Part-time Work in SME in the Moravian-Silesian Region

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to summarize the basic findings of the research, which deals with employing and with managing of part-time workers. Partial aim is to compare the attitudes of employers and representatives of small and medium enterprises in the Moravian-Silesian region to part-time work. To achieve the goal of this work were used method of description, comparison and statistical methods. It was found that the use of part-time employment is dependent on the size of an enterprise and is independent on the owner of the enterprise. It was also found the differences among the respondents in the opinions about effectiveness of part-time employees for the company.

Key words: part-time work · part-time employment · Moravian-Silesian region

JEL Classification: E24 · J22 · O15

1 Introduction

Higher labour market flexibility is nowadays considered an inseparable part of labour markets that face with unemployment and decrease in jobs. The labour market climate is also disturbed by economic crisis, after which it takes a long time for the labour market to return back to “normal”. Today, the labour market is conditioned by many changes that have an impact on further development of human resources management and the employer-employee relationship (Brožová 2003, Dušková 2005, Keller, 2012):

• increased employment in services,
• growth of the strategic importance of human capital,
• risks and uncertainty associated with constant changes,
• new forms of communication and information technology,
• creation of competitive advantage in markets based on creativity, learning, adaptation, and the ability of transformation of knowledge into technical and technological innovations,
• transformation of economy in the financial sector,
• growth in the volume of inferior forms of employment (such as uncertain, temporary, or badly paid jobs),
• growth in the volume of well paid jobs based on knowledge,
• work flexibility.

Work flexibility has become one of the characteristic features of work nowadays. By flexibility we mean the ability to adapt to changing conditions and the ability to react quickly and flexibly (Podnar, Golob, 2010). Also, work flexibility can be used to fight unemployment as one of the causes of unemployment is the rigidity of the labour market. However, some (for example Keller 2012, p. 23) point out that “inferior forms of work contribute to the fact that employment becomes more uncertain, makes employees less resistant to market fluctuations, and still less allows employees to face social uncertainty”.

From the point of view of economic theory, we can divide work flexibility into several types. Already Atkinson (1984) divided flexibility into the so-called numerical, functional, and wage flexibility. Another classification includes positive and negative flexibility (Jepsen, 2006) or offensive and defensive flexibility (Vielle, Walthey 2003).

Given the focus of this paper, we consider it appropriate to deal also with time flexibility (also working-time flexibility; it takes into account the time aspect of working time) and work flexibility (called also flexible forms of employment; it connects various forms of employment relationships and working conditions), which are, compared to the above mentioned flexibilities, focused directly on the definition of various forms of flexible forms of employment and flexible forms of work and working time (Accornero, 2005; VUPSV 2004).

According to this typology, we can divide time flexibility into classical forms of working time (which have been used since the 1990s) – for example barter, night shifts or overtime work. Among new forms of working time (which have been used in recent years) we count working time account, staggered hours, compressed work week, flexible working time, work in working teams, part-time work, job-sharing, term-time working, sabbatical, career breaks, educational leave, part-time retirement.
Also, flexible forms of employment can be divided into classical and new forms. Classical forms of flexible employment, which are, at the same time, the most popular and most used, are self-employment and temporary forms of employment. New flexible forms of employment include home-working, on-call work, working on the move, teleworking, subcontracting (VÚPSV 2004; Gilarová 2004).

Nowadays, one of the most desirable types of flexible employment, especially in western countries, is part-time job (shorter working time, § 80 in the Czech Labour Code). In Czech Republic work part-time just about 6% of all employed person, but the number of employees on part-time arrangement slightly rises. That is why this paper is dedicated to this topic. The purpose of this paper is to summarize the basic findings of the research, which deals with employing and with managing of part-time workers. Partial aim is to compare the attitudes of employers and representatives of small and medium enterprises in the Moravian-Silesian region to part-time work.

2 Theoretical basis of Part-time Work

Part-time employment refers to work that takes place for less than a standard number of hours per week. In Czech Republic, part-time workers are those who work fewer than 40 hours per week. From the legislative point of view, we can say that our labour law is neutral towards part-time employment - it neither promotes nor restricts it in any way (Kotíková, Kotrusová, Vychová 2013). The Czech Labour Code, says if “employee taking care of a child who is under 15 years of age or a pregnant female employee, or an employee who proves that he or she, mostly on his or her own, takes long-term care of a person who, is considered as a person being dependent on another individual’s assistance and such dependency is classified by grade II (dependency of medium seriousness), grade III (serious dependency) or grade IV (full dependency), and this employee requests to work only part-time or requests some other suitable adjustment to her or his weekly working hours, the employer is obliged to satisfy with such request unless this is prevented by serious operational reasons.” (Law no. 262/2006 Coll., “Labour code” as amended).

Part-time employment gradually increased in majority of developed countries, especially in recent decades. Part-time jobs are mainly used by women and it is the most feminized alternative form of work. (McDonald, Bradley, Brown, 2009; Cuesta, Ramos Martín 2009)

But only few authors in this field specializes on human resource management, or, more precisely, on the management and leadership of employees with part-time jobs. Yet, such publications do exist. For example, Lynda Macdonald (2009) characterizes in a part of her book dedicated to part-time jobs their advantages and disadvantages, reveals the differences between part-time and full-time employment, and deals with the management of part-time employees in the area of remuneration. Between the most mentioned advantages of part-time work for employers belongs an option to harmonize personal and working life. Disadvantages for employees are the lower salary (according to amount of arrangement) and the lower option to employee training. On the other side, the advantages for employers can be higher flexibility, and higher firm productivity. They surveyed, that 10% increase in the part-time share is associated with 4.8% higher productivity (Nelen, de Grip 2013). As the biggest disadvantages are mentioned higher administration costs, and difficulties with managing and leading of workers.

Giannikis and Mihail (2011) discovered that part-time employment is associated with higher turnover and a higher risk of dismissal, a reduction in non-financial rewards. It was also found that there are many reasons why employees with part-time have lower educational opportunities (because of the training costs and return on investment; working irregular shifts; working background; low enthusiasm of part-time employees; high turnover of part-time employees; lack of resources, knowledge, and suitable training provision) (Sobaih 2011).

Vinopal (2011) dealt with research of importance of selected factors of work quality for employees and their satisfaction with these factors. His results show that for employees are very important job retention, relationship with colleagues and behaviour of managers, nonfinancial rewarding and time for family. But employees’ satisfaction is depended on the working time. Part-time workers are more satisfied with remaining time, than full-timers. The satisfaction with relationships with colleagues and behaviour of managers doesn’t depend on working arrangement. On the other hand, part-time workers are more unsatisfied with nonfinancial rewarding and with job retention.

Václavková (2007) says, that small and medium-sized enterprises offer a relatively large job security to their employees, because they offer a temporary job much less often than open-ended employment contract. But simultaneously small and medium-sized enterprises offer part-time work much less, than large enterprises.

3 Methodology of the research

This article is part of a student project focusing on employment and leadership of people with part-time jobs in enterprises in the Moravian-Silesian Region (hereafter abbreviated the MSR). The aim of this research is, besides
other things, to find out how the institute of part-time employment is used in the MSR, a region of long-term, widespread unemployment where part-time employment could help improve the situation. Attention was paid also to the ways of managing employees with part-time jobs and to the comparison of employees with part-time and full-time jobs.

It was used a method of inquiry (questionnaire consisting of 27 questions, which were divided into the following groups: identification questions, questions concerning the possibilities of part-time employment, and questions on leading and managing of people with part-time jobs).

The data collection was performed through electronically sent questionnaires due to lower costs and time savings. The basic sample comprised enterprises and organizations in the MSR totalling 16681. In order for the survey to be representative, we needed to collect at least 376 correctly filled in questionnaires (Raosoft, 2015). We approached 11 000 companies; 149 emails with request to fill in the questionnaire were not delivered (July – September 2015). 410 respondents filled in the questionnaires, which guarantee the representativeness of the research. The questionnaire was distributed via the portal survio.com, which allows that the respondent cannot reply twice. In this way, the uniqueness of each questionnaire was guaranteed. The overall return of the questionnaires was thus 3.78 %.

### Table 1: Characteristic of the population size and sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population size = 16680</th>
<th>Sample size = 410</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-49 employees</td>
<td>15 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 249 employees</td>
<td>948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 and more employees</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own processing

For this paper are used the data only from small and medium sized enterprises, overall 380 enterprises, which still guarantee the representativeness of the research. Was formulated the following hypotheses with respect to the stated goal:

**H1:** More than a half of researched subjects use part-time work. This hypothesis was based on the preliminary research and on the results of Václavková (2007) and on current knowledge gained from others researches which claim that up to 60% of companies use part-time jobs (Confederation of Industry of the Czech republic 2009; Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Czech Republic 2010).

**H2:** The larger enterprises use the part-time work more. This hypothesis was divided into statistical hypothesis:

*H2₀:* The use of part-time employment is independent of the size of an enterprise.

*H2ₐ:* The use of part-time employment is dependent on the size of an enterprise.

We assumed that the use of part-time employment would be dependent on the size of the enterprise, because, quite logically, the more employees the company has, the more part-time jobs it can offer.

**H3:** Foreign enterprises use part-time work more frequently, than domestic enterprises.

*H3₀:* The use of part-time employment is independent of the owner of an enterprise.

*H3ₐ:* The use of part-time employment is dependent on the owner of an enterprise.

### 4 Research results

The number of people in part-time employment amounts to 316 thousand; the share of part-time in total employment is thus 6.6% (2014 data from the Czech Statistical Office). The standardized Eurostat data, however, show a value of 5.5% for the Czech Republic for 2014. Compared to the average of the EU-28 countries, where the share of part-time to total employment was 19.6% in the last year, this number is very low. Because part-time work helps to coordinate working and personal life, there is a supposition that mothers with little children usually work part-time. In fact 5.3% mothers with child in age 2-3 years can work part-time and just 11.6% women with children in age 3-6 years have part-time work. But according to Formánková, Dudová, Vohlidalová, (2011) almost 40 % mothers with little children in age 3-6 and about 11 % mothers with children in age 2-3 would like to work part-time. There we see potential for future.

The primary research has shown that employers enable part-time employment in 68 percent of cases (altogether 257 firms). The characteristics of firms providing part-time employment can be found in Table 2. This question also confirmed the hypothesis H1. More than a half of researched subjects use part-time work. The research showed that 70% of the surveyed companies use part-time employment.
According to Confederation of Industry of the Czech republic (2009), employs part-time work 50% of enterprises, according to the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Czech Republic (2010) 58% of companies employs part-time jobs. We assume that we have reached such a high number, because companies, which do not use the part-time job, omitted the questionnaire because of lack of interest, even though it was said in the instructions that the views of companies that do not use part-time work are valuable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Use part-time work</th>
<th>Abs.</th>
<th>In %</th>
<th>Abs.</th>
<th>In % (from total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small enterprise (1 - 49 employees)</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>80.26%</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>52.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium enterprise (50 – 249 employees)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>19.74%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>67.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic enterprises (private sector)</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>66.58%</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>41.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch of foreign enterprise</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.47%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>28.95%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>23.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>67.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own processing

However, we need to say that only 42,12% of the all 380 companies carried out a survey among their employees or job applicants to find out whether they would be actually interested in part-time jobs. Yet, when asked about the barriers to the establishment of part-time jobs, 20% of the respondents who reported to have never surveyed the interest of their employees in part-time jobs, reported that the employees' lack of interest in part-time jobs is a very strong or strong barrier to their establishment. We can, therefore, assume that it is the unwillingness of the management and medium management and lack of interest in this alternative form of employment that are responsible for such attitudes of the firms.

Next, we focused on what relation exists between the size of an enterprise and the use of part-time employment. The calculation was conducted in the SPSS using the Chi-squared distribution. The output is viewed in Figure 1. The Pearson 2-sided Asym. Sig. value from chi-square test is 0.045. Chosen level of significance is $\alpha = 0.05$. According to this values, we reject $H_{20}$: "The use of part-time employment is independent of the size of an enterprise."

Figure 1 SPSS results (dependent of using part-time work on the size of enterprise)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PearsonChi-Square</td>
<td>4.02$^2$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-LinearAssociation</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N ofValidCases</td>
<td>380</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 24.28.

Source: Own processing

Next, we focused on what relation exists between the owner (domestic/foreign) of an enterprise and the use of part-time employment. We used chi-square in SPSS again. The result shows Figure 2. According to values, we cannot reject $H_{30}$: "The use of part-time employment is independent of the owner of an enterprise."

Most often, employers use part-time employment for operational reasons (56%); also, a relatively high number of employers have a helpful attitude towards their employees (44%). From this we can presume that if firms use part-time employment mainly for operational reasons, there is a possibility that people working in these positions work part-time involuntarily. According to Eurostat data (2015), there were 21 percent of involuntary part-time employments in the Czech Republic in 2014. Compared to the EU average (29,6%), this number is lower; nonetheless, we believe it is important to emphasize that the share of involuntary part-time employments has risen rather substantially since 2001 (from 14% to today’s 21%). In contrast, quite surprisingly, the least reported reason for not using part-time employment is the effort to save money during the economic crisis (15%).
Our attention was paid to dis/advantages of using and managing part-time. In these questions respondents could mark more than one option. 49% of all respondents are inclined to the view that there are no disadvantages associated with employment of part-time employees. There is no difference in results by the size of enterprise.

The greatest disadvantage for the small enterprises is limited communication with part-time employee (29%). The same number of respondents see problem in shorter presence of part-time employee. For middle sized enterprises are the greatest difficulties shorter presence of part-timers (38%) and the need to occupy working place by two part-timers (17%).

For both group of enterprises the organizational difficulties aren’t big disadvantage (for 14% small and 17% medium sized enterprises). This is surprisingly interesting information, especially when we compare this result with another result. According Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (2009) almost 50% of respondents fear of changes, which introduction of part-time work brings.

From the other side, according to employers the biggest advantage is higher flexibility (for 38% of small enterprises and for 30% medium enterprises) and higher productivity of employees (for 26% small firms and 17% of medium-sized enterprises). Almost 45% of all respondents, which use part-time work, checked the option “no advantages”. It is interesting, that 25.67% of these respondents checked the option “no disadvantages” and currently they marked the option “no advantages” in next question. This means, that 66 of 257 respondents don’t see any negative or positive aspects of part-time job. We can suppose that these companies maybe don’t pay enough attention to part-timers.

In this last part of questionnaire we asked the respondents on whether part-time employees could be beneficial for the firm (its productivity, the loyalty of employees, financial savings in the form of lower wages for part-time employees, redundancy payment (if there is not 1 position with 2 part-time employees, but 1 part-time position), higher flexibility of the firm with respect to demand fluctuations, subsidies for part-time jobs provided by employment offices) (according to Nelen, de Grip 2013; Kotíková, Kotrusová, Vychová 2013, McDonald 2009).

Almost half of all 380 respondents (46,58%) are inclined to think that it is possible for a firm that employees part-time employees to have the above mentioned features, but they are not able to judge it. This stems from the fact that a larger number of the respondents employ only few part-time employees, and they thus do not give much attention to these employees as they are not in direct contact with them, gaining information about their productivity indirectly. Another explanation is that this question was answered also by those respondents who do not use part-time employment in their enterprises (for example due to the character of the firm’s activities or because the managers do not support this form of employment sufficiently), but they are convinced that part-time employment has positive effects.

Table 3 Opinions on the positive effects of part-time employees according to whether enterprises use part-time employment or not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use part-time work</th>
<th>Don’t use part-time work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>17,59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is possible</td>
<td>41,21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is not possible</td>
<td>34,17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>5,03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own answer</td>
<td>2,01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own processing
When we focused on the differences in answers, depending on whether an enterprise uses part-time employment or not, we found that there was a difference between these two groups of respondents — the enterprises using part-time employment are more sceptical towards these opinions. It is interesting that a less than 5 percent of the respondents who currently do not use part-time agreement with the opinion that part-time employment can be beneficial for the firm. This indicates that these enterprises used part-time work in the past, and these opinions proved to be true for them. There is, however, also a quite big group of respondents who do not use part-time employment, but they believe that the firm could profit from its usage.

5 Conclusions

The article is devoted to the topic of using part-time work in Moravian-Silesian region (MSK). MSK is the region with high unemployment and part-time work can contribute to her reduction.

It was found that part-time work use almost 70% of enterprises. But total part-time employment is only about 6%. Though companies use part-time work, the proportion of people who do this work are very low (eg. compared to the EU average, which is almost 20%). The use of part-time depends on the size of the business, but is independent on the owner. As the largest advantage of using part-time employers perceive flexibility and improved productivity. Disadvantages of using part-time work are limited connection with part-time employees and shorter presence at workplace, but this is impossible to eliminate.

Based on the results of this questionnaire, we are going to carry out depth interviews with selected enterprises which will be interested in a qualitative survey. Attention will be paid to factors of managing and leading of people working part-time.

Acknowledgement

Paper was supported by project SGS/14/2015 “Employing and managing of people in enterprises using part-time work in Moravian-Silesian region” Silesian University in Opava, The School of the Business Administration in Karviná.

References


