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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Model for Addressing Media Professionals' Challenges within the Iranian Labor Law Framework: Leveraging Media Capacity

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction:

The rapid expansion of mass media and digital communication has fundamentally transformed the relationship between labor policies, public communication, and professional rights. Media professionals occupy a unique position within society, serving as intermediaries between governmental institutions, policymakers, employers, employees, and the general public. However, despite their critical role, numerous challenges persist regarding the application and implementation of labor laws affecting media practitioners. In the context of the Labor Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran, these challenges include insufficient media literacy, limited institutional capacity, inadequate policy coordination, and weaknesses in public communication concerning labor rights and responsibilities. Recognizing the strategic role of media in promoting legal

awareness and facilitating policy implementation, the present study aimed to develop and validate a comprehensive model for resolving the problems faced by media professionals through the effective utilization of media capacity. The study sought to identify the principal dimensions influencing this process and to establish an empirically validated framework capable of supporting policymakers, labor administrators, and media organizations.

Method:

This research was designed as an applied, exploratory mixed-methods study integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Data collection followed a cross-sectional design. The qualitative phase focused on identifying the conceptual foundations of the proposed model through thematic analysis. The principal documentary source consisted of the Labor Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was systematically analyzed alongside expert perspectives. Participants in the qualitative phase included media professionals, labor experts affiliated with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, and university scholars specializing in media studies, sociology, and labor law.

Following the qualitative exploration, the quantitative phase was conducted to evaluate the validity and reliability of the proposed conceptual model. The statistical population comprised 130 experts distributed across three principal groups: 25 media specialists; 75 labor experts, including 25 national and provincial officials, 25 county-level managers and specialists, and 25 media managers and practitioners; and 30 university faculty members with expertise in media, sociology, and labor law. Based on the Morgan sampling table, a minimum sample size of 97 participants was required. To enhance statistical precision and compensate for possible incomplete responses, the final sample size was increased to 100 respondents.

Qualitative data analysis was performed through theoretical coding using MAXQDA software, enabling the systematic identification and categorization of themes. Quantitative analyses were carried out using SPSS version 23 and LISREL version 8.8. Statistical procedures included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, structural equation modeling (SEM), and one-sample t-tests. These analytical techniques were employed to examine the relationships among the identified variables, assess construct validity, evaluate measurement reliability, and determine the overall goodness-of-fit of the proposed structural model.

Findings:

The qualitative analysis generated a comprehensive conceptual structure consisting of 61 subcategories, which were subsequently synthesized into six overarching themes representing the principal dimensions of the proposed framework. These six themes were identified as:

- (1) the necessity of media literacy education;
- (2) the influence of media literacy on media professionals;
- (3) management of media capacity;
- (4) educational initiatives for strengthening media capacity;
- (5) consideration of media policymaking processes with a focus on enhancing media capacity; and
- (6) development of awareness and professional competencies related to media capacity.

The quantitative findings provided strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework. Pearson correlation analyses indicated statistically significant relationships among the

principal variables. Structural equation modeling demonstrated satisfactory factor loadings across the identified constructs, confirming acceptable convergent validity and internal consistency. Model fit indices indicated that the overall structural model achieved an acceptable level of goodness-of-fit, while measurement errors associated with the latent constructs remained minimal. The one-sample t-test further confirmed that the identified dimensions significantly contributed to explaining the challenges experienced by media professionals within the labor law framework.

Among the identified dimensions, media literacy emerged as a particularly influential factor, emphasizing the importance of educating media practitioners regarding labor regulations, professional ethics, legal rights, and communication strategies. Likewise, effective management of media capacity and systematic policymaking were found to play essential roles in strengthening institutional performance and facilitating cooperation among governmental organizations, labor authorities, academic institutions, and media organizations. Educational initiatives aimed at enhancing media capacity were also identified as fundamental mechanisms for improving professional competence and increasing the effectiveness of labor law implementation.

Conclusion:

The findings demonstrate that addressing the challenges encountered by media professionals under the Labor Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran requires a multidimensional and integrated approach that combines legal knowledge, media literacy, institutional capacity building, strategic policymaking, and professional skills development. The proposed model exhibited satisfactory construct validity, reliability, and overall structural fit, indicating that it provides a scientifically robust framework for understanding and addressing the complex interactions between media systems and labor law implementation.

The validated model offers several practical implications for policymakers, government agencies, labor organizations, educational institutions, and media professionals. By emphasizing continuous media literacy education, strengthening organizational capacity, improving communication between stakeholders, and integrating media considerations into labor policymaking, the framework can contribute to more effective implementation of labor regulations, greater protection of professional rights, enhanced public awareness, and improved institutional performance. Furthermore, the model provides a useful foundation for future research examining media governance, labor policy implementation, and the broader relationship between communication systems and employment regulations.

Overall, the study concludes that systematic investment in media capacity development and evidence-based policymaking can significantly improve the effectiveness of labor law implementation for media professionals. The proposed framework represents a reliable and applicable model that may serve as a valuable reference for future policy development, organizational planning, academic research, and professional practice in the fields of media management, labor law, and public policy.

Data Availability Statement.

Data available on request from the authors.

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Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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