



UNIVERSITY OF
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1. Introduction

The present report aims to track and tackle the current trends related to influence the development of GIG economy on worker participation in Greece.

A comprehensive literature review has been conducted in order to present and emphasize the emerge type of relationship between the employers and the free-lancers or independent employees.

The survey analysis that has been conducted is based on the confidence index methodology and aims to evaluate how optimistic or pessimistic workers and employers on automotive sector are in the context of worker participation in decision making processes and the future of automotive industry.

The present report aims to highlight all the derivatives obtained from the survey. For this purpose, University of Thessaly, designed in google forms, a questionnaire that addressed various fields regarding the GIG economy. The forms of questions were open questions (were the respondents can answer in their own words), half open questions, multiple choice questions, questions based on level of measurement and rating scale questions.

2. Literature review

The GIG economy represents an emerging type of employer-employee relationship that differs, substantially, from the traditional way of employer hiring employees. Technological progress has allowed employers to run their businesses through the use of workers on free-lance or self-employed basis (Todolí-Signes 2017). Apparently, such type of relationship is a semi-disguised employer-employee relationship (De Stefano 2015), and, despite the accruing benefits (i.e. flexibility, quasi-entrepreneurship), this has generated uncertainties (i.e. uncertain salary) and concerns (i.e. limited or zero working rights) (Bergvall-Kåreborn and Howcroft 2014, Silberman and Irani 2016).

There is no unanimity regarding the definition of the GIG economy, even though some key-characteristics of the GIG economy are stressed out. According to McKinsey Global Institute (2016), “independent work has three defining features: a high degree of autonomy; payment by task, assignment, or sales; and a short-term relationship between worker and client”. Brinkley (2016) describes GIG economy “as the performing of work by connection to customers and clients through a platform”. Stewart and Standford (2017) uses “crowdsourcing”, “sharing economy” and “collaborative economy” as an alternative to the GIG economy phraseology. According to BEIS (2018), “the GIG economy involves exchange of labor for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment-by-task basis”.

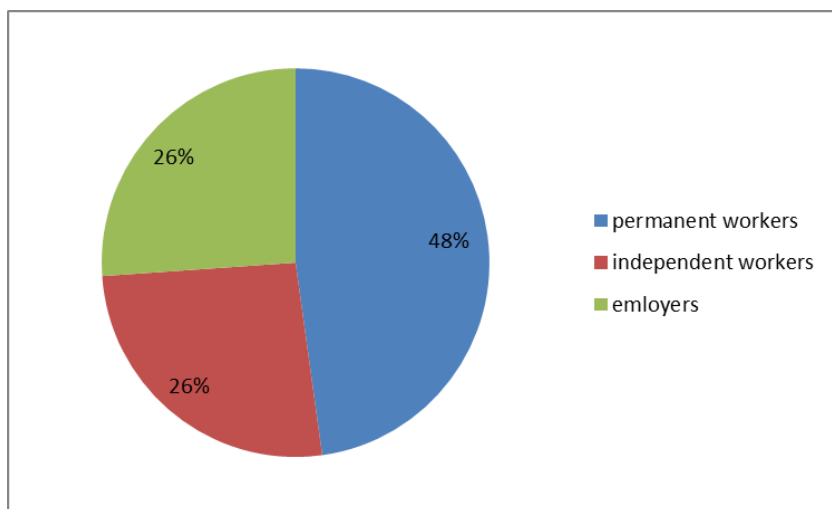
Scientific literature on the GIG economy is still at an embryonic stage and some crucial topics about the realities of the GIG economy need to be addressed. Is GIG economy a new form of self-employment or a new form of exploitation? How many workers are involved with GIG economy? Who are they? Is GIG economy their main source of income? What is the situation regarding their working rights? What is their level of satisfaction? What are the implications for public policy?

“Worker participation in GIG economy – long term scenarios for automotive sector” (VP/2018/006) project contributes to this discussion providing the findings of an empirical analysis regarding the automotive sector in the EU. The automotive sector is the largest industrial sector in the EU, providing jobs for 12,000,000 people and accounting for the 4% of the GDP. For the needs of the project, primary research has been conducted and the findings a questionnaires’ analysis provide valuable insight.

3. Questionnaires' analysis

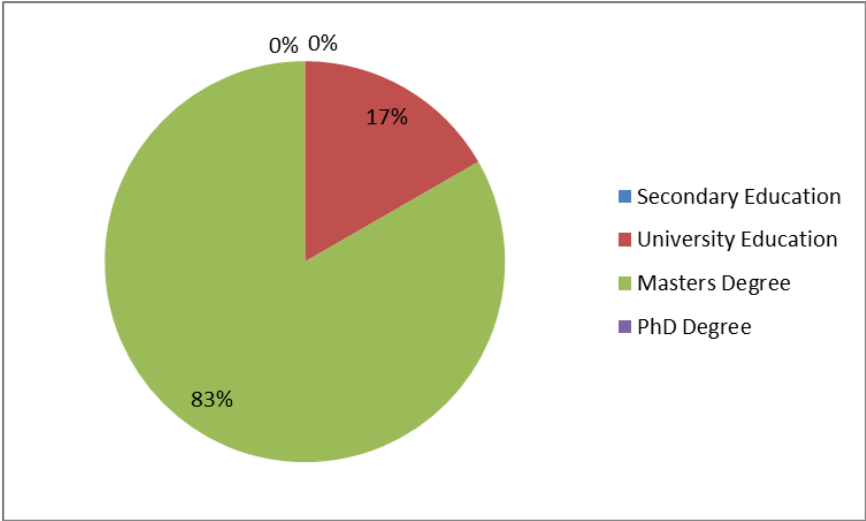
The questionnaire is divided in three sections according to the working status of the participants, thus the first includes questions for the independent workers, the second for the permanent workers and the third for the employers. About half of the participants of the survey (47.8%) are employed as permanent workers, 26.1% of them are employed as independent workers and the rest 26.1% are employers. The questionnaire responders were 23. (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Working status of the participants of the survey.



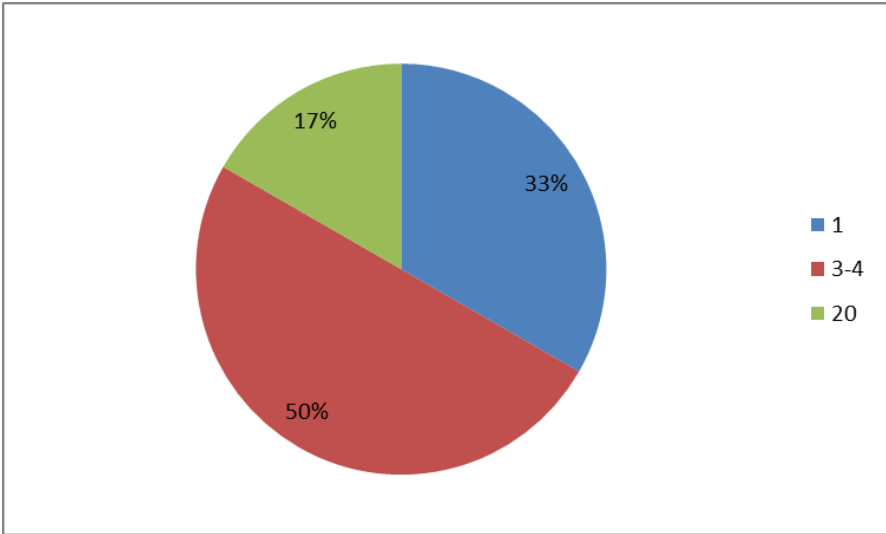
As far as the independent workers are concerned, all of them represent Greece as project-participating country. The level of their education is quite satisfying as the overwhelming majority of them (83%) holds a master's degree, while the rest of them (16.7%) have University education (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Level of education.



Half of the respondents (50%) have worked the last couple of years in 3-4 employers, 33.3% in only one employer, while the other 16.7% in a major number of employers that reach up to 20 (Figure 3).

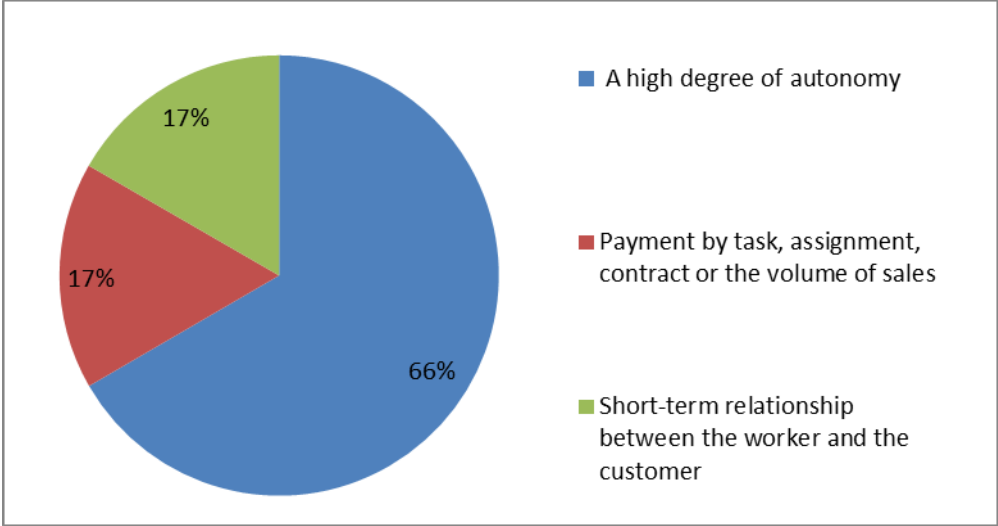
Figure 3. Number of employers worked in the last couple of years.



Regarding the working conditions of the respondents, a high proportion of them (66.7%) have a high autonomy degree. This implies, that independent workers have a high degree of control and flexibility in determining their workload and work portfolio. They can decide which assignments to accept based on criteria such as the fee, the desirability of the client, or the timing and they can change those choices over time. A smaller share of the participants in the survey (16.7%) is paid by task, assignment, contract or the load of sales they make. Unlike salaried employees, they are not paid for time not spent working. An equally similar share of the participants (16.7%) has a short-term relationship with the customer. This implies that independent earners perform short-term assignments.

Both the worker and the customer acknowledge the limited duration of the relationship. Some contracts may extend for months or even years, at this point the individuals become indistinguishable from traditional employees; we therefore define independent work as assignments lasting less than 12 months (Figure 4).

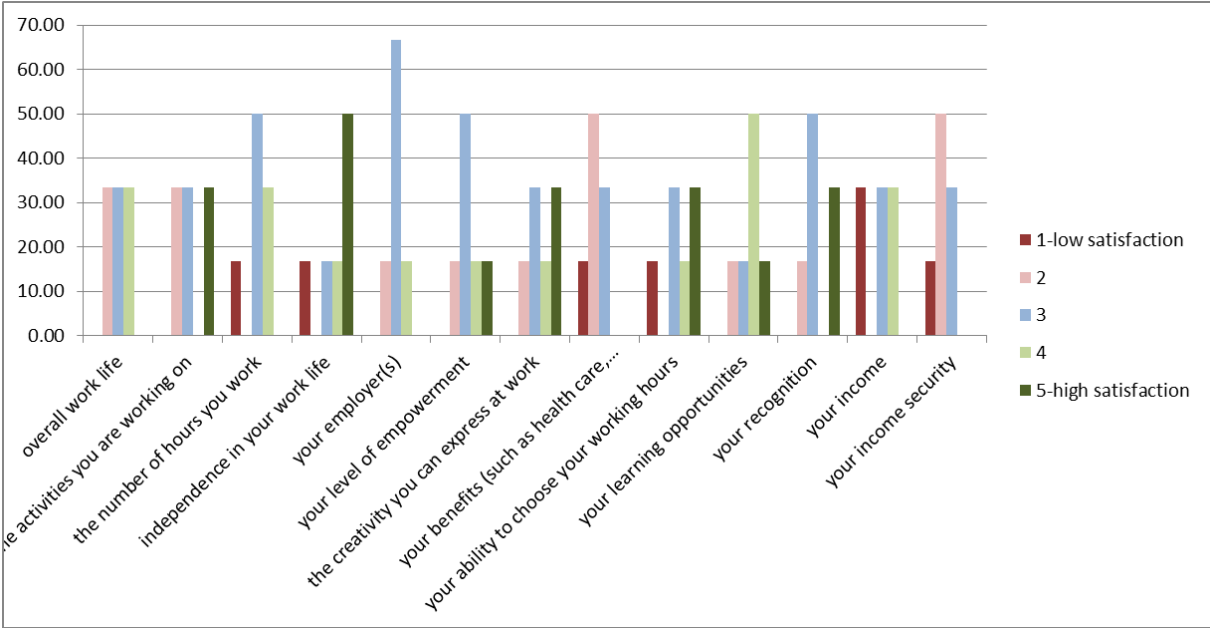
Figure 4. Main feature of the working status of respondents as independent worker.



A higher share of the respondents (67%) answered that it was their decision to become independent workers, while a smaller share (33%) became by necessity. This work is basic for their living as the 83.3% of them answered that independent work generates their primary income and only 16.7% of them answered that this work offers a supplemental income.

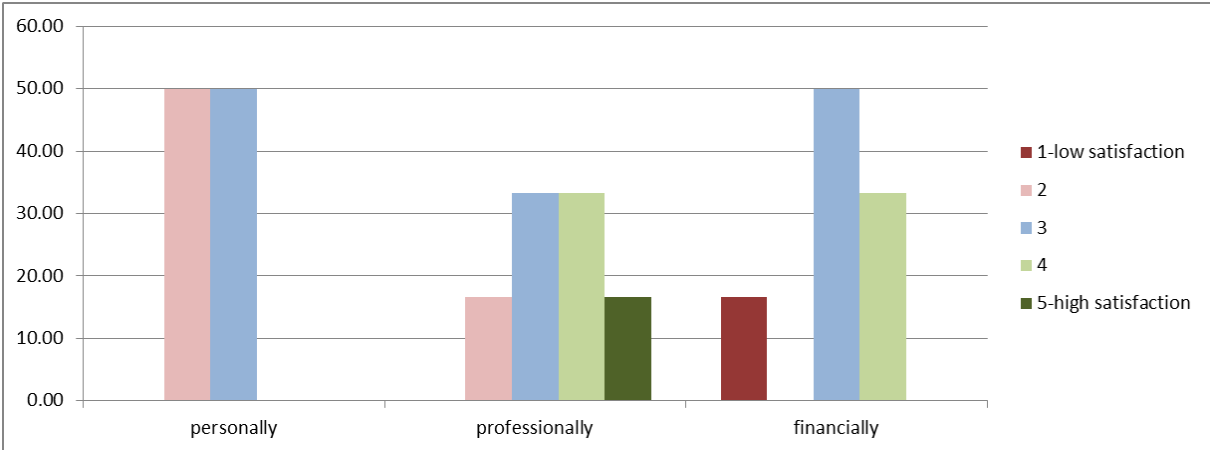
The survey canvasses the opinions of the respondents about their overall work life. Their answers were based on a scale of 1-5 of which 1 indicates low satisfaction and 5, high satisfaction. Their answers showed a moderate view about overall work life as the 33% showed a rather high satisfaction (score 4), the other 33% a rather low satisfaction (score 2) and the rest 33% a moderate satisfaction level (score 3). The participants also expressed a medium-level satisfaction about the activities they are working on, as the 67% of them scored 2-3, while the 33% showed a high satisfaction level (score 5). As far as the number of working hours are concerned, the majority of the participants (83%) expressed a medium satisfaction level (3-4), while the 17% a low satisfaction. Finally, regarding the independence in their work life, the majority of the respondents (66.7%) stated a (rather) high satisfaction (score 4-5), the 33% a moderate satisfaction (score 3), while the rest 17% a low satisfaction (score 1) (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Level of satisfaction on working conditions.



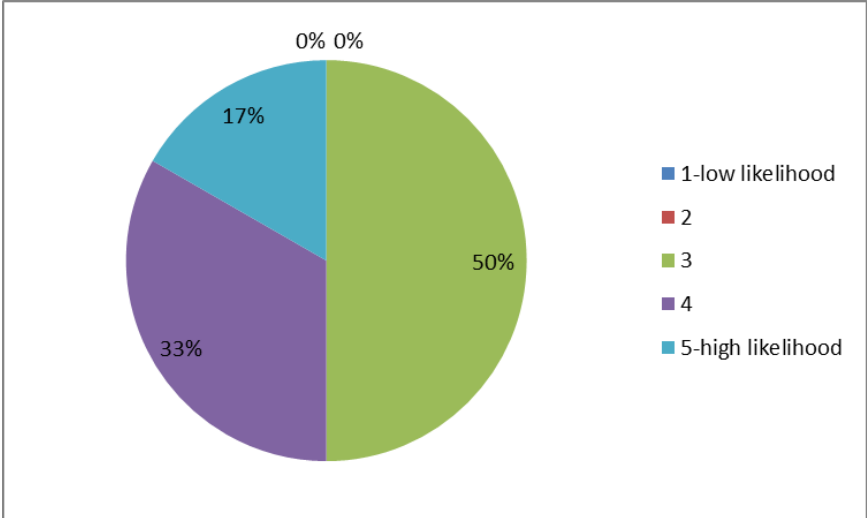
In the question on whether independent work has affected their life, the participants answered in a scale 1-5 (1: negatively; 5: positively). Therefore, at personal level all the participants scored their satisfaction in rather low (score 2) or medium level (score 3). At professional level half of the respondents showed rather high or high satisfaction (score 4-5), the 33.3% of the respondents showed medium satisfaction (score 3) and the 17% showed low satisfaction (score 1). Finally, at financial level, half of the participants are medium-level satisfied, the 33% is rather high satisfied, while the 17% expressed a low satisfaction (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Degree of satisfaction at personal, professional and financial level.



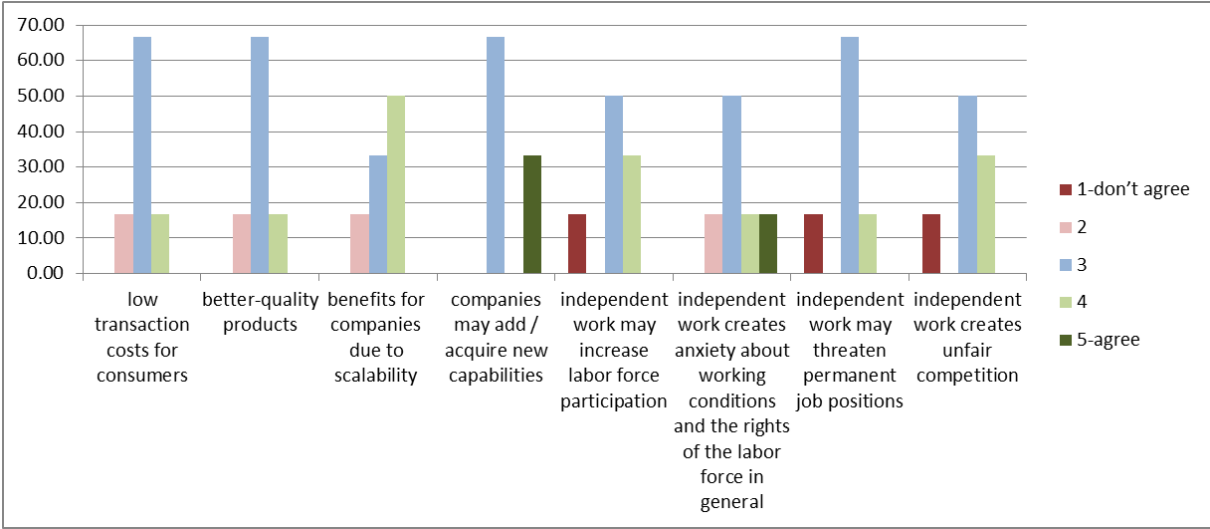
In the question on whether the independent workforce could grow larger in the years ahead, the respondents in a scale 1-5 (1: low likelihood; 5 high likelihood) answered a medium-level likelihood (50%), a rather high (33%) or a high likelihood (17%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Opinion about whether the independent workforce could grow larger in the years ahead.



Moreover, the survey asked the opinion of the respondents on whether the independent work can create economic benefits. The participants answered in a scale of 1-5 (1: don't agree; 5: agree). A moderate view of the respondents is revealed concerning the low transaction costs for consumers and the better-quality products as the 67% of them scored their opinion by 3. A slightly positive picture is given by some respondents that scored mainly 3 (the 50%) and 4-5 (the 33.3%) on whether independent work may increase the labor force participation. A more positive opinion of the respondents was expressed on the benefits gained for companies due to scalability (i.e. companies can keep core operations focused on what they do best and call in independent service providers exactly when they need them) (50% answered that they rather agree) and also on the fact that companies may add/acquire new capabilities as the 33% of the participants showed that they agree. The employees expressed their fear on whether independent work may threaten permanent job positions but mostly on whether independent work might create anxiety regarding the working conditions and the rights of the labor force in general or on whether independent work might create unfair competition (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Opinion about whether independent work can create economic benefit.

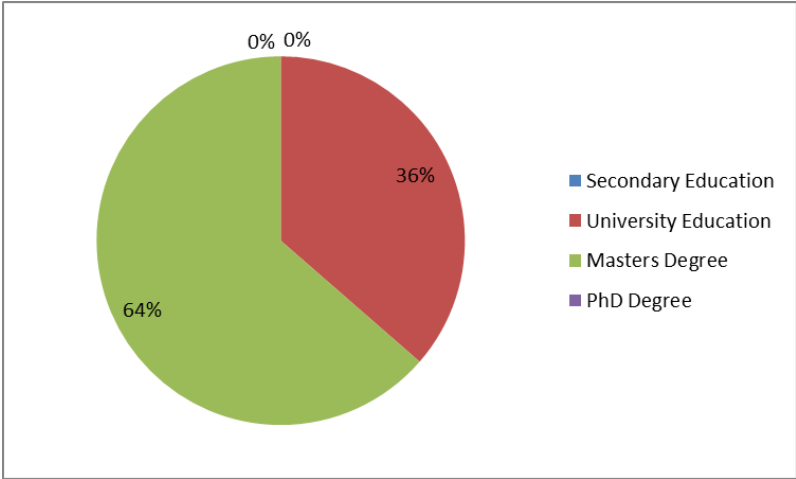


The majority of the respondents believe that independent workers must be statistically recorded as in a scale of 1-5 (1: totally disagree; 5: totally agree) the 67% of participants rather or totally agree (score 4-5). Similarly, the 83.4% of the participants agree or nearly agree that policy-makers need to regulate the GIG economy and support the independent workers. In the question on whether independent workers must participate to labor unions, 83.3% of the participants totally agree and 16.7% totally disagree. 83% of the respondents also totally or nearly agree (score 4-5) that independent workers must have collective contracts. Similarly, on the question on whether the independent workers must have a guaranteed minimum wage as the 66.7% of them totally agree (score 5) and the 33.3% nearly agree (score 4).

67% of the respondents consider that GIG economy provides a quick and effective way of gaining experience (score 4-5), while the rest 33% has a more moderate view (score 3). The overwhelming majority of the respondents (83%) totally or nearly agree that independent work can provide income for graduates who aim getting into the labor market. Half of the participants totally agree that independent work is more suitable for graduates who aim getting into the job market, while the rest half of them expressed a more moderate view (score 3).

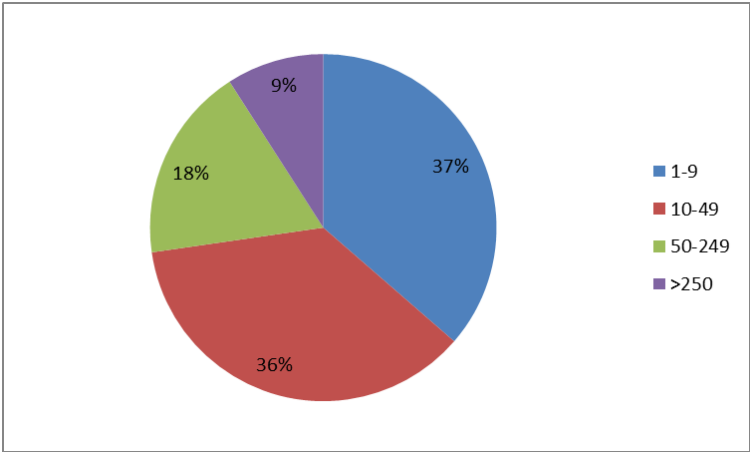
As far as the permanent workers are concerned, the 90.9% of the respondents represent Greece as the project-participating country and the 9.1% Belgium. Similarly, with the participants working as independent workers, the level of their education is quite satisfying as the majority of them (63.6%) holds a master’s degree, while the rest (36.4%) has University education (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Level of education of all the participants of the survey.



C the size of the firms that the participants work in, 36.4% of them work in micro size firms (1-9 employees), another 36.4% work in small-sized firms (10-49 employees), 18.2% work in medium-sized firms (50-249 employees) and 9.1% work in large firms (over 250 employees) (Figure 10).

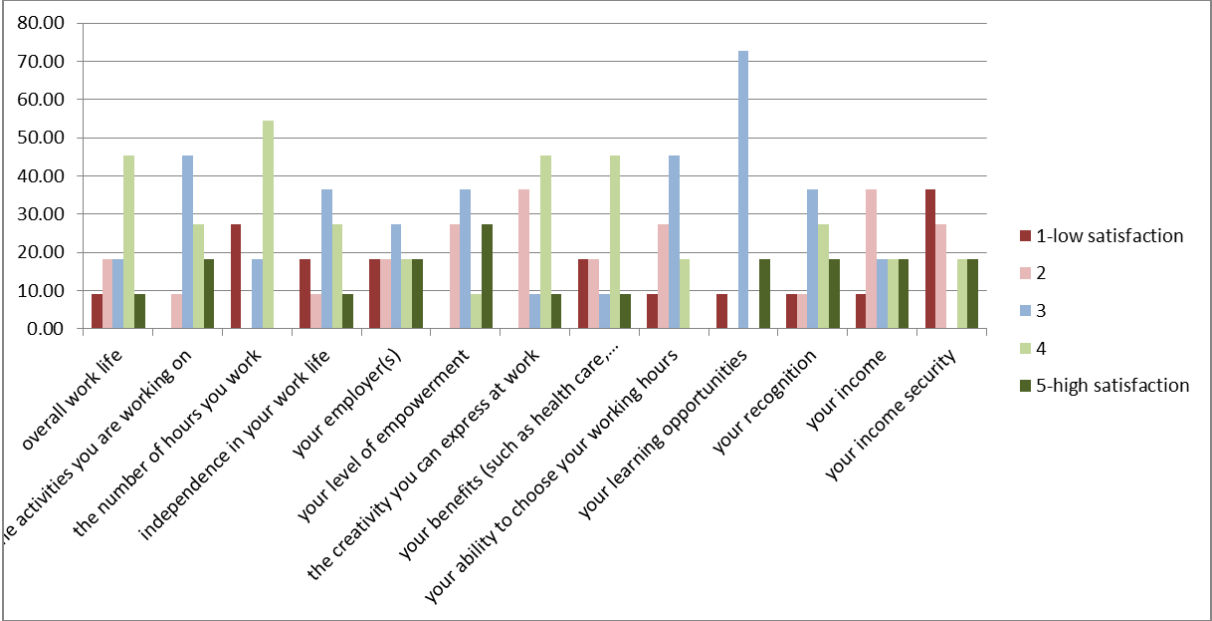
Figure 10. Size of firms that participants work in.



The survey canvasses the opinions of the respondents regarding their working conditions. Their answers were based on a scale of 1-5 of which 1 indicates low satisfaction and 5 indicates high satisfaction. More than half of the participants (54.6%) expressed a high or a nearly high satisfaction (score 4-5) on their overall work life, 18.2% has a more moderate view and 27.3% has a less or nearly

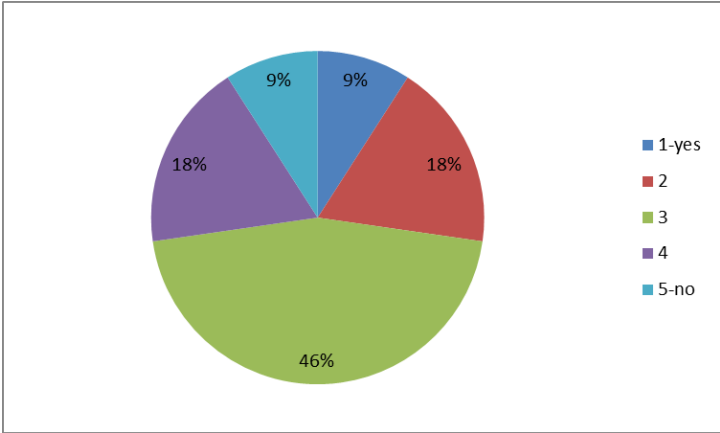
less satisfaction (score 1-2). 45.5% of the participants show a high satisfaction (score 4-5) on the activities they are working with, another 45.5% shows a moderate satisfaction level and the rest 9.1% shows a rather less satisfaction level (score 2). Regarding the number of working hours, the 54.5% of the respondents are rather satisfied (score 4), 27.3% expressed low satisfaction and the rest 18.2% showed a medium-level satisfaction (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Level of satisfaction on working conditions



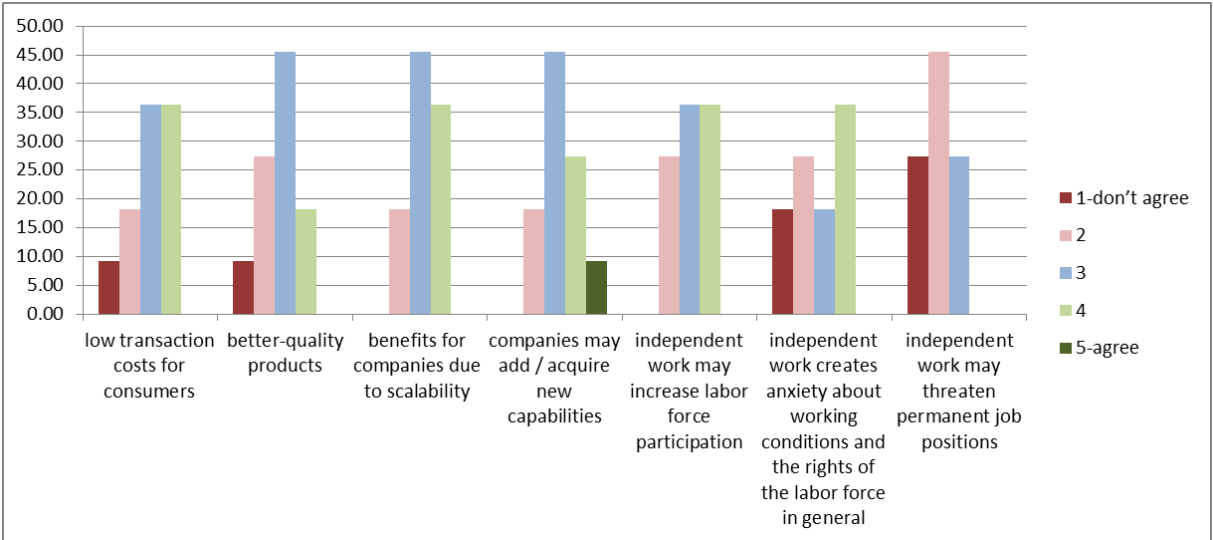
None of the participants showed a clear will to work as an independent worker as 54.6% of them answered that they didn't want to work as an independent worker (score 4-5), while the rest 45.5% expressed an ambiguous answer (score 3, neither yes, nor no). In the question on whether they are afraid to work as independent workers the 27.3% stated that (rather) yes (score 4-5), the other 27.3% answered that (rather) no (score 1-2) and the rest 45.5% gave an intermediate answer (score 3, neither yes, nor no) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. How much they are afraid to work as an independent worker.



The survey asked the permanent workers to express their opinion about the prospects of independent work. A mainly moderate with slightly positive aspects view (that means score 3 has the higher share and score 4-5 the second higher share) was expressed regarding the low transaction costs for consumers, the benefits for companies due to scalability, the possibility for the companies to add/acquire new capabilities and the possibility of the independent work to increase labor force participation. On the contrary, a moderate with slightly negative aspects view was expressed about the better-quality products. Permanent workers seem that they are not afraid of whether independent work might create anxiety about working conditions and the rights of the labor force in general, and whether independent work may threaten permanent job positions. (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Opinion about whether independent work can create economic benefits



On the question regarding their opinion on the independent workers, the permanent workers answered on a scale of 1-5 (1: totally disagree; 5: totally agree). More than half of them (54.6%) totally or rather agree (score 4-5) that independent workers must be statistically recorded. 72.7% of them totally or

rather agree (score 4-5) that policy-makers need to regulate the GIG economy and support the independent workers. Nearly all the respondents (90.9%) totally or rather agree that independent workers must participate to labor unions.

A more differentiated view on whether independent workers must have collective contracts, shows that 54.6% of the participants totally or rather agree (score 4-5), 36.4% has a moderate view (score 3) and the 9.1% rather disagree (score 2). Surprisingly, on the question regarding the guaranteed minimum wage of the independent workers, the majority of them (72.8%) totally or rather agree (score 4-5), 9.1% totally disagree.

More than half of the participants (54.5%) expressed a moderate view on whether the GIG economy provides a quick and effective way of getting experience, 36.4% totally or rather agree (score 4-5) and 9.1% rather disagree. On the contrary, half of the respondents (54.5%) totally or rather agree (score 4-5) that independent work can provide income for graduates who aim at getting into the labor market, while the 36.4% expressed a moderate view (score 3). Finally, a moderate view (score 3) is expressed by a significant part of the participants (45.5%) on the question on whether independent work is more suitable for graduates who aim at getting into the labor market, while the 36.4% of them totally or rather agree (score 4-5) and the 18.2% rather disagree (score 2).

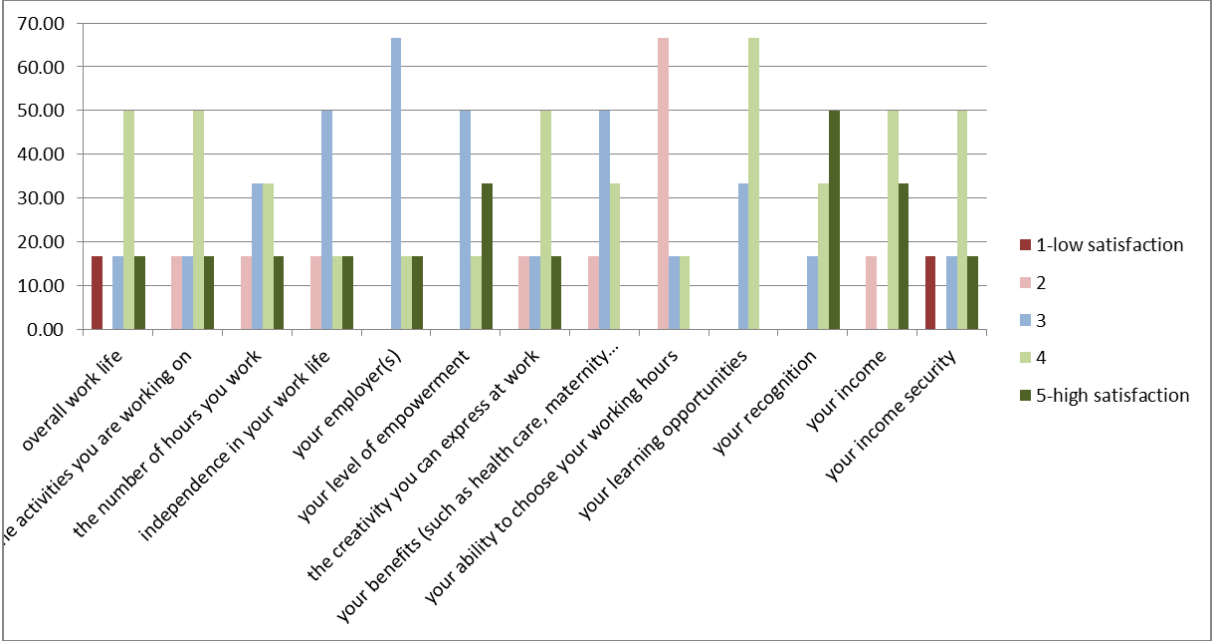
As far as the employers are concerned, all of them represent Greece as a project-participating country. The level of education is lower than the previous two analysed groups as half of the participants have secondary education, 33.3% has University education and only 16.7% holds Master's Degree. 66.7% of them work in micro size firms (1-9 employees), 66.7% works in small-sized firms (10-49 employees), and 16.7% work in large firms (over 250 employees). Half of the firms have more than 80% of their staff in a permanent position, 33.3% have 26-50% permanent staff and 16.7% have less than 25% permanent staff.

The majority of firms (33.3%) have contracts with independent workers with one-year average duration. A smaller share of firms (16.7%) have contracts with duration of less than a year (3-6 months, or 6 months), greater than one year or no contract at all.

The survey attempts to map the overall satisfaction of permanent workers with regards to their employers. Thus, a mainly moderate but slightly higher satisfaction level (score 3 has the higher share and score 4-5 the second higher share) is expressed in the questions concerning the independence in their work life, their employer(s), the benefits (such as health care, maternity/ paternity leave, minimum wage) and the level of empowerment. A higher satisfaction level of participants was presented for the overall work life, the activities they are working on, the number of hours they work,

the creativity they can express at work, the learning opportunities, the income and income security. On the contrary, less satisfaction is expressed only in the ability to choose their working hours (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Level of satisfaction on working conditions.



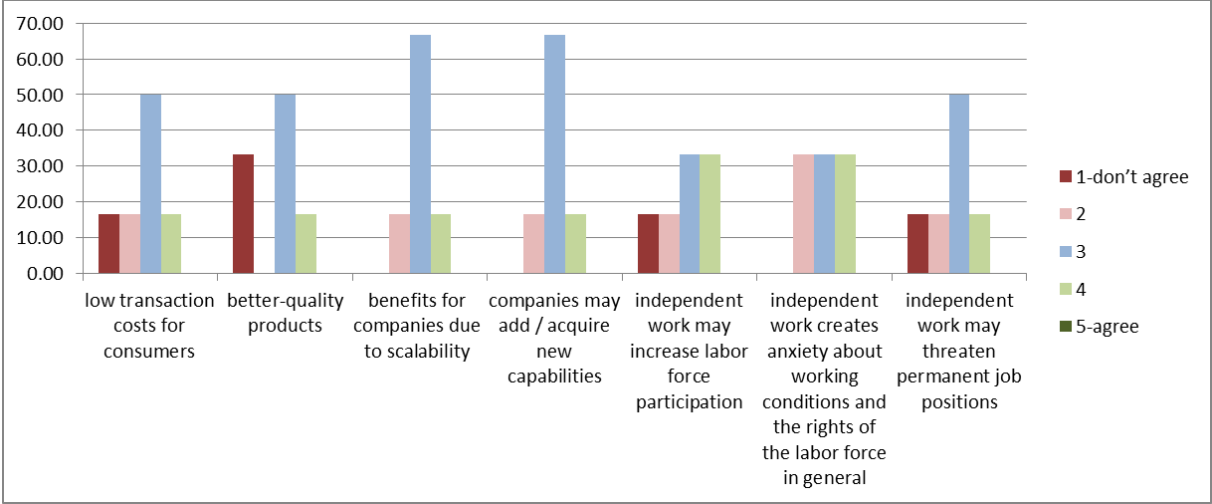
66.7% of the participants gave an ambiguous answer on whether their workers became independent by choice (score 3 from a scale 1-5, 1: false; 5: true), while the rest 33.3% believes that it is not true. It seems that employers do not favour the permanent workers as in the question regarding their preference on independent or permanent workers, the 66.7% of them expressed a moderate view, and the other 33.3% disagreed.

Similarly, the majority of participants (66.7%) gave an intermediate answer (score 3 from a scale 1-5, 1: low likelihood; 5 high likelihood) in the question on whether the independent workforce could grow larger in the years ahead, 16.7% believe that there is a high likelihood and the other 16.7% that there is a low likelihood.

On the question on whether the independent work can create economic benefits, the participants expressed on a scale 1-5 (1: don't agree; 5: agree), a moderate view about the benefits for companies due to scalability and the possibilities that companies may add/acquire new capabilities. A neutral picture was given in the question on whether the independent work can increase labor force participation and the possibility of creating anxiety about working conditions and the rights of the labor force in general as the 33.3% of respondents answered that they agree (score 4-5), disagree

(score 1-2) or that expresses a medium level of agreement (score 3). Finally, a slightly negative view was expressed for the low transaction costs for consumers and the better-quality products, while they do not agree that independent work might threaten permanent job positions (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Opinion about whether independent work can create economic benefits.



33.3% of the participants totally or rather agree (score 4 and 5) that independent workers must be statistically recorded, while the rest 66.7% has a moderate view (score 3). Similarly, the 33.3% of the respondents totally or rather agree that policy-makers need to regulate the GIG economy and support the independent workers, while the 50% expresses a moderate view (score 3) and the rest 16.7% rather disagree. Again, the 33.3% of the respondents totally or rather agree that independent workers must participate to labour unions and the other 66.7% expressed a moderate view.

Similar picture was given by the answers of the respondents on the question on whether the independent workers must have collective contracts, as the 66.7% gave an intermediate answer (score 3) and the other 33.3% rather agree (score 4). The majority of the participants (83.3%) totally or rather agree (score 4-5) that independent workers must have a guaranteed minimum wage. Half of the participants totally or rather agree that GIG economy provides a quick and effective way of getting experience, 33.3% has a moderate view and 16.7% rather disagree.

Finally, half of the participants expressed a moderate view on whether independent work can provide income for graduates who aim getting into the labor market and the other half of them rather agree. Similarly, half of the respondents showed a moderate view on whether independent work is more suitable for graduates who aim at getting into the labor market, while the other half of them totally or rather agree.

4. Conclusions

It can be concluded, that independent workers agree on the capabilities the independent work can offer, but they are not satisfied with their working conditions and mostly with the benefits (such as health care, maternity / paternity leave, minimum wage) and their income security. On the contrary, permanent employees appear to work in better conditions (better than their employers believe for them) as they expressed low satisfaction level in fewer fields of their work (mainly for their income and their income security). Unambiguously, all the categories of participants (independent, permanent workers, and employers) agree that independent workers should participate to labor unions, to have collective contracts (however more moderate were appeared on that the employers) and to have a minimum wage.

Regarding the prospects of working independently, independent employees expressed the fear that this form of work might create anxiety about the working conditions and the rights of the labor force in general, but also that it might create unfair competition. On the contrary, permanent workers showed less fear about the negative effects of independent work. Employers, even though they didn't seem to favor permanent employees in detriment of the independent employees (but without clear evidence), they do not agree that independent work might threaten permanent job positions, but they expressed a mediocre view on the prospects of independence work.

Independent work, despite its flexibility and the advantage of learning opportunities is presented to confront significant problems and unfavorable working conditions in relation to permanent work. Its prospects seem to be limited given the current conditions.

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