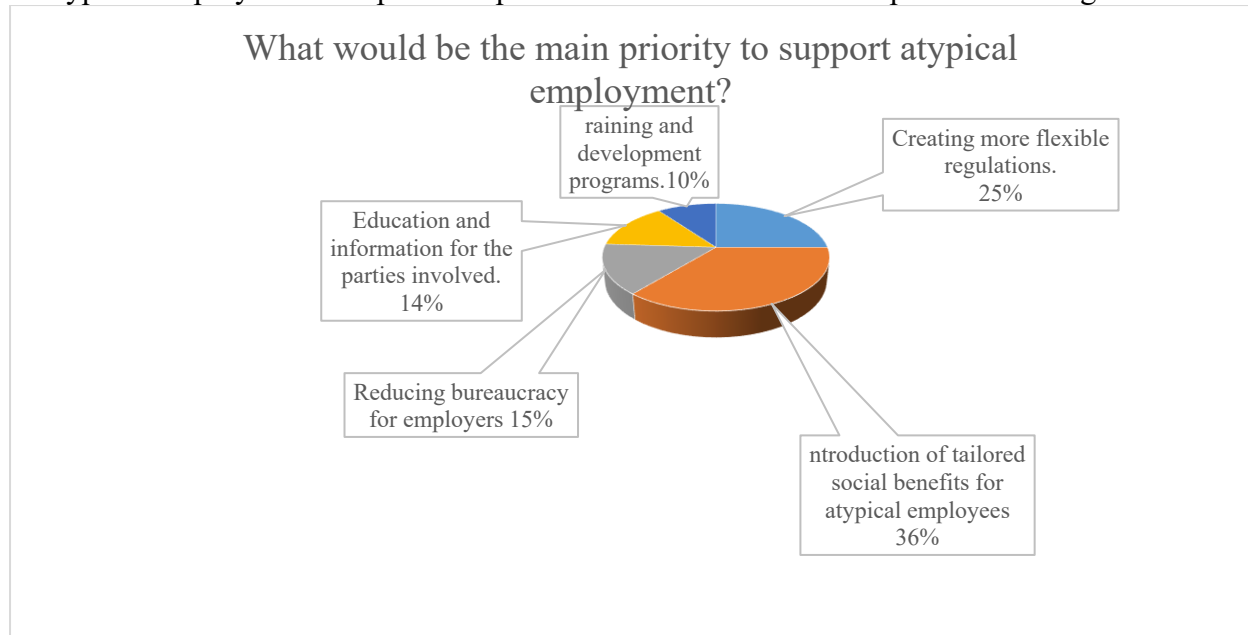
**Figure 5. Atypical employment provides employees with more professional freedom.**

More than half of respondents (53%) believe that an atypical job offers more professional freedom, of which 36% agree and 17% strongly agree. In contrast, 21% of respondents do not share this opinion, expressing disagreement (12%) or strongly disagree (9%). A significant percentage of 26% remain indifferent. These results suggest that the perception of the professional freedom offered by atypical work varies, but the majority of respondents consider it beneficial. The data are presented in Figure 5.



**Figure 6. The balance between personal life and professional life**

More than half of the respondents (52%) believe that atypical employment has an impact on the balance between personal and professional life. In contrast, 28% do not observe such an influence, and 20% are unsure. These results suggest that the majority perceive a link between the type of employment and personal-professional balance. Data are presented in Figure 6.



**Figure 7. Atypical employment**

The most significant support for atypical employment, according to respondents, would be the introduction of tailored social benefits for atypical employees (36%), followed by the creation of more flexible regulations (25%). Other suggestions include reducing bureaucracy for employers (15%), educating and informing stakeholders (14%), and implementing training and development programs (10%). The results highlight the need for regulatory adjustments and benefits to more effectively support this type of employment. Data are presented in Figure 7.

## Conclusion

The investigation comes about highlight that atypical shapes of business are getting to be progressively broad and are seen as a useful arrangement for both bosses and representatives, especially in segments such as promoting and imaginative businesses. Adaptability is the key to victory – The lion's share of workers accept that atypical business offers them more prominent independence and the capacity to adjust their work plan, driving to higher efficiency and work fulfilment.

Fetched decrease is the deciding figure. Bosses are drawn to the money related investment funds they can accomplish by dodging costs related with conventional long-term work. This makes atypical business courses of action financially appealing. Execution will not be influenced – Conclusions are partitioned on this matter, but most accept that non-routine laborers perform at slightest as well as changeless representatives due to the adaptability and independence they appreciate.

Atypical business shapes are considered a useful arrangement for both companies and laborers, with adaptability and fetched diminishment being the most reasons for their appropriation. Be that as it may, the victory of this demonstrate moreover depends on favorable assess administrations and proficient execution administration of workers.

## Research Limitations



One of the main limitations of the study is the use of convenience sampling, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Also, the use of an online questionnaire may influence the diversity of respondents, excluding students who do not frequently use digital platforms.

### **Future research directions**

For future studies, it is recommended to expand the sample to include students from a wider spectrum of universities and fields of study. Also, a mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative) could provide a more detailed picture of the reasons and perceptions related to atypical employment. Another important aspect would be to investigate the long-term impact of these forms of employment on the careers of graduates.

### **References**

- Bălan, L., & Ioniță, R. 2023. Flexibilizarea pieței muncii și impactul asupra tinerelor talente. *Revista de Muncă și Carieră*, 22(3), 112-120.
- Cătoi, I., 2009. *Cercetări de marketing*. București: Editura Marketing.
- Dumitrescu, G. 2024. Studiu privind impactul muncii part-time asupra performanței academice a studenților din România. București: Editura Universității din București.
- Institutul Național de Statistică (INS), 2024. Raport anual privind evoluția pieței muncii. București: INS. Available at: <https://insse.ro/cms/>.
- Ionescu, M., & Marin, A. 2021. Angajarea atipică în rândul studenților din România: Motivații și provocări. *Journal of Romanian Labor Studies*, 18(1), 45-59.
- Marica, M. E. 2019, *Contracte de muncă atipice*. București: Universul Juridic, 2019. 414 p
- Mihailov, T. 2019, Home-based work and telework – atypical forms of employment. In: *Public Administration Review*, no. 4 (104), pp. 157-161.
- Orzan, M.C, Zara, A., Căescu, Ș.C., Constantinescu, M.E. & Orzan, O.A (2021). Social Media Networks as a Business Environment, During COVID-19 Crisis. *Revista de Management Comparat International*, 22(1), 64-73.
- Roman, N. and Alcaz, N., 2021. Practica reglementării relațiilor de muncă ocazionale prin prisma legislației ungare. *Studia Universitatis Moldaviae (Seria Științe Sociale)*, 3(143), pp. 63-67. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4570262>.
- Stoica, I., Vegheș, C. & Orzan, M. (2015). Statistical exploratory marketing research on romanian consumer's behavior regarding smartphones. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 23(1), 923-931.
- Țiclea, A. 2002, Contractul individual de muncă pe timp parțial. În: *RRDM nr. 3/2002*, pp. 29-38.