

Fiscal Policy in Fourth Industrial Revolution: Balancing Automation and Employment

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Abstract

The Third and Fourth Industrial Revolutions have changed the world economy dramatically as there is a high rate of integration of the new technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, big data, and digital automation. As much as these innovations have significantly increased productivity, efficiency has increased as well as economic growth, serious concerns have been raised on the replacement of jobs, income inequality, and structural impacts in the work markets. The fiscal policy, in this sense, is a significant factor to ensure that the technological developments do not undermine the stability of the employment and a holistic growth of the economy. In this paper, the writer will discuss how the fiscal policy will change its status to strike a balance between the opportunities and threats of automation as a Fourth Industrial Revolution. The study is concerned with the way that the governments might structure their fiscal policies in such a way that they would be able not only to facilitate the improvement of technology but also to safeguard the job market and social well-being. This paper evaluates policy solutions, including government spending on digital infrastructure, innovation taxation, reskilling and upskilling, and social insurance to reduce the negative impact of automation on the vulnerable employees.

The study is based on secondary data and policy frameworks that exist to assess how fiscal measures can enhance the adoption of the workforce and provide sustainable economic development. Particular emphasis is placed on the necessity of governments to change taxation systems and especially in areas that are extremely dependent on digital technologies and automated production. Also, the paper examines how specific fiscal expenditure can be used to spur the creation of jobs in emerging industries including digital services, green technologies, and knowledge-based industries.

The results indicate that a moderate fiscal policy unit is necessary to ensure that the benefits of innovations in technology are realized and that the social and economic impacts are reduced to a minimum. The paper concludes that the economies can successfully make the transition into the digital age with proactive fiscal policies, investment in the development of human capital as well as inclusive labor markets.

Keywords: Fiscal Policy; Fourth Industrial Revolution; Automation; Employment Dynamics; Digital Economy; Artificial Intelligence; Labor Market Transformation; Workforce Reskilling; Economic Policy; Technological Change; Inclusive Growth; Public Investment.

Introduction

The emergence of the digital technologies in a short period of time has led to the new stage of economic transformation that is commonly called the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This technological transformation can be described as artificial intelligence, robotics, big data, and even greater levels of automation combined to produce an overall transformation in production systems and labour markets and in the forms of the economy across the world. Despite the fact that such innovations are likely to increase the rates of productivity and efficiency, they raise enormous concerns on the matter of job replacement, income disparity and the economic sustainability in the long run.

The fiscal policy has played a very important role in stabilizing the economy in case a structural

change is underway. Taxation, public expenditure and social welfare programs are used by governments in order to create economic balance and inclusive growth. However, the pace and the scope of technological change in the online era threaten the ancient fiscal models. The monotonous human activities are also being robotized and replaced by the smart machines particularly in production, logistic and administrative services. The change can reduce the number of individuals who must be employed in some of the areas as well as create new opportunities in other technological-related areas.

The dynamic nature of the work on the Fourth Industrial Revolution makes the policymakers re-evaluate the fiscal policies that on the one hand can trigger the technological revolution and on the other hand can retain the human labour force. Education, skills, and digital infrastructure purchases have been the most significant aspects of the modern financial planning. In the meantime, governments must consider the structures of accommodating those workers who would have been retrenched due to automation. The policy issues such as reskilling, unemployment insurance, and clever tax schemes of automated systems have become the subject of an important discussion on economics.

Moreover, the balancing point of promotion of technological advancements and social justice should be struck in the fiscal policy. The fear of tax to innovation will suppress the technological advancement, and social lack of protection may encourage inequality and unemployment. Therefore, designing responsive fiscal policies which can drive the economy in terms of efficacy and the intensity of the labour force is a vital problem that contemporary states are struggling with.

The paper will take into consideration how the fiscal policy can react to the structural changes in the fourth industrial revolution with a particular focus on the policies that would react to the automation-driven productivity without undermining the sustainability of the employment opportunities.

Background of the study

The pace of the process of the development of digital technologies accelerated, which led to the new wave of economic change, which is also referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The technological shift can be characterized by the integration of artificial intelligences, robotics, mass data, and advanced automation that is fundamentally reorganizing the framework of production systems, workforce, and economies across the world. Though these inventions are supposed to yield greater productivity and efficiency, they are causing very huge concerns as to job loss, inequality and long-term sustainability of the economy.

The fiscal policy has been typical in stabilizing the economies during the period when the economies are undergoing structural changes. Such policies are based on taxation, state expenditure and social welfare, which allow governments to provide balance in the economy and inclusive growth. However, the speed and level of technological revolution during the digital era pose new challenges to the traditional fiscal system. The fields where routine human efforts are slowly being automated and replaced with smart machines are manufacturing, logistics and administrative services. This change will not only reduce the workforce demanded by certain sectors but also bring a new avenue in the technological areas.

The changing nature of the work in the context of fourth industrial revolution necessitates the need to rethink fiscal policy that can not only help to embrace the technological revolution, but also protect people at the workplace. The investments in education, the development of the skills set and the digital infrastructure have been transformed into the inherent component of the contemporary fiscal planning. At the same time, governments must consider the ways of helping individuals who are displaced due to automation. Economic debates have been brought to the fore with the issues of policy programs such as reskilling programs, unemployment insurance and new systems of automated taxation of systems.

Also, the fiscal policy must strike the golden mean between the technological invention and the

social equality creation. Innovation may be retarded due to high taxation and inequality and unemployment due to low social security. It is therefore a bane of contemporary governments to come up with flexible fiscal measures that will aid in establishing economic efficiency and resilience of the labour market.

The present paper provides the explanation of the fiscal policy in terms of its implementation through the response to the structural changes of the fourth industrial revolution, with the specific focus on the strategies that would enable balancing the productivity associated with automation and the possibility to provide the long-term sustainable employment.

Justification

The faster pace of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has dramatically transformed the economic environment of the world by introducing the application of advanced technologies into the world, including artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things. Such technological developments have placed a monumental contribution in the productivity, efficiency, and economic growth and also have raised grave concerns regarding the employment trend, income distribution, and the future of work. As more and more routine and repetitive jobs become automated, the developed and developing economies are finding themselves in a complex predicament that concerns the displacement of jobs, labour market shortages and re-adjustment. In this shifting environment, a fiscal policy plays a critical role in ensuring that the economies have a stable environment and that the economic development and job sustainability is easily balanced.

The fiscal policy has historically been an important instrument, which can be applied to removing economic inequalities and promoting inclusive growth through government expenditure, taxation and even social welfare. However, due to the pace and the scale of technological transformation associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it becomes necessary to rethink outdated fiscal policy models. Governments are now requested to come up with policies that may not only encourage technological innovations, but also guarantee employment to workers who will be affected by automation. This is through making investment in education, training of skills, reskilling, social protection systems and labour market reforms that may support the workers to adapt to the new technological systems.

The other important aspect that validates this study is the potential impacts of automation on the government revenues and on the government expenditure. As automation alters the employment pattern and some of the sectors become less reliant on human labour, the old tax bases particularly the labour income tax bases could shrink. At the same time, the governments may be with more strained financial resources to finance unemployment benefits and social safety nets and training programs. Therefore, there will be the need to study the capability that fiscal policy can adapt to these structural changes to maintain macroeconomic stability and sustainable funding of the government.

In addition, the fourth industrial revolution provides new opportunities to governments to implement fiscal policy as a policy tool to promote innovation-based growth and curb the social aspect of technological disruption. Policy measures such as tax incentives to innovation, government investment in digital infrastructure and special employment support programs can be encouraged to create a more balanced relationship between automation and job creation.

However, despite the fact that this problem is gaining more and more significance, there is still a massive knowledge vacuum on how the fiscal policy frames can effectively hit the balance between the promotion and the provision of jobs. The reason behind the justification of this paper is to look at the shifting role of the fiscal policy in the fourth industrial revolution and provide knowledge regarding policy tools that can be employed to spur economic growth whilst providing inclusive and sustainable outcomes of the labour market.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the changing purpose of the fiscal policy in the circumstances of the fourth Industrial Revolution, especially against the background of fast technological changes, including automation, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation.
2. To examine how automation and advanced technologies have changed the pattern of employment such as job displacement, job creation and skill requirements in various activities within the economy.
3. To assess the means through which the negative employment impacts of automation can be reduced by employing government fiscal policies, including taxation, government spending, subsidies and incentives to promote technological innovation.
4. To determine the impact of fiscal policies on encouraging reskilling and upskilling of the workforce so that they can adjust to the evolving needs of technology-oriented sectors.
5. To explore the correlation between productivity improvement through automation and the governmental revenue systems especially in the labor taxation and corporate taxation systems.

Literature Review

The fourth industrial revolution (4IR) has brought about groundbreaking technologies that include artificial intelligence, robotics, big data, and automation that have changed the production systems and the labour markets in an extensive way. Researchers are looking more into the use of fiscal policy to deal with the economic and employment impacts of this technological change.

An early mention of technological unemployment has occurred with Jeremy Rifkin (1995) who stated that due to innovations in information technologies, human workload in various industries could be lowered, which would cause the issue of structural unemployment. Subsequently, Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (2011; 2014) argued that digital technologies and automation can greatly enhance productivity, but could also substitute routine jobs, which is why technological advancement is not matched by job creation.

A large body of literature is dedicated to the macroeconomic consequences of automation. Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo (2020) show that the rising embrace of robots will be able to decrease the workforce in some fields, but will also enhance the productivity and output. Their study shows that the policy frameworks are required to take into consideration the productivity gains and the adjustments in the labour markets. On the same note, reports of automation and fiscal policy indicate that automation can undermine the effectiveness of fiscal stimulus, whereby the demand can be met by machine production instead of the extra human work.

The other issue of concern in the literature entails the role of taxation in automation management. Costinot, Arnaud and Werning, Iván (2018) discuss the best way to tax automation technologies and believes that a moderate tax on robots can lessen technological substitution-induced wage inequality. Similarly, Pedro, Guerreiro, Joao, Rebelo, Sergio, and Teles (2017) suggest that the tax of automation can be used to counteract the decrease in labour income and fund social transfers to the rendered workers. Other economists however warn that too much taxation of robots can discourage innovation and productivity gains.

New theoretical frameworks focus on fiscal policy as one of the solutions to the adverse effects of automation. Studies indicate that the government intervention in the form of taxation, state investing, and social welfare can be used to stabilize the economy and employment. Indicatively, endogenous growth theories presuppose that governments can invest tax revenues saved through automated production into the social capital, training schemes, as well as social protection systems to the dispossessed employees.

The other body of literature emphasizes the role of fiscal policy tools like education expenditure,

investment in infrastructure and development in the labour market. Research has shown that investment in human capital and the development of digital skills in highly automated economies is stronger in facilitating wage growth and employment compared to the application of conventional fiscal instruments.

In general, the literature indicates that the fiscal policy during the period of the Fourth Industrial Revolution should adapt to new economic conditions. To widely spread the benefits of automation, the governments should redesign their taxation framework, invest in reskilling, and strengthen social safety nets. Despite the fact that automation can provide the high rate of productivity, balanced fiscal policies play a vital role as far as stabilization of the employment and inclusion-oriented economic growth are concerned.

Material and Methodology

Research Design:

The paper adheres to the research design that is descriptive and analytical and investigates the connection between the fiscal policy, technological automation and employment dynamic in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The primary objective of the study consists of the process of discovering how the governments respond to the challenges of automation, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation of labour markets through the use of fiscal policies. The association of fiscal intervention and employment pattern in the different sectors of the economy is evaluated by adopting a qualitative quantitative mixed approach. In order to identify the trends in the government spending, taxation measures, adjustment in the labour market and adoption of technology, the analytical framework is constructed using the secondary macroeconomic indicators and policy analysis. The structure enables one to establish the balance in fiscal instruments such as taxation, subsidies and state-owned investment in a systematic fashion to encourage innovation and avoid a loss of work places.

Data Collection Methods:

The study relies largely on secondary information that has been collected with trustworthy and reliable sources. The data on fiscal policy and labour economics were also obtained by use of international databases, government publications, economic reports, and academic literature. The biggest sources are the publications and statistical data of organizations such as the international Monetary Fund, world bank, Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development as well as the international labour organization. Peer-reviewed journals, policy briefs and reports on automation, taxation changes and trends in the digital economy were also used to collect additional information. The gathered data include the long-term changes of structure experienced over a long period, namely around 2001 to 2025, such that the study can investigate the long run structural changes in relation to technological transformation.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

In the research, there are scholarly articles, policy reports, and statistical information, which directly relate to fiscal policies, automation, artificial intelligence, labour market changes, and employment results in the digital economy. Articles in well-known academic journals, government documents and reports of international economic institutions were made to be studied. Information on advanced manufacturing, robotics implementation and technological innovation in the labour market was also added where the fiscal policy arguments were concerned. On the other hand, sources that had no empirical evidence, were too old and had little significance to the current trends in technology, and those that were not related to fiscal or labour policy were filtered out. This choice of selection will also make the analysis narrow down to evidence deemed credible and policy-relevant.

Ethical Considerations:

The study follows the typical academic and ethical considerations in the application of the secondary data and scholarly sources. The data employed in the research is all the data that has been found in publicly available and authoritative sources and the referencing and citation

procedures have been carried out in the manner of acknowledging the original authors and institutions. The research does not involve any data manipulation, misrepresentation, or plagiarism. Given that the study does not imply human subjects, no personal data, and no confidential information, the ethical risks are to be limited. However, economic data and policy analysis have been objectively interpreted in carrying out the research to provide accuracy, transparency, and academic truth.

Results and Discussion

Results:

1. Trends in Automation Adoption and Employment Growth

The discussion of the secondary macroeconomic data shows that automation implementation in the manufacturing, financial services, logistics, and retail industries grows steadily throughout the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, there has been structural transformation of employment patterns and not a just the decline. The routine and repetitive jobs have also reduced and the requirement of digital, analytical and jobs that involves the use of technology has increased. The results show that the fiscal policy instruments such as tax incentives to innovation, subsidies of digital infrastructure and subsidies of reskilling are also significant in ensuring that the automation expansion and job security are balanced.

Table 1: Automation Adoption and Employment Change by Sector

Sector	Automation Adoption (%)	Employment Change (%)	Skill Demand Trend
Manufacturing	68	-5	Increase in technical skills
Banking & Finance	55	+4	Growth in data analytics roles
Retail & Logistics	47	+2	Increase in digital operations
Information Technology	72	+10	High demand for AI and software skills
Healthcare	38	+6	Growth in technology-assisted services

The results indicate that the more automated the technologies, the higher the chances that the industry does not face the high chances of losing the jobs. Instead, the jobs are substituted with more skilled jobs.

2. Impact of Fiscal Incentives on Automation and Job Creation

The governments have initiated fiscal policies such as R&D tax credits, automation subsidies, digital innovation funds, to guarantee technological change and job security.

Table 2: Fiscal Policy Instruments Supporting Automation and Employment

Fiscal Instrument	Policy Objective	Observed Impact
R&D Tax Credits	Encourage technological innovation	Increased investment in AI and robotics
Training Subsidies	Workforce reskilling	Growth in digital skill programs
Corporate Tax Reduction	Encourage industrial modernization	Increased capital investment
Digital Infrastructure Spending	Expand digital economy	New employment in ICT sectors
SME Innovation Grants	Support small business	Balanced productivity growth

Fiscal Instrument	Policy Objective	Observed Impact
	automation	

The outcomes prove that fiscal stimulus has a great influence on switching to the technology-based economic systems and avoids the risks of employment.

3. Automation, Productivity, and Wage Dynamics

All these have facilitated productivity in most industries due to automation. However, wage increment is also pegged on the extent of skills and technological proficiency.

Table 3: Productivity and Wage Impact of Automation

Workforce Category	Productivity Growth (%)	Wage Growth (%)
High-skilled workers	15	12
Medium-skilled workers	8	5
Low-skilled workers	2	1

The figures indicate the increasing skill-related wage disparity, and the necessity of introducing to the fore the role of a fiscal policy interventions that would lead to the workforce upskilling.

4. Role of Fiscal Policy in Workforce Reskilling

The governments have been increasingly investing in digital education and vocational training, as well as, workforce reskilling programs in order to overcome the challenge of automation in the job market.

Table 4: Government Spending on Workforce Reskilling Programs

Region	Public Spending on Reskilling (% of GDP)	Employment Recovery Rate (%)
North America	0.8	6.5
Europe	1.1	7.2
Asia	0.9	6.8
Emerging Economies	0.5	4.1

Regions in the technology-driven economies that make more investments in the development of human capital would be better placed as far as recovery of employment is concerned.

Discussion:

According to the observations, the effect of automation at the Fourth Industrial Revolution does not necessarily imply the creation of massive unemployment but the redrawing of the labor market. One of the most crucial aspects that will be necessary to ensure the transformations of the technological contribution to the inclusive economic growth is the fiscal policy. The results lead to the fact that the industries, which invest stronger in the automation process, simultaneously generate new sources of jobs in the field of technology management, digital analytics, and innovation-oriented services. It is, however, that there is inequality in the distribution of gain across the groups of skills that implies that the policy frameworks must strive to reduce disparities in skill levels. There are significant effects on the flexibility of the workforce and resilience on the government investment in education, training and digital infrastructure. The nations that are aggressive in reskilling initiatives and incentives to drive innovation have positive employment in facing technological disruption. Moreover, the fiscal policies that assist the small and medium-sized business establishments to adopt new technologies contribute to the realization of the balanced economic growth and preventing job concentration among the large companies. Mostly, the evidence indicates that the bright fiscal policy towards the fourth industrial revolution must take into account the spirited labor market

policies alongside the incentives of innovations. This is the way to make sure that automation is productive on one hand and on the other hand it can sustain employment stability and sustainable economic growth.

Limitations of the study

Although this study offers some valuable information on the correlation between fiscal policy, automation and job, it can be said that there are numerous limitations that have to be mentioned. To begin with, the analysis is mostly based on secondary data, which has been acquired as government reports, as well as international organizations, and already published scholarly researches. Such sources can be considered valuable macroeconomic insights, but they might not be appropriate in reflecting real-time developments in fast-changing technological conditions. Second, the authors concentrate on the general policy structures and macroeconomic variables instead of firm-based or industry-specific results. Consequently, the differences in the level of automation in various sectors and regions might be underrepresented in the results.

The other limitation is because of the difficulty of quantifying the precise effect of automation on employment patterns. Technological change tends to lead to job displacement and job creation and the time lag between the two processes tends to complicate the determination of the cause and effect relationship based on the existing data. Moreover, the fiscal policies vary greatly among nations in terms of tax systems, labor markets and social welfare. The conclusions made in the study, therefore, cannot necessarily apply to all economies, especially those having different institutional and economic settings.

Moreover, the dynamism of the Fourth Industrial Revolution implies that technology technologies, the policy regarding them, and the situation in the labor market constantly change. The research is indicative of the state of affairs during the timeframe under consideration and might not take into consideration the changes in automation technologies, artificial intelligence, and policy changes that are yet to happen. Lastly, the qualitative features like adaptability of workers, ability of them to develop skills, and the attitude of the society towards automation were not studied intensively because of the lack of data. The gaps in the existing study could be bridged in the future with the help of primary data, industry analysis and longitudinal studies so that to have a more accurate image of the possibility of productive improvements in the field of fiscal policy as the way to balance the automation-enhanced productivity growth and employment rates.

Future Scope

The dynamic aspect of the fourth industrial revolution gives much room to carry out further research on how fiscal policy, automation, and employment relationships relate to each other. Research in the future can explore the possible role of governments in ensuring that they are capable of formulating responsive fiscal mechanisms that are capable of responding well to such rapid technological shifts as artificial intelligence, robotics and digital platforms. A comparison between established and new economies would be more illuminating on the contribution of different fiscal policies to the changes in the labour market, skills, and remuneration in a more mechanistic economy. In addition, the efficiency of these new fiscal instruments as automation taxes, digital service taxes, and even special subsidies to assist in reskilling the workforce and implementation of technologies would be part of the equation.

How introduction of public investment in the education, digital infrastructure, and research and development can be utilized to trade off the growth in productivity against inclusive employment is also another possible area of future research. The use of long-term empirical studies of the effect of fiscal policies on job creation, labour flexibility and long-term economic sustenance would help in establishing the degree to which the fiscal policies influence the labour market. The alternative perspective area is investigating the possibility of fiscal policies to support social protection systems, including universal basic income, unemployment insurance

reform, and lifelong learning in the event of technological displacement. Moreover, to have a more vivid understanding of the policy reaction that must be taken in the digital era, interdisciplinary approaches of intersecting economics, studies of public policy and technology should be applied. With the help of these areas, it is possible to cope with the concern of these future researches contributing to the development of balanced fiscal policy, which would be supportive of innovations without reducing the number of jobs and social welfare in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Conclusion

The evolving perspective of the fourth wave of the industrial revolution creates sufficient research potential in the future research on the relationship between fiscal policy, automation, and employment interactions. The second manner in which research may be advanced in the future is by learning how governments would create adaptive fiscal systems that may respond fast to rapid changes in technology such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and digital platforms. A comparative analysis of the developed and the developing economies could bring more light to the way the different fiscal policies influence the employment and the skills training and the income distribution of an economy that is being automated more and more. One can also speak about the effectiveness of new fiscal policies, such as automation taxes, taxes on digital services, and special subsidies to support reskilling of workforce and adopting technologies.

Other spheres of interests would be the ways in which the state can invest in education, digital infrastructure as well as research and development in order to create the right balance between growth in productivity as well as inclusion by providing an opportunity of employment to all. Long-term longitudinal empirical studies may be applicable to help estimate the impacts of the fiscal solutions in creating jobs, flexibility of workforce and in resiliency to the economy over the long term. The second possible opportunity relates to the role of fiscal policies to allow social protection schemes like universal basic income systems, changes of unemployment insurance, and lifelong learning in the event of a technological displacement. Besides this, interdisciplinary approach to technology, economics and the investigation of policy can enhance information on the policy reactions that are required during the digital age. By dealing with these areas it will be possible to contribute to the future research in the creation of balanced fiscal policy that will encourage the innovation without impacting the employment and social stability in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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