

Research on the Path and Effectiveness of Part-time Work Economy to Promote Economic Development in Post-epidemic Era

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Abstract

The part-time economy is an economic field composed of freelancers, which provides flexible employment opportunities for workers and is a new economic form. Based on the economic development situation in the post-epidemic era, this paper carries out the research on the path and effectiveness of economic development in the epidemic era from the perspective of the part-time work economy, and strives to make a modest contribution to promoting the income increase of the part-time workers and protecting the employment rights and interests of the part-time workers in the era of the part-time work economy, so as to make their future employment situation develop steadily and well.

Keywords

Post-epidemic era; Part-time economy; Development path.

1. Definition of the concept of part-time economy

Part-time workers are those who use intermediaries to obtain temporary jobs. With the development of digital information technology, "part-time" on-demand work has sprung up in an endless stream, and the economy of part-time work has become a new economic model developed with the help of part-time work. The economy of part-time work is the product of the development of new technology, which derives new features on the basis of retaining the most fundamental connotation of part-time work. Therefore, to grasp the concept of part-time work economy, we need to first clarify the relevant concepts of part-time work.

1.1. Definition of the concept of part-time work

Looking back on the history of labor development, odd work is not a new word. It appeared earlier in the early stage of traditional industrial society. Some employers hired some temporary workers in consideration of operating costs. In 1984, Martin J. Cannon, a foreign scholar, studied the preference, time, diversity and flexibility of temporary workers. Sociologist Valenzuela Abel discussed the emerging research on the practice of daily labor, including the origin of the market, its contemporary development, and its employment and wages. However, in China's traditional social form, there have been temporary workers, temporary workers, casual workers and other similar words, which mainly emphasize the characteristics of traditional casual workers such as temporary, mobility and atypical employment. Since the mid-1990s, on the one hand, since the implementation of the household responsibility contract system in rural areas, a huge social transformation has taken place in rural areas, resulting in a large number of rural people entering the city to work; On the other hand, due to the adjustment of urban economic structure, a large number of enterprise employees have been laid off. These groups have a low level of professional skills. Most of them have not experienced professional

and systematic education. They can only dissociate themselves from formal employment and choose industries with low entry threshold to ensure their basic life. This kind of work mode is called "part-time work", which is essentially a short-term form of employment in which employers employ temporary workers.

1.2. Definition of the concept of part-time economy

The economy of odd jobs is the derivative of odd jobs in the new era. "Gig" originally refers to the employment of musicians to play for a specific theater group or evening performance at the beginning of the 20th century, but it is now used to describe various temporary and part-time jobs. In recent years, with the development of digital information technology, especially with the digital platform becoming a new mode of production organization, the part-time economy has become a new economic model including employers, employees and digital platforms. In 2009, the term "jobless economy" was mentioned in the article "jobless economy" published on the American news website The Daily Beast, "which means that people can flexibly choose job opportunities according to their own interests and skills through a third-party platform, instead of relying on a certain organization or institution for a long time". This definition highlights the diversification and flexibility of the employment mode of part-time workers, but ignores the role of digital platforms. Nowadays, the economy of part-time jobs, which is based on the rise of digital information technology, has once again become a topic of debate in the academic community. The definition of the concept of part-time jobs economy in the academic community can be divided from three dimensions.

First, from the dimension of traditional employment. Arne Kelleberg called the part-time economy "non-standard employment relationship", which includes part-time, temporary agency and contract work. He believes that today's part-time economy has a remarkable feature, that is, it marks the employment relationship different from the traditional standard employment arrangement. In the traditional standard employment work arrangement, it is usually expected that the work will be full-time, will continue indefinitely, and will be carried out at the employer's place of business under the instruction of the employer. In today's "non-standard employment relationship", the employment relationship between employers and employees is more flexible, which is a flexible employment method.

Second, from the dimension of employment characteristics. Domestic scholars, such as Wang Jiabao and Cui Xiaoxuan, pointed out that the part-time job economy is "a form of short-term cooperation or single project cooperation between employees and employers by relying on the platform to connect practitioners, enterprises and customers through the network". They believe that the part-time job economy is a kind of work form with high flexibility and short working time, which is free from the shackles of fixed working place and fixed working time in the traditional employment mode. Four scholars, Catherine G. Abraham, John C. Haltivanger, Christine Sandasky and James R. Pulitzer, believe that the part-time economy based on digitalization and Internet connectivity, which is different from the traditional unstructured work mode, is "a collection of flexible work mediated by various online platforms". They pointed out that in the part-time economy, goods and services can be obtained through applications on smart phones and other web-based applications, which can provide flexibility for workers and better match their skills with work projects.

Third, from the dimension of employment demand. Many scholars believe that the form of economic flexible employment of part-time workers can alleviate the pressure of employment, although it has absorbed a large number of labor outside the formal employment to a certain extent. At the same time, the part-time economy can quickly match the supply and demand of labor through the digital platform, and better meet the needs of consumers. However, many scholars, based on the background of the development of digital information technology and platform organizations, believe that part-time workers in the economy are facing huge

difficulties. For example, Yao Jianhua started from the economy of part-time workers with non-standard employment methods derived from the Internet platform capital, It is believed that "the relationship between employers and odd workers in the odd work economy is informal employment and labor relations, and workers are faced with difficulties such as employment instability, excessive labor, and depression due to lack of security. Therefore, digital workers in the odd work economy are unstable proletarians in flexible and insecure informal employment and labor relations". Nils van Dorn and Adam Badger believe that the part-time economy has the characteristics of financial capitalism, which makes workers face the risk of employment instability and being eliminated. Gerald Friedman, an American economist, believes that "the part-time job economy has increased employment in the form, but it is essentially the result of the high unemployment rate caused by the economic recession, and will transfer more economic risk burden to workers". In addition, many scholars have mixed the concept of part-time economy with platform economy and sharing economy. For example, Matthews J pointed out that "sharing economy", "part-time economy" and "on-demand economy" are popular terms referring to companies based on point-to-point Internet technology.

2. Distinctive Characteristics of Part-time Economy

In the traditional industrial society, the mode of production has undergone changes with the development of productivity and technology. Entering the digital information society, the mode of production has taken on the new characteristics of digitalization, while the part-time economy, which is based on digital information technology, has undergone tremendous changes in the way of employment. Comparing the new employment form of the part-time economy with the traditional employment form, it can be found that the working time and place of the contemporary part-time workers are not limited, and they can arrange their work schedule independently. The employment relationship between the labor demanders, the digital platform and the workers does not have a long-term and continuous relationship. Therefore, the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary part-time economy can be divided into three characteristics: spatial diversification, time elasticity and task-based employment.

2.1. Diversification of economic space for part-time workers

Digital information technology has provided favorable conditions for the part-time economy to break the barriers of limited physical space. In the traditional form of employment, the work of workers is arranged in a fixed place by the employer, and the daily life of workers is controlled by the rhythm of production lines and offices. In the form of part-time work economy, the digital platform in the part-time work economy, as an online labor market that creates a link between workers and labor demanders, uses data algorithm technology to match the needs of both parties, and integrates the global labor force into the part-time work economy platform, breaking the geographical constraints of the matching of labor supply and demand. Its core lies in its ability to accelerate the globalization of labor force, mobilize global labor force to produce for it by using digital platforms, and reduce labor costs by taking advantage of geographical differences in skills and labor costs. Even for the work with higher skills and higher remuneration, the remuneration is relatively lower than that of the non-platform-based equivalent. In addition, the spatial connection between workers and labor demanders can be discontinuous, because part-time workers themselves need to have basic digital skills and can use the Internet to choose suitable places to work according to their wishes. For some types of jobs, workers do not need to contact the labor demanders directly, which provides workers in remote areas with the opportunity to work online. This means that, in theory, anyone and anywhere with appropriate technical support can complete the work based on digital information.

2.2. Elasticity of economic time of part-time workers

"Working time flexibility mainly means that the working time is no longer fixed, and the work is a free and flexible trading mode based on the unit of one hour or even less". Under the traditional form of employment, the working hours of workers are fixed, and they work according to a fixed time rule every day. In the form of part-time work economy, there is often no mandatory fixed time limit. The time of workers is random. They can use their free time to work for the labor demander and get paid. For example, the delivery staff can choose a nearby place to pick up the order, and the online taxi driver can pick up passengers nearby. The flexibility of working hours is conducive to workers' reasonable arrangement of their working hours, as well as flexible allocation of human resources and control of labor costs.

2.3. Task-based economic employment of part-time workers

Under the traditional form of employment, labor demanders employ workers to work and pay remuneration. The remuneration of workers is generally long-term, such as monthly salary, quarterly salary and annual salary, which is a form of long-term employment. In the form of part-time work economy, the labor demanders need to match the workers with the help of digital platform to start the work task and finish the work after the task is completed. On the one hand, there is no long-term and continuous employment relationship between labor demanders and workers. For example, under the digital platform, there is only a cooperative relationship between online taxi drivers and consumers during the order period. Once the order is completed, the cooperative relationship between the two parties will be automatically cancelled; On the other hand, there is no long-term employment relationship between workers and digital platforms. The digital platform defines itself as an intermediary connecting workers and labor demanders, not as an employer. Therefore, according to the regulations of the platform, workers only maintain a cooperative relationship with the digital platform during the completion of tasks. It can be seen that the characteristic of task-based economy of part-time workers is that the cooperative relationship between workers and labor demanders and platforms is based on the completion of each work task.

3. The Impact Path of Part-time Economy on Economic Development

The emergence of the new work paradigm of the part-time economy, through market-oriented means, adjusts and optimizes social human capital, making the supply and demand of human capital tend to dynamic balance, and the human capital market reaches the Walras general equilibrium, truly realizing the optimal allocation of human capital. In this form, every labor resource, working time resource and enterprise resource have been optimally allocated and utilized, and enterprises, individuals and social systems have reached general market equilibrium.

Through three distributions, we can gradually adjust the proportion of high-income groups, expand the scale of middle-income groups, improve the income level of low-income groups, achieve the balance of social resources, accelerate the pace of narrowing the gap between rich and poor, and accelerate the promotion of common prosperity. With the help of social and market mechanisms, the income distribution system can allocate resources more accurately, comprehensively, rapidly and efficiently.

3.1. "Build a market+social mechanism" and create a one-stop integrated platform for part-time work economy

There are many factors in the odd work market, such as the odd work individual (C-end), the job demand enterprise (B-end), and the government regulatory department (G-end). It is necessary to build a general market equilibrium platform with two-way interaction between C-end and B-end under G-end supervision with the help of market forces. It can provide job-

matching, employment training, social security, insurance, work-related injury identification, legal aid and other services for individual workers; Provide functions such as position release, position matching, job evaluation, electronic labor contract, attendance management, etc. for enterprises; Provide one-stop job employment service functions such as data collection, job analysis, supervision and punishment for government supervision. The platform should have the characteristics of convenient operation, low transaction cost, fairness and justice, true information, high efficiency of docking, and can not only help the odd workers and enterprises who need "odd jobs" to match odd jobs accurately, quickly and efficiently, but also protect the legitimate rights and interests of both parties.

3.2. The economy of part-time jobs stimulates endogenous motivation and creates more new job demands

In recent years, technology updates based on AI, big data and 5G have been rapidly iterated, and the industrial chain of online red economy has become increasingly clear, and new business forms such as live broadcast e-commerce and social e-commerce have been emerging. With the development of various Internet platforms and emerging industries, a large number of job demands have been derived or stimulated. These jobs include not only traditional offline jobs but also some new jobs created by fragmentary, flexible, non-fixed work places and other factors. From 2019 to 2021, the Human Resources and Social Security Department released four batches of 56 new jobs, including UAV pilots, electronic athletes, industrial robot operators, etc. It can be seen that new types of business are constantly giving birth to new jobs and posts.

3.3. Employment fluctuation in the economic sector of part-time work, promoting the dynamic balance of human capital market

With the economy entering the new normal, especially under the repeated impact of the epidemic in recent years, the part-time economy has played a very positive role in stabilizing employment and promoting employment. The part-time job economy not only generates many jobs, but also plays a role in alleviating the employment pressure and becomes the "buffer" of the labor market. The economy of odd jobs has become the employment choice of the new generation, which conforms to the new employment concept to a certain extent. From the perspective of the nature of the employment of enterprises, the flexible working mode of foreign-funded enterprises and the flexible employment time of the part-time economy fit in. With the continuous development of foreign-funded enterprises and the continuous improvement and standardization of the part-time economy, the matching degree of the two will become higher and higher, and the demand for the part-time economy will increase unabated; For the private economy, due to the control of cost, the full-time cost is significantly higher than the part-time job, and its awareness of the flexible employment form, flexible employment time and flexible employment of the part-time job economy will also continue to improve; Although the central enterprises and state-owned enterprises are limited by the system, they will gradually accept and integrate into the part-time economy with the change of young people's employment view. In addition, in recent years, the new generation of migrant workers has been significantly outflowing, the agglomeration effect of big cities is obvious, the pressure of urban employment has increased sharply, and the new employment paradigm of the part-time economy has also significantly improved the income level of the new generation of farmers while accepting a large number of rural migrant workers. With its flexible employment and flexible working hours, the part-time economy has effectively slowed down the impact of changes in the external environment on social employment.

3.4. Scientific and technological development helps the economy of part-time workers increase income and adjust social income distribution

The application of big data, 5G, artificial intelligence and other technologies endows part-time workers with more convenient and fast tools and skills to meet their multi-level and multi-dimensional employment needs, which can not only improve the breadth of employment, but also improve the productivity of unit labor force, thus driving the growth of labor income. The role of the part-time economy in county-level cities is highlighted by providing new employment opportunities for low-skilled workers and housewives, and also promoting the improvement of the living standards of high-skilled workers.

4. Problems in the Economic Development of Part-time Workers

4.1. Platform level: labor security is a problem, and relevant rights and interests are not guaranteed enough

Part-time workers lack employment security. Unlike full-time employees, they do not sign long-term labor contracts with their work units. Most of them are short-term cooperative relationships. Under such circumstances, the jobless economic practitioners have good employment flexibility, but lack corresponding social security, and are prone to income crisis or unemployment in case of emergencies. In addition, the intellectual property rights of practitioners are difficult to protect. Part-time workers enjoy intellectual property rights to the content they create, but the ease of dissemination of information content in the Internet era has led to an endless number of phenomena such as piracy and plagiarism. It is difficult for many practitioners to effectively protect their intellectual property rights. Various "original disputes" are common, such as song creation, photo shooting, short video production and other fields, and there have been many disputes.

4.2. From the perspective of the operator: the bargaining power is weak and it is difficult to obtain financial services

First, the economy of part-time workers is affected by uncontrollable factors. Compared with fixed jobs, their income fluctuates greatly. After jobless economic practitioners have been matched to work on relevant platforms, their final transaction is affected by factors such as price, distance and the buyer's willingness. In reality, some practitioners have experienced the rejection of work content by the other party, and the channel of problem response is not smooth. According to the survey, the average value of income stability of Tiktok content creators is only 2.45 (1 means extremely unstable, 7 means very stable, and the larger the number, the higher the stability of income), which reflects the great uncertainty of income of casual workers.

The second is the lack of support from trade unions and other organizations, and the bargaining power of practitioners is weak. There are a large number of practitioners on the platform of part-time work economy, and it is difficult to form scale effect due to their individual strength, while the platform and the demander often have more resources and information. The asymmetry of information makes part-time workers in a relatively passive position. They have weak bargaining power over welfare, compensation and rights, and can only accept them passively in most cases. Express workers account for a large proportion of the part-time economic workers. 75.07% of China Post express workers earn less than 5000 yuan a month, and half of them work more than 8 hours a day.

Third, the uncertainty of the income of the workers in the part-time economy leads to their difficulty in obtaining effective loan support. Part-time workers in the economy are generally young, have little asset accumulation and weak earning ability, and cannot provide stable income flow, which leads to the low willingness of most banks to lend; At the same time, part-time workers often choose financial loans only when they encounter difficulties such as family

changes, medical expenses, and supporting their families. However, due to the influence of educational background, family background and other factors, it is difficult to obtain good financial services.

4.3. From the perspective of the employer: the employer is not fixed, and the management and training costs are high

While the part-time economy is changing people's consumption habits, the labor relations are also quietly changing, and the status and responsibilities between workers and enterprises are also changing. From the perspective of the platform, the part-time workers are from the third party, and the platform is only to build a bridge to facilitate the match between the supply and demand of labor force, which leads to the objective reality that the responsibilities of both sides of the labor force are ambiguous. The fuzziness or unclear boundaries of the rights and obligations of part-time workers make them independent, autonomous and flexible, and at the same time, they also externalize the responsibilities of enterprises and the rights of part-time workers. The unequal responsibilities and powers make them have to bear various social risks by themselves in most cases.

In addition, the relationship between practitioners and employers is mostly temporary and short-term. The internal training cost of enterprises is high or there is no training. Only individuals can improve their comprehensive quality. At the same time, there is no clear path for career advancement. Practitioners lack learning motivation, and their development is limited.

5. Policy Recommendations for the Promotion of Economic Development in the Post-epidemic Era by the Part-time Economy

The "part-time economy" has achieved remarkable results in releasing growth potential, stabilizing employment and promoting common prosperity, but there are also problems such as imperfect labor security, weak bargaining power, and asymmetric supply and demand information. We need to work together from the dimensions of policy, practitioners and industry to make the "part-time job economy" an important engine to promote common prosperity.

5.1. Laws and regulations keep pace with the times and make up for the shortcomings of the system

First, speed up the introduction of laws and regulations related to social security to protect the "part-time economy". Identify the labor relationship in the economic model of part-time workers, strengthen its security, and find a legal path that can not only promote the development of the part-time economy, but also protect the rights and interests of all parties; In the context of the digital economy, part-time workers rely on online job information from various channels. Some black intermediaries seize this point, release a large number of false recruitment information, carry out online fraud, etc., and part-time workers do not sign formal labor contracts with employers. In the process of labor, labor disputes such as gratuitous dismissal and wage deduction often occur. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the law enforcement of enterprises and increase the cost of violation. Strictly crack down on illegal and illegal acts such as illegal intermediaries, issuing false recruitment information and seeking improper benefits in the name of recruitment, break the asymmetric information barrier between part-time workers and employers, strengthen the supervision and management of the part-time job market, promote the institutionalized management of the part-time job market, and effectively safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of workers.

Second, the platform itself should also improve its internal management system. Strengthen background review and access, strictly review the qualification of employees, solve the problem

of information asymmetry between supply and demand to the greatest extent, accelerate the innovation of management system, and pay attention to the protection of the rights and interests of workers in the "part-time economy".

5.2. Strengthen government guidance and policy incentives

First, the government and regulatory authorities should actively change their thinking. The government should take the initiative to carry out forward-looking research and actively guide the development of economic formats that can promote employment, increase income, narrow the gap between the rich and the poor and contribute to common prosperity. Through the digital economy and the Internet platform, we will give full play to the information, organization and management advantages of the government, and guide the sound and rapid development of the "part-time economy". The introduction of informatization means, with the help of "Internet plus", big data, 5G and other technologies, enhances the effectiveness of matching supply and demand of odd jobs. At the same time, human resources service institutions, social capital and high-quality service resources are encouraged to participate in the construction and operation management, and professional services such as career planning, enterprise management, legal aid, etc. are expanded. Second, the government supervision department should actively encourage the development of the "part-time economy". At the moment of the explosive growth of the economy of part-time workers, seize the opportunities brought by technological innovation such as the Internet platform, and introduce a series of incentive policies to provide necessary financial support and social security for practitioners, and effectively improve the income of "part-time workers".

5.3. Strict supervision platform and exploration of long-term mechanism

The relevant government regulatory departments should strictly supervise various platforms related to the "part-time economy", especially to prevent the formation of a "one take all" monopoly on the Internet. In the context of digital development, various Internet platforms have different layers, and the phenomenon of "those who get the data will get the world" is very common. Relevant government regulatory departments should make full use of offline offices such as the service hall, government hall, grass-roots service platform, and online channels such as recruitment websites, WeChat Weibo, and mobile app to publish job recruitment information in various forms, and build an "information bridge" for the supply and demand sides of the part-time economy. We should avoid excessive speculation of capital, thus disrupting the competitive market, forming a data oligopoly, and then forming a monopoly situation of individual Internet platforms. In addition, from the perspective of the industry, providing various protection measures for practitioners is a long-term investment. It is necessary to formulate corresponding market norms to avoid the vicious circle caused by inefficiency and excessive competition, and more effectively promote common prosperity.

5.4. Strengthen skill training and improve employment skills

With the rapid development of the digital economy, skill-based, professional, creative and other part-time work economies have been gradually derived. Providing necessary skills training for part-time workers has become an important channel to improve the healthy development of the part-time work economy. The requirements for skills and professional quality of part-time workers in relevant positions of "digital+" type enterprises are constantly improving. The part-time workers must reach a certain level or have professional qualification certificates to be competent. For this, on the one hand, the government should build a training platform, formulate industry training standards, and actively guide part-time workers to participate in basic vocational skills training. For hot and scarce occupations, we should expand the scope and depth of training, and train before taking up the post; On the other hand, integrate government, social and enterprise resources, create a professional and comprehensive training service

platform, and provide high-quality and highly skilled workers for the development of the new type of part-time workers. At the same time, the government should provide policy support for the development of such training platforms and strengthen supervision.

Acknowledgments

This study was funded by the National Undergraduate Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program of Anhui University of Finance and Economics in 2021, "Research on the development prospect and utility of part-time workers under the background of post-epidemic based on the empirical analysis of VAR model" (Grant No.: 202110378111).

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