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**The Existence of Alpha Coefficient in the Wages System and Fiscal Decentralization in Indonesia Under the Law No. 6 of 2023**

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**Abstract**

Wages are one of the important issues in Labor Law, particularly from the workers' perspective. The enactment of Law No. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation in Indonesia, which was later revoked by Law No. 6 of 2023, introduced substantial changes to the structure of Labor Law, specifically in the existence of Alpha Coefficient as a substitute for KHL. This Alpha Coefficient is replacing the KHL and representing functions as an economic index sector variables in Indonesia. This study aims to examine two main issues: first, the legal and conceptual implications of replacing KHL with the Alpha Coefficient in calculating minimum wages; and second, the effect of this change on the authority and role of the Regional Wage Council as part of Indonesia's fiscal decentralization policy. The research employs a statutory and conceptual approach supported by a review of the development of the national wage system. The findings indicate that the existence of the Alpha Coefficient enhances legal certainty by establishing a definitive parameter in wage calculations, thereby improving workers' welfare protection. Furthermore, the Regional Wage Council's position is strengthened through the restoration of tripartite negotiations, ensuring a more balanced and decentralized fiscal and also wage-setting mechanism. The Alpha Coefficient significantly increase the workers wealth by, following the main rights on Indonesian Constitution.

**Keywords:** minimum wage, alpha coefficient, fiscal decentralization

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**1. Introduction**

Wage regulation is a central and often contested issue in Indonesia's labor law regime. Furthermore, wage is the worker's main goal and wage is one of the crucial factors in economic development (Sisma & Subekti, 2023). This sector is interrelated with human resource

development, education, and the national economic system (Agus Surya Manika, 2022). The main problem in this field lies in the issue of wages, which often causes social inequality between workers and employers. Wages are often questioned because they concern the livelihood of workers and cost efficiency for employers (Donandi S, 2022). Therefore, fair regulations are needed so that the relationship between workers and employers can be balanced and in accordance with the principles of social justice (Saputra & Retnowati, 2021).

The background to the existence of wages in the labor law system in Indonesia is certainly inseparable from the relatively dark history of the colonial period (Faturrohman, Anggraeni Marshanda Putri, & Mochamad Basit Alhaetami, 2024). Before independence, workers were not paid and were ordered to do work according to the wishes of their employers, in this case the colonizers. However, not so long there was a development during the colonial period that implemented a policy of reciprocity or *etische politic* (Pasaribu, Ginting, & Saputri, 2024). These policies is the background of many policies in Indonesia labor law regime, that included the principle of human dignity, specifically about wage.

Legally, labor issues are directly related to the objectives of the state as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, namely to create general welfare for all Indonesian people (Wijaya, Cahya, & Saputra, 2021). Article 27 Paragraph (2) and Article 28D Paragraph (2) also guarantee the rights of citizens to work and earn a decent living. This shows that the government has an obligation to ensure the welfare of workers as part of the implementation of the *welfare state* principle (Amalina, Karyudi, Ananta, & Putri, 2025). In Lalu Husni's view, the law must be a tool of the state to realize social justice and protection for workers (Husni, 2012). Therefore, wage policies must be formulated based on legal rules that are fair, rational, and pro-human welfare (Tobing, 2024).

Those regulations is not implemented very well in Indonesia, following the problems like a highly wage gap between one and another region, wage system, and many more. For example, in Surabaya, the minimum wage is Rp4.961.753 following the Governor's Decision No. 100.3.3.1/775/KPTS/013/2024. In another side, Situbondo's minimum wage is Rp2.335.209. This valuable gap can make some conflicts between the definition of wealth from the Surabaya's people perspective and Situbondo's people. This issue can be fixed if the fiscal decentralization is comprehended, specifically in context of the minimum wage.

Wage regulations in Indonesia have undergone major changes since the enactment of Law No. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation. Previously, Law No. 13 of 2003 stipulated that the calculation of minimum wages was based on *the Decent Living Needs* (KHL). However, this concept was replaced by the Alpha Coefficient, which is considered to better reflect national economic conditions. This change has sparked debate because it is has been criticized for potentially neglecting the welfare state and its people (Nola, 2020). The government argues that this policy is intended to adjust wages to economic growth, but workers believe that it could reduce their rights.

The existence of the Alpha Coefficient is then regulated in more detail in Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 18 of 2022. In this regulation, the Alpha Coefficient is set in the range of 0.10 to 0.30 and is used as an indicator of labor's contribution to the economy. However, this policy has drawn much criticism because it is considered not to reflect the real conditions of workers' needs in each region. In another side, the role of the Regional Wage Council has been increased because the new calculation method no longer uses the KHL as its main basis. This Alpha Coefficient is reviving the dignity of Regional Wage Council, because the Regional Wage Council got their past authority to calculate the minimum wage on their own region. Therefore, an in-depth legal study is needed to assess the impact of the application of the Alpha Coefficient on the wage system and economic justice in Indonesia.

Previous research conducted by Nabiyla Risfa Izzati highlights the evaluation of minimum wage policies and the function of the Wage Council in the national labor system (Izzati, 2023). Nabila Dewi Putri's study examines macroeconomic factors such as economic growth, education, and fiscal decentralization on income inequality in Indonesia (Putri, 2024). On the other hand, the research by Muhammad RM Fayasy Failaq and Mario Agritama SW Madjid discusses regional legal innovations in the implementation of asymmetric decentralization (Failaq & Madjid, 2023). However, these studies have not specifically examined the discussion about the existence of Alpha Coefficient in calculating the minimum wage under the Law Number 6 of 2023 and its relation with the fiscal decentralization policy. This study focuses on the legal and fiscal impacts of using the Alpha Coefficient on the authority of local governments, thereby enriching the academic discourse on the relationship between national wage policy and the principle of fiscal decentralization.

This research has two main objectives, namely to examine the existence of Alpha Coefficient as a substitute for KHL in the minimum wage calculation, and its impact for the fiscal decentralization, following the revival of the Regional Wage Council. This change in wage indicators is important because it can affect the welfare of workers and the direction of national economic policy. This study also seeks to examine the extent to which this shift changes the authority of regions in determining wage policy. Thus, this study not only highlights the normative aspects of wage policy, but also the structural aspects related to the relationship between the central and regional governments. The results of this analysis are expected to provide new insights into the balance between economic efficiency and social justice in wage policy in Indonesia. To address these issues, this study adopts a normative legal research design using statutory and conceptual approaches.

## **2. Research Method**

This research is normative legal research that aims to produce a prescription for resolving a legal problem (Marzuki, 2017). Problems in legal research are divided into three types, namely conflict of norms, norm vacuum, and norm ambiguity (Jalaludin Rifa'i et al., 2023). The main problem in this research relates to norm ambiguity and potential conflict of norms between Law

No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower (UUK) and Law No. 6 of 2023 (UUCK) as implemented through Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 18 of 2022. The problem approaches used in this study are the statutory approach and the conceptual approach. The statutes in question are the UUK and UUCK, particularly Permenaker 18/2022, which regulates the alpha coefficient in the calculation of the minimum wage as a substitute for the KHL regulated in the UUK. The concepts to be discussed the comparison between the use of KHL Alpha Coefficient as one of the variables to calculate the minimum wage, which are debated by labor groups, and their vitality role to reviving the Regional Wage Council under UUCK, as the implementation of fiscal decentralization policy of Indonesia.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Comparison of Minimum Wage Calculations with Decent Living Needs and the Alpha Coefficient

Determining minimum wages is an important instrument in labor policy that serves to ensure decent living standards for workers while maintaining economic balance for the business world (Putra, Waridin, & Wajdi, 2022). In the development of regulations in Indonesia, there are two main methods used in calculating minimum wages, namely the Decent Living Needs (KHL) approach and the alpha coefficient approach as introduced in the latest policy (Tjakradirana, Rosida, & Wijaya, 2024). Both methods have different legal bases, calculation parameters, and normative consequences, thus requiring in-depth study. A comparison between KHL and the alpha coefficient is important to assess the ability of each system to fulfill the principle of adequate wages, provide legal certainty, guarantee fairness for workers, and adapt to national and regional economic conditions (Winarsi, *et.al.*, 2024). This subchapter aims to describe the characteristics of both systems and provide a critical analysis of the structural differences that affect the effectiveness of minimum wage setting in Indonesia.

##### 3.1.1. Legal Basis for Minimum Wage and KHL Formula

From a regulatory certainty perspective, the use of the alpha coefficient provides a more stable and predictable wage determination formula (Rauuf, Adiyani, & Widodo, 2022). This consistency arises because the range of alpha values has been clearly defined in the regulations, thereby limiting the variation in calculation results. In contrast, the KHL method often results in disparities in minimum wage values between regions because it is highly dependent on the survey process and political dynamics at the regional level (Marcelli & Perdana, 2023). The subjective element in determining the components of basic needs can also create uncertainty for local governments and business actors. Therefore, in terms of normative stability, the alpha coefficient approach tends to be stronger than the KHL system.

From the perspective of adequacy in meeting basic needs, the KHL approach is closer to the principle of livability because it measures the real consumption costs of workers (Abrianto, 2024). The KHL component is derived from actual expenditures that reflect the minimum needs that must be met each month. In contrast, the alpha formula is more influenced by macroeconomic

variables such as inflation and economic growth, which do not always reflect the concrete conditions of working households (Kusumastuti, Mutiasari, Paningrum, & Cahyani, 2022). The discrepancy between macro indicators and daily needs can result in wages that fall short of a decent standard of living. Thus, from the perspective of substantive justice, the KHL is considered to better reflect the reality of workers' living needs.

In terms of sensitivity to local contexts, KHL has an advantage because its components are calculated through price surveys in each region. This approach allows KHL to capture significant variations in the cost of living between regions. In contrast, the alpha coefficient formula tends to produce more uniform values because it relies on macro indicators that are general and not region-specific. This comparison shows that the alpha coefficient is more prominent in terms of regulatory stability, while KHL is superior in terms of fairness and relevance to workers' needs. Therefore, the discourse on wage policy reform should ideally focus on finding a balance between the stability of the formula and the ability of wages to meet the basic needs of workers (Ramli, 2008).

### 3.1.2. Alpha Coefficient Formula Structure

Following the enactment of Law No. 11 of 2020 and Government Regulation No. 36 of 2021, the government adopted a new approach to setting minimum wages based on macroeconomic variables (Sridadi, Prihandono, Kurniawan, Abrianto, & Prihantono, 2021). This approach integrates inflation, economic growth, and an additional index in the form of an alpha coefficient as core elements of the calculation. Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 18 of 2022 then stipulates that alpha should be in the range of 0.10 to 0.30 as a representation of the contribution of labor to economic activity (Juliani & Kusuma, 2025). The range is set to ensure consistency and limit variation in the calculation results. This framework thus replaces the previous method, which used a survey of basic living needs.

Nevertheless, labor groups have criticized this macroeconomic-based mechanism (Izzati, 2023). They argue that dependence on national economic conditions could slow wage growth, especially during economic slowdowns (Hidayah, R. Cloet, & Pradhan, 2021). Meanwhile, workers' basic needs have not adjusted as quickly as economic variables. The limited alpha value is also considered to narrow the possibility of wage increases to a more adequate level. Therefore, this new approach is considered to not fully protect workers' purchasing power.

On the other hand, the government argues that the existence of the alpha coefficient increases the stability and predictability of wage policy (Yusnaini, Gunawan, & Tyas, 2025). The fixed value range is considered capable of reducing volatility and creating certainty for business actors. The government also stated that this formula provides a balance between business capabilities and worker income protection. In addition, the use of alpha is considered more consistent than survey-based methods, which tend to be subjective. Thus, there are differences in arguments that require more in-depth normative review to determine their suitability with the principle of fairness in minimum wage policy.

### 3.1.3. Comparison of KHL with Alpha Coefficient

From the perspective of regulatory certainty, the application of the alpha coefficient is considered capable of providing a more structured and predictable wage calculation mechanism (Hartanto, Ningrum, & Simanungkalit, 2022). Meanwhile, the KHL approach tends to produce varying wage values because it is heavily influenced by field surveys and local political dynamics. These conditions make it difficult to maintain consistency in wage setting across regions. The alpha formula, on the other hand, provides a more uniform calculation pattern with minimal fluctuations. However, when linked to the real needs of workers, the alpha formula is often considered to not fully reflect the actual cost of living.

In terms of sensitivity to regional conditions, the KHL method is more adaptable because it is derived from local price and consumption data (Destiana, 2022). This approach allows the KHL to capture differences in the cost of living that arise due to local economic changes (Risnandar, 2024). On the other hand, the alpha formula relies on national macro indicators, so it does not always reflect variations in needs between regions (Widodo, 2021). This discrepancy can lead to an imbalance between the minimum wage and workers' basic expenses. Therefore, KHL is considered more representative in describing local economic conditions than the alpha formula.

Based on this comparative analysis, the alpha formula is superior in terms of regulatory consistency and wage calculation regularity. Meanwhile, KHL is considered stronger in terms of material justice and the ability to meet workers' minimum living needs. These differences in nature indicate the need to integrate both approaches in formulating a more balanced wage policy. By combining the principles of stability and adequacy of living needs, the wage formula can become more comprehensive. Therefore, discussions on wage regulations need to be directed towards finding a common ground that can guarantee regulatory certainty and worker welfare.

### 3.2. The Effect of the Alpha Coefficient on the Institutional Position of the Wage Council as a Manifestation of Fiscal Decentralization

The implementation of regional autonomy gives local governments the right to regulate labor affairs as part of fiscal decentralization (Suwandi, 2015). This authority allows regions to adjust wage policies to local socioeconomic conditions. However, this mechanism underwent changes when the central government issued Government Regulation No. 36/2021 and Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 18/2022. These two regulations shifted the approach to wage calculation from the KHL method to an alpha formula based on macro indicators. Therefore, the relationship between regional authority and wage policy must be understood in the context of this change in formula.

An alpha coefficient in the range of 0.10–0.30 provides an opportunity for the Wage Council to assess regional conditions in determining the minimum wage (Donandi, 2022). This opportunity allows for policy adaptation based on productivity and local economic growth (Putri, 2024). However, the restrictions imposed by the central government continue to limit the flexibility of local governments in determining wage increases (Hasnati, Dewi, & Shandy Utama,

2022). This creates a duality between empowerment and restriction in the fiscal decentralization system. Thus, alpha becomes an instrument that both expands and restricts regional policy autonomy.

The use of alpha also shifts the role of the Wage Council to a more strategic position. During the period of PP 78/2015, the Council tended to have no substantial influence because the central formula was very dominant. Permenaker 18/2022 restores the function of the Council as a tripartite deliberative forum that can provide factual recommendations regarding wages (Izzati, 2023). Through the evaluation of alpha values, the Council once again played an active role in decision-making. This demonstrates the restoration of a more inclusive industrial relations structure.

From a normative legal perspective, strengthening the Wage Council improves the quality of participation and accountability in the wage-setting process (Wulandari, Mutiah, & Rusmana, 2024). However, restrictions on the alpha range still raise doubts about the extent of regional authority (Failaq & Madjid, 2023). The possibility of symbolic participation arises when Council discussions have no real impact on the final outcome. This situation calls for a review of the effectiveness of fiscal decentralization in wage policy. Therefore, scientific assessments must consider the balance between regulatory certainty and worker protection.

This study expands on previous research, particularly regarding the importance of the Wage Council as a forum for tripartite dialogue. The novel contribution of this study lies in the analysis of the alpha coefficient as a technical factor that alters the distribution of wage-setting authority between the central and regional governments. Alpha not only revives tripartite negotiations, but also influences the fiscal structure that underpins minimum wage policy. This shows that the technical aspects of a regulation can have significant institutional impacts. Thus, this study deepens our understanding of formula-based wage decentralization.

In summary, the alpha coefficient provides methodological clarity that can improve the consistency of minimum wage calculations. However, the limited range of alpha values means that regions do not yet have complete freedom in formulating wage policies that protect workers. This condition shows that the goal of worker welfare has not been optimally achieved (Fithri, 2022). Nevertheless, the strengthening of the Wage Council opens up opportunities to improve the balance between regional interests and central regulations. Thus, it can be concluded that the alpha formula still needs improvement to be in line with the principles of decentralization and social justice.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

Replacing the KHL with the Alpha Coefficient makes minimum wage calculations more realistic and idealistic. This is because the alpha coefficient is a macroeconomic indicator, not just an indicator of individual needs. The alpha coefficient promises a steady but gradual wage

increase. Compared to the KHL, the alpha coefficient also optimizes regional fiscal policy. The transition from the KHL method to the alpha coefficient provides legal certainty and formula stability, but the limited range of alpha still reduces the system's ability to ensure truly decent wages for workers. This shift indicates a change in approach from measuring real needs to macro indicators, thus requiring additional protection mechanisms to ensure that welfare objectives are still met. In addition, the use of alpha revives the role of the Wage Council through a tripartite value-setting process, although its authority remains limited by central regulations. This situation shows that fiscal decentralization in wage policy is limited and highly determined by the policy space provided by the central government.

#### 4.2 Recommendation

Despite sound policies, comprehensive improvements and revisions are still needed in law enforcement and implementation.

- a. Limiting the authority of law enforcement agencies in Employment Law and evaluating policies should problems arise in their implementation are necessary. To optimize the benefits of using the alpha coefficient, preventive and repressive law enforcement is required, especially in the field of Labor Law in Indonesia. The large number of unlawful actions by authorities and business employers means that workers' confidence in legal certainty is lost.
- b. Therefore, active participation and legal strengthening of state institutions that support workers are necessary.
- c. Strengthening the authority of Regional Wage Councils is a top priority in restructuring Indonesian Labor Law.
- d. There needs to be transparency of information among trade unions in Indonesia, which is realized through the publication of regulations and the results of agreements between the Regional Wage Council and the Regional Government.

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