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PLATFORM WORK AS A SOURCE OF SATISFACTION – ITS MERITS AND DEMERITS IN THE OPINION OF POLES

| Abstract

- ▶ *Goal* – the article aims to identify the characteristics of platform work (PW) as a potential source of satisfaction, based on the opinions of adult Poles. It draws on the approaches to job satisfaction derived from neoclassical economics and psychological concepts of work.
- ▶ *Research methodology* – the characteristics of PW were compiled through the review of extant literature. The opinions were collected in a diagnostic survey using an online questionnaire filled and returned by a representative sample of 3165 Poles. The survey identified a group declaring to have the knowledge of platform-mediated work opportunities, which ultimately contained 2099 respondents. To the best of the author's knowledge, this was the first survey in Poland on the perception of the characteristics of work mediated through digital platforms conducted on such a large scale.
- ▶ *Score/results* – the study showed that major benefits of PW relate to contractor autonomy and concern the freedom of choice when and how long to work. The most frequently identified demerit, on the other hand, concerns work remuneration and it is the instability of income.
- ▶ *Originality/value* – the originality of the study stems from the quantitative representation of the opinions concerning the characteristics of platform-mediated work, divided into merits and demerits classified under three categories: labour income, contractor autonomy, and working conditions.

| **Keywords:** digital labour platforms, work platformisation, job satisfaction, gig economy.

1. Introduction

Digital labour platforms are one of the manifestations of the platformisation of the economy. They facilitate communication and transactions between parties using a platform as an intermediary. Transactions involve labour services ordered by businesses or consumers and performed by gig workers. Services can be performed online (this is how platforms such as Useme, Freelancer, MTurk, PeoplePerHour and many others operate) or offline (examples of such platforms include Task Rabbit, Pomocedomowe, Uber, Glovo), but they are always mediated by a digital platform. They can range from typical simple jobs, referred to as crowd work, to assignments or projects requiring specialised knowledge, classified as freelancing, but they also include the work of couriers delivering meals, drivers transporting people, and contractors of simple domestic services and alike [De Stefano, 2015; Florisson, Mandl, 2018; Mandl, 2021; Stewart, Stanford, 2017; Ayentimi, Abadi, Burgess, 2023].

Labour platforms have contributed to changing the way the labour factor is engaged. Responding to the need to improve the efficiency of businesses, they have enabled the acquisition of labour services without the need to hire employees on a more traditional basis. Work has become fragmented by being broken down into individual tasks or projects that can be outsourced to separate contractors through digital platforms [Çiğdem, 2022]. Labour platforms have also created new income opportunities for large numbers of potential platform workers. Platform work (PW) can therefore be seen as a source of utility for those choosing it. However, both criticism from researchers and mixed reactions and protests from platform workers call for the analysis of its shortcomings and risks [Clemons et al., 2022; Prassl, 2018; Kessler, 2018; Joyce et al., 2019; Aloisi, De Stefano, 2020; Woodcock, Graham 2020; Heeks et al., 2021]. This justifies the need to study the society's awareness of the characteristics of PW. The article aims to identify the merits and demerits of platform work as a potential source of satisfaction for platform workers.

Based on literature review, the article first identified the main categories of work characteristics that are a source of satisfaction for workers. Then, PW was analysed in the cross-section of the identified categories of characteristics, which were then divided into potential merits and demerits. At the next stage, the opinions of Poles, collected in the course of the diagnostic survey designed by the author, were presented. The opinions elicited through the survey allowed for the verification of the characteristics of PW that, according to the respondents, contribute to either increased or decreased satisfaction.

2. Literature review

2.1. Characteristics of work as a source of satisfaction

In the process of analysing PW as a source of satisfaction in a cross-section of its merits and demerits, it is possible to use selected theoretical approaches on the bases of which it is possible to infer the rationale for a worker's choice of a particular type of work. In the neoclassical approach [Pigou, 1933; Marshall, 1961; Ehrenberg, Smith, 2012], taking the perspective of the labour supply side, best represented by Pigou, workers act according to the principle of maximising utility from consumption (based on a simplified division of the time budget between work and leisure). Under the assumptions of a perfect labour market, they are guided in their decisions by the level of labour income that will enable them to achieve maximum consumption satisfaction [Kwiatkowski, 2007: 101].

In reality, jobs are not homogeneous and the choice is determined not only by the level of labour income, but also by many other characteristics that can be a source of job satisfaction. The results of research into job satisfaction are reflected in psychological concepts of work. Depending on the perspective, job satisfaction can be seen as the fulfilment of a worker's needs, as proposed by Locke [1976], or the fulfilment of a worker's expectations, as Vroom [1994] put it in an attempt to explain what makes people choose a particular type of gainful employment. Noir [2007], on the other hand, defined job satisfaction as an attitude resulting from an opinion about the workplace. Based on these relatively similar approaches, job satisfaction is seen as the degree of positive or negative well-being created as a result of the tasks performed in specific physical and social conditions [Springer, 2011]. This category is used extensively in the management of organisations and the development of incentive schemes. However, it can also be useful for explaining the mechanism of the subjective assessment of a particular type of job (e.g. PW) as a potential source of income, made by an individual while choosing the most suitable option of employment.

An array of job satisfaction conceptualisations [Springer, 2011; Paliga, 2021] contains a model of particular interest to the author, namely Hackman and Oldham's [1976] model of job characteristics, which builds on the earlier findings of Turner and Lawrence as well as of Hackman and Lawer [Paliga, 2021]. This model seems the most suitable for assessing the utility derived from a chosen type of work, as it comprises a set of job characteristics that are likely

to become a source of motivation as an expression of job satisfaction. It shows that the decisive influence on job satisfaction is the sense of meaning a worker can get from performing the job (a variety of skills, completeness of tasks and their importance), worker autonomy, and feedback on worker performance. This model, together with other similar ones, described the situation of the worker at a given level of pay and the equipment of the workplace. In contrast, Herzberg's two-factor concept of job satisfaction [Herzberg, 1987], which takes a broader view of the utility derived from work, implies the importance of work remuneration and working conditions, alongside organisational policies, which all belong to internal determinants referred to as hygiene factors. Their appropriate level reduces potential job dissatisfaction. The other group consists of external factors relating to the content and type of work, including a sense of responsibility as well as development and promotion opportunities.

Contemporary major findings relating to work characteristics that guide individuals in their work related choices include research by Kunze and Suppa [2013], who demonstrated that non-pay work characteristics, such as higher worker autonomy (for example, being able to choose how and when to perform work), caused that this type of employment was more likely to be chosen and retained. In a similar context, research was conducted into the determinants of self-employment in terms of job satisfaction, which identified the importance of flexible working hours [Blanchflower, 2000; Kunasz, 2014; Çiğdem, 2022]. Similar findings were established by the study carried out by Lakes [2019], which revealed that between 2002 and 2019, the importance of the ability to act independently (the characteristic most often indicated alongside good pay as a source of satisfaction) increased, while the importance of fixed working hours decreased dramatically (only 5.8 per cent of respondents identified this characteristic as one of the three most important for finding work satisfying).

For the last few years, authors have been in agreement that flexible forms of employment are a source of job satisfaction [Origo, Pagani, 2008], which may be in conflict with the generally critical opinion of the changes taking place and the hypothesis of deteriorating working conditions caused by the popularisation of non-standard employment in the conditions of technological change [Kalleberg, 2011: 16]. In this context, worker autonomy, understood as the worker's ability to determine when and how long he works, becomes an important element of research. It is important to remember that the so-called technostress and the intensification of work managed by automatic algorithms in a digitalised environment actually limit worker autonomy.

To summarise the theoretical findings regarding the recognition of work as potentially satisfying, in the context of platform work, it is worthwhile to identify work characteristics related to labour income, worker autonomy, working conditions, in particular the opportunity to obtain feedback on work performance. The specific characteristics of platform work will be described in these three categories.

2.2. Characteristics of PW

In this section, literature review was carried out so that the selection was made regarding the characteristics of PW as a potential source of utility for workers – understood as job satisfaction – across the categories of characteristics identified above. It is important to note that the principles of PW vary and undergo rapid change, so the considerations presented below can be seen as a generalisation of the characteristics most often described.

Labour income

PW allows for flexible income earning when the need arises, which is seen as its merit [La Salle, Cartoceti, 2019; Oyer, 2020]. Global research shows that income from PW is mainly an additional source of income for platform workers, as it accounts for less than half of labour income [Huws et al., 2017]. However, Howcroft, Dundon, and Inversi [Howcroft et al., 2019] argued that there is often no guaranteed rate of remuneration for the provided service, as the platform worker tends to be self-employed or has the status of an independent contractor, depending on the legal environment, and even more so if he operates informally [Wallenstein et al., 2019]. Remuneration is most often paid for the provision of a single service, usually irrespective of the time involved in waiting for the commission of a task and actually performing it, which, according to Prassl [2018], is often the case.

Literature, based on empirical studies, presents the criticism regarding inadequate remuneration practices [Spreitzer et al., 2017; De Stefano, Aloisi, 2018; Oyer, 2020]. Mara and Pulignano [2022] demonstrated, using the example of platforms organising online work for freelancers, that deregulated, national self-employment systems combined with work platform strategies led to a reduction in the remuneration with the unchanged workload, leaving the worker unpaid for a part of it. Chicchi, Marrone, Casilli [Chicchi et al., 2022] pointed

to the differences between the situation of freelancers, whose income depends on their negotiating power, and contractors of small routine tasks (so-called clickworkers), who are remunerated based on principles that are described as 'tragic'. The conditions for freelancers working at the Upwork platform in Poland, on the other hand, were assessed as relatively more favourable compared to Belgium, Italy and France [Mara, Pulignano, 2022], which may have an influence on public sentiment.

Contractor autonomy

Contractor autonomy is often identified as an important characteristic of PW, as it enables a contractor to choose the time (day, hours, etc.) on/at which to declare his/her availability and readiness to perform services [La Salle, Cartoceti, 2019; Oyer, 2020]. Additionally, in the case of services delivered online, platforms offer an opportunity to reach customers anywhere in the world, opening up the global marketplace to contractors [Drahokoupil, Vandaele, 2021].

In practice, however, platform workers are dependent on the demand for tasks or assignments for which they have to compete. This means that they need to account for waiting time since no continuity of orders is ensured. As a result, work is unevenly distributed over time and accumulates during periods of increased demand. This diminishes contractor autonomy and undermines the benefit of working time flexibility, turning it, in fact, into a drawback [Howcroft, Bergvall-Kärebörn, 2019; Dazzi 2019; Muller 2020; Wei, Mc Donald, 2022]. According to the findings of Huws, Spencer, Syrdal and Holts [Huws et al., 2017], the effectiveness of efforts to obtain a new assignment is estimated at 5–10%, which is extremely low.

PW is subject to algorithmic (automated) monitoring and control of task completion [Howcroft, Bergvall-Kärebörn, 2019; Wood et al, 2019; Wu, Li, 2019], which significantly limits contractor autonomy. A number of studies indicate that automated inspection that delegates task completion quality assessment to the customer, potentially exposes the contractor to an unfair assessment, which he usually cannot appeal against. Platforms build and monitor their own reputation, which can lead to unfair decisions concerning the removal of contractors from the platform community and exposure to income loss [Todoli-Signes, 2017; Kessler, 2018]. As a result, contractors attempt to evade the control and evaluation algorithms, which entails certain risks and confirms the cumbersome nature of

AI-based systems [Vallas, Schor, 2020]. Furthermore, in practice it contradicts their autonomy. As a general rule, contractors provide services separately and do not work in teams, which can lead to their alienation and makes the conditions for them to self-organise in order to protect their own interests (including the protection of autonomy) extremely unfavourable [Joyce et al., 2023; Mendonca, Kougiannou, 2022].

Working conditions and feedback for contractors

PW is relatively easy to start, as it is done by joining the platform community. Prerequisites are required, for example age and relevant qualifications; in some cases also the confirmation of skills and acceptance of the platform's rules and regulations [De Stefano, Aloisi, 2018]. However, they are not a significant obstacle, as evidenced by the fact that the growth in the number of people working in this segment has reached a dynamic estimated at 25% per year [Shair, 2020]. A platform minimises the knowledge gap and information asymmetry between the contractor and the customer, while providing easy contact between the transacting parties, including access to transaction completion mechanisms and defining its rules [Rogers, 2015; De Stefano, Aloisi, 2018: 16–24; Ostoj, 2019].

The contractor, in competition with other contractors, creates his own history based on customer feedback and can thus build his own position in the platform community and, in the case of changing demand, quickly obtain the information needed by reviewing orders or observing the behaviour of platform leaders and adapting to changes [Panteli et al., 2020]. Much depends on how well contractors are able to use feedback from an automated platform management system [Bellesia et al., 2023]. Online freelancers need to develop their own brand by building appropriate strategies, tailored to the character of a platform and communication requirements (e.g. demonstrating skills, improving the profile, maintaining customer relationships). It is proven that good reputation is associated with higher income [Blyth et al., 2022] and allows freedom from price-based competition [Bellesia et al., 2023].

Another controversy concerns the equipment used to perform tasks, which the contractor has to fully or partly provide himself or at least incur the related costs. The equipment can include: a computer, a smartphone, but also, for example, a scooter or a bicycle [Stanford, 2017; Howcroft et al., 2019]. The use of equipment entails costs and faster wear and tear, of which

novice platform workers are often unaware. Additionally, the contractor is responsible for improving his qualifications and professional development [Todoli-Signes, 2017].

When tasks and assignments mediated by platforms are performed offline, exposure to an unknown customer may be a cause for concern, even though customers are also registered with the platform, so they are not anonymous. Other complications may include the difficulty of contacting the platform in case of problems (e.g. with customer contact) and frequent changes to the rules and regulations implemented by platform management [Huws et al, 2017; Aleksynska et al., 2018; Vallas, Schor 2020].

Dazzi [2019] emphasises that recognising PW as a source of satisfaction and treating its characteristics as merits and demerits is country-dependent, as this type of work is not equally popular everywhere and those doing it may have different experiences compared to their country's conditions for earning labour income. Todoli-Signes [2017] points out that differences in the treatment of platforms by the laws of different countries are a source of risk for their owners. This perspective calls for research into the segment of platform workers also at national level, despite the global nature of operations run by many platforms. It can therefore be assumed that work mediated by digital platforms as a potential source of satisfaction has both merits and demerits. A balanced, objective analysis of the characteristics of PW is therefore necessary, but it is also important to build knowledge about their perception by the public, which is shaped by their own experiences, the media or the opinions of others.

3. Research method

3.1. Merits and demerits of PW

A proposed compilation of the characteristics of PW as a potential source of satisfaction is divided into merits and demerits in the three categories of characteristics identified in the theoretical part of the article and presented in Table 1.

The merits presented above may turn into demerits under certain conditions. This is a deliberate decision in the design of the questionnaire aiming to put the respondents in a position to make an objective choice so that their attitude to

the characteristics in question could be tested. The use of own equipment, for example, was identified both as a merit and a demerit.

Table 1. Merits and demerits of PW in the three categories of characteristics

Merits	Demerits
I. Labour income	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opportunity to earn additional income when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instability of income • remuneration for the service provided, not accounting for the time taken to complete it • no guarantee of remuneration (e.g. a minimum rate)
II. Contractor autonomy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the freedom of choice concerning the day and time of work • choice of working hours • the opportunity to work with own equipment (telephone, computer, bicycle, car) • the opportunity to work online with the global customer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uneven distribution of work over time • the need to self-equip the workplace or secure the necessary means to perform services (telephone, car, bicycle, room, etc.) • the need to set up work oneself and to improve qualifications • feeling of alienation, loneliness
III. Working conditions and feedback for contractors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is easy to start work • the platform defines the terms of cooperation with the customer through rules and regulations and thus protects the interests of the contractor • the platform provides access to orders, so contractors do not need to seek them on their own • the contractor can build his position by collecting customer ratings – feedback (so-called contractor history) • contractors can adapt to changes more easily by being able to observe their competitors (other contractors, platform leaders, analysing customer comments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pressure from competitors (other contractors) • difficult contact with the platform in case of problems (answers are generated automatically, no response to emails) • frequent changes of rules and regulations by platforms • no possibility of self-organisation in the form of trade unions to protect contractor interests • exposure to subjective, unfair assessment of the quality of service provided by the customer in an algorithmic system created by the platform • uncertainty resulting from exposure to an unknown customer in the case of offline service provision

Source: the author's own elaboration.

3.2. The description of the survey and the research sample

The drawbacks result from the nature of service delivery through platforms. It is uncertain whether those with knowledge of working via digital platforms are aware of them. The evaluation of the extent to which these characteristics of PW are perceived in this way by Poles was carried out using a diagnostic survey method with an online interview (CAWI). The collection of primary data with the designed survey was commissioned to the Ariadna Nationwide Research Panel, which ensures the high quality of research procedures. The survey was conducted on a quota-based sample on 2–6.07.2021. The sample corresponded to the population structure of the adult population of Poland in terms of gender, age and place of residence. The questionnaire precisely explained the meaning of the concept of ‘platform-mediated work’, taking into account the reservations originating from the results of the studies conducted in other countries and the relevant suggestions, including the formulation of questions to respondents [OECD, 2019; Piasna, 2020]. Due to the potentially low penetration of the population with PW, the sample size was set at over 3000 respondents. In the course of the survey 3165 correctly completed questionnaires were obtained. Prior to the main survey, a sample Omnibus survey verified the prevalence of PW at a level justifying in-depth research.

In the group of respondents corresponding to the structure of the general population of Poles aged 18–70, 51% were women and 49% were men; by age: 13% were 18–24 year-old, 23% - 25–34 year-old, 38% – 35–54 year-old, and 26% were 55–70 year-old respondents. By place of residence: 38% were residents of large cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants; 25% were residents of cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants; and 38% were residents of rural areas. The first stage of the survey identified respondents who had heard about the opportunity to earn income by doing work coordinated by digital platforms. This accounted for 66% of respondents, i.e. 2,099 people. With a confidence level of 95% and a standard error at 0.84, the confidence interval was between 64.32% and 67.68%. This group of respondents was further analysed.

Since the study was conducted using an online survey technique, it must be assumed that, as in other similar studies, it may have over-represented potential platform workers who were also internet access holders and users [Piasna, Drahokoupil, 2019; Huws et al., 2019]. Responses to the questions concerning the characteristics of PW were expressed on a five-point Likert scale: from 1 – I agree completely, to 5 – I disagree completely. Conclusions were based on selected descriptive statistics: the arithmetic mean (\bar{X}), the dominant (D), and standard deviation (SD).

4. Research findings

Table 2 presents the findings for the characteristics of PW identified as merits.

Table 2. Characteristics of PW as a source of satisfaction, identified as merits (%) (N = 2099)

Characteristic	Response structure					Descriptive statistics		
	1	2	3	4	5	X	D	SD
I. Labour income								
The opportunity to earn additional income when needed.	23	43	21	9	4	2.3	2	1.03
II. Contractor autonomy								
Freedom of choice concerning the day and time of work.	27	40	20	9	4	2.3	2	1.08
Choice of working hours.	27	40	20	9	5	2.2	2	1.09
The opportunity to work with own equipment (telephone, computer, bicycle, car).	21	38	24	13	4	2.4	2	1.09
The opportunity to work online with the global customer.	21	40	26	9	3	2.3	2	1.02
III. Working conditions and feedback for contractors								
It is easy to start work.	13	33	38	12	3	2.6	3	0.98
The platform defines the terms of cooperation with the customer through rules and regulations and thus protects the interests of the contractor.	13	40	35	9	3	2.5	2	0.94
The platform provides access to orders, so contractors do not need to seek them on their own.	11	36	40	10	3	2.6	3	0.91
The contractor can build his position by collecting customer ratings.	14	44	29	10	3	2.4	2	0.96
Contractors can adapt to changes by being able to observe their competitors (other contractors, platform leaders, analysing customer comments).	12	41	35	9	3	2,5	2	0.92

X – the arithmetic mean, D – the dominant, SD – standard deviation

Source: the author's own elaboration.

It seems that with regard to the relatively new phenomenon of PW, the predominance of responses from the second level of the scale, i.e. the less decisive 'I rather agree', can be considered normal. The largest percentage of respondents (67%) identified the characteristics classified in the category 'contractor autonomy' as merits – namely the freedom of choice concerning the day and time of work ($X = 2.3$) and the length of working time ($X = 2.2$). More than 60% of the respondents also rated the opportunity to work for the global customer as a merit. A similar result was also obtained for the characteristic involving 'the opportunity to earn additional income when needed' ($X = 2.3$) – i.e. for the characteristic in the category 'labour income'. Thus, the characteristics of PW in the categories of 'contractor autonomy' and 'labour income' were rated the highest by the respondents.

Most surprisingly, the majority of respondents identified using their own equipment for work as a merit. On the other hand, this characteristic had the highest proportion (17%) of respondents who did not consider it to be a benefit. It can be assumed that, lacking sufficient experience, the respondents assessed such a situation as convenient for them, without considering its disadvantages. Therefore, a similar characteristic was also included as a demerit, although in a slightly broader context (Table 2). On the other hand, the majority of the respondents did not identify as benefits two other characteristics – the ease of starting work and the fact that the platform provides advertising and access to customers (here the number of the undecided was the highest, dominant $D = 3$). Also, the mean deviation of the given characteristic from the arithmetic mean was the lowest ($SD = 0.91$).

The findings of the survey regarding the characteristics describing the demerits of PW are included in Table 3.

While reflecting on the potential demerits of PW, respondents were more cautious than in the case of the merits. The percentage of the undecided was higher (the dominant was $D = 3$). The standard deviation for the characteristics listed as demerits from their arithmetic mean was also lower, compared to the merits. Not once did the SD exceed 1. Potential demerits were concentrated in the category of the characteristics referring to work remuneration (the sum of responses from the first and second level of the scale). The source of dissatisfaction was therefore the instability of income and no remuneration guarantees. The characteristics referring to contractor autonomy – the need to self-equip the workplace and the need to set up work oneself – were also considered the demerits by more than a half of the respondents.

Table 3. Characteristics of PW as a source of satisfaction, identified as demerits (%) (N = 2099)

Characteristic	Response structure					Descriptive statistics		
	1	2	3	4	5	X	D	SD
I. Labour income								
Instability of income	17	42	27	11	3	2.4	2	0.99
Remuneration for the provided service, not accounting for the time taken to complete it	11	37	37	13	2	2.7	2; 3	0.93
No guarantee of remuneration (e.g. a minimum rate)	16	36	33	12	3	2.5	2	1.00
II. Contractor autonomy								
Uneven distribution of work over time	6	29	46	16	3	2.3	3	0.87
The need to self-equip the workplace or to secure the necessary means to perform services (telephone, car, bicycle, room, etc.)	18	39	29	12	3	2.4	2	1.00
The need to set up work oneself and improve qualifications	13	38	32	14	3	2.6	2	0.98
Feeling of alienation	6	20	53	17	4	2.9	3	0.87
III. Working conditions and feedback for contractors								
Pressure from competitors (other contractors)	16	33	35	13	3	2.5	3	0.99
Difficult contact with the platform in case of problems (answers are generated automatically, no response to emails)	15	33	39	10	3	2.5	3	0.96
Frequent changes of rules and regulations by platforms	11	33	44	10	2	2.6	3	0.89
No possibility of self-organisation in the form of trade unions to protect contractor interests	13	32	38	13	4	2.6	3	1.00
Exposure to subjective, unfair assessment of the quality of service provided by the customer in a system created by the platform	15	38	36	9	2	2.5	2	0.94
Uncertainty resulting from exposure to an unknown customer in the case of offline service provision	11	36	38	12	2	2.6	3	0.93

X – the arithmetic mean; D – the dominant; SD – standard deviation

Source: the author's own elaboration.

The slightly different wording of the question, which still referred to own equipment used for work, revealed a different perception of the problem. In the group of working conditions, only one characteristic – exposure to subjective, unfair assessment by the customer – was considered a demerit by more than a half of the respondents, confirming the importance of feedback to the contractor, which in this case causes a sense of threat. Notably, PW is not perceived by Poles as a potential source of isolation or diminished social contacts. One reason may be that the respondents mainly see PW as an additional source of income and allocate only limited time to perform this work. The other reason may be the pandemic, spanning over a year from the date of the survey, and the reduction in social contacts that it caused.

The survey revealed poor understanding of the nature of PW and the perception of digital platforms more in terms of benefits, especially in the area of contractor autonomy, rather than drawbacks in the area of working conditions.

5. Conclusion

The theoretical part of the article demonstrated that the characteristics of PW that relate to labour income, contractor autonomy and working conditions, especially the received feedback, can be the source of job satisfaction. In Poland, the respondents perceived PW mainly through the prism of merits, so, as a result, as a potential source of satisfaction. These merits in the area of income and autonomy suggest that Poles need flexible forms of earning additional income, including participation in the global online services market. The working conditions created by the platforms, together with feedback on work performance, were in part identified as a potential source of satisfaction. On the other hand, the respondents did not recognise as a merit the ease of starting work through a platform or the access to customers that a platform may offer.

The instability of income was identified as a demerit by the highest percentage of the respondents, which - in connection with the merits – can be interpreted as the risk of not earning additional income when it would be most needed. Flexibility, of which the respondents expressed appreciation, therefore relates to working time, not to income. This contradiction is, however, a typical characteristic of PW, where working time flexibility is often accompanied by income instability. Some of the demerits identified by the respondents, affecting the benefits of autonomy or working conditions, such as the exposure to unfair

assessment, the necessity to self-equip the workplace, or the need to improve qualifications, may be mitigated by adequate regulations and the improved systems of work monitoring and customer feedback. It is also important to realize that Poles may be unaware of certain disadvantages, which poses some challenges for the sphere of education and information, e.g. through social campaigns.

PW in Poland is in its nascency. The institutional conditions, including those developed by the European Union, will determine whether the potential demerits will be reduced and the benefits will contribute to the strengthening and achievement of satisfaction derived by people from PW.

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