



Legal Protection Against Account Suspension for Digital Platform Workers: A Doctrinal and Empirical Study in Semarang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of the digital platform economy has transformed employment relationships in Indonesia and created new challenges for workers' legal protection and platform governance. This study examines the legal protection available to digital platform workers against account suspension and analyzes the role of public policy in promoting fair and accountable platform governance. The study combined doctrinal legal research with an empirical qualitative approach. Relevant Indonesian legislation and legal principles were examined through statutory and conceptual analyses, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 purposively selected digital platform workers in Semarang, Indonesia. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Sixteen participants had personally experienced account suspension and reported immediate income loss, limited explanations for suspension decisions, and ineffective appeal mechanisms. The doctrinal analysis further indicates that existing Indonesian regulations provide only general legal safeguards and do not specifically regulate algorithm-based account suspension, mandatory explanations, meaningful human review, or standardized grievance procedures. The study concludes that fair platform governance requires clearer regulatory standards, transparent written explanations, accessible appeal mechanisms, and meaningful human review before permanent account suspension is imposed.

Keywords: *Account Suspension; Algorithmic Management; Digital Platform Workers; Legal Protection; Platform Governance.*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed employment patterns worldwide, including in Indonesia (Khalid & Rana, 2025; Rahman et al., 2024). Digital platform companies have introduced new forms of employment

characterized by flexible work arrangements, technology-mediated services, and algorithm-based management systems. Ride-hailing, food delivery, courier services, and other platform-based occupations have become important components of Indonesia's digital economy, providing employment opportunities for millions of workers while simultaneously reshaping conventional employment relationships. Unlike traditional employees, however, digital platform workers generally operate under partnership arrangements rather than formal employment contracts, creating legal uncertainty regarding labor rights, procedural fairness, dispute resolution mechanisms, and social protection (Ahumada, 2023; López Ahumada, 2023).

One of the most significant legal challenges arising from this transformation concerns account suspension implemented through algorithmic management systems. Platform workers may experience temporary or permanent suspension because of customer ratings, complaints, suspected policy violations, or automated performance evaluations. Since access to digital platforms directly determines workers' ability to earn income, account suspension may immediately disrupt economic security and employment continuity. Nevertheless, suspension decisions are frequently implemented without transparent explanations, meaningful opportunities for clarification, or effective appeal mechanisms, raising concerns regarding procedural fairness, accountability, and legal certainty. These challenges demonstrate that account suspension should be viewed not merely as an operational platform management issue but also as a legal and public policy concern requiring appropriate regulatory attention within Indonesia's digital labor ecosystem.

Existing Indonesian labor regulations were primarily developed to govern conventional employer–employee relationships and therefore do not comprehensively address the legal status of digital platform workers or the governance of algorithm-based managerial decisions (Indra & Nawangsari, 2025; Rahman et al., 2024; Salam, 2023; Wardhana & Rasji, 2025). As digital platform employment continues to expand, governments are increasingly expected to formulate adaptive public policies that balance technological innovation, business sustainability, and workers' rights. Previous studies have examined digital platform work from perspectives such as employment classification, labor protection, employment flexibility, and algorithmic management (Albab et al., 2023; Gandini, 2019; Khalid & Rana, 2025). However, limited attention has been devoted to examining account suspension by integrating normative legal analysis with empirical evidence from platform workers, particularly within the Indonesian context.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating normative legal analysis with empirical evidence obtained from digital platform workers in Semarang, Indonesia, to examine account suspension not merely as a platform management practice but as an issue of legal protection, procedural justice, and public policy. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on employment classification, labor flexibility, or algorithmic management separately, this study provides a comprehensive assessment of whether existing legal frameworks adequately protect platform workers against account suspension while proposing evidence-based public policy recommendations for strengthening transparent, accountable, and fair platform governance.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the legal protection available for digital platform workers against account suspension policies and to examine the role of public policy in promoting fair and accountable platform governance based on empirical

evidence obtained from digital platform workers in Semarang, Indonesia. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of legal scholarship on digital labor governance while providing practical recommendations for strengthening transparency, procedural fairness, legal certainty, and workers' rights within Indonesia's rapidly expanding digital platform economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital platform work has transformed employment relationships by introducing flexible, technology-mediated arrangements in which digital platforms mediate interactions between workers and consumers. Although this model creates work opportunities and flexibility, it may also generate legal uncertainty because platform workers are commonly classified as independent partners rather than employees, limiting their access to conventional labor rights and social protection (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021; Kim, 2018). Continuous access to the platform is therefore central to workers' ability to obtain assignments and generate income, making account suspension an issue with direct economic and legal consequences.

The algorithmic management framework explains how digital labor platforms increasingly delegate managerial functions, including task allocation, performance monitoring, evaluation, and disciplinary decisions, to automated systems (Kellogg et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021). While algorithmic management may improve operational coordination and efficiency, it can also reduce transparency and worker autonomy when workers are not adequately informed about how decisions are made or how they may challenge them. In this study, algorithmic management provides an analytical basis for examining transparency, human oversight, and accountability in account suspension decisions.

The legal protection perspective emphasizes the importance of legal certainty, fair treatment, procedural safeguards, and effective remedies for individuals whose rights and livelihoods are affected by institutional decisions. In the context of digital platform work, legal protection extends beyond determining employment status and includes workers' rights to receive clear explanations, challenge adverse decisions, and access effective grievance and appeal mechanisms (Aminuddin & Kusumawati, 2023; Shekhawat & Khare, 2025). This perspective is used to assess whether the Indonesian legal framework adequately protects platform workers against arbitrary or insufficiently explained account suspension.

The public policy perspective highlights the role of government in responding to collective problems and balancing technological innovation, economic interests, and workers' rights (Cairney, 2019). In digital labor markets, public policy should establish standards concerning platform accountability, algorithmic transparency, human oversight, grievance procedures, and regulatory supervision (ILO, 2021; European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2024). This perspective supports the formulation of policy recommendations for fair and accountable platform governance.

Collectively, these perspectives provide an integrated analytical framework for examining account suspension as both a platform management practice and a legal governance issue. They connect workers' dependence on platform access with algorithmic decision-making, procedural protection, and governmental responsibility.

Analytical Indicators

Based on this framework, the study employs four principal indicators to guide the doctrinal and empirical analyses:

1. **Transparency of account suspension procedures**, including the availability of clear information concerning the reasons for suspension and the decision-making process.
2. **Workers' right to appeal**, including the availability, accessibility, timeliness, and effectiveness of grievance and dispute resolution mechanisms.
3. **Human review of algorithmic decisions**, referring to whether automated suspension decisions are subject to meaningful human evaluation before or after implementation.
4. **Legal certainty and regulatory protection**, including the adequacy of Indonesian laws and policies in protecting digital platform workers against arbitrary suspension and ensuring procedural fairness.

Workers' dependence on platform access and the employment relationship are treated as contextual dimensions that help explain the economic and legal consequences of account suspension. The four principal indicators are applied in the analysis and used to structure the presentation and interpretation of the findings.

Table 1. Conceptual and Analytical Framework of the Study

Perspective	Main Concept	Analytical Relevance
Digital Platform Work Perspective	Platform-mediated work and workers' dependence on continuous platform access	Economic dependence, employment relationship, and consequences of account suspension
Algorithmic Management Framework	Automated allocation, monitoring, evaluation, and disciplinary decision-making	Transparency, algorithmic accountability, and human review
Legal Protection Perspective	Legal certainty, procedural safeguards, and effective remedies	Right to appeal, procedural fairness, and protection against arbitrary suspension
Public Policy Perspective	Governmental regulation and governance of collective problems	Regulatory oversight, platform accountability, and transparent governance

METHODS

Research Design and Setting

This study combined doctrinal legal research with an empirical qualitative approach to examine the legal protection afforded to digital platform workers against account suspension and to formulate recommendations for fair and accountable platform governance. The doctrinal component involved identifying, interpreting, and

synthesizing relevant statutory provisions, legal principles, and policy documents, whereas the empirical component explored platform workers' experiences through semi-structured interviews (Hutchinson & Duncan, 2012; Leeuw & Schmeets, 2016).

The study was conducted between January and February 2026 in Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia. Semarang was selected because of the active presence of ride-hailing and delivery platforms and its relevance as a setting for examining algorithmic management, account suspension practices, and the legal protection of digital platform workers.

Participants and Sampling

Twenty digital platform workers were recruited using purposive sampling. Participants were eligible if they were active digital platform workers, had at least two years of work experience, were familiar with platform rating and account suspension systems, and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The exclusion criteria included inactive platform workers, individuals with less than two years of work experience, those unable to complete the interview process, and those who declined to provide informed consent.

The sample size was considered adequate because thematic saturation was reached during the final interviews, when no substantially new information or themes emerged. To protect participants' identities, each participant was assigned an anonymous code ranging from P1 to P20.

Ethical Considerations

Formal ethical approval was not obtained because, at the time of the study, the authors' institution did not require ethics review for this category of non-interventional normative-empirical legal research involving interviews about participants' professional experiences. Nevertheless, the study adhered to established ethical principles.

Before data collection, participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to decline or withdraw, and the intended use of the collected data. All participants provided informed consent before the interviews. Their identities were anonymized using participant codes, and confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Legal Materials and Normative Approaches

The doctrinal analysis drew upon primary and secondary legal materials. The primary legal materials included Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, Law No. 6 of 2023 concerning Job Creation, Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Electronic Transactions as amended by Law No. 1 of 2024, and Law No. 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection. Secondary legal materials included scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy documents, and reports issued by organizations such as the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The doctrinal inquiry employed two complementary approaches. First, the statutory approach was used to identify and interpret Indonesian legislation governing employment, electronic information and transactions, personal data protection, and digital governance. Second, the conceptual approach was used to examine legal

protection, procedural fairness, algorithmic accountability, workers' rights, and public policy. These approaches were applied to assess whether the existing legal framework provides adequate substantive and procedural protection for digital platform workers facing account suspension.

Data Collection

Empirical data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions. The interview guide explored participants' experiences with customer rating systems, algorithmic performance evaluation, account suspension, grievance and appeal procedures, the economic consequences of suspension, and expectations regarding legal protection and public policy reform.

Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or through a WhatsApp call, depending on the participant's preference. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded, supplemented with field notes, and transcribed verbatim in Indonesian.

Quotations selected for inclusion in the manuscript were translated into English by the researcher and subsequently reviewed by the research team to ensure that the meanings, contexts, and nuances of the participants' original statements were retained. A document review checklist was also used to organize the examination of relevant statutory provisions and policy documents.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021). The analytical process involved familiarization with the data, initial coding of relevant statements, generation of preliminary themes, review and refinement of the themes, and definition and naming of the final thematic categories.

Initial coding was conducted by one researcher. The researcher subsequently recoded the transcripts to examine the consistency and coherence of the coding decisions. The resulting codes and preliminary themes were then discussed with the other members of the research team to refine the thematic structure, consider alternative interpretations, and ensure interpretive consistency.

The analysis generated four principal themes:

1. algorithmic management and performance evaluation;
2. account suspension practices and their economic consequences;
3. procedural fairness and grievance mechanisms; and
4. expectations regarding legal protection and public policy reform.

The doctrinal materials were analyzed by identifying and interpreting statutory provisions and legal principles relevant to employment status, transparency, procedural rights, algorithm-based decision-making, appeal mechanisms, personal data protection, and government oversight.

The empirical and doctrinal findings were subsequently integrated through source triangulation and thematic synthesis. Participants' accounts were compared with relevant statutory provisions and policy documents to identify convergences,

inconsistencies, and regulatory gaps. The integrated findings were then interpreted in relation to relevant scholarly literature to assess the adequacy of existing legal protection and formulate evidence-based recommendations for transparent, accountable, and fair platform governance.

RESULT

This section presents the empirical and normative findings concerning the legal protection of digital platform workers against account suspension practices. The empirical findings are derived from semi-structured interviews with digital platform workers in Semarang, while the normative findings are based on an analysis of relevant statutory provisions and policy documents. The findings are organized into participant characteristics, experiences of account suspension, the existing legal framework, and participants' expectations regarding public policy reform.

Characteristics of Participants

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age (Years)	Digital Platform	Working Experience (Years)	Employment Status
P1	Male	42	Gojek	5	Full-Time
P2	Male	37	Grab	4	Full-Time
P3	Male	29	ShopeeFood	2	Part-Time
P4	Male	45	Maxim	6	Full-Time
P5	Male	33	Gojek	3	Full-Time
P6	Female	31	Grab	2	Part-Time
P7	Male	40	Gojek	5	Full-Time
P8	Male	36	ShopeeFood	3	Full-Time
P9	Male	47	Maxim	6	Full-Time
P10	Male	35	Grab	4	Full-Time
P11	Male	38	Gojek	5	Full-Time
P12	Male	30	ShopeeFood	2	Part-Time
P13	Male	44	Grab	5	Full-Time
P14	Male	39	Maxim	4	Full-Time
P15	Male	41	Gojek	6	Full-Time
P16	Female	34	Grab	3	Full-Time
P17	Male	46	ShopeeFood	5	Full-Time
P18	Male	32	Gojek	2	Full-Time
P19	Male	43	Maxim	6	Full-Time
P20	Male	37	Grab	4	Full-Time

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the twenty participants involved in this study. The participants represented four major digital platforms operating in Semarang, namely Gojek, Grab, ShopeeFood, and Maxim. Most participants worked as full-time digital platform workers with working experience ranging from two to six years, enabling them to provide rich insights into platform governance and algorithmic management practices. Among the twenty participants, sixteen had personally experienced account suspension, whereas four participants had not

experienced suspension directly but were familiar with suspension practices through observations and discussions within their driver communities. The reported reasons for suspension varied, including low customer ratings, customer complaints, low acceptance rates, suspected policy violations, and algorithm-based detection, reflecting the complexity of automated decision-making within digital platform ecosystems.

Table 3. Theme-Code-Quote

Theme	Subtheme	Code	Quotation
Transparency	Lack of explanation	No explanation	P2="I never knew why my account was suspended."
Right to appeal	Appeal mechanism	Ineffective appeal	P7="My appeal was never answered."
Human review	Algorithmic decision	Automated suspension	P12="Everything seemed to be decided automatically."
Legal certainty	Regulatory protection	No legal certainty	P17="We don't know our rights."

Empirical Findings on Account Suspension Practices

The interview findings indicate that account suspension has become one of the most significant concerns experienced by digital platform workers. Most participants reported that suspension decisions were closely associated with customer rating systems, customer complaints, and algorithm-based performance monitoring. Although these mechanisms were intended to maintain service quality and platform integrity, many participants perceived that suspension procedures lacked transparency and provided limited opportunities for clarification or appeal.

To provide a clearer overview of participants' experiences, the principal findings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Major Findings on Account Suspension Practices

Findings	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Reported that customer ratings affected work opportunities	18/20	90
Reported that customer complaints frequently triggered account reviews	17/20	85
Reported receiving unclear explanations for suspension decisions	16/20	80
Considered existing appeal mechanisms ineffective	15/20	75
Reported an immediate loss of income following account suspension*	16/16	100
Expected stronger government regulation	20/20	100

The percentages presented in Table 4 are intended solely to describe the distribution of responses among the twenty participants and should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all digital platform workers in Indonesia. The findings were derived from thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview transcripts. Participants' responses were coded and grouped into recurring patterns and themes

related to account suspension practices, legal protection concerns, and public policy needs.

The findings demonstrate that customer ratings constitute one of the primary determinants influencing workers' access to digital platform services. Eighteen participants acknowledged that maintaining high customer ratings was essential for sustaining work opportunities, while seventeen participants reported that customer complaints frequently initiated account reviews or suspension procedures. However, sixteen participants stated that they received limited explanations regarding the specific reasons underlying suspension decisions, making it difficult to understand or challenge the platform's actions.

Furthermore, fifteen participants considered the existing grievance and appeal mechanisms ineffective because the review process was perceived as lengthy, highly standardized, and lacking direct communication with platform representatives. All sixteen participants who had personally experienced account suspension reported an immediate loss of income. Because digital platforms constituted their primary source of livelihood, temporary or permanent suspension directly affected their financial stability and household income. All participants agreed that stronger regulatory intervention was necessary to ensure greater transparency, procedural fairness, and legal protection within Indonesia's digital platform ecosystem.

Several participants emphasized the uncertainty created by algorithm-driven suspension decisions. One participant (P7, Gojek driver, five years of experience) stated, *"I received a one-star rating without knowing the reason, and shortly afterward my account was temporarily suspended. I was never given the opportunity to explain my side of the story."* Similarly, another participant (P14, Maxim driver, four years of experience) explained, *"Submitting an appeal was possible, but I never received a clear explanation regarding why my account had been suspended or how the final decision was made."* These statements illustrate that participants perceived account suspension not merely as a technical platform management procedure but as a process requiring greater transparency, accountability, and procedural justice.

The empirical findings indicate that account suspension constitutes a multidimensional issue involving algorithmic decision-making, workers' procedural rights, and legal certainty. These findings provide the empirical basis for the subsequent discussion concerning the adequacy of Indonesia's legal framework and the role of public policy in establishing fair and accountable platform governance.

Normative Analysis of Legal Protection against Account Suspension

The normative analysis examined Indonesian legislation governing labor relations, electronic information and transactions, and related legal principles applicable to digital platform employment. The analysis focused on the extent to which existing legal regulations provide protection for digital platform workers who experience account suspension resulting from algorithmic management systems or platform-based performance evaluation.

The review of the legal framework indicates that Indonesian labor legislation, particularly Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower as amended by Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning Job Creation, primarily regulates workers engaged in conventional employer-employee relationships. However, digital platform workers

generally operate under partnership arrangements, placing them outside the conventional employer-employee relationship regulated under existing labor legislation. Consequently, the legal basis governing procedural rights associated with account suspension remains dispersed across different legal instruments rather than being addressed through a specific regulatory framework.

In addition, Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection and Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Electronic Information and Electronic Transactions establish general principles related to accountability, transparency, and electronic system administration (Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Republic of Indonesia, 2024). Nevertheless, the analysis found that no specific statutory provisions explicitly regulate algorithm-based account suspension, mandatory explanation of suspension decisions, or standardized appeal procedures for digital platform workers. As a result, decisions regarding account suspension are primarily implemented according to the internal policies and operational standards established by individual platform companies.

Table 5. Normative Analysis of Legal Protection against Account Suspension

Legal Aspect	Existing Legal Framework	Normative Findings
Employment Relationship	Law No. 13 of 2003; Law No. 6 of 2023	Platform workers are generally categorized as partners rather than employees.
Procedural Rights	General legal principle	No specific provisions governing procedural rights related to account suspension.
Account Suspension	Internal platform procedures	Suspension procedures are primarily determined by platform companies.
Appeal Mechanism	Internal platform procedure	No nationally standardized legal mechanism regulating appeals against account suspension.
Algorithmic Decision-Making	No specific regulation	Existing legislation has not explicitly addressed algorithm-based managerial decisions affecting platform workers.
Government Oversight	General labor and digital regulations	Oversight exists at a general regulatory level without specific provisions governing algorithmic platform management.

The normative findings demonstrate that legal protection for digital platform workers is currently derived from a combination of labor law principles, electronic transaction regulations, and platform-specific operational policies. These findings provide the normative basis for the subsequent discussion concerning the relationship between algorithmic management, legal protection, and public policy in developing fair and accountable platform governance in Indonesia.

Empirical Findings on Public Policy Needs

Beyond legal protection, the interviews revealed that participants considered public policy to play a crucial role in improving fairness and accountability within Indonesia's digital platform ecosystem. Nearly all participants expressed the view that existing governance mechanisms should be strengthened through clearer regulatory standards, greater transparency in algorithmic decision-making, and more accessible

procedures for resolving disputes arising from account suspension. Participants emphasized that government intervention is necessary to ensure a balanced relationship between digital platform companies and platform workers.

To summarize participants' expectations regarding future policy development, the principal themes identified through thematic analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Public Policy Needs Identified by Digital Platform Workers

Public Policy Need	Number of Participants (n = 20)	Percentage (%)
Clear regulations governing account suspension	20	100
Transparent explanation of suspension decisions	19	95
Standardized appeal and grievance mechanisms	18	90
Human review before permanent suspension	17	85
Legal certainty regarding workers' rights	20	100

The interview data indicate that legal certainty and procedural transparency constitute the highest priorities among digital platform workers. All participants emphasized the importance of establishing explicit regulations governing account suspension procedures and clarifying the legal rights of platform workers within Indonesia's digital economy. Nineteen participants expected digital platforms to provide transparent explanations for suspension decisions, while eighteen participants considered standardized grievance and appeal mechanisms essential to ensuring procedural fairness.

Furthermore, seventeen participants suggested that permanent account suspension should not rely solely on automated algorithmic decisions but should involve human review before a final decision is made. Participants also highlighted the importance of stronger government supervision to ensure that digital platforms operate transparently and consistently with principles of accountability and fairness. These expectations indicate that participants view public policy not only as a regulatory instrument but also as a mechanism for protecting workers' procedural rights within an increasingly digitalized labor market.

One participant (P5, Gojek driver, three years of experience) remarked, *"If the government establishes clear rules, platform companies will have to explain why an account is suspended instead of leaving workers uncertain."* Similarly, Participant P17 (ShopeeFood driver, five years of experience) stated, *"We understand that platforms need rules, but workers should also have the opportunity to defend themselves before losing access to their livelihoods."* These statements demonstrate that participants consistently associated fair platform governance with regulatory transparency, accountability, and accessible legal remedies.

The empirical findings suggest that digital platform workers expect public policy to provide clearer regulatory guidance, enhance procedural safeguards, and promote transparent governance practices. These findings serve as the empirical foundation for

discussing the role of public policy in developing fair and accountable platform governance within Indonesia's digital labor ecosystem.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that digital platform work has transformed conventional employment relationships by organizing work through digital applications and partnership-based arrangements. Unlike workers in clearly defined employer-employee relationships, platform workers depend on continuous access to digital applications to obtain assignments and generate income (Andri Herman Setiawan et al., 2025; Sadowski, 2020; Witasari & Musthofa, 2018). The empirical findings from Semarang indicate that account suspension immediately interrupts workers' economic activities because platform accounts function as essential gateways to employment opportunities and income. These findings support Digital Platform Work Theory, which emphasizes that platform-mediated employment may provide flexibility while simultaneously creating legal uncertainty concerning employment status and workers' rights (Kim, 2018; Mutiara Safira Raudatul Hasanah & Agus Suprajogi, 2025; Wardhana & Rasji, 2025). The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that account suspension is not merely an operational platform decision but also a legal and governance issue with direct implications for workers' procedural rights, economic security, and legal certainty.

The interview findings further demonstrate that account suspension represents a practical manifestation of algorithmic management, in which evaluative, supervisory, and disciplinary functions traditionally performed by human managers are increasingly delegated to automated systems (Kellogg et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2026). Participants reported that customer ratings, complaints, and platform-generated performance indicators influenced suspension decisions, while the reasons underlying such decisions were often inadequately explained. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that algorithmic management can improve operational coordination while creating concerns regarding transparency, accountability, worker autonomy, and procedural fairness (Kellogg et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021; Tian, 2024). The present study extends this discussion by showing that limited opportunities to challenge algorithm-based suspension decisions also constitute a legal protection issue. Consequently, algorithmic management should be accompanied by transparent decision-making procedures, meaningful opportunities for clarification and appeal, and appropriate human oversight, particularly when automated decisions directly affect workers' livelihoods.

The normative analysis indicates that Indonesian legislation provides general legal safeguards but has not established specific procedural protections governing algorithm-based account suspension. Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, as amended by Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning Job Creation, primarily regulates conventional employer-employee relationships (Republic of Indonesia, 2003; Republic of Indonesia, 2023). Meanwhile, Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Electronic Information and Electronic Transactions and Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection establish broader principles relating to electronic systems, accountability, transparency, and personal data processing (Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Republic of Indonesia, 2024). However, these instruments do not specifically require platform

companies to provide detailed explanations for suspension decisions or establish standardized procedures through which platform workers may challenge such decisions. This finding reflects Legal Protection Theory, which emphasizes that legal protection should include preventive and remedial mechanisms to protect individuals against arbitrary actions (Salam, 2023; Shekhawat & Khare, 2025). It is also consistent with previous legal studies indicating that digital platform employment requires adaptive regulatory frameworks capable of balancing technological innovation with workers' substantive and procedural rights (Aminuddin & Kusumawati, 2023; Indra & Nawangsari, 2025; Shekhawat & Khare, 2025; Witasari & Musthofa, 2018). The present study extends these studies by demonstrating that existing legal provisions remain fragmented and insufficiently specific in addressing algorithm-based employment decisions.

Building upon the empirical and normative findings, the study highlights the strategic role of public policy in promoting fair and accountable platform governance. Participants consistently emphasized the need for clearer standards governing account suspension, transparent explanations of platform decisions, accessible appeal mechanisms, meaningful human review, and stronger governmental oversight. These expectations are consistent with a public policy perspective that understands policy as a governmental response to collective problems involving competing social, economic, and institutional interests (Cairney, 2019). They are also consistent with international policy discussions emphasizing the need for regulatory frameworks that ensure decent working conditions, greater transparency, and appropriate protection for workers in the platform economy (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). Effective platform governance should therefore balance technological innovation and business sustainability with legal certainty, accountability, procedural fairness, and the protection of workers' rights (Albab et al., 2023; Alfarizi et al., 2025; Muhyiddin et al., 2024; Novemyanto & Nur, 2025).

Based on these findings, the Ministry of Manpower and the ministry responsible for communication and digital affairs could consider developing coordinated regulatory standards for account suspension practices. Such standards should require platform companies to provide written and sufficiently detailed explanations for suspension decisions, establish accessible appeal procedures with defined response periods, and ensure meaningful human review before permanent suspension is imposed. Regulatory oversight could also include periodic evaluations of algorithmic management systems and their implications for workers' rights. These recommendations are consistent with international regulatory developments that emphasize transparency, fairness, human oversight, and accountability in algorithmic management, particularly for decisions restricting, suspending, or terminating workers' platform accounts (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2024).

The findings indicate that account suspension should be understood as both a platform management practice and a legal governance issue. Effective protection therefore requires an integrated framework combining transparent decision-making, procedural fairness, meaningful human review, accessible remedies, and appropriate regulatory oversight. This integrated perspective provides a foundation for strengthening accountable platform governance while preserving opportunities for technological innovation within Indonesia's digital economy.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital platform workers in Semarang face substantial procedural and regulatory challenges arising from account suspension practices implemented through algorithmic management systems. The empirical findings reveal limited transparency in suspension decisions, ineffective appeal mechanisms, insufficient human review, and immediate economic consequences for workers whose access to income depends on digital platforms. The doctrinal analysis further indicates that existing Indonesian regulations provide only general legal safeguards and do not specifically regulate algorithm-based account suspension, mandatory explanations for suspension decisions, or standardized grievance procedures.

These findings demonstrate that account suspension should be understood not merely as an operational platform decision but also as a legal and public policy issue affecting procedural fairness, legal certainty, and workers' economic security. The study contributes to the literature on digital labor governance by integrating doctrinal legal analysis with empirical evidence from platform workers in Semarang. It also highlights the need for coordinated regulatory standards requiring transparent written explanations, accessible appeal mechanisms with defined response periods, and meaningful human review before permanent account suspension is imposed.

This study has several limitations. The empirical component involved only twenty purposively selected digital platform workers in Semarang; therefore, the findings should not be generalized to all platform workers in Indonesia. In addition, the study focused primarily on workers' perspectives and did not include platform companies or government regulators, whose perspectives could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of account suspension practices. Future research should involve more diverse participants from different regions, incorporate the perspectives of platform companies and policymakers, and examine the implementation and effectiveness of regulatory frameworks governing algorithmic management through comparative or longitudinal research.

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