RESEARCH PAPER

Algorithmic Surveillance and Psychological Safety in the Gig Economy: A Bibliometric and Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This bibliometric and systematic literature review investigates the intersections of algorithmic surveillance, algorithmic management and psychological safety within the gig economy. Using PRISMA 2020 protocols, a Scopus corpus of 242 peer-reviewed articles and reviews (2016-2026) and VOSviewer to conduct bibliographic coupling, keyword co-occurrence and country collaboration network analyses, this review addresses five research questions investigating the intellectual structure, conceptual linkages, theoretical perspectives, and methodological trends within algorithmic management and the gig economy, along with identifying future research directions. The bibliometric findings show an exponential growth in publications (CAGR of approximately 65% from 2020-2025) and an interdisciplinary diffusion across twelve ABDC A* outlets. In terms of bibliographic coupling, four thematic clusters emerged: algorithms, employment relations, labour processes; psychological outcomes and mental health; workers' voice; governance structures and platforms. The keyword co-occurrence analysis demonstrates that the gig economy and algorithmic management are at the conceptual core of the field while psychological safety is on the periphery. The country collaboration networks indicate a geographic concentration of articles published from authors in China, USA, UK, and India. The review develops an integrated conceptual model that links Algorithmic Surveillance Intensity (ASI) to psychological safety through perceived autonomy deficit (SDT pathway) and surveillance-induced anxiety (COR pathway), with platform governance design, worker income precarity, and collective social support as moderating factors. Finally, ten research gaps and a structured future agenda are provided.

Keywords: algorithmic management; algorithmic surveillance; psychological safety; gig economy; platform work; BSLR.

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1. Introduction

Labour relations have been transformed globally via the gig economy, moving from traditional management hierarchies to algorithmic management of workers using automated processes to control, evaluate and discipline their work. For riders of food delivery, drivers of ride-sharing, crowd workers and on-demand service providers, their work is governed by applications that monitor their actual location, rate them by customers' ratings, and evaluate them regarding how fast they accept an assigned task and how quickly they complete it. This occurs with little transparency into how all of these data impact a worker's treatment (Duggan et al., 2020) and create an omnipresent yet invisible style of management that is both precise and opaque. The magnitude and speed of the transformation are staggering, as estimates indicate that the number of gig workers globally exceeds 400 million, with continued growth anticipated from platform capitalism growing beyond food delivery and ride-hailing to become part of domestic work, professional service work, and knowledge work (Rani & Furrer, 2021). Companies like Uber, Deliveroo, Amazon Mechanical Turk and Upwork have each redefined the act of assigning, monitoring and motivating workers compared to traditional forms of electronic monitoring which are used to supplement direct supervision but with algorithmic management providing the primary governance structure through the definition of work expectations, management of incentives, management of data, provision of management nudges and management of disciplinary expectations through account deactivation without human intervention (Cameron, 2024; Ngo, 2025).

Workers are unable to access complete and accurate information regarding their rights and responsibilities because while full behavioural data exists with the platform, only partial, algorithmic-collated data will be provided to the worker. In addition to the confluence of governance characteristics, the political economy of gig work creates labour market instability and vulnerability to work and to employers. In most cases, gig workers are designated as "independent contractors," thereby having the flexibility that comes with being independent while at the same time denying significant employment protections, claw-back rights through collective bargaining, occupational health entitlements and institutional grievance mechanisms (Wood et al., 2021). In fact, this very contractual relationship becomes neither an incidental nor incidental feature of platforms as it accomplishes the dual purpose of providing platforms with a way to manage workers without being subject to traditional management-type legal obligations, thus creating a paradox of governance whereby workers are managed and treated as autonomous. As such, the working experience for gig workers includes high surveillance, income instability and power imbalance, yet they do not have any formal mechanisms through which they can contest, negotiate, or exit from conditions of employment that they perceive as unfavorable. Any resistance that may occur will occur informally, covertly and individually per established organisational silence patterns rather than as a form of voice (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Psychological safety within the gig economy is not yet well-researched theoretically but does exhibit important actual characteristics. Psychological safety, as defined to be an individual's perception that it is safe to take risks, communicate authentically and provide feedback without fear of disproportionate consequences (Edmondson, 1999), is important and presents a meaningful challenge for gig workers due to the structural realities of gig work as outlined above and the significance of these structural characteristics in diminishing the likelihood that Edmondson's criteria for psychological safety will be present. Long-standing perceptions of the risk of deactivated accounts are formed by exposure to minimal due process, currently being classified as both present and unpredictable; therefore, this can operate as a chilling effect and ultimately prevent the authentic behaviour of gig workers, including suppressing the provision of voice, error reporting and safety-related information. There has been increasing interest in both algorithm-based management (Kadolkar et al., 2025) and the welfare of gig workers (Giwalter & Mehru, 2020) as separate elements. However, there is currently no one source that brings these two areas of research together through a comprehensive Bibliometric and Systematic Literature Review (BSLR); therefore, this BSLR fills this gap through five research questions shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Questions, Analytical Focus, and Coverage

RQ	Focus	Research Question	Addressed In
RQ1	Intellectual Structure	What is the intellectual, conceptual, and thematic structure of research on algorithmic surveillance and psychological safety in the gig economy?	Bibliometric analysis: trends, bibliographic coupling, keyword co-occurrence
RQ2	Conceptual Linkages	How does existing literature conceptualize the relationship between algorithmic surveillance and psychological safety (voice, silence, well-being) in gig work?	Systematic thematic synthesis: mechanisms and pathways
RQ3	Theoretical Perspectives	What theoretical frameworks explain algorithmic surveillance effects on psychological safety, and where are the integration gaps?	Theory-mapping; framework frequency analysis
RQ4	Methodological Trends	What are the dominant methodological approaches and contextual settings, and how do they constrain	Method coding; geographic distribution; country network

		understanding of psychological safety?	
RQ5	Future Research Agenda	What are the key research gaps and future directions for advancing knowledge on algorithmic surveillance and psychological safety?	Gap synthesis; integrated model; future framework

2. Methodology

2.1 BSLR Design and Database

The Bibliometric & Systematic Literature Review (BSLR) will combine the two approaches of bibliometric science (quantitative intellectual mapping) and systematic reviews (the interpretive quality of the evidence) into one research design that includes a determination of a research topic used to identify the available literature. The research will follow the PRISMA 2020 standards (Page et al., 2021) and the bibliometric review protocols by Donthu et al. (2021) (Hossen & Pauzi, 2025; Puspitarini et al., 2023). Because Scopus is considered to be the most comprehensive database within the areas of management, psychology, social science and human-computer interaction, it will be the source for this study's literature searches. The search strings will consist of three conceptual clusters: 1) constructs related to algorithmic surveillance and management; 2) psychological safety and outcomes related to voice/silence and well-being; and 3) terms and synonyms for any of the gig or platform work contexts. Wild cards will also be used to maximize recall of all applicable articles. The search strings are as follows: 1) Algorithmic Surveillance Constructs: 2) Psychological Safety Constructs: 3) Gig and Platform Work Context. ("algorithmic surveillance" OR "algorithmic management" OR "digital surveillance" OR "electronic monitoring" OR "AI management" OR "platform control" OR "data-driven management") AND ("psychological safety" OR "employee voice" OR "silence" OR "speaking up" OR "psychological well-being" OR "mental health" OR "workplace fear") AND ("gig economy" OR "gig worker*" OR "platform work*" OR "platform worker*" OR "crowdwork*" OR "on-demand work" OR "app-based work" OR "food delivery" OR "ride sharing").

The inter-rater reliability was measured by estimating Krippendorff's Alpha. The resulting α = 0.87 exceeds the predetermined standard of 0.80 demonstrating a high level of reliability between raters.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 2 presents the ten-dimension inclusion and exclusion framework, operationalized a priori before screening commenced to ensure conceptual coherence and methodological quality.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Time Period	Published 2016-2026	Studies before 2016
Document Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles and reviews	Conference papers, theses, editorials, book chapters
Language	English only	Non-English publications
Work Setting	Gig economy, platform work, app-based workers	Traditional employment without gig relevance
Key Constructs	Algorithmic surveillance/management AND psychological safety or related constructs	Studies addressing only one construct in isolation
Population	Gig workers (delivery riders, ride-hailing drivers, crowd workers)	Students, general population, non-working samples
Subject Areas	Business, Management, Social Sciences, Psychology, Computer Science	Medicine, cybersecurity, pure engineering
Study Relevance	Workplace dynamics, control, monitoring, employee outcomes in gig settings	Surveillance in healthcare, national security, pure AI systems
Accessibility	Full-text available	Abstract-only or inaccessible studies
Geographic Scope	Global studies	No exclusion

2.3 PRISMA Screening Flow

Two independent reviewers carried out blind screening in two separate stages to identify and evaluate articles relevant

to Algorithmic Surveillance, Psychological Safety, and Gig Work. Disagreements between the two reviewers were resolved through discussion and consensus. The title screening (Stage 1) examined all of the 471 de-duplicated records against the inclusion criteria. Because of this evaluation, 433 of the records were retained, and 38 of the records were excluded as irrelevant because they were not encompassed in the three domains of Algorithmic Surveillance, Psychological Safety or Gig Work. The second stage of the screening was abstract screening (Stage 2) that applied the full ten-dimension inclusion and exclusion framework to the 433 retained records, resulting in 242 of the records being retained, and 191 of the records being excluded, due to construct mismatch, wrong population, inaccessible or contextually irrelevant. The inter-rater reliability for both stages of the screening had a Cohen's $\kappa > .80$ which is considered to be a strong level of agreement. The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram detailing the results of both stages can be found in Table 3 and displayed in Figure 1.

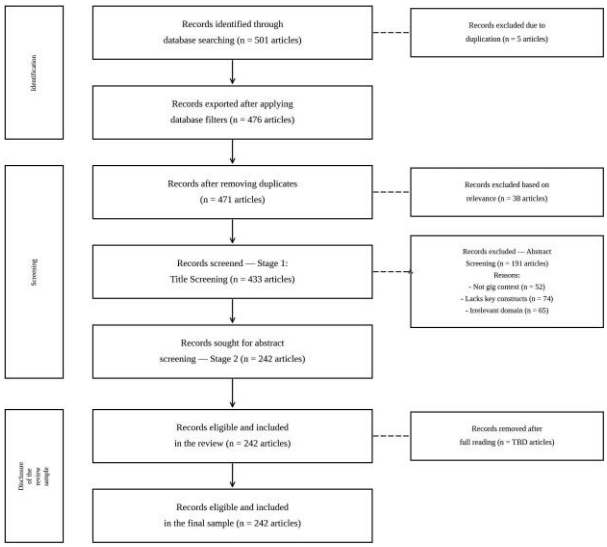

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram — Screening and Selection of Studies (Source: Scopus (April 2026)

Table 3: PRISMA 2020 Screening Flow

PRISMA Stage	Description	n	Notes
Identification	Records identified via Scopus database search	501	-
	Records exported after applying database filters	476	25 removed
Deduplication	Records retained after removing duplicates	471	5 duplicates removed
Title Screening	Records retained after title screening (Stage 1)	433	38 excluded
Abstract Screening	Records retained after abstract screening (Stage 2)	242	191 excluded
Included	Final studies included in synthesis	242*	-

2.4 VOSviewer Bibliometric Analysis

VOSviewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) was used as follows: (a) To visualize clusters of intellectually related documents through bibliographic coupling networks; (b) To visualize clusters of related documents over time using overlay visualization by average year of publication; (c) To map geographic distribution and international co-authorship patterns through country collaboration; and (d) To identify the conceptual structure of the field through keyword co-occurrence analysis. Python (pandas, collections) was used to assess trends in publication volume, frequency of citations, and productivity of authors. Ratings from the ABDC Journal Quality List 2022 were applied throughout this study.

2.5 Systematic Thematic Synthesis

Thematic synthesis followed Thomas and Harden's (2008) three-stage protocol: free line-by-line coding of titles, abstracts, and retrieved full texts; development of descriptive themes; and generation of higher-order analytical themes. VOSviewer cluster assignments informed but did not determine thematic categories.

3. Bibliometric Findings

Publication Trends (RQ1, RQ4)

Table 4 documents annual publication distribution. The near-absence before 2020 (n=4, 1.7%) reflects the field's nascent state. Publications increase from 2020 (n=7) through 2022 (n=16), accelerate sharply in 2023 (n=24) and 2024 (n=47, a 96% year-on-year increase), and peak in 2025 (n=85, 35.1% of corpus). The compound annual growth rate of approximately 65% from 2020 to 2025 indicates exponential field maturation.

Table 4: Annual Publication Distribution (2018-2026)

Year	n	Share	Contextual Note
2018-19	4	1.7%	Early exploratory studies; field nascent
2020	7	2.9%	COVID-19 accelerates platform economy scrutiny
2021	14	5.8%	Foundational works: Duggan, Wood, Glavin, de Vaujany, Gegenhuber

2022	16	6.6%	Psychological well-being strand consolidates; ABDC A* outlets engage
2023	24	9.9%	Rapid growth; AI governance discourse enters the field
2024	47	19.4%	Mature, high-output phase; multi-method designs increase
2025	85	35.1%	Peak annual output; ABDC A* publications surge
2026*	45	18.6%	Partial year; annualized projection approximately 135 papers
Total	242	100%	CAGR 2020-2025 approximately 65%

** 2026 data through April 2026 only.*

Bibliographic Coupling - Cluster Structure (RQ1):

VOSviewer bibliographic coupling analysis of the 242-article corpus identifies four intellectually distinct clusters, as visualised in Figure 2. In bibliographic coupling, two documents are linked when they share references in common the greater the overlap in their cited literature, the stronger the coupling and the closer their spatial proximity in the network map. Node size is proportional to each article's raw citation count, such that larger nodes represent more highly cited and intellectually influential works. Edge thickness reflects bibliographic coupling strength, with thicker connections indicating greater shared reference overlap between two documents. Node colour denotes cluster membership, identifying four distinct scholarly communities within the gig economy algorithmic management literature. The spatial arrangement is governed by the VOS mapping algorithm, which positions intellectually similar documents in proximity and dissimilar documents at greater distance.

Cluster 1 (Red - Algorithmic Control and Labour Process): Anchored by Duggan et al. (2020) [802 citations], Rani (2021), Wood (2021), and Cano (2021). This is the largest and most internally connected cluster, with Duggan et al. (2020) dominating by node size and confirming its role as the field's primary intellectual anchor. Cluster 2 (Green - Surveillance, Governance and Platform Design): Centred on de Vaujany et al. (2021), Glavin (2021, 2022), and Cebulla (2023). Cluster 3 (Yellow - Psychological Outcomes and Well-being): Anchored by Kinowska (2020), Lin (2020), and Mao (2024). Cluster 4 (Blue - Voice, Collective Action and Identity): Comprising Zhu (2024), Lang (2023), Yang (2025), and Wu (2023, 2025). This is the most recently emerged cluster (2023-2025), reflecting growing attention to voice behaviour, employee silence, collective organizing, and identity under algorithmic conditions.

Figure 2 displays a cluster structure with a central core made up of a densely connected group of nodes (Cluster 1 in red) surrounded by three sparsely connected satellite clusters. The most notable feature of the node between Higgins, Huang, and Zhu (2020) is the size of a node compared to all other nodes in the network; Higgins, Huang, and Zhu (2020) has more than four times the number of citations (802) of the next most cited document in this corpus. The structure of the network is a centre/periphery structure, with the core of the network including works published between 2019 and 2022 that are either cited heavily or very well connected (the most established). In contrast, the periphery contains works published more recently that have fewer citations. There are several lighter-coloured edges crossing between clusters that represent connection points between the four clusters; while the four clusters are intellectually distinct, they are not completely separated - there are documents that contain literature from at least two clusters simultaneously. Additionally, there is one isolate (Yadav, 2023, purple) on the far left of the network, which has very few links to the central core and indicates a lack of relevance to the core intellectual community.

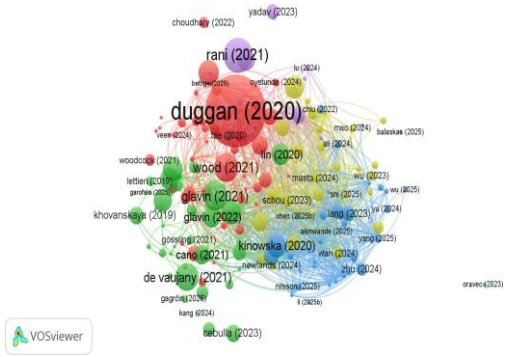

Figure 2. VOSviewer Bibliographic Coupling Network Visualization

Overlay Visualization - Temporal Evolution (RQ1, RQ4):

Figure 3 presents the bibliographic coupling overlay visualization, which maps the average publication year of each article onto the network structure established in Figure 2. The overlay retains the identical node positions, sizes, and edge structures of the bibliographic coupling network but replaces cluster-colour coding with a continuous temporal colour gradient. Dark purple nodes (towards the left of the colour bar scale, centred on 2021) represent articles with the earliest average publication year within the network; teal and green nodes (2022–2023) represent intermediate temporal cohorts; and bright yellow-green nodes (towards the right of the colour bar, centred on 2024–2025) represent the most recently published scholarship. This visualization technique allows the reader to observe not merely the intellectual structure of the field (captured in Figure 2) but the temporal sequence in which that structure was built identifying which scholarly communities emerged first, which are currently

most active, and where the field's future development is concentrated.

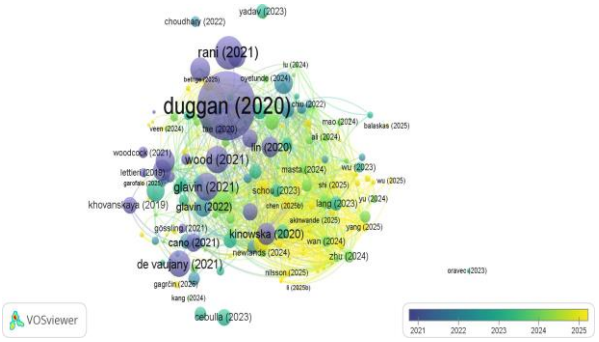

Figure 3. VOSviewer Bibliographic Coupling Overlay Visualization

Country Collaboration Network (RQ4):

Figure 4 presents the VOSviewer country collaboration network constructed from author affiliation data across the 242-article corpus. In this network, each node represents a country, with node size proportional to the total number of author affiliations from that country across all corpus articles. Edges between nodes represent co-authorship connections a link between two countries indicates that at least one article in the corpus was co-authored by researchers from both nations. Edge thickness reflects the strength of the co-authorship relationship, measured by the number of jointly authored articles. Node colour denotes cluster membership, identifying four regional co-authorship communities within the global gig economy research network. The image of the network shows researchers who work together and internationally collaborate both in regard to geography and the way through which output, like scholarly written articles, has been created (i.e., authors who worked together and are located in the same geographical area). The network is structured by size with the largest node being the China node with 132 author agreement affiliations. The next three largest nodes are USA (83), India (47), and UK (42). Therefore, these four countries make up the majority of the total number of author affiliations and are, therefore, at the central nodes of the network. The network's overall structure is one of high density between different clusters of researchers through many inter-community collaborations, even though there are distinct regional patterns of clustering. Additionally, there are many collaborative linkages between researchers in the UK/European cluster with the North American cluster and those from the Asia/Pacific cluster with both Western clusters. The most significant limitation of the geographic scope of the field at present is the absence of any nodes in Africa, Central/South America, the Middle East, and most of Southeast Asia (Gap G7).

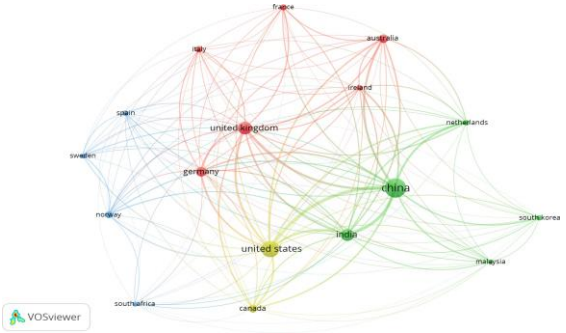

Figure 4. VOSviewer Country Collaboration Network

Table 5: Geographic Distribution of Author Affiliations (Top 14 Countries)

Country	n	Country	n
China	132	Norway	13
United States	83	Sweden	12
India	47	Italy	12
United Kingdom	42	France	10
Australia	27	Taiwan	10
Germany	22	South Korea	8
Canada	18	Spain	8

Critical finding: Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and most of Southeast Asia are entirely absent from the country collaboration network despite hosting the world's fastest-growing gig labour markets (Gap G7).

Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis (RQ1)

Figure 5 presents the VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence network constructed from author-assigned keywords across the 242-article corpus. In a keyword co-occurrence network, two keywords are linked when they appear together in the same article; the more frequently they co-occur across the corpus, the stronger the connection between them and the closer their spatial proximity in the network map. Node size is proportional to keyword occurrence frequency the number of articles in which a keyword appears such that larger nodes represent more commonly used and conceptually central terms. Edge thickness reflects co-occurrence strength. Node colour denotes keyword cluster membership, identifying four thematic vocabularies through which the gig economy algorithmic management literature conceptualises its subject matter. The keyword co-occurrence network complements the bibliographic coupling analysis by revealing not the intellectual ancestry of the field (which papers cite which others) but its conceptual vocabulary the shared language through which scholars construct and communicate their arguments. Figure 5 reveals a keyword co-occurrence network structured around a dense central core flanked by four colour-coded thematic clusters. Clearly, the first thing that stands out visually is that the two most important concepts in this study are the Gig Economy and Algorithmic

Management because they are the two largest nodes on the overall conceptual map. Thus, these two nodes represent the anchoring concepts of the study's theoretical framework. More than just being the most frequently mentioned keywords, both gig economy and algorithmic management are also among the most extensively connected nodes; each has edges extending to nearly all other nodes in the network, making them the conceptual centre of the entire network, linking together all other terms in the study. The network's centre-periphery structure mirrors the bibliographic coupling pattern observed in Figure 2: established, high-frequency terms occupy the centre while more specialised or recently emerging terms occupy the periphery. The four clusters are spatially distinct red (conceptual core) on the right, green (human/demographic) on the left, blue (worker outcomes) in the centre-top, and yellow (future of work) at the top yet extensively interconnected through cross-cluster edges, confirming that the field's vocabulary does not segregate neatly into isolated thematic silos.

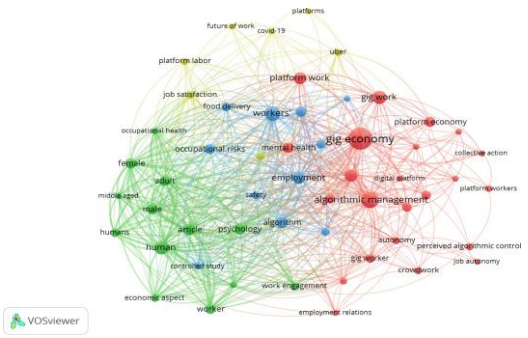

Figure 5. VOSviewer Keyword Co-occurrence Network

Table 6: Top 20 Author Keywords by Frequency (n = 242)

Keyword	Freq.	Keyword	Freq.
Gig economy	62	Algorithmic control	11
Algorithmic management	34	Digital platforms	8
Gig work	22	Well-being	8
Gig workers	18	Perceived algorithmic control	7
Platform work	18	Platform labor	7
Platform economy	13	Crowdwork	7
Food delivery	7	Uber	7
Work engagement	7	Mental health	7
Autonomy	6	Employee voice	4
Social support	5	Work stress	4

Most Cited Works and Source Distribution (RQ1):

The corpus accumulates 4,247 total citations with a mean of 17.55 per article. Table 7 presents the twelve most cited works, all published in ABDC A* journals. Table 8 presents the top ten publication venues.

Table 7: Top 12 Most Cited Articles - All Published in ABDC A Journals (*)*

Cit.	Author(s)	Year	Title (abbreviated)	Journal (* ABDC A*)
802 *	Duggan et al.	2020	Algorithmic management and app-work in the gig economy: A research agenda for employment relations and HRM	Human Resource Management Journal
136 *	Glavin et al.	2021	Uber-Alienated: Powerless and Alone in the Gig Economy	Work and Occupations
126 *	Wood et al.	2021	Antagonism beyond employment: How the subordinated agency of labour platforms generates collective action	Socio-Economic Review
121 *	de Vaujany et al.	2021	Control and Surveillance in Work Practice: Cultivating Paradox in New Modes of Organizing	Organization Studies
94*	Gegenhuber et al.	2021	Microphones, not megaphones: Functional crowdworker voice regimes	Human Relations

			on digital work platforms	
87*	Cameron	2024	The Making of the Good Bad Job: How Algorithmic Management Manufactures Consent	Administrative Science Quarterly
86*	Behl et al.	2022	Gamification and gigification: A multidimensional theoretical approach	Journal of Business Research
57*	Kougiannou and Dundon	2021	Breaking the Managerial Silencing of Worker Voice in Platform Capitalism	British Journal of Management
55*	Kadolkar et al.	2025	Algorithmic management in the gig economy: A systematic review and research integration	Journal of Organizational Behavior
44*	Wang et al.	2022	Observation or interaction? Impact mechanisms of gig platform monitoring on workers cognitive work engagement	Int. Journal of Information Management
39*	McDaid et al.	2023	Algorithmic management and the politics of demand: Control and resistance at Uber	Accounting, Organizations and Society
33*	Kellogg	2022	Local adaptation without work intensification: Experimentalist governance of digital technology	Organization Science

Table 8: Top 10 Publication Sources by Article Count

Source Journal / Venue	n	Discipline
Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction (CSCW)	11	HCI / CSCW
Frontiers in Psychology	6	Psychology
Work, Employment and Society *	5	Industrial Relations / Sociology
Journal of Business Research *	5	Business / Management
Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	4	HRM
Economic and Industrial Democracy	4	Industrial Relations
Safety Science	4	Occupational Health
Current Psychology	4	Psychology
Computers in Human Behavior *	4	HCI / Psychology
New Media and Society	4	Media / Communication Studies

4. Systematic Thematic Synthesis

Three major analytical themes were created from a synthesis of a collection of 242 published papers through a process called thematic synthesis. A process that drew on information from two distinct sources: 1) clusters of articles with high bibliographic coupling, which we will describe later in detail; and 2) the use of keyword co-occurrence analysis. Each theme was built from the frequency analysis of abstract-level keywords, verified against the structure of the bibliographic coupling clusters, and refined through a close reading of the most cited works and those contributing most significantly to theory in the articles. The three analytical themes relate to 1) the structural design of algorithmic control, and the effect of that design on workers' autonomy/agency; 2) the psychological/health-related effects from algorithmic governance; and 3) the dynamics of worker voice, organisational silence, and collective action - the most significant way in which the field has connected with constructs of psychological safety.

Theme 1: Algorithmic Control Architectures and Worker Autonomy (RQ2) [Clusters 1 and 2]

The corpus of literature reflects the dominant ways in which algorithmic governance via algorithmic control, worker monitoring and distributed authority at scale have an effect on participatory management of gig employment. The three main themes that emerge from the literature which track how platform-based systems reconstitute both work processes and the psychological experiences of the worker (Newell et al., 2017) are: (1) Algorithmic Control; (2) Worker Surveillance; and (3) The Augmentation of Work Via Embedded Algorithms. All three themes demonstrate the influence of platform systems on both the processes of work and the psychological experience of workers (Newell et al., 2017). For instance, de Vaujany et al. (2021) found that governmentally controlled platforms use numerous surveillance techniques to restrict real choice while increasing control in spite of claims of flexibility and independence for workers. The result is an increased level of disempowerment as well as a decreased level of ability for workers to resist. Similarly, Cameron (2024) illustrates how the implementation of gamification, rating systems, and fairly opaque design via the interface of the platform creates 'manufactured consent', where compliance does not occur through coercion, but rather as a result of the interface design itself. That said, the effect of participatory platform governance on a worker's level of autonomy and work intensity is not predetermined. As Kellogg (2022) reveals, participatory platform governance can improve both worker's levels of autonomy loss and work intensity - evidencing that the outcome of participatory platforms is contingent more on governance than on technology. There are also a number of studies which support the link between algorithmic management and worker psychological safety; there are at least 36 studies (14.9%) within the corpus that support this link. When an algorithm is opaque and unpredictable, and a worker fears being deactivated, they will often refrain from voicing their opinions or concerns. This suppression of voicing behaviour reflects a decrease in psychological safety for workers and supports the assertion that both a loss of autonomy and the uncertainty related to algorithms are two of the key structural antecedents that influence worker experiences in the gig economy as per Edmondson (1999).

Theme 2: Psychological and Well-Being Consequences (RQ2) [Cluster 3]

Research on the impact of psychological outcomes yields only limited data across all studies. Of the psychological types listed, 49 studies (20.2% of total) focused on well-being, 30 studies (12.4% of total) focused on stress, 20 studies (8.3% of total) on mental health, and 12 studies (5.0%) on burnout. Fewer in number than other types; the 70 percent of studies reported negative psychological outcomes and showed an imbalance and inconsistency between reported positive outcomes such as thriving, resilience, and meaningful work (Gap G3). The distinction between observational and interactive monitoring provides additional insight into how algorithmic surveillance (i.e., digital surveillance) has psychological effects. Observational monitoring creates less cognitive engagement due to feelings of pressure, while interactive monitoring can enhance cognitive engagement through perceived company support. This suggests that the cognitive impact of algorithmic surveillance depends on whether monitoring is perceived as coercive (as an example, panoptic) or constructive. Experience sampling employed in a study by Zhang et al. (2025) (Shaidan et al., 2025) revealed the presence of a finance-safety paradox in food delivery work as financial incentives may encourage risky behaviours, thereby reducing psychological safety will ultimately result in negative influence on overall performance. Findings from this study extend the original work of Edmondson (1999) to the gig economy, demonstrating fear of financial retribution reduces reporting errors as well as communication around psychological safety. Lack of transparency, as discussed by McDaid et al., is another contributing factor to self-censorship by Uber drivers. Glavin and colleagues (2021) extend this discussion by identifying how the structural characteristics of gig work create feelings of isolation and powerlessness ("über-alienation"). As a result, these features undermine the trust, collective efficacy, and psychological safety climate necessary for an individual to feel they can share their thoughts while at work and contribute to organisational learning, thereby indicating the structural roots of psychological vulnerability within algorithmically governed work (Zulkifli & Hamzah, 2024).

Theme 3: Voice, Silence, and Collective Action (RQ2) [Cluster 4]

The use of built-in voice channels for platform work (i.e., streaming, app-based communication) functions as ‘microphones’ for workers to communicate verbally with employers and customers under algorithm-controlled, employer-filtered conditions. The voice channels allow workers to connect with employers and customers while also limiting peer connections that would lead to authentic representations of worker experiences due to employer surveillance and control mechanisms. 19 abstracts contained the term worker voice (7.9%) while only one contained the term silence, thus illustrating a significant imbalance between these two terms. While some researchers highlight methodological limitations in capturing silence, there is also a lack of focused attention on this topic. The organisational silence theory (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) provides insight into the reasons gig workers may choose to withhold their concerns (i.e., their voice) but is not widely employed within

the literature. However, Kougiannou & Dundon (2021) demonstrate that workers' voice is not completely silenced. UK food couriers utilise informal modes of communication (e.g., WhatsApp, social media) to mobilise collective worker voice without the use of platform-controlled modes of communication. This finding supports the idea of "subordinated agency" as proposed by Wood et al. (2021)—workers display some forms of limited resistance while still adhering to platform rules and regulations; thus, workers do not completely challenge the authority of platform owners. Lastly, James (2024) identifies numerous inequities that exist within the gig economy, including gendered burdens (e.g., balancing platform work and unpaid reproductive work, emotional demands, income instability) that shape the experiences of workers. Therefore, it is necessary to evolve perspectives of gig workers beyond viewing them as a single homogeneous population (i.e., akin to those who work in the "traditional" economy); therefore, the findings presented in regard to Gap G6 will be important areas for future research.

Theoretical Frameworks (RQ3):

In the corpus of 242 articles, as shown in Table 9, the ten theoretical frameworks can be organised into two groups: Labour Process Theory (Braverman, 1974) and Foucauldian panopticism (Foucault, 1975; Zuboff, 2019), which are the two dominant theories that illustrate the field's origins from critical sociology and organisational studies. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) studies how algorithmic control decreases autonomy and intrinsic motivation at the individual worker level, while Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) conceptualises surveillance as a resource-draining activity that causes stress and burnout. Together these provide the theoretical foundation of the integrated conceptual model in Section 5. By contrast, psychological safety theory (Edmondson, 1999) is used in less than twenty studies (about 8%) and is mainly used in an unadapted manner to gig work. Psychological safety theory originated in teams that are stable and have a clear hierarchy and support system; therefore, applying this theory undisguisedly to gig work under algorithmic control is theoretically inappropriate. This uncritical application of the theory constitutes Gap G2. The literature suffers from a significant lack of integration across its most prominent research streams: surveillance governance (Clusters 1-2), psychological outcomes (Cluster 3), and voice/silence (Cluster 4) require integration. The integrated conceptual model proposed in Section 5 represents an important effort to fill that gap and create a more unified understanding of the relationship between surveillance and psychological safety.

Table 9: Theoretical Frameworks in the Corpus (= deployed in ABDC A* journal studies)*

Framework	**Key Source(s)**	**Contribution to Surveillance-Safety Nexus**
Labour Process Theory (LPT)	Braverman (1974); Duggan et al. (2020)	Deskilling, intensification, and managerial control under algorithmic governance
Panopticism / Surveillance Theory	Foucault (1975); Zuboff (2019)	Continuous visibility as mechanism of behavioural normalisation
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	Deci & Ryan (1985)	Autonomy deficit as central mediator of algorithmic control effects on motivation
Conservation of Resources (COR)	Hobfoll (1989); Wang et al. (2022)	Resource depletion under surveillance stress; work engagement outcomes
Organizational Justice Theory	Colquitt (2001); Cameron (2024)	Procedural and distributive fairness of opaque algorithmic decisions
Psychological Safety Theory	Edmondson (1999); Zhang et al. (2025)	Safe climate for voice; minimally adapted to gig structural conditions
Social Identity Theory	Tajfel & Turner (1979); Wood et al. (2021)	Collective identity as buffer against platform-induced atomisation
Platform/Gig Work Theory	Vallas & Schor (2020); Kellogg (2022)	Gig-specific power asymmetries; experimentalist governance design
Algorithmic Accountability	Diakopoulos (2016); McDaid et al. (2023)	Transparency and contestability in automated decisions affecting workers
Emotional Labour Theory	Hochschild (1983); Kougiannou & Dundon (2021)	Rating-induced emotional management; identity costs of platform work

5. Integrated Conceptual Model (RQ5)

The integrated conceptual model for algorithmic surveillance intensity (ASI) and psychological safety of gig economy

workers is displayed in Table 10 based on bibliometric results, cluster analysis from VOSviewer, and thematic synthesis using a systematic approach also mentioned in the figure 6.

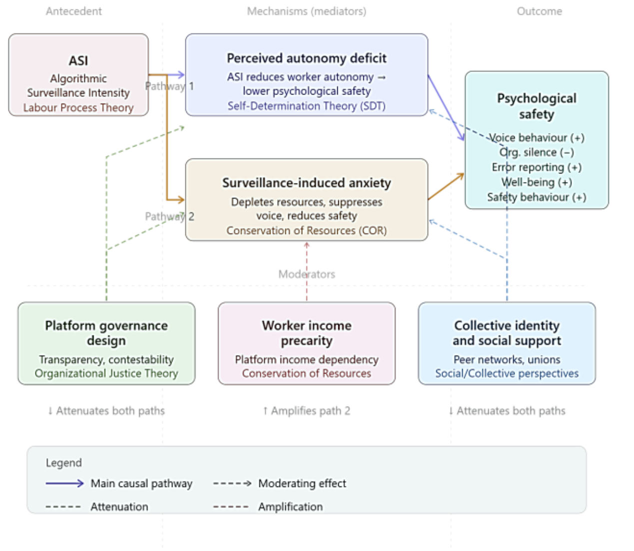
Antecedent
Mechanisms (mediators)
Outcome
ASI
Algorithmic Surveillance Intensity
Labour Process Theory
Pathway 1
Perceived autonomy deficit
ASI reduces worker autonomy → lower psychological safety
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)
Psychological safety
Voice behaviour (+)
Org. silence (−)
Error reporting (+)
Well-being (+)
Safety behaviour (+)
Surveillance-induced anxiety
Depletes resources, suppresses voice, reduces safety
Conservation of Resources (COR)
Pathway 2
Moderators
Platform governance design
Transparency, contestability
Organizational Justice Theory
Worker income precarity
Platform income dependency
Conservation of Resources
Collective identity and social support
Peer networks, unions
Social/Collective perspectives
↓ Attenuates both paths
↑ Amplifies path 2
↓ Attenuates both paths
Legend
Main causal pathway
Moderating effect
Attenuation
Amplification

Figure 6. Integrated conceptual model: ASI → psychological safety pathways (Source: Author's own source)

Table 10: Integrated Conceptual Model - ASI to Psychological Safety Pathways

Category	Construct	Description / Operationalization	Theoretical Lens
		platform governance design	
A (Antecedents)	Algorithmic Surveillance Intensity (ASI) Surveillance-Induced Anxiety	Geolocation tracking granularity; customer rating weighting; acceptance rate enforcement; algorithmic nudge frequency; perceived account deactivation risk ASI depletes cognitive and emotional resources, suppresses voice behaviour; reduces psychological safety; amplified by income precarity	Labour Process Theory Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory
	Psychological Safety	Measured via: voice	Psychological Safety
O (Outcomes) D (Decisions / Mechanisms)	Perceived Autonomy Deficit	behaviour (+), organizational silence (-), error reporting (+), well-being (+), burnout (-), safety behaviour (+) ASI reduces perceived worker autonomy, leading to lower psychological safety;	Theory Self-Determination Theory (SDT)
		attenuated by	
Moderators	Platform Governance Design	Transparency, contestability, appeals mechanisms; attenuates both mediation pathways	Organizational Justice Theory
	Worker Income Precarity	Platform income dependency ratio; amplifies ASI effects	Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory
	Collective Identity & Social Support	Peer networks, union membership, occupational communities; attenuates both pathways	Social/Collective Perspectives (e.g., Wood et al., 2021; Kougiannou & Dundon, 2021)

Pathway One (Self-Determination Theory): ASI creates a perceived autonomy deficit by decreasing perceived worker autonomy with increased levels of surveillance, resulting in reduced intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy for taking risks and expressing an authentic voice. The design of governance

structures or platforms moderates this pathway consistent with the findings of Kellogg (2022) and Cameron (2024). Pathway Two (Conservation of Resources): ASI creates surveillance-induced anxiety, which suppresses voice and decreases psychological safety of gig economy workers. Ongoing surveillance creates a depletion of cognitive/emotional resources that leave workers with rationally self-censoring their voices due to an asymmetrical potential for punishment. The worker's financial precarity related to income increases this pathway in line with the findings of McDaid et al. (2023). Collective identity and social support moderate against both pathways as indicated in the findings of Wood et al. (2021) and Kougiannou & Dundon (2021).

6. Research Gaps and Future Directions (RQ5)

Ten research gaps emerge from triangulating bibliometric findings, VOSviewer keyword and coupling analyses, citation patterns, and thematic synthesis. Table 11 presents each gap with evidential grounding and future research directions.

Table 11: Ten Research Gaps with Evidential Basis and Future Directions

Gap		Description and Evidence	Future Research Direction
G1	Fragmented Surveillance-Safety Link	No study simultaneously and causally links ASI and psychological safety in gig contexts; psychological safety is absent from the keyword co-occurrence map (Kadolkar et al., 2025)	Multi-wave survey studies with validated ASI scale; platform-comparative natural experiments
G2	No Gig-Specific Psychological Framework	Edmondson's (1999) framework developed in stable team employment is applied without structural adaptation to precarious, algorithmically governed work	Develop precarious psychological safety extension incorporating algorithmic opacity and contractual instability
G3	Overemphasis on Negative Outcomes	Stress, burnout, and alienation dominate corpus; positive pathways, resilience, and thriving under algorithmic management are neglected	Balance agenda: buffering factors, flourishing, resource gain spirals; test COR-based positive mechanisms
G4	Limited Multi-Theoretical Integration	Single-theory studies dominate; multi-framework explanations bridging individual and structural levels are rare (Cameron, 2024)	Integrative models: LPT + SDT + justice + COR; multi-level modelling of platform and worker effects
G5	Platform Design Moderators Unstudied	How design choices including transparency and contestability moderate psychological safety under surveillance is empirically untested (Kellogg, 2022)	Platform-comparative studies; EU AI Act implementation as natural experiment; participatory design trials
G6	Worker Heterogeneity Neglected	Studies treat gig workers as homogeneous; gender, race, migration, disability differences insufficiently examined (James, 2024)	Intersectional designs; stratified analyses; disaggregated outcomes by demographics and precarity level
G7	Geographic and Contextual Bias	China (132), USA (83), UK (42), India (47) dominates; Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia	Cross-national collaborations; targeted Global South research funding; multilingual

		severely underrepresented despite fastest gig growth (country collaboration network)	search strategies
G8	Near-Absence of Longitudinal Research	Only 1 longitudinal study in 242-article corpus (0.4%); causal inference fundamentally limited; ESM feasibility shown by Zhang et al. (2025)	ESM/EMA diary studies; panel surveys; natural experiments; within-person temporal dynamics of surveillance
G9	Buffering Factors Undermodelled	Social support, collective identity, algorithmic transparency as moderators rarely integrated into models (Wood et al., 2021; Kougiannou & Dundon, 2021)	Protective factor studies; governance design experiments; platform unionism intervention trials
G10	Methodological Imbalance	Survey dominance (n=58); ethnography (n=11) and longitudinal methods underused; voice and silence behaviourally underobserved; bibliographic coupling reveals cluster fragmentation	Methodological pluralism: algorithmic audits; digital trace analysis; ESM; computational text mining

Priority *first* for ongoing work related to the general area of psychological safety in the gig economy (i.e., Safety/Surveillance: G1) is that the lack of psychological safety on both a keyword co-occurrence map and in the Kadolkar et al. (2025) research indicates that there is no direct and causal relationship between ASI and psychological safety in gig environments to date. The best evidence-based need for the field is multi-wave survey studies using validated ASI measures.

The *second* priority regarding ongoing work in the area of psychological safety in the gig economy relates to longitudinal designs (G8). There is only one longitudinal study represented in the 242 articles that were reviewed (i.e., a 0.4% occurrence rate). Zhang et al. (2025) demonstrate that experience sampling methodology is feasible; therefore, this design should be used to study the developing nature of psychological safety over longer time periods.

The *third* priority for this overarching body of research is global South perspectives (G7). Through the collaboration lighting icon network, it is clear that there is a complete absence of collaboration involving researchers from Africa, Latin America and most of Southeast Asia. These regions host some of the fastest growing gig labour markets in the world.

7. Discussion and Implication

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

This systematic literature review (SLR) contributes to theory in four ways. First, it establishes psychological safety as a theoretically fruitful and under-researched construct for understanding how gig workers behave when subject to algorithmic management (as evidenced by the absence of the concept in the keyword co-occurrence map and in Kadolkar et al., 2025). The integrated conceptual model is the first systematic theoretical structure that links ASI (algorithmic surveillance intensity) to psychological safety via two alternative mediating pathways. Second, the BSLR demonstrates how the features of gig work structure systematically violate the preconditions (the requirements) established by Edmondson (1999) for establishing psychological safety. This motivates the need for an alternative theoretical framework for understanding psychological safety in precarious work or gig work environments. Third, ASI will be conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct necessitating further operationalization and scale development that is specific to this construct type. Fourth, the triangulated ten-gap research framework, which was developed collectively from VOSviewer visualizations, citation analysis and thematic synthesis, is the most comprehensive research agenda produced to date on the topic of algorithmic management and gig work.

7.2 Practical Implications

Platform companies that have surveillance architectures prioritizing control over transparency will generate psychological costs for gig workers which will diminish worker performance and worker retention. The findings of

Kellogg (2022) demonstrate that participatory platform design can reduce the negative impacts associated with surveillance. Policymakers will find the evidence base in this BSLR to be supplemented by the findings of Kellogg (2022) and can therefore strengthen their case for regulating algorithmic accountability. Regulations should be consistent with the EU AI Act, provide minimum income protections for gig workers and allow workers the right to an explanation of automated decision-making processes. Gig workers' organizing strategies may be informed by Kougiannou & Dundon (2021) and Wood et al. (2021) through their studies of platform unionism and the framework of subordinated agency.

7.3 Limitations

There are four limitations to be aware of. One is reliance on a single database, Scopus, which means publications listed in both Web of Science or PsycINFO could be excluded. Two is that the restriction to only include English-language publications would restrict the number of publications in Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese. Three is that the bibliographic coupling code excludes anything less than 5 citations, and so recent high relevance documents could be excluded in this situation, and finally Thematic Synthesis will improve when full text is available as currently it is based primarily on abstracts.

8. Conclusion

This BSLR, combining PRISMA 2020 systematic review methodology with VOSviewer bibliographic coupling, keyword co-occurrence, and country collaboration network analysis, documents a field that has grown from near-invisibility before 2020 to a substantial, theoretically diverse, and internationally distributed research community producing over 130 publications annually as of 2025. The VOSviewer analyses reveal four intellectually distinct bibliographic coupling clusters, a field core anchored by the 2021 generation of paradigm-setting studies in twelve ABDC A* journals, a rapidly growing Asia-Pacific cluster, and a conceptual peripheralization of psychological safety confirmed by its absence from the keyword co-occurrence map. The integrated conceptual model linking Algorithmic Surveillance Intensity to psychological safety through perceived autonomy deficit and surveillance-induced anxiety, moderated by platform governance design, worker income precarity, and collective social support, provides a testable theoretical architecture for the next generation of empirical research. Ten research gaps, led by the near-total absence of longitudinal designs (0.4% of corpus), the fragmented surveillance-psychological safety link, and the severe Global South underrepresentation confirmed by the country collaboration network, define the field's priority research agenda.

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