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ALGORITHMIC CONTROL VS. HUMAN DIGNITY: EVALUATING DECENT WORK STANDARDS AMONG DIGITAL PLATFORM WORKERS IN YOGYAKARTA

Tandori
Universitas Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta
tandori.yk@gmail.com
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Abstract
The rapid expansion of the digital economy in Southeast Asia is often celebrated for offering income flexibility. However, under the facade of autonomy, platform workers increasingly face absolute digital surveillance. In regions like Yogyakarta, where the formal job market is highly competitive and regional minimum wage (UMR) remains relatively low, the reliance on the gig economy has intensified. This study evaluates to what extent platform work aligns with the international labor benchmarks, tracing the trajectory from the ILO WESO (2021) diagnostic report to the newly established normative standards of ILO Convention No. 193 (2026). Employing a qualitative case study approach with heterogeneity sampling, this research conducts in-depth semi-structured interviews with 11 active platform workers in Yogyakarta, categorized into three distinct clusters: male passenger transport drivers, female drivers facing gender-specific vulnerabilities, and time-bound food and goods couriers. Data saturation was achieved, and the data is analyzed using Miles and Huberman's thematic analysis. The preliminary findings reveal a phenomenon of "pseudo-flexibility," where workers' endurance under strict algorithmic control is not an autonomous preference but a manifestation of structural coercion due to the lack of formal, inclusive livelihood alternatives. This paper argues that without robust state-led regulatory interventions and internal algorithmic reforms by digital platforms, the digital economy in developing Asian urban centers will continue to compromise human dignity under the guise of technological transformation.
Keywords: *Algorithmic Control, Decent Work, Gig Economy, Human Dignity, Pseudo-Flexibility.*

Introduction

The proliferation of the gig economy across the Global South has fundamentally restructured the contemporary labor market, shifting the paradigm from traditional formal employment to digitally mediated short-term contracts. In Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, this digital transformation has been widely celebrated as a democratizing force, promising unprecedented autonomy, financial inclusion, and temporal flexibility. Digital platforms offering ride-hailing, food delivery, and logistics services have rapidly expanded, absorbing a significant portion of the productive demographic that remains marginalized by the highly competitive formal sector. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, a province characterized by a unique confluence of a highly educated youth demographic and persistently low regional minimum wages (UMR), the gig economy has transitioned from a supplementary income source to a primary livelihood for thousands of households.

However, beneath the optimistic narrative of micro-entrepreneurship and flexibility lies a profound structural paradox rooted in Economic Law. Platform workers in Indonesia operate within a highly exploitative legal gray area, systematically classified as "independent contractors" or "partners" under the guise of a partnership contract (kemitraan). In reality, this arrangement often manifests as "bogus self-employment" (kemitraan semu), where platforms act as monopolistic market-makers to circumvent standard labor protections, minimum wage guarantees, and comprehensive social security nets. Consequently, the promised autonomy is frequently overshadowed by extreme precarity. As the market reaches saturation and competition among platform providers intensifies, the initial incentives that attracted workers to the gig economy have gradually been replaced by stringent "algorithmic management"—a system where artificial intelligence and data-driven metrics dictate worker behavior, monitor performance, and enforce compliance with uncompromising rigidity.

This shift toward algorithmic dominance has profound implications for human dignity. Workers find themselves subjected to unilateral commission cuts, fluctuating dynamic pricing mechanisms, and the perpetual threat of automated account suspensions without transparent or fair appeal processes. The digital architecture of these platforms operates as an invisible, yet omnipresent panopticon, reducing

human labor to quantifiable data points and eroding the fundamental dignity associated with decent work. In response to the escalating global crisis of platform worker exploitation, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published the flagship WESO (2021) report , establishing comprehensive normative benchmarks for decent work in the digital platform economy. This authoritative report strongly recommends algorithmic transparency, the right to collective bargaining, and protection against arbitrary algorithmic dismissals, aiming to redefine decent work for the digital age.

Despite the critical importance of ILO WESO 2021 report, empirical evaluations of its implementation and relevance within localized contexts in the Global South remain nascent. Previous literature on the gig economy in Indonesia has predominantly focused on consumer satisfaction, operational efficiency, or descriptive survival strategies of workers. There is a distinct dearth of critical, theoretically grounded research that evaluates the lived experiences of platform workers through the specific lens of international decent work standards and human dignity.

This research aims to bridge this critical gap by connecting the international governance trajectory from empirical diagnosis to binding legal codification. While the ILO WESO (2021) report served as the foundational starting point by identifying systemic decent work deficits, the recent adoption of ILO Convention No. 193 (2026) establishes the definitive normative realization for digital labor protection. By contextualizing the transition from WESO (2021) recommendations to the binding mandates of Convention No. 193 (2026) within a specific micro-socioeconomic setting, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the intersection between technological advancement, labor exploitation, and human dignity in the developing world. The findings are expected to inform localized policy interventions and contribute to the broader scholarly discourse on the urgent need for algorithmic regulation in the gig economy.

Literature Review

The Evolution of Algorithmic Management in the Global South

The gig economy represents a paradigm shift in global labor markets, characterized by task-based compensation mediated through digital platforms (Woodcock & Graham, 2019). Initially lauded for offering spatial and temporal independence, the discourse surrounding platform work has become increasingly polarized. Early studies tended to highlight worker empowerment, framing gig work as a democratizing force that allows individuals to bypass traditional corporate hierarchies and act as autonomous micro-entrepreneurs (Vallas & Schor, 2020). However, contemporary literature, particularly focused on the Global South, sharply challenges this techno-optimism and underscores the structural paradoxes inherent in the platform business model.

In developing nations—such as Indonesia—where robust social safety nets are largely absent, the gig economy rarely operates as a launchpad for genuine entrepreneurial freedom. Instead, it frequently serves as an employer of last resort for a demographic structurally excluded from the formal labor market (Graham et al., 2017; Rahman, 2021). This phenomenon gives rise to what De Stefano (2015) identifies as the fundamental contradiction of platform capitalism: the imposition of intense, factory-like managerial control over a workforce that is legally classified as independent. Furthermore, even in developed contexts, platform-capital exercises extensive, non-negotiable labor control through algorithmic management, confirming this exploitation as a highly scalable, globalized phenomenon (Veen et al., 2020). The digital platform, functioning as an absolute market-maker, leverages its technological infrastructure to unilaterally dictate the terms of exchange, thereby neutralizing the foundational premise of mutual consent in traditional contract law.

Central to this structural paradox is the concept of “algorithmic management.” Unlike traditional human-led management, digital platforms utilize automated, data-driven tools to dictate worker behavior, monitor efficiency, and enforce compliance (Kellogg et al., 2020). Algorithmic management effectively replicates traditional managerial hierarchies in a digital format that is significantly more opaque and non-negotiable (Vasudevan & Chan, 2022). Workers are subjected to continuous digital surveillance, where their autonomy is reduced to metrics such as acceptance rates, completion times, and customer ratings. This algorithmic surveillance slowly objectifies workers, transforming human labor into a highly controlled, standardized commodity (Newlands, 2022). In the Global South, where labor supply vastly outstrips demand, platforms possess disproportionate power to unilaterally dictate terms, further exacerbating the asymmetry of algorithmic control.

Structural Coercion vs. Agency in Platform Work

To understand why platform workers persist in exploitative environments despite deteriorating conditions, this study draws upon the theory of Structural Coercion viewed through the lens of Partnership Contract Law. Distinct from direct physical coercion, structural coercion occurs when economic systems and the absence of viable alternatives compel individuals to participate in highly disadvantageous labor arrangements (Ford & Honan, 2019). In the context of Yogyakarta, a region marked by a competitive job market and low minimum wages, the decision to engage in platform work is rarely a fully autonomous choice. Instead, it is driven by systemic economic constraints that platforms exploit to draft asymmetric partnership agreements.

Under algorithmic management, this structural coercion is weaponized to breach the fundamental principle of good faith (iktikad baik) in contract law. Platforms leverage the economic vulnerability of workers to enforce strict compliance through automated penalties, unilaterally altering the terms of the "partnership" via dynamic algorithms. The promised "flexibility" morphs into a "pseudo-flexibility," where the structural inability to exit the system forces workers to sacrifice their dignity and submit to absolute algorithmic governance. The illusion of an equal partnership is maintained through app interfaces that offer the theoretical choice to decline tasks, while the underlying algorithm practically punishes such autonomy by reducing future earning opportunities.

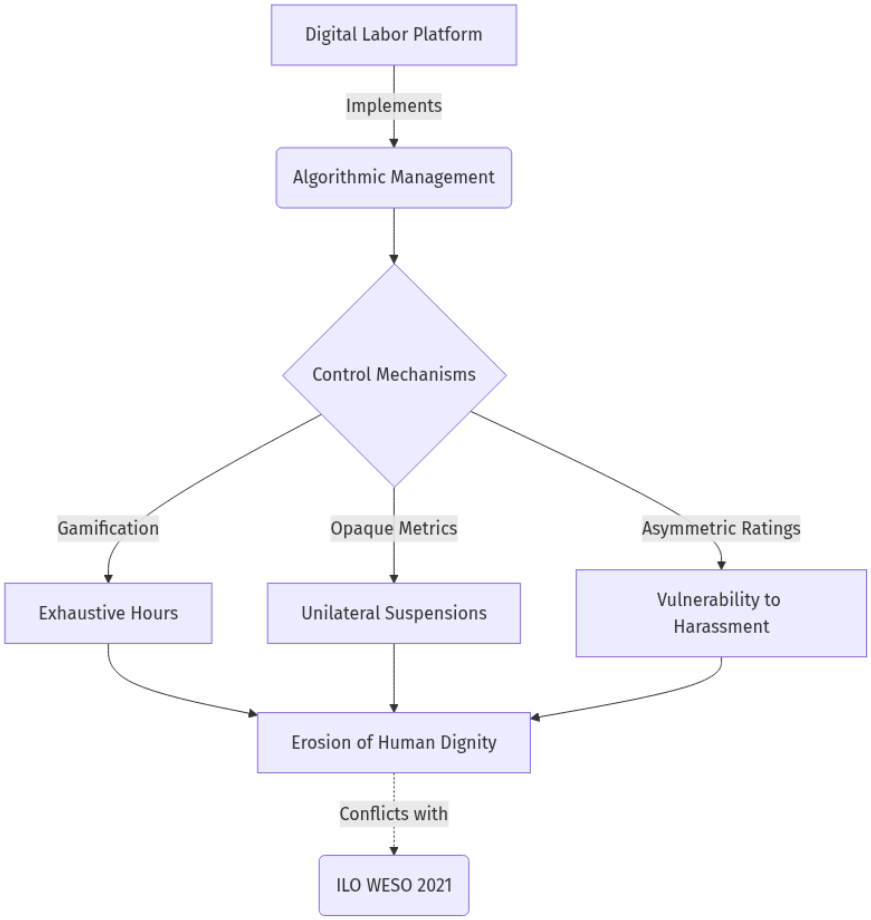


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: The Cycle of Algorithmic Coercion and Dignity Erosion.

From Decent Work Deficits to Normative Realization: The Trajectory from ILO WESO (2021) to ILO Convention No. 193 (2026)

In response to the escalating vulnerability of platform workers worldwide, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published the WESO 2021 report, outlining a framework for decent work in the platform economy. This flagship report highlights critical gaps in digital labor protection,

explicitly emphasizing the need for algorithmic transparency, fair dispute resolution mechanisms with human mediation, and protection against unilateral account terminations.

However, because the WESO 2021 report was an advisory policy study, it lacked binding international legal enforceability. To bridge this regulatory vacuum, the ILO initiated intensive tripartite standard-setting deliberations. This process culminated on June 12, 2026, with the historic adoption of the Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026 (No. 193) at the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILO, 2026a, 2026b). Convention No. 193 transforms the diagnostic alarms raised in WESO (2021) into binding treaty obligations. Specifically, Article 8 establishes the mandatory right to algorithmic transparency and privacy protections, while Article 12 explicitly outlaws automated, unilateral account suspensions by guaranteeing human-mediated dispute resolution.

Crucially, this combined framework the report redefines decent work for the digital era by centralizing human dignity—asserting that algorithmic management must not subject workers to constant coercive surveillance or punitive financial mechanisms without equitable human oversight. This discourse aligns with growing global demands for the protection of dignity and fair working conditions in the highly precarious gig economy sector (Gandini, 2019). Together, the diagnostic baseline of ILO WESO (2021) and the binding standards of ILO Convention No. 193 (2026) serve as the normative benchmark in this study to evaluate whether the operational models of gig platforms in Yogyakarta align with universal human rights and fair labor standards.

Global Regulatory Responses to Algorithmic Control

As the exploitative nature of platform capitalism becomes globally apparent, advanced economies have begun experimenting with legislative countermeasures to restrict algorithmic hegemony. Notably, Spain and the state of California have emerged as pioneering battlegrounds. The Spanish legislative framework, driven by labor unions, focuses heavily on algorithmic transparency, attempting to dismantle the "black box" of platform management (Todolí-Signes, 2021). Conversely, legislative efforts in California, such as Proposition 22, attempt to find a middle ground by maintaining the independent contractor status while instituting specific wage floors and benefits (Dubal, 2021). These contrasting approaches provide crucial theoretical benchmarks for analyzing the regulatory vacuum in developing nations, highlighting the necessity of state intervention to mediate the extreme power asymmetry between platform algorithms and human labor (Forde et al., 2017).

Research Methods

Research Design and Paradigm

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive-analytical case study design. This methodology was selected to deeply explore the phenomenon of algorithmic control and its impact on human dignity based on the direct empirical experiences of digital platform workers in Yogyakarta. A qualitative paradigm allows the researchers to capture emotional nuances, psychological pressures, and survival strategies of workers that cannot be adequately quantified by statistical figures. By focusing on lived experiences, the research bridges the gap between abstract algorithmic mechanics and tangible human impacts.

Sampling Technique and Informant Selection

The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling with heterogeneity criteria, facilitated by a snowball sampling technique initiated at various informal driver basecamps across Yogyakarta, to obtain a rich and diverse variation of perspectives. This recruitment strategy ensures access to authentic, grassroots worker networks while mitigating the selection bias inherent in purely random sampling. The total number of informants is 11 active platform workers residing and operating in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. This sample size of 11 is considered adequate as it achieved data saturation—the point at which no new themes or information emerged regarding algorithmic control practices from additional interviews. The informants were strategically categorized into three clusters to capture specific sectorial and gendered nuances: 1. Cluster 1 (Male Passenger Transport Drivers - 4 Informants): Male drivers of cars and motorcycles with an active tenure of over 3 years (e.g., Ms, Dy, Ag, Si). 2. Cluster 2 (Female Drivers - 3 Informants): Female online motorcycle taxi drivers facing unique socio-cultural and safety vulnerabilities (e.g., Da, Ek, Ro). 3. Cluster 3 (Food and Goods

Delivery Couriers - 4 Informants): Workers strictly bound by time targets and order performance metrics (e.g., Ai, Jo, Mh, B***a).

To provide a transparent overview of the research subjects, the demographic and operational profiles of the 11 informants are detailed in Table 1 below.

Pseudonym	Gender	Vehicle Type	Cluster	Tenure	Avg. Working Hours	Primary Complaint
M***s	Male	Car (Four-Wheeler)	1 (Driver)	> 3 years	10-14 hours/day	Exhaustive hours for bonus
D***y	Male	Car (Four-Wheeler)	1 (Driver)	> 3 years	10-12 hours/day	High maintenance costs
A***g	Male	Motorcycle	1 (Driver)	> 3 years	10-12 hours/day	Decreased real income
S***i	Male	Motorcycle	1 (Driver)	> 3 years	12 hours/day	Externalized risk (engine breakdown)
D***a	Female	Motorcycle	2 (Female Driver)	2 years	8-10 hours/day	Safety and harassment risks
E***k	Female	Motorcycle	2 (Female Driver)	> 3 years	8-10 hours/day	Asymmetric rating system
R***o	Female	Motorcycle	2 (Female Driver)	> 3 years	8-12 hours/day	Unfair customer-centricity
A***i	Male	Motorcycle	3 (Courier)	2 years	12 hours/day	Lack of appeal mechanism
J***o	Male	Motorcycle	3 (Courier)	> 3 years	12-14 hours/day	Dehumanization ("like robots")

Pseudonym	Gender	Vehicle Type	Cluster	Tenure	Avg. Working Hours	Primary Complaint
M***h	Female	Motorcycle	3 (Courier)	1.5 years	10 hours/day	Harsh tariff reductions
B***a	Male	Motorcycle	3 (Courier)	> 4 years	10-12 hours/day	50% income drop over time

Table 1. Informant Demographics and Operational Profiles
(Note: Table numbering will be adjusted accordingly, the Data Display matrix in Findings will now be designated as Table 2).

Data Collection Procedures

Primary data was collected through in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews conducted during July 2026. To capture the authentic, unfiltered realities of platform work, the interviews took place in various informal, grassroots settings preferred by the workers themselves. These locations primarily included traditional roadside food stalls (angkringan) and informal driver basecamps scattered across critical operational hotspots in Yogyakarta, specifically around Tugu Station, the Gejayan educational district, Taman Siswa, Bugisan, and the bustling Kranggan Market. Conducting the research in these naturalistic environments was crucial for establishing rapport and trust, allowing the informants to speak candidly about their frustrations without fear of digital surveillance or platform retaliation.

Each interview session lasted approximately 45 to 90 minutes and was guided by a semi-structured protocol. The interview guide was meticulously designed to explore complex themes bridging Economic Law and sociology, focusing specifically on algorithmic transparency, experiences with unilateral suspensions, daily working hours, the distribution of operational costs, and the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of in-app dispute resolution mechanisms. Prior to the interviews, all informants were provided with a detailed explanation of the research objectives. Formal Informed Consent forms were signed, ensuring absolute confidentiality, the anonymization of their identities (using pseudonyms), and their voluntary participation in strict accordance with rigorous academic ethical standards.

Data Analysis Techniques

The transcribed interview data was systematically analyzed using the interactive Thematic Analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020). This rigorous analytical framework encompassed three concurrent and iterative stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

During the initial data reduction phase, the raw interview transcripts were meticulously coded line-by-line. This process involved filtering out extraneous narratives and pinpointing recurring keywords, emotional responses, and specific incidents related to algorithmic coercion and contract asymmetry. These initial codes were subsequently aggregated into broader analytical themes reflecting the normative pillars of decent work outlined in the ILO WESO 2021 report and the principles of Economic Law. Next, in the data display stage, a comprehensive matrix was constructed (presented as Table 2). This matrix served to visually synthesize the specific operational phenomena and corresponding algorithmic impacts experienced by each distinct informant cluster, allowing for robust cross-case comparisons. Finally, during the conclusion drawing phase, the synthesized data was interpreted against the established theoretical frameworks of structural coercion and bogus self-employment, ensuring a transparent, logical, and evidence-based progression from raw qualitative data to robust theoretical conclusions.

Research Findings and Discussion

Based on the thematic analysis of the transcripts from 11 informants, the findings of this study confirm a significant clash between the algorithmic control of platforms and the standards of decent work and human dignity, as regulated in ILO WESO 2021 report. The reduced qualitative data is systematically presented (data display) in Table 2. The findings are categorized into three major themes that elucidate the intersection of algorithmic injustice, gender vulnerabilities, and structural coercion.

Informant Cluster	**Work Phenomenon**	**Algorithmic Impact (Coercion)**	**Contradiction with ILO WESO (2021) & Violated ILO Convention No. 193 Articles**
Cluster 1: Male Drivers (4 informants)	On-bid time 10-14 hours/day; exorbitant vehicle maintenance costs absorbing 50% of income.	"Pseudo-flexibility" driven by gamification; hidden penalties for ignoring unfeasible tasks.	Violation of standard working hour limits & Occupational Safety (OHS). (Violates ILO Convention No. 193, Articles 9 & 10).
Cluster 2: Female Drivers (3 informants)	Double vulnerability: threat of customer harassment and rigid platform rating systems.	Absolute rating system with no defense mechanism; extreme customer-centricity overriding driver safety.	Violation of decent work principles: Right to fair dispute resolution and human mediation. (Violates ILO Convention No. 193, Articles 8 & 12).
Cluster 3: Couriers (4 informants)	Drastic and unilateral tariff reductions; immense psychological burden ("treated like robots").	Automated suspensions (auto-suspend) and order deductions for declining non-sensical delivery routes.	Violation of decent work principles: Algorithmic transparency and prohibition of coercive surveillance. (Violates ILO Convention No. 193, Articles 8 & 12)

Table 2. Thematic Data Synthesis Matrix (Data Display)

The Illusion of Autonomy and Algorithmic Injustice

The temporal flexibility frequently heralded as the hallmark of the gig economy is, in reality, a manifestation of "pseudo-flexibility." Technically, platform workers possess the freedom to determine their operational hours. However, the omnipresent pressure exerted by the algorithmic management system to maintain high ratings and chase daily gamified bonuses forces workers to operate far beyond reasonable human limits. The algorithm does not physically compel the worker to drive; instead, it utilizes a highly sophisticated form of financial conditioning engineered to extract maximum labor during peak demand while minimizing platform liabilities during idle periods.

This systemic conditioning is vividly illustrated by informants in Cluster 1. M***s, a senior male driver, explicitly articulated the deceptive nature of this autonomy through a profound sense of entrapment:

> *"People on the outside think we are our own bosses. That is a complete lie. To achieve the daily bonus, which is the only way to actually make a decent living, I cannot just work when*

> *I want to. Even if there are no orders, the application must remain 'On'. I am terrified to decline a trip because my acceptance rate will drop, and the algorithm will 'punish' me by withholding orders for hours. Consequently, I have to be online beyond normal limits, averaging 10 to 14 hours every single day, just staring at the screen in my car."*

The necessity to remain logged into the application, waiting for algorithmic task allocation without guaranteed compensation for idle time, constitutes a form of unpaid digital standby labor. From an Economic Law perspective, this represents a severe abuse of the partnership contract. The platform monopolizes the driver's time and operational capacity but completely evades the legal responsibility of compensating them for "standby time"—a core labor right under formal employment statutes. This practice starkly contradicts the principles of decent work, which mandate fair remuneration for hours committed to an employer's disposal.

Furthermore, the algorithmic architecture is designed to be profoundly asymmetric, actively marginalizing the workers' bargaining power. The system prioritizes logistical efficiency and consumer satisfaction above all else, often treating the human labor mediating the service as highly dispensable. J***o (Cluster 3), a food delivery courier, highlighted the dehumanizing effect of this absolute control:

> *"We are essentially treated like robots. If it rains, the system demands we move faster. If there is a traffic jam, the system doesn't care, it just docks our performance score. It is unequivocally inhumane, but because we are desperate for the income to feed our families, we cannot protest. We just have to keep moving and accept whatever the system throws at us. We are partners on paper, but slaves to the algorithm in reality."*

This sentiment encapsulates the severe erosion of human dignity. The worker ceases to be an independent agent capable of negotiating the terms of their labor and instead becomes a biological extension of the digital application.

Exploitation Through Unilateral Evaluation and Automated Suspension (Auto-Suspend)

The vulnerability of platform workers is drastically compounded by the unilateral evaluation systems employed by digital platforms. These systems, predominantly reliant on customer-generated star ratings, serve as the primary determinant for future task allocation and account longevity. For female workers (Cluster 2), this customer-centric evaluation creates a double vulnerability. Not only do they face the physical risks inherent in navigating urban traffic and nighttime operational hazards, but they must also endure immense emotional labor to appease customers, knowing that a single arbitrary negative review can trigger an automated suspension.

R***o (Cluster 2) criticized the absolute, unyielding nature of the algorithm, which remains oblivious to ground realities such as extreme weather, dangerous delivery locations, or inherently difficult customer behavior:

> *"The space for us to defend ourselves is practically non-existent. A customer gave me one star because I refused to enter a dark alleyway at 11 PM to deliver her food. I explained I felt unsafe, but the algorithm doesn't read context, it only reads the '1-star'. I was suspended for three days. The system's absolute priority is to pamper the customer, regardless of the truth or the driver's safety."*

This lack of due process becomes particularly alarming in cases involving severe disputes. A***i (Cluster 3) drew a chilling comparison regarding the asymmetry of platform policies in handling sexual harassment allegations. He noted that if a driver is accused by a customer, the partnership is terminated instantaneously by the algorithm without any formal hearing or presentation of evidence. Conversely, if a driver reports a customer for harassment, the platform frequently remains passive, issuing standard automated apologies while prioritizing revenue over worker safety.

This complete absence of a fair, human-mediated dispute resolution mechanism directly contradicts the core recommendations of the ILO WESO 2021 report and constitutes a flagrant breach of Article 12 of ILO Convention No. 193 (2026). When suspensions (temporary or permanent partnership terminations) are executed by automated emails—without affording the worker a transparent avenue for appeal or legal counsel—the platform exercises dictatorial power. Under

traditional Contract Law, such unilateral termination without a fair hearing would be deemed an unlawful breach of contract. Yet, under the guise of "kemitraan," platforms execute these dismissals with total impunity, stripping the worker of basic legal and human dignity.

Structural Coercion and the Externalization of Operational Risks

The escalating cost of living in Yogyakarta stands in stark contrast to the real income of gig workers, which has steadily declined due to aggressive tariff wars and a race-to-the-bottom pricing strategy adopted by competing platforms. B***a (Cluster 3), a veteran driver, reported a staggering 50% decrease in daily earnings compared to his initial years on the platform. This unilateral tariff reduction by the platform highlights a severe failure of mutual benefit, a core tenet of Partnership Contract Law. The workers do not remain in the gig economy because they are satisfied; they are trapped due to the complete absence of viable alternatives in the formal labor market, vividly validating the theory of Structural Coercion.

To maximize profitability, digital platforms execute a masterclass in risk externalization, severely skewing the economic burden of the partnership. The entire cost of operations—including fuel, daily vehicle maintenance, insurance, and even the mandatory installment payments for platform-branded attributes—is entirely offloaded onto the "partners." S***i (Cluster 1) reported suffering millions of Rupiah in losses due to a catastrophic engine failure while executing an order. This incident forced him to cease operations for 20 days, during which he received zero financial assistance or compensation from the platform. From an Economic Law perspective, this represents a highly exploitative market failure: the platform absorbs the economic surplus from the mediated service while the worker shoulders 100% of the depreciation and physical risk, stripping the "partnership" contract of any equitable validity.

International Comparison and the Urgent Need for Algorithmic Transparency

The vulnerabilities experienced by drivers in Yogyakarta are not isolated incidents; rather, they reflect a systemic flaw in the gig economy model proliferating across the Global South. Empirical studies by Woodcock and Graham (2019) regarding logistics couriers in China, and findings by Veen (2020) concerning food-delivery work in Australia, confirm an identical pattern: algorithmic management inevitably creates a "pseudo-flexibility" that forces workers to disregard physical safety in pursuit of gamified performance targets. The exploitation documented in Yogyakarta is the logical conclusion of a business model deployed in regions with surplus labor and relaxed labor regulations.

The unilateral suspension practices and the absence of appeal mechanisms reported by all informant clusters constitute a flagrant departure from the substantive guidelines of the ILO WESO 2021 report. The report explicitly recommends algorithmic transparency, establishing the fundamental need for workers to comprehend the specific metrics utilized to evaluate, penalize, or terminate them. The reality in Yogyakarta demonstrates that without the ratification and aggressive enforcement of such international conventions at the national level, the autonomy promised by digital platforms will remain a sophisticated facade for the objectification and exploitation of human labor.

Global Policy Comparison: Learning from Europe and the United States

The regulatory vacuum in Indonesia, which enables the aforementioned exploitation, becomes glaringly apparent when juxtaposed with recent legislative developments in the Global North. While Yogyakarta's platform workers suffer under the guise of "partnership," jurisdictions like Spain and California have actively intervened to recalibrate the power asymmetry.

In Spain, the landmark Ley Rider (Riders' Law) of 2021 explicitly recognized gig delivery couriers as wage laborers rather than independent contractors, mandating platforms to provide formal employment contracts and disclose the mathematical parameters of their algorithms to labor unions (Todolí-Signes, 2021). This directly addresses the algorithmic transparency mandated by ILO WESO 2021 report. Conversely, in California, the passage of Proposition 22 created a "third category" of workers—retaining independent contractor status but guaranteeing a wage floor equivalent to 120% of the local minimum wage, alongside stipends for health insurance (Dubal, 2021).

Although imperfect, these international precedents highlight the severe legislative inertia in Indonesia. The absolute externalization of operational risks (as experienced by Si) and the unilateral

automated dismissals (as critiqued by Ro and A***i) persist in Yogyakarta precisely because the Indonesian state has yet to decisively define the legal boundaries of algorithmic gig work (De Stefano, 2015; Forde et al., 2017). Therefore, the lived realities of these 11 informants serve as a critical empirical mandate for the Indonesian government to adopt localized legislative frameworks, drawing inspiration from Spain's algorithmic transparency and California's minimum wage floor, to safeguard human dignity in the digital era.

Conclusion

This study set out to evaluate the algorithmic working conditions of gig workers in Yogyakarta against the standards of ILO WESO 2021 report. The findings unequivocally demonstrate that platform work has evolved from a supplementary, flexible income alternative into an institutionalized trap of digital exploitation. Algorithmic control manifests uniquely across clusters: male drivers endure extreme physical exhaustion due to gamified targets, female drivers face severe vulnerabilities due to asymmetric customer-centric rating systems, and couriers suffer from dictatorial tariff reductions. Collectively, these mechanisms constitute a potent form of structural coercion, where the promised "flexibility" of the gig economy is a myth used to mask highly precarious, hyper-monitored labor in a stagnant formal economy. Ultimately, the existing "partnership" model systematically strips workers of their human dignity through oppressive algorithmic surveillance, the total absence of equitable appeal mechanisms, and the ruthless externalization of all operational risks. This operational reality stands in stark contrast to the decent work guidelines outlined in the ILO WESO 2021 report, necessitating urgent structural reforms.

Policy Recommendations

Addressing the profound decent work deficits in the gig economy requires holistic, multi-stakeholder interventions guided by the normative principles of the ILO WESO 2021 report, the urgent ratification of ILO Convention No. 193 (2026), and robust Economic Law frameworks. Based on the empirical findings, this study proposes the following targeted recommendations:

1. **For the State (Government of Indonesia):** There is an urgent imperative to legally redefine the boundaries of "partnership" (*kemitraan*) contracts to eliminate regulatory arbitrage. The government must draft specialized Economic Law regulations that aggressively pierce the veil of "bogus self-employment by ratifying and incorporating the core articles of ILO Convention No. 193 into national legislation.." This reform must encompass three core elements:
    a. **Standardization of Partnership Contracts:** Mandating standardized digital contracts that explicitly prohibit unilateral, algorithmic tariff reductions without tripartite consultation.
    b. **Guaranteed Economic Floors:** Instituting a sector-specific minimum wage floor that calculates "standby time" (waiting for orders) as active working hours, ensuring compensation aligns with local living costs.
    c. **State-Mandated Welfare:** Compelling platforms to fully subsidize mandatory occupational hazard insurance (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan) for all active workers, legally shifting the burden of risk from the individual back to the corporate entity.
2. **For Digital Platforms and Labor Unions:** Companies must immediately reform their algorithmic architectures to comply with international human rights standards.
    a. **Algorithmic Transparency:** Platforms must implement absolute algorithmic transparency in accordance with Article 8 of Convention No. 193, providing workers (and state regulators) with comprehensible, localized data regarding how ratings, bonuses, and suspensions are calculated.
    b. **Independent Dispute Resolution Tribunal:** Platforms must finance the establishment of an independent, tripartite dispute resolution tribunal (comprising platform representatives, labor union advocates, and government mediators) to satisfy Article 12 of Convention No. 193. This tribunal must replace automated suspensions, ensuring that drivers can challenge dismissals in front of a human panel without the burden of absolute proof falling solely upon them.For Digital Platforms: Companies must immediately reform their algorithmic architectures. This includes implementing

absolute algorithmic transparency (openly explaining how ratings, bonuses, and suspensions are calculated) and establishing an independent, human-mediated dispute resolution tribunal where drivers can challenge automated suspensions without the burden of absolute proof falling solely upon them.

Ultimately, technological transformation and algorithmic efficiency in the developing world must be strictly subordinated to universal human values. It is the fundamental responsibility of the state to ensure that artificial intelligence serves to elevate human dignity and equitable economic growth, rather than functioning as an instrument to commodify and exploit marginalized labor.

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