

Employment status of Hungarian food delivery workers in the post pandemic era

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Abstract

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Introduction. The Covid pandemic had a great impact on the sharing economy. As a result, food delivery platforms continue to flourish. Today, several challenges recently appeared, and this research explores the ambiguous employment status of food delivery workers in Hungary. They are uncertain as to whether they are employees or independent contractors.

Materials and methods. This research provided use of techniques including "word frequency inquiry" and "exploration diagrams," which are supported by the NVivo qualitative research software. Through interviews and participant observation this paper attempts to illuminate how food delivery workers perceive their employment status and the information is gathered directly from them.

Results and discussion. This study attempted to determine how Hungarian food delivery workers felt about their status as independent contractors or employees. The data revealed that the majority of food delivery employees work full-time, but a large proportion of them do not view it as a long-term source of income due to concerns about their health and working conditions. Also, despite being referred to as "independent contractors," many of them claimed to be "employees," indicating that they were skeptical and confused about their employment status. Food delivery employees struggle in the sharing economy because they do not receive assistance from organizations such as labor unions. Based on these results, it appears that there is a need for more clarity and norms regarding the classification of individuals in the sharing economy. When it is unclear whether an individual is an independent contractor or an employee, they can be exploited, particularly if they have no other employment options. Also, the incapacity of organizations such as labor unions demonstrates the importance of finding alternative means to defend and support food delivery workers. This study helps us understand the issues that food delivery workers in the sharing economy face, particularly with regard to their employment and the absence of institutional support. The results demonstrate that policymakers must address these issues by implementing the appropriate rules and support systems to safeguard and assist workers in the sharing economy.

Conclusions. Our research indicates that the attitudes of the food delivery workers are influenced by the trade-off between the flexibility of working conditions and the lack of employee benefits.

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Introduction

The sharing economy is gradually growing, and we cannot neglect the increasing number of food delivery workers, especially during the pandemic. However, there are critical challenges for these workers (Vinod and Sharma, 2021). The current situation has brought to light the challenges delivery workers face, such as employment contracts and employment benefits, especially before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Barton (2001) highlights that gig workers in the sharing economy face identity problems of whether they are independent contractors or employees. There might be several reasons behind this uncertainty, where flexibility and benefits are the main drivers.

The flexibility arises when workers indicate the advantage of being able to choose where and when to work. By doing so, they are able to control and modify their earnings based on their working hours. Food delivery workers have the opportunity of deciding working hours by enabling their phones to show an online or offline status. This situation indicates flexibility.

Lin et al. (2020) highlights the importance of the flexibility that the just-in-time workforce has become, much more valuable than before in the sharing economy. The platforms provide flexibility for many people who choose the starting time and duration of work. It is an essential component for food delivery workers and their working conditions. Rosso et al. (2010) also highlights the relation between the work and its value to workers, and this dimension is necessary, especially for workers in the sharing economy.

The food delivery workers' employment status varies from country to country depending on its regulations. Some nations identify them as independent contractors, whereas other countries accept them as employees.

During the pandemic, food delivery workers face many difficulties. Moreover, essential needs, such as holiday pay and sick leave, became more important among the workers. Governments also aim to leverage these difficulties among workers, and the employment status of workers play a crucial role in receiving governmental assistance during this pandemic. Moreover, Schwab and Malleret (2020) also expresses that many workers in the sharing economy face difficulties in obtaining government assistance during the pandemic. Their employment contract status plays a crucial role. Food delivery workers are part of the sharing economy that faces the same difficulties in receiving financial help during the pandemic.

This research aims to explore the employment status of food delivery workers in Hungary from the perspective of these workers. This study focuses on the uncertainty of employment contracts and employment benefits that arises, especially during the pandemic.

People use social media platforms to gather and categorize a diverse array of user perspectives and opinions. The primary objective is to highlight the different viewpoints and perspectives of food delivery workers, as well as answer specific queries.

For the purpose of gaining a deeper and more detailed comprehension, in-depth interviews are used to obtain complete responses to a wide range of queries.

Materials and methods

Materials

Through the implementation of a rigorous research methodology that integrates comprehensive in-depth interviews, open-ended inquiries on various social media platforms, and specialized software, we are able to collect an extensive and precise array of

interpretations from individuals who engage in food delivery workers. In order to effectively manage and evaluate the large quantity of data obtained from open-ended inquiries on social media platforms, it is necessary to initially classify the majority of short responses into distinct categories. Subsequently, qualitative research methods are employed to carry out comprehensive interviews, which facilitates deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of these workers. Eventually, specialized software tools, such as "Nvivo," are employed to facilitate word frequency inquiries and exploration diagrams. These tools allow for the identification and analysis of patterns that arise from the data. By adopting a comprehensive approach, we have been able to generate detailed and elaborate insights into the experiences of gig workers among the food delivery workers. This has enabled us to contribute to a greater understanding of this rapidly expanding sector within the gig economy.

Methodology

This paper reviews the available sources regarding the food delivery workers in Hungary as part of the sharing economy. The main aim is to reinterpret a certain number of articles from various sources. For this reason, employment contract status and employment benefits are widely discussed to analyze the perspective of the food delivery workers in the sharing economy.

The research is based on a qualitative method, and it is not limited to only particular sources, such as published articles, specialized authors, professors, or companies. Instead, the scope of the paper includes participants' responses and public interpretations to achieve the entire content beyond the disciplines. An eclectic approach is taken by combining different disciplines and research methods.

NVivo software, which specializes in exploring qualitative data in research-based investigations, is also used in this research. The two methods are "word frequency inquiry" and "explore diagrams," respectively. These methods assist in efficiently merging the interview materials and analyzing them in specificity (QSR International Pty Ltd. 2020). Graphs were created using the qualitative data-specific software Nvivo, and its data reflects a "word frequency query and exploration diagrams." The most highlighted terms are the most prevalent coping expressions from interviews.

The research includes in-depth interviews with local food delivery people in Hungary. The in-depth interviews were taken by people who work in the food delivery sector of the sharing economy in Hungary. There are both full-time and part-time food delivery workers among participants. The age range of the participants is between 25-40, and the length of work experience is from one month to over two years. Males predominate, and almost half of the workers are not Hungarian citizens. Moreover, specific questions are asked on social media platforms to gather information from the food delivery worker community, specifically from the Facebook group Futárok – Wolt – Netpincér. This group includes most of the delivery sector workers in Budapest comprised of 10.2K members (Banyai et al., 2014). The closed-ended questions are posted with specific time cycles to collect most of the answers. The first question aims to understand whether participants provide food delivery services as part-time or full-time. Almost 150 pieces of feedback were collected. After having the results, the following question is asked to understand participants' expectations for their long-term activities. The question is aimed to observe whether participants undertook their current activity as long-term or not related to the previous question. Almost 250 pieces of feedback were collected. Additionally, 13 personal comments that respond to the questions are included as part of the survey discussion. The first and second questions referred to the

current and desired length of working cycles based on participant preferences. The third and last questions refer to whether the participant is aware of their working status and the implications of said status, such as employment conditions and benefits. Therefore, the third question asks to understand whether participants count themselves as independent contractor or employees. The third question aimed to observe whether food delivery workers recognize themselves as independent contractor or employee. The answers are collected from over 100 pieces of feedback.

In the following part, personal comments in response to the questions are shared. These comments are not directly relevant to the questions, and therefore, they are partly shared in this section.

The participant observation is also part of the research, and results are shared based on participant observation experience. The main concern of participant observation is understanding how other workers perceive their employment status in this field. As part of the participant observation, this study includes personal experiences working in the delivery sector for a limited time and observing working conditions. Observations were made through discussions with other food delivery workers as much as possible while working with them. The food delivery workers' feelings and interpretations in the working field played important roles, especially in terms of their employment status according to their perspectives.

The database includes mainly Google Scholar, Scopus, and Science-Direct platforms. Gale and Ebsco sources are included for further literature review, and literature sources only began to emerge in the last 2–5 years.

Results and discussion

Employment contract status

This study exposes how food delivery workers in the sharing economy are unaware of their employment rights and benefits, especially during the pandemic. In other words, there is a lack of clarity regarding their employment status. The people who were interviewed appear to be uncertain about their work status. They are confused about where they stand in relation to the labour market and their position of uncertainty. In this chapter, readers will obtain information about the employment contract statuses and different approaches of food delivery workers.

Distinguish between two categories

In order to better explain employment contract status, it is crucial to interpret the main difference between independent contractor and employee. There are both similarities and differences between these two categories. The employee is assigned to work under an employer/manager for any business environment, and the independent contractor may also work under an employer/manager. However, the employment benefits are not the same for both categories. For instance, an employee is supported with the primary benefits governed by employment laws, such as holiday pay and sick leave. On the other hand, the independent contractor is not afforded the same benefits due to their employment contract status. Independent contractors do, however, possess greater flexibility in their jobs, such as the ability to choose their working hours (Thelen, 2018).

It is crucial to remember that independent contractors should be valued the same as any administrators or business owners in the sharing economy. Ravenelle (2017) highlights "*the ethos of being your own boss and setting your own hours*" for the players in the sharing economy. In other words, even though food delivery workers are identified as independent contractors, they do not receive the same flexibility compared to any "manager/boss" in the traditional economy. Moreover, food delivery workers receive less employment benefits due to their contract status. In other words, food delivery workers are classified as independent contractors and therefore are not given the same employment benefits as employees.

Additionally, sharing economy is an emerging concept, and therefore, the relationship between independent contractors or employees with ongoing business fields is newly created. The adaptation of new concepts into existing platforms, such as the food delivery business, creates uncertainty.

Approaches towards the uncertainty

In order to leverage this uncertainty between the independent contractor and employee, Rogers (2016) highlights the need for a minimum wage for most workers in the sharing economy. It should be feasible for companies to provide these essential employment conditions, such as minimum wage and specific employee benefits. In order to set a minimum wage, the government must be involved. Exposing the issues for workers of the sharing economy will thus help to improve the political economy accordingly. In the long run, innovative policies will be essential and sufficient for the growth of the sharing economy.

Furthermore, food delivery workers in the sharing economy are identified as independent contractors. Their status allows them to decide where and when to work due to the sharing economy concept. Therefore, this opportunity provides them with essential flexibility. On the other hand, workers may not decide the price mechanism and do not have bargaining power during contract procedures. Food delivery workers are only obligated to confirm the employment contract online without any discussion opportunities. In this case, the question appears whether or not food delivery workers have value as independent contractors. The food delivery workers are excluded from particular benefits, such as sick leave and holiday pay.

Despite these uncertainties, Inman (2021) highlights the essential development by referencing Uber Technologies, Inc. (Uber). Uber Eats, a subsidiary of Uber, guaranteed that 70,000 food delivery workers are classified as employees by having a minimum hourly wage and holiday pay aligned with the superior court. This is a sign that the current issue is already deeply discussed in the UK.

Another article highlights the consensus view that existing laws are insufficient to support workers' rights in the sharing economy. Therefore, the classification of independent contractors has to be improved significantly for these participants. Indeed, workers' flexibility should be considered in employment status, as employment protection is essential to the digital economy's growth (Means and Seiner, 2015).

Adversely, the emerging economies and new concepts lead many businesses to benefit from existing laws. Many companies recognize the diminished employee responsibilities. In the sharing economy, employee classification as independent contractors allow business owners to take less responsibility. Moreover, this situation leads companies to shortcut their costs. For example, companies do not pay immense taxes or social benefits for sharing economy workers because these platforms classify them as independent contractors. However, as pandemics increase, social benefits become essential. Therefore, gig workers recognize their lack of rights to obtain these benefits.

On the other hand, Cunningham-Parmeter (2016) highlights that several American companies hire people by not employing them in the traditional sense. The growth of new economies critically underestimates labour standards. Sharing economy and traditional economy will differ, especially in terms of contract status, as long as platform economies hire workers as independent contractors. Moreover, this dilemma requires an urgent call for governments to review existing labour laws.

Concept of food delivery in Hungary

In this chapter, the reader will obtain more profound information about food delivery workers in Hungary. The central part of the study is to overview the case of Hungary during the pandemic. In this part of the study, the focus is on how the food delivery sector plays a role in Hungary as part of the sharing economy.

Recently, the food delivery sector is increasingly in high demand. Lin et al. (2020) also indicate that the sharing economy is an emerging pattern that grows in various sectors. Primarily, the food delivery sector in the sharing economy plays an essential role during the pandemic.

The food delivery sector plays an essential role in Hungary. There are three leading brands: Wolt, Netpincer and Bolt. These three brands belong to the sharing economy, especially in the food delivery sector.

Technically, online platform applications are user interfaces where workers can communicate with restaurants. After registering on the application, users are required to sign an online contract that indicates a partnership with the company. In other words, the contract is prepared between food delivery workers and companies as a partnership agreement, which is partly different from the employment contract of an employee in the traditional economy. Additionally, users have to register to the tax system as a service provider owner.

In-depth Interview

In this section, participant interpretations will be about the uncertainty between being/feeling like an independent contractor or employee depending on circumstances.

The term flexibility becomes a critical factor in identifying the employee status, especially after the pandemic and the growing food delivery sector in the sharing economy. Flexibility is an excellent option and one of the most attractive features for food delivery workers. Most of the participants highlight that they can decide where and when to work, and the duration of working hours based on their availability. Most of the interview participants emphasize flexibility. Interviewee #2 states that the given contract by food delivery companies provides flexibility to workers. According to Interviewee #3, flexibility is the most significant reason why he is eager to work full-time as a food delivery worker, as he feels more free in this line of work. Also, the literature reviewed shows that companies in the sharing economy offer workers freedom and flexibility to work wherever and whenever they prefer to work (Cano et al., 2021).

Moreover, participants often mention the independence of a personal income based on their efficiency. They indicate that they can estimate and arrange their pay, as they determine their own working hours. These are the main reasons why food delivery workers feel like independent contractors.

On the other hand, there are some circumstances where food delivery workers feel like employees than independent contractors. Interviewee #7 indicates that he has worked as a

food delivery worker for over one year. Based on his experiences, he highlights that in terms of his contract, he never had any bargaining power. The food delivery workers have no bargaining power over the partnership agreement, and they have no chance to make any amendments to the contracts. Furthermore, Interviewer #4 explains that he works for two different food delivery platforms. He highlights the working slots in the applications, where users have to choose time slots to be performed during a week. In other words, there is less flexibility regarding work hours.

In addition, the online platform or companies, such as Wolt or Netpincer, are the primary contact in case of any difficulty during the delivery. Some of the participants had anticipated that the direct contact person would be another food delivery worker. The food delivery workers can be punished or blocked from the applications due to any disciplinary issues, such as breaking the rules. Moreover, the revenue is paid during specific cycles, and this makes them feel like a salaried employee. Interviewee #9, in particular, highlights that he is not seeing a bright future in this business where he feels like an employee by earning his income like a salary. He also finds this business hard and sometimes dull because working as a food delivery worker becomes monotonous after a while. These circumstances lead food delivery workers to feel more like employees rather than independent contractors.

The interpretations above call attention to the uncertainty between independent contractors and employees. However, participants also shared their opinions on various aspects. For instance, Interviewee #3 explains that there is an algorithm to calculate the price of work per/hour, including the distance. However, this calculation is set for everyone. Only the online platform providers have the power to raise or decrease the hourly price due to specific conditions, such as weather or during busy time cycles. The particular changes apply to every user. Nevertheless, Interviewee #3 indicates that users are also willing to explore the existing algorithm behind the application, which will provide them with a better understanding. Interviewee #6 also highlights that food delivery workers do not have any support from particular institutions or agencies, such as labour unions, which can play an essential role for food delivery workers in the sharing economy.

World Frequency Query



Figure 1. Complete interview quotes
Source: NVivo (released in December 2022)

The most common words are “*boss*” and “*employee*”, which they follow concerning working durations and their payments. The most notable connection between this chart and our foundational findings is the dilemma faced by Hungarian workers, who feel either as employers (bosses) or employees. In the following, Hungarian workers link this difficulty to their income and hours worked. In other words, food delivery workers compare their working hours and compensation to their employment status.

Exploring Diagrams

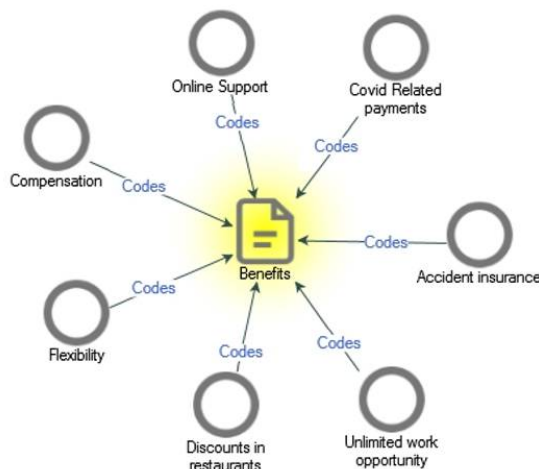


Figure 2. The benefits of being delivery workers

Source: NVivo (released in December 2022)

The graph mainly illustrates responses about the advantages the food delivery sector offers. “*flexibility*” and “*unlimited work opportunity*” is related to the primary of the study, which demonstrates why food delivery workers feel conflicted between the roles of employee and employer. In addition, the “*accident insurance*” and “*compensation options*” (i.e. Covid-related payments) were significant advantages.

This graph depicts the Hungarian delivery workers’ anticipation of obtaining the future. The highlighted areas focus mostly on aspects of representation, where employees perceive a lack of support for being represented by unions or even countries. In addition, some of the responses indicate that in the future, delivery positions may be considered as a temporary occupation in order to “*save money for difficult situation*”, such as economic or career-related ones. Some of the replies also highlight the unclarity between employee and employer because a couple of the results demonstrate represented responses “*paid holiday*” and “*voucher*”, which are mainly applied to employees.

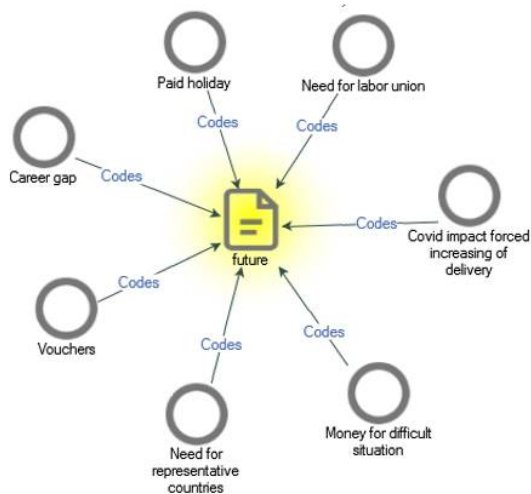


Figure 3: The future expectaion of being delivery workers
Source: NVivo (released in December 2022)



Figure 4. The difficultiesdelivery workers
Source: NVivo (released in December 2022)

In this graph, many issues are presented, with an emphasis on accounting-related topics such as “*billing system*” and “*taxation*.” In addition, app-related difficulties are highlighted due to the complexity and uncertainty of the algorithm and limited usage entries, such as “*app limitation for working hours*”. The complexity arrives due to some responses on whether employees are supposed to work based on given responses, such as without “*app limitations for working hours*” or “*entire expenses assigned to you*”.

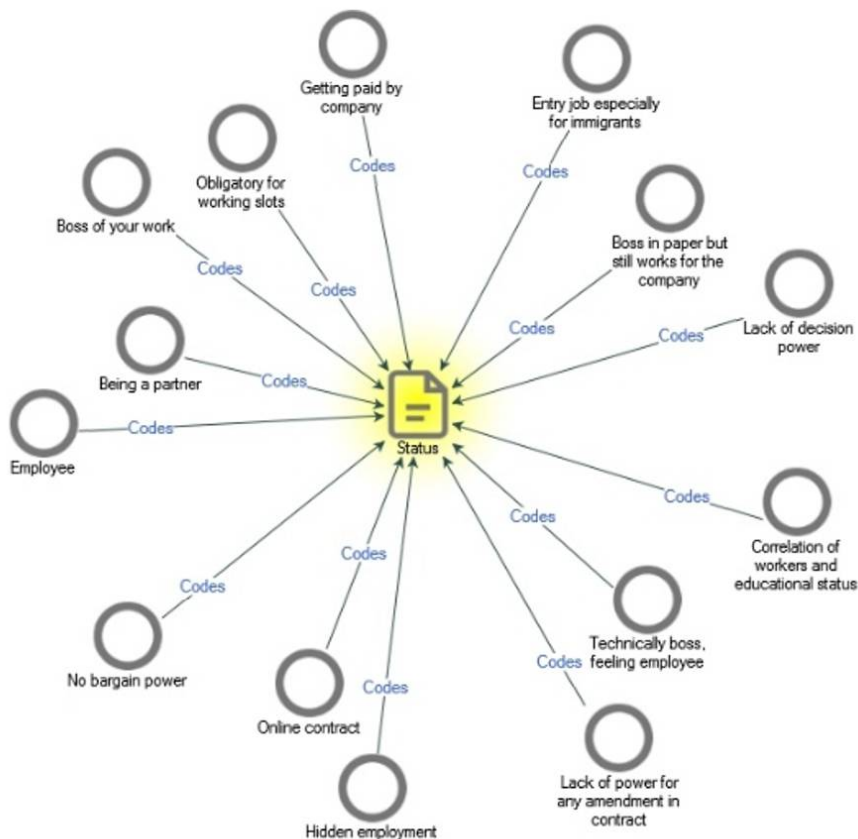


Figure 5. The status delivery workers

Source: NVivo (released in December 2022)

This graph depicts the current status of delivery employees, with being a boss, employer, or feeling like an employee as the most attractive result. Being an employer is supported by responses such as “*being a partner*” and “*being the boss of your job*,” but being an employee is indicated by responses such as “*being paid by a firm*” and “*being the boss on paper but still working for the company*.” In addition, there is uncertainty that can be

explained by responses such as "*hidden employment*," "*no bargaining power*," and "*lack of power*."

Food delivery workers' perspective on the social media

This section will include the interpretation of answers given by participants through social media. Four questions were asked to food delivery workers located in Hungary.

The questions were posted in a specific Facebook group that includes most food delivery workers from the sharing economy located in Hungary. Participants were able to answer closed-ended questions as well as share their own comments below the questions.

Question 1

According to the results:

Q1: Are you doing this job part-time or full-time?

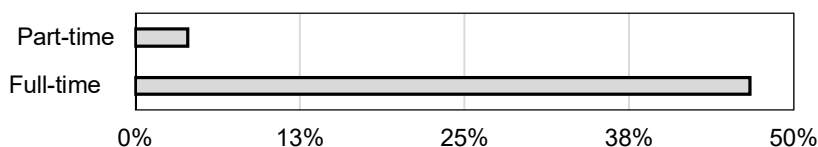


Figure 6. Comparison data by poll results

Source: *own data*

- 47% of the participants claim full-time activity;
- 4% of the participants claim part-time activity.

The result shows that many participants take on food delivery services as a full-time opportunity. According to the result, we can assume that most of the people do not have other jobs and do not work as food delivery workers as an additional job but rather choose to be full-time delivery workers.

Question 2

According to the results:

Q2: Do you see this job as long-term gainful activity?

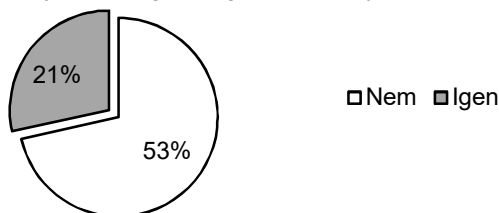


Figure 7. Comparison data by poll results

Source: *own data*

- 53% of the participants claim that they do not see this job as a long-term gainful activity;
- 21% of the participants claim that they see this job as a long term gainful activity

The result shows that a high portion of the answers belongs to negative intention. According to the results, we may assume that food delivery workers do not anticipate working for a more extended period in the future in the delivery sector. Therefore, a dilemma appears where participants primarily work full-time; however, they are also not willing to prolong it in the future.

Additionally, there are personal comments under the questions where users share their opinions about not seeing this job as a long-term gainful activity. Participants highlight that working conditions and health issues are the vital causes behind this negative intention.

Question 3

According to the results:

Q3: Do you regard yourself as an independent contractor or employee?

☐ employee ☒ individual entrepreneur



Figure 8. Comparison data by poll results

Source: *own data*

- 44% of the total result indicates that people identify themselves as an employee
- 32% of the total result indicates that people identify as an independent contractor

The result shows that most of the independent contractor food delivery workers recognize themselves as employees despite being independent contractors.

Personal Comments of Questions

Personal comments to the second question provide assumptions that food delivery cannot be a long-term activity. Participants highlight that working conditions and health issues are the vital causes behind this negative intention.

The poll results provide the two central answers as yes and n to the last question. However, participants created their comments, and two of the comments are highlighted among other comments.

According to the personal comments:

- 61% indicate that they are employees
- 28% indicate that they are immigrants with no specific information about their employment rights

It is possible that food delivery workers may misunderstand the questions. Though the question asks about their employee benefits and rights, most of the commenters respond, “We are an employee.” The comment shows that 61% of participants perceive that any

benefits or rights are not within their scope unless they are employees. Moreover, the rest of the comments belong to foreigners, as they indicated in the comments that they are immigrants. They claim that foreigners, referred as immigrants, are not aware of their benefits due to their residential status.

Additionally, the word immigrant used in the comments might refer to expatriate or foreigner as well. Therefore, this study includes this comment under foreigner.

Results show that food delivery workers in Hungary prefer to work in the sharing economy as full-time workers instead of being idle. However, they are also unwilling to invest in this field for a more extended period. Moreover, food delivery workers assume that employment benefits or rights are only available when working as an employee. Employment benefits and rights are crucial factors in determining whether food delivery workers identify themselves as independent contractors or employees.

What is more, food delivery workers in the sharing economy recognize themselves more as employees than as independent contractors as demonstrated by the collected answers. Food delivery companies in the sharing economy implemented the idea of being the owner of your business. In other words, they are supposed to be called independent contractors in the sharing economy. As proof, a food delivery worker must sign a partnership employment contract with companies under the title of service provider. This is not the same contract where a single worker signs a bilateral employment contract with a company in the traditional economy. Consequently, the dilemma arises whether food delivery workers are employees or individual entrepreneurs as part of the sharing economy.

Participant observation

The aggregate feedback from the participant observation exposes that having incremental earnings and facing difficulties during a pandemic may be the main reasons for being a full-time independent contractor of food delivery in the sharing economy. Most of the workers find this field as an opportunity for incremental earnings, and they highlight that the more they work, the higher their earnings become. Most of the participants also indicate that the pandemic is a strong factor why many people turn to the food delivery sector after facing many difficulties in other business fields.

Besides, food delivery sectors in the sharing economy provide flexibility for where and when to work. The employment contract, which is called a partnership agreement as a service provider, also supports their identity as an independent contractor. However, food delivery workers highlight that they also feel like employees based on current working conditions, such as bargaining power, application restrictions, and revenue cycles, widely discussed in the in-depth interviews section.

Limitation of the study

There were a couple of essential difficulties that impacted our study. This study aimed to review the sharing economy in Hungary. Therefore, a language barrier existed, especially with comments made in different languages in response to the questions.

Also, the posting pool questions are deleted more than twice on the social platform. The social platform for given poll questions was managed by an administrator and four moderators. Since communication issues exist between moderators and managers of the group's page, the given questions were suddenly removed even though they had prior approval from the administrator, which impacted our study negatively.

This study aimed to collect an aggregate number of participants during interviews and questions. However, social platform owners were unwilling to assist in this study. There was

hesitation among moderators about whether these activities on their platforms played an essential role or not while this study aimed to get in touch with Hungarian food delivery workers directly through these social platforms.

Questions for future

The study exposes that most participants are dissatisfied with health conditions during work, and they also highlight avoiding working in the same sector for longer periods. Another research may delve into exposing the underlying reasons.

In the poll question answers, some of the participants indicated that they are foreigners and do not have any idea about their employment rights. Further research can be helpful in understanding how foreigners identify themselves in terms of their employment benefits and rights.

This study is limited in scope, as the research only addresses the local citizens and foreigners working in Hungary. Alongside this research, however, there were some discussions with a couple of delivery sector workers in Sweden and Gotland, Iceland, and these workers indicate that Swedish food delivery workers are the minority of total food delivery workers based on a short analysis. Therefore, this point may need further investigation in the future.

Conclusion

This paper exposes how the pandemic situation creates remarkable changes in the sharing economy. This study mainly focused on food delivery workers in the sharing economy and significant changes in employment contract status and benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study discloses that ambiguity is a significant factor, where uncertainty exists between being an independent contractor or an employee. As explained before, it is an interesting phenomenon, as there seems to be no concern regarding employment status until the pandemic occurs. However, this uncertainty is not the primary concern for food delivery workers in the sharing economy in the case of Hungary. The participants do not seem particularly concerned about this ambiguity but are more focused on the working conditions and standards. As an illustration, Barton (2001) emphasizes the issue of identity, whereas Thelen (2018) explains that the right to choose working hours is an indicator of identity. To support the idea, Ravenelle. (2017) highlights "the ethos of being your own boss and setting your own hours" Rogers (2016), however, emphasizes the minimum wage's crucial function in this regard.

Finally, the study shows that food delivery workers started to be concerned about their employee benefits and rights after the pandemic. Rosso et al. (2010) describes the relationship between the value of work, whereas Lin et al. (2020) emphasizes flexibility. It shows that employment contract status is not the main challenge for workers unless critical times arise, such as a pandemic. For instance, food delivery workers face difficulty regarding their social benefits since their employment status involves barriers compared to traditional workers. The lack of support from institutions or agencies, such as labor unions, for food delivery workers in the sharing economy, as mentioned by Interviewee #6, highlights the need for further advocacy and regulation in this sector. Impact of the pandemic made these people much more aware or interested in their labour market status.

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