

Original Article

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence Disruption on Industrial Relations Stability in the Media Sector

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Abstract:

The advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has created a profound transformation in global labor structures, particularly within the media industry. Automation and AI-driven algorithms have begun to replace numerous human functions, from content production to digital editorial management. This phenomenon raises normative legal issues within Indonesia's labor framework, as the increasing number of employment terminations (PHK) is no longer primarily caused by economic loss, but by efficiency decisions driven by technological modernization. Existing regulations, such as Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower and Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021, have yet to provide an adequate legal foundation to address this emerging reality. This study employs a normative juridical legal research method, focusing on the examination of positive legal norms, legal principles, and relevant labor law doctrines. The study finds that Indonesia's labor law system remains reactive and unprepared to anticipate structural changes resulting from the integration of AI in the workplace. Legal protections for workers affected by automation-induced termination are not yet comprehensively accommodated within existing regulations. The research emphasizes the need for a more adaptive and progressive reformulation of labor law, positioning reskilling and upskilling policies as preventive legal mechanisms. Such legal renewal is essential to maintain a balance between industrial efficiency and the protection of workers' rights amid the ongoing artificial intelligence revolution.



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Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology in the 21st century has brought the world of work into an era of disruption, one example being the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI has become a major catalyst in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is characterized by the integration of digital technology, automation systems, and data analysis

in almost all aspects of economic and social activities ([Herman et al., 2025](#)). In various sectors, including the media industry, the use of AI has brought new efficiencies while posing complex challenges to the working relationships between workers, companies, and labor institutions.

In the context of the media industry, AI disruption has led to significant changes in the production and distribution of information. Technologies such as automated journalism, natural language processing, and machine learning have enabled computer systems to write news articles, edit manuscripts, and personalize content according to audience preferences. This transformation brings high efficiency to media companies, but on the other hand, it raises concerns about the reduction of human labor, the shifting roles of journalists, and digital competency gaps among media workers ([Kuswoyo et al., 2025](#)). Structural changes resulting from AI adoption also have implications for the stability of industrial relations ([Dalimunthe et al., 2025](#)). Industrial relations, involving workers, employers, and the government, have the potential to experience new tensions due to changes in work patterns, wage systems, and labor protection mechanisms that are not yet fully capable of accommodating the phenomenon of digitalization ([Kanaya et al., 2021](#)). The absence of specific regulations regarding the use of AI in the workplace can exacerbate the imbalance between corporate productivity interests and worker welfare. This situation highlights the need for a more in-depth study of how the development of AI technology affects existing legal frameworks and industrial relations.

Advances in artificial intelligence technology have had a substantial legal impact on the employment system in Indonesia. In a normative context, the presence of this technology creates an urgent need for legal reforms that can adapt to changes in the work structure in the modern industrial sector, particularly the media industry. Automation carried out by AI-based systems has replaced various human functions, such as news writing, editing, and digital content management ([Kaplan, 2018](#)). This change raises dogmatic legal issues, namely how existing positive legal norms can be applied or interpreted in the face of new conditions that have never been explicitly regulated in Indonesian labor laws.

From a normative perspective, labor law in Indonesia is principally aimed at protecting workers from arbitrary actions by employers, including in the context of termination of employment (PHK) ([Supianto, 2023](#)). Based on Government Regulation Number 35 of 2021 concerning Fixed-Term Employment Agreements, Outsourcing, Working Hours, Rest Periods, and Termination of Employment, Article 43 states that efficiency can only be used as grounds for termination of employment if the company is experiencing losses, not in order to prevent losses. This provision is restrictive and serves as a legal protection instrument for workers. However, dogmatically, this regulation creates an interpretative void when faced with the reality of technology-based efficiency that is not related to economic losses, but rather to the modernization of work systems ([Raharjo, 2023](#)). This gap is the main reason for the need for legal research that focuses on the discrepancy between positive legal texts and their application in the context of AI disruption.

Another reason that reinforces the urgency of this research is the incompatibility between the principles and objectives of labor law and the phenomenon of digital automation. Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower was designed with the assumption of a conventional employment relationship between humans and employers, where termination of employment is generally associated with violations, resignation, or economic conditions. In the context of technological disruption, the reasons for termination of employment have changed into new forms that are not yet accommodated in positive norms, namely the elimination of positions due to the integration of artificial intelligence systems that are capable of taking over human functions. Dogmatically, this condition raises legal questions regarding

the legitimacy of such layoffs: can technology-based efficiency be considered a valid reason from a positive law perspective? This question forms the normative basis for research to reexamine the limitations, interpretations, and rationality of Indonesian labor law in facing the new reality of the digital job market.

From a legal theory perspective, this condition shows that Indonesian labor law is still in a reactive paradigm, not an anticipatory one. Satjipto Rahardjo emphasizes that good law is law that lives and develops with its society, not law that limits itself to static regulatory texts (Rahardjo, 2018). When applied in the context of digital labor, this principle suggests that regulations that are unable to adapt to social changes will lose their normative effectiveness. Thus, this study is driven by the need to assess the extent to which Indonesian labor law can uphold substantive justice for workers amid structural changes caused by AI, while also testing the adequacy of existing legal principles to respond to these new challenges.

In the context of legal dogma, this research is important because it provides a space for analyzing existing norms and assessing their consistency with the principles of labor law. According to Gustav Radbruch, law must reflect three main values: justice, certainty, and utility (Sukendro et al., 2024). If legal norms only emphasize certainty without considering substantive justice for workers who lose their jobs due to technological disruption, then the law risks losing its social legitimacy. This is where the urgency of this dogmatic research lies, to identify whether the structure of Indonesian positive law is adequate in guaranteeing justice for workers affected by automation and to what extent the applicable norms are still consistent with the principles of labor protection as stipulated in the constitution.

Furthermore, the normative reason that strengthens this research is the need for legal reform that not only improves the text of regulations but also clarifies the direction of legal policy (*rechtspolitiek*) in the face of technological transformation. Labor law reform must be directed towards ensuring a balance between industrial efficiency and the protection of workers' rights. The law cannot stand outside of social change; rather, the law must function as a balancing mechanism that ensures that industrial modernization does not sacrifice the constitutionally guaranteed rights of workers (Salim, 2019). Thus, this research was conducted not because of empirical considerations, but rather because of the normative need to ensure that positive law remains in line with the principles of justice and social protection in the era of AI disruption.

In the context of modern employment, workers who lose their jobs due to automation are the most vulnerable to structural injustice. Therefore, the legal system must ensure that protection for them is not only based on compassion, but is a normative obligation rooted in the principle of social justice. In other words, this study aims to reassess the position of Indonesian positive law in the face of technological disruption, with an emphasis on normative consistency and the direction of fair labor law reform in the era of artificial intelligence.

The objective of this study is to analyze the readiness and adequacy of the labor law framework in Indonesia in providing protection for workers affected by termination of employment due to AI disruption, as well as to identify the direction of labor law reform that needs to be carried out in order to anticipate changes in the work structure arising from the application of AI technology, particularly in the media industry sector. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which Indonesia's labor law system is able to adapt to the challenges of the digital era, while also providing strategic recommendations for the formation of regulations that are fair, adaptive, and responsive to technological developments.

Research Method

This study uses a normative legal research method, which focuses on the study of positive legal norms, legal principles, and legal doctrines relevant to the issue of termination of employment (PHK) due to AI disruption in the media industry. Normative legal research departs from the view that law is a system of norms that has a certain internal structure and hierarchy, so that every legal issue must be examined through written provisions, legal principles, and the views of authorized legal experts ([Marzuki, 2017](#)).

The normative legal method was chosen because the issues studied were dogmatic and conceptual, rather than empirical. The issues raised do not focus on social behavior or field data, but on the analysis of the suitability and adequacy of positive law in responding to new realities resulting from technological advances. Thus, this research is analytical-descriptive in nature with regard to the applicable legal system, while also being prescriptive in providing ideas for reformulating labor laws that are more adaptive to technological disruption ([Soekanto & Mamudji, 2018](#)).

In the context of labor law, issues arising from automation and artificial intelligence reflect the tension between static legal norms and dynamic socio-technological developments. Therefore, this normative research aims to assess the extent to which Indonesia's labor law system, as stipulated in Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Labor and Government Regulation Number 35 of 2021, has been able to anticipate structural changes in labor relations caused by the application of AI.

Normative legal research has the main objective of discovering the applicable legal principles, structures, and systems and assessing the extent to which these norms are capable of realizing justice and legal certainty in society. In the context of this research, these objectives are translated into two directions: first, examining the adequacy of positive legal norms in providing protection for workers who lose their jobs due to automation; and second, reviewing the direction of legal reforms needed so that the Indonesian labor system can adapt to the artificial intelligence revolution without sacrificing the principle of social justice ([Asshiddiqie, 2020](#)).

Result and Discussion

How adequate and sufficient is Indonesia's labor law framework in providing protection for workers affected by termination of employment due to disruption caused by artificial intelligence?

The artificial intelligence (AI) revolution has brought about fundamental transformations in the global employment landscape. In the media industry, the application of AI technology has enabled automation in various work processes, ranging from automated journalism, algorithm-based content editing, to real-time audience behavior analysis ([Anwar et al., 2024](#)). This trend shows the occurrence of deskilling in several types of jobs that previously required human skills, so that editorial and administrative functions are now largely replaced by digital systems. This phenomenon then causes a significant structural shift in employment patterns, one of the consequences of which is an increase in cases of termination of employment (PHK) for reasons of efficiency.

Legally, Indonesia's labor law framework is not yet fully prepared to anticipate the impact of this technological disruption. The main regulations regarding layoffs are contained in Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower and its derivative regulations, namely Government Regulation Number 35 of 2021. Article 43 paragraph (1) of PP No. 35 of 2021

states that employers can carry out layoffs because the company is streamlining due to losses or to prevent losses. However, if interpreted grammatically, the reason for streamlining is explicitly related to the company's financial condition, not because of technological innovation or digital restructuring.

Thus, layoffs carried out as a consequence of AI implementation do not have a clear normative basis in Indonesian positive law. Companies that carry out layoffs under the pretext of technological efficiency can be categorized as exceeding the scope of the norms regulated in Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021, thus potentially causing [\(Anton, 2024\)](#). This situation creates a legal vacuum that weakens the position of workers before the law, as there are no regulations that adapt to technological changes in the industrial world. From a legal dogmatic perspective, existing regulations are still oriented towards the industrial economy paradigm, in which labor relations are regulated based on company stability rather than technological dynamics [\(Raharjo, 2023\)](#). This shows that Indonesian labor law is still reactive in nature, rather than anticipatory of changes in the structure of work resulting from AI disruption. In the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution, labor law should not only function as a passive protection tool, but also as an instrument of adaptation to systemic technological transformation.

Furthermore, the principle of labor protection as stipulated in Article 4 letters (a) and (b) of the Labor Law requires the state to guarantee the basic rights of workers and create equal employment opportunities. However, in practice, workers affected by automation do not receive special protection, whether in the form of job transition guarantees, retraining, or adequate compensation. Normatively, this raises questions about the extent to which national laws still fulfill their protective function for workers amid the changing paradigm of the digital economy. From a constitutional perspective, Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly states that every citizen has the right to work and a decent livelihood [\(Asshiddiqie, 2020\)](#). This norm places employment as part of the human rights guaranteed by the constitution. Therefore, labor law as a subsystem of national law has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that technological advances do not eliminate citizens' opportunities to work. With the lack of regulation on layoffs due to technological disruption in positive law, the state can be said to have failed to fulfill the principle of substantive justice in guaranteeing the right to work.

This weakness is also evident in international law comparisons. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Germany have included a "technological transformation" clause as one of the legal bases for legitimate work restructuring, but with an obligation for companies to provide compensation and transition training plans for affected workers. In South Korea, for example, the Framework Act on Employment Policy emphasizes the government's obligation to ensure job training programs for workers affected by digital innovation. Meanwhile, Indonesia does not yet have similar provisions that place technological transformation as a legal variable in layoff policies.

In addition, there is a normative inconsistency between the principle of job protection and technology-based efficiency practices. The law emphasizes the importance of ensuring job welfare and security, but in practice, layoffs due to automation are often considered administratively valid if they meet the general provisions of company regulations. In fact, without a clear legal basis, this practice can be classified as a violation of the principle of fair termination [\(Pratiwi, 2025\)](#).

Furthermore, Indonesian positive law does not yet have derivative legal instruments that regulate digital-based industrial relations. There are no provisions regarding corporate social responsibility towards workers who are replaced by automated systems, and there are no rules governing the mechanism for redeploying workers to other positions that are still relevant to new technologies. This condition shows that Indonesian labor law is not yet mature enough to respond to the complexities caused by AI, both conceptually and normatively.

Thus, normatively, it can be concluded that the readiness of Indonesian labor law in facing AI disruption is still limited. The weaknesses lie in the lack of normative recognition of technological innovation-based layoffs, the lack of legal protection for workers affected by automation, and the absence of adaptive labor transition regulations for changes in the digital media industry structure. Legal reform is imperative to ensure that labor laws do not lag behind the increasingly rapid and disruptive technological developments ([Adha, 2020](#)).

What direction will labor law reform in Indonesia take in anticipation of changes in the structure of work brought about by the application of artificial intelligence in the media industry?

The application of artificial intelligence in the media industry not only raises the issue of job losses, but also demands a paradigm shift in labor law itself. Changes in the structure of work in the digital era are leading to flexible, decentralized, and competency-based work models, in which workers no longer depend entirely on permanent employment relationships, but rather on project-based contractual systems or platform-based employment. This phenomenon demands fundamental changes in the concept of employment relationships, which have been narrowly defined as relationships between employers and workers under direct command with a specific wage ([García & MacInnes, 2018](#)). This concept is no longer entirely relevant when some of the work is delegated to automated systems or performed by individuals independently through digital platforms ([Imtikhani et al., 2025](#)). Therefore, the direction of labor law reform must be able to accommodate new forms of employment relationships without reducing the principles of protection for workers. Normatively, labor law reform can be directed through three dimensions: reform of positive law substance, reorientation of labor law principles, and integration of legal policy with national human resource policy. These three dimensions need to be elaborated gradually to confirm the direction of comprehensive labor law reform.

First, in terms of legal substance, Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021 needs to be revised to add a new legal basis for layoffs due to technological transformation. Such a clause will provide legal certainty for employers and workers, as well as form the basis for the establishment of a proportional compensatory mechanism for affected workers. Second, from a legal principle perspective, a new principle called the “principle of technological adaptation in employment” needs to be developed, which emphasizes the obligation of the state and industry to adapt work norms to digital changes without sacrificing the basic rights of workers. This principle is in line with the spirit of social justice recognized in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Thus, any efficiency measures implemented by companies due to technology adoption must be accompanied by adequate social protection mechanisms, whether in the form of compensation, retraining, or job relocation. Third, in the context of human resource policy, labor laws must be integrated with national programs for reskilling and upskilling the workforce. The provisions of Article 25 of Law No. 13 of 2003 do stipulate that job training aims to improve the competence of the workforce, but this norm is still general in nature and

does not yet lead to the strengthening of digital capacity. Therefore, it is necessary to establish derivative regulations, such as a Government Regulation on Technology Transition Training, which regulates the obligation of companies to provide digital training for workers whose positions are replaced by AI.

From a legal dogmatic perspective, updates are also needed to broaden the definition of “worker” to include workers in digital systems. The concept of digital labor, namely individuals who work through platform systems, has not been explicitly recognized in Indonesian labor law, resulting in many digital workers losing access to basic rights such as social security and severance pay (Solow, 2018). Updating these definitions is important to ensure legal inclusivity in the digital age. In addition, modern labor laws must be transformative, not merely corrective. This means that laws should not only be present after violations occur, but should also serve as a tool for shaping new social structures.

In this context, legal reforms need to be directed towards the creation of regulatory mechanisms that guarantee job security amid digital transformation, for example through a “digital labor protection fund” system used to finance retraining for workers affected by automation (Noerdin, 2025). Philosophically, the direction of labor law reform in Indonesia must remain grounded in the values of social justice and human dignity (Kittay, 2019). According to Radbruch, just law is law that recognizes humans as an end, not a means (Supianto, 2023). In this context, technological progress and industrial efficiency should not victimize workers, but rather make them part of a fair social evolution process. Labor law reforms must emphasize the role of the state in ensuring a humane transition to work in the AI era.

Thus, the direction of labor law reform in Indonesia is not only related to the adjustment of positive norms to new technologies, but also part of the state's constitutional responsibility to protect its citizens from the structural injustices caused by automation. The integration of legal reform and social policy is key to ensuring that digital transformation can take place without sacrificing the basic rights of workers and the principles of social justice that form the basis of the state ideology.

Conclusion

This study shows that Indonesia's labor law framework, particularly Law No. 13 of 2003 and Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021, has not been able to anticipate the impact of AI on labor relations. The absence of explicit rules regarding technology-based layoffs creates a legal vacuum that weakens worker protection and fails to fulfill the mandate of Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution regarding the right to work and a decent livelihood.

Indonesian labor law is still reactive in nature, thus risking the neglect of substantive justice for workers affected by automation. In contrast, countries such as Japan and South Korea have implemented anticipatory legal models through technology transformation clauses and retraining programs.

Therefore, the reform of Indonesian labor law needs to be directed towards an adaptive and human-centered framework, including the recognition of layoffs due to technological transformation, the principle of technological adaptation in employment relationships, and reskilling and upskilling programs for affected workers. This legal reform is expected to balance industrial efficiency with the protection and dignity of workers in the era of artificial intelligence.

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