

Algorithmic Management, Digital Surveillance, and Worker Voice among App-Based Delivery Riders in Lagos State, Nigeria: A Structured Integrative Review

DOI: 10.36108/ljerhrm/6202.60.0190

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Abstract

This article examines how algorithmic management and digital surveillance shape worker voice in app-based delivery work, focusing on delivery riders in Lagos State, Nigeria. It responds to four persistent weaknesses in the literature: a tendency to treat management, surveillance, and voice as separate conversations; the relative neglect of delivery labour compared with ride-hailing; the limited visibility of Global South settings; and insufficient attention to how Lagos-specific frictions alter platform control in everyday practice. Drawing on a bounded structured integrative review informed by PRISMA-ScR reporting principles and JBI scoping-review guidance, searches undertaken between 1 and 6 April 2026 across Google Scholar, targeted publisher platforms, institutional repositories and citation trails produced 312 records. After duplicate removal and staged relevance screening, 31 sources were retained for synthesis, comprising 19 peer-reviewed journal articles, 1 doctoral dissertation, 7 institutional or policy reports, 1 scholarly book, and 3 methodological guidance sources. The resulting corpus strengthens delivery-specific and recent coverage while maintaining clear evidential boundaries. Five challenge domains recur: opaque allocation and evaluation; surveillance-driven behavioural discipline; asymmetric risk transfer and income insecurity; weak procedural voice and fear of retaliation; and fragmented but expanding collective representation. The article develops a voice-reconfiguration governance model in which decision opacity, surveillance intensity, sanction uncertainty and risk transfer suppress direct voice. At the same time, Lagos-specific frictions redirect voice into extra-platform collective channels. The central claim is simple: worker voice is not diminished by technology alone; it is redistributed through the governance architecture of algorithmic control.

Keywords: *Algorithmic Management; Digital Surveillance; Worker Voice; Delivery Riders; Platform Work; Gig Economy, Lagos State, Nigeria.*

1. Introduction

App-based delivery work has become an important part of urban service economies. In Lagos, mobile applications now facilitate food, parcel, and courier deliveries through systems that match customers and riders in real time, track movement, record performance, and optimise work allocation. Consumer convenience depends on a labour process in which software increasingly performs roles previously undertaken by line managers and dispatch supervisors (Adekoya et al., 2024; Arubayi, 2022; Fairwork, 2023a, 2023b). What matters for employment relations is not simply the presence of digital tools, but how those tools rearrange power. Algorithmic management automates or semi-automates tasks such as order allocation, routing, pricing, incentive setting, ranking, and sanctioning. In parallel, digital surveillance renders riders continuously visible through geolocation, timestamps, acceptance rates, idle times, cancellation records, route deviations, and customer feedback. These systems may improve coordination and responsiveness, but they can also

intensify asymmetric control, obscure decision rules, and shift operational risk onto workers (Genty et al., 2025; Kellogg et al., 2020; OECD, 2025; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016).

These dynamics are important because they directly affect worker voice. Worker voice refers to workers' capacity to raise concerns, contest decisions, contribute ideas, and influence the rules under which they work. In more conventional employment settings, voice may operate through supervisors, grievance channels, consultative arrangements, unions, or collective bargaining. Platform work is different. Channels are often individualised, weak, or absent; apps and scripted support systems mediate communication; and workers are commonly classified as independent contractors rather than employees. This creates a significant asymmetry: workers are highly visible to platforms, yet they frequently lack effective means of holding those platforms accountable (Ajonbadi et al., 2025; Bertolini & Dukes, 2021; Lee, 2024b).

Existing research shows that algorithmic management can deepen precarity and informational asymmetry; that continuous monitoring may affect autonomy, stress, and safety; and that extra-platform organising tends to grow where the procedural voice inside the platform is weak (Adekoya et al., 2024; Genty, et al., 2025; Ajonbadi et al., 2025; Anwar & Graham, 2021; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Useche et al., 2025). Even so, four gaps still make a focused review necessary. First, algorithmic management, surveillance, and worker representation are often examined as adjacent topics rather than as parts of a single labour regime. Second, the evidence remains geographically uneven, with much of the most cited work still concentrated in Europe, North America and China. Third, Nigerian platform research has paid more attention to ride-hailing than to delivery work, despite the intense pressures around speed, routing and ratings in delivery labour. Fourth, previous reviews have said relatively little about how the everyday frictions of Lagos (congestion, road safety risks, merchant delays, fuel cost volatility, and weak procedural protection) reshape the effects of algorithmic control.

Taken together, these gaps warrant a review with a narrower focus and sharper purpose. The present study broadens the evidence base, makes the review process more transparent through a numeric source-flow trail and formal flow figure, and distinguishes direct Nigerian evidence from Nigeria-adjacent transfer and international, delivery-specific evidence at the mechanism level. The aim is not merely to list what is already known. Rather, it is to explain why worker voice becomes fragile under platform control and how the architecture of platform governance reshapes the channels through which workers can speak, contest decisions, and be heard.

Accordingly, the article seeks to explain how algorithmic management and digital surveillance shape worker voice among app-based delivery riders in Lagos State. More specifically, it aims to: (i) synthesise the literature on algorithmic control, surveillance and voice in platform work; (ii) identify the challenges most relevant to delivery riders in Lagos State; (iii) examine how those challenges affect direct, indirect and collective forms of voice; and (iv) propose a context-sensitive governance model for fairer platform management and labour regulation.

Two research questions guide the review. First, through what mechanisms do algorithmic management and digital surveillance shape the labour process of app-based delivery riders in Lagos State? Second, how do those mechanisms constrain or reconfigure worker voice, and what institutional responses are most likely to address the resulting challenges?

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature and conceptual foundations; Section 3 presents the theoretical framework; Section 4 explains the review design, search strategy and evidence-synthesis procedures; Section 5 reports the findings; Section 6 develops the theoretical interpretation, governance model and propositions; Section 7 outlines the implications for employment relations, HRM and public policy; Section 8 presents actionable recommendations; Section 9 states the review's limitations; and Section 10 concludes and sets out the contributions to knowledge.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Foundations

2.1 Algorithmic Management

Algorithmic management refers to the use of digital systems, data capture, analytics and automated or semi-automated rules to direct, evaluate and discipline labour (Kellogg et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2015). In platform settings, the app interface itself often becomes the site through which management is enacted: it allocates work, sets prices or incentive thresholds, ranks performance, issues warnings or restrictions and uses accumulated behavioural data to shape future access to work. The concept does not suggest that human managers disappear. Rather, managerial authority is reconfigured and partly embedded in software, metrics and interfaces. Across the enlarged corpus, four dimensions recur with particular regularity: allocation, evaluation, compensation and discipline (Kellogg et al., 2020; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016).

2.2 Digital Surveillance in Platform Work

Digital surveillance is the infrastructural counterpart of algorithmic management. It relies on the continuous capture of behavioural traces, including location, route movement, log-in duration, communication records, performance timestamps, customer feedback, and patterns of availability. In app-based delivery work, surveillance is ambient, continuous, and datafied rather than episodic or solely human. The literature gives it a dual character: it can support coordination, fraud prevention, and safety monitoring, yet it can also heighten stress, narrow discretion, and encourage anticipatory compliance (Ball, 2021; OECD, 2025; Useche et al., 2025). When workers cannot tell where coordination ends and punishment begins, visibility itself becomes disciplinary.

2.3 Worker Voice in Digitally Mediated Labour Markets

Worker voice encompasses the expression of grievances, suggestions, preferences and demands intended to influence managerial decisions or improve working conditions. Voice may be individual or collective, direct or representative, formal or informal. A meaningful voice regime requires more than the existence of a channel through which complaints can be lodged; it also requires confidence that speaking up is safe, will be heard and may affect outcomes. Those conditions are fragile in platform work. Workers are dispersed, often located outside standard employment protections, and frequently limited to app-based support channels that are transactional rather than deliberative. Recent research therefore shows voice spilling into WhatsApp groups, social media networks, grassroots associations and collective protest (Ajonbadi et al., 2025; Bertolini & Dukes, 2021; Mendonça & Kougiannou, 2025; Woodcock, 2021).

2.4 Why Lagos Delivery Riders Matter Analytically

Delivery riders in Lagos occupy a distinctive place within the platform economy. The city's high population density and severe traffic congestion create substantial road-safety risks for riders. These conditions are compounded by infrastructure deficiencies, merchant-side delays, and an

institutional framework that provides inadequate protection for platform workers (Adekoya et al., 2024; Arubayi, 2022; Fairwork, 2023a, 2023b). Consequently, the gap between algorithmic predictions and real-world delivery conditions can be substantial. A rider may be penalised for lateness caused partly by traffic gridlock, police encounters, adverse weather, road closures, merchant preparation delays, or safety considerations. Metrics that appear neutral in the abstract can therefore become distributively unfair in practice. In this review, Lagos is treated not merely as another setting, but as a contextual moderator that changes the meaning and effects of algorithmic control.

3. Theoretical Framework

This article draws primarily on labour process theory (LPT) and secondarily on worker voice theory. Together, the two perspectives offer a useful basis for analysing digitally mediated work because they connect labour control, contestation, participation and procedural justice. From an LPT perspective, algorithmic management is not simply a technical innovation; it is a regime of labour control. Platforms use data capture and digital rules to reduce uncertainty in labour performance, standardise conduct, and discipline deviations through routing systems, customer-facing time promises, acceptance thresholds, incentive tiers, and automated sanctions. LPT is particularly useful here because it shows how control can be intensified while being presented as neutral optimisation. The authority of the platform is often obscured by the technical form in which it is exercised (Kellogg et al., 2020; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Wood et al., 2019).

Worker voice theory complements this perspective by explaining when and how workers express concerns. The ability to speak up depends on institutional protections, trustworthy communication channels, confidence in fair procedures, and a belief that speaking will have an effect. When workers fear retaliation, perceive management as unresponsive, or cannot identify the person responsible for a decision, silence can be a rational response (Ajonbadi et al., 2025; Lee, 2024b). The article's main theoretical contribution is not simply to juxtapose two existing perspectives; rather, it uses them to explain a specific problem of platform governance.

Labour process theory helps to explain intensifying control, yet it says less about how contestation shifts across formal and informal channels once supervision is embedded in software. Worker voice theory clarifies why speaking up depends on safety, efficacy and procedural justice, but says less about algorithmic opacity, sanction uncertainty and the costs of complaining in digitally mediated work. The voice-reconfiguration governance model developed bridges that gap. It shows how digital governance reallocates voice across channels: under conditions of opacity, surveillance intensity, sanction uncertainty and risk transfer, direct firm-controlled voice weakens, while informal, collective and extra-platform voice becomes more salient. Lagos-specific frictions intensify that shift by raising the costs of both compliance and contestation. The model is therefore best understood as a governance account rather than a simple moderation model, because it links mechanisms of control, contextual moderators, voice outcomes and institutional levers within a single explanatory framework.

4. Method

4.1 Review Design

The study adopts a bounded structured integrative review informed by PRISMA-ScR reporting principles and JBI scoping-review guidance. This design suits a problem that is conceptually broad,

interdisciplinary and context-sensitive. The aim is not to estimate a pooled causal effect, but to bring together heterogeneous evidence from employment relations, HRM, labour sociology, platform studies, occupational health and policy analysis to build a contextually grounded explanatory account. Consistent with contemporary integrative-review guidance, the synthesis is designed to create new conceptual understanding from existing literature rather than merely summarise prior studies (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). PRISMA-ScR and JBI are therefore used here as transparency aids within a bounded review protocol rather than as the basis for claiming exhaustive systematic-review compliance. Table 1 summarises the review protocol and the main evidence-synthesis decisions guiding the study. To strengthen transparency and auditability, the review protocol, workbook and associated materials were registered on the Open Science Framework (OSF) as a Generalized Systematic Review Registration on 11 April 2026 (OSF project: ab54e).

Table 1: Review Protocol and Evidence-Synthesis Decisions

Element	Specification
Review design	Bounded structured integrative review informed by PRISMA-ScR reporting principles and JBI scoping-review guidance.
Coverage window	January 2015 to 6 April 2026, selected to capture the emergence and subsequent development of app-based algorithmic management research; searches run 1–6 April 2026.
Search architecture	Google Scholar, targeted publisher platforms, institutional repositories, and backward/forward citation chasing.
Source-flow trail	312 identified records; 58 duplicates removed; 254 title/abstract records screened; 76 full texts assessed; 45 full texts excluded with reasons; 31 sources included.
Included corpus	19 peer-reviewed journal articles, 1 doctoral dissertation, 7 institutional/policy reports, 1 scholarly book, and 3 methodological guidance sources.
Analytic strategy	Structured extraction template, open coding, category building, cross-study comparison, support-strength mapping, and theory-led synthesis.
Theoretical output	A voice-reconfiguration governance model and six propositions linking platform control mechanisms, Lagos context moderators, and voice outcomes.

4.2 Search Strategy and Exact Search Architecture

The review covered material published from January 2015 to 6 April 2026. January 2015 was selected as the lower boundary because it captures the emergence of foundational empirical research on app-mediated and algorithmic management in location-based work (Lee et al., 2015), while the 6 April 2026 cutoff allowed the review to incorporate the most recent evidence available when the searches were completed. Reporting both the publication window and the retrieval dates makes the temporal boundary explicit and prevents material indexed later from being treated as part of the original corpus.

To improve transparency, the review followed a structured screening protocol with explicit boundaries: search clusters were specified in advance, the first relevance-ranked records from each

cluster were screened, and every included source was logged in an extraction workbook. Search strings were adapted modestly to each interface but remained conceptually equivalent. In reporting the strings, AND and OR are capitalised as conventional Boolean operators so that logical connectors are visually distinguished from substantive search terms. AND links concept blocks, OR combines alternatives, and parentheses preserve grouping. The capitalisation is a reporting convention rather than an indication that the searches were case-sensitive; in Google Scholar, where AND is implicit, equivalent term-co-occurrence logic was used.

The main clusters were “algorithmic management” AND “platform work”; “digital surveillance” AND “gig work”; “worker voice” AND “platform economy”; “delivery riders” AND “algorithmic management”; “delivery workers” AND surveillance AND ratings; Nigeria AND “gig economy” AND “worker voice”; Lagos AND (“delivery platforms” OR “ride-hailing”); and Fairwork Nigeria platform workers. Targeted publisher-platform searches were then used to recover delivery-specific studies that broad discovery interfaces may rank poorly, including work published in journals commonly indexed in major social-science databases.

Search saturation was assessed iteratively across the predefined search clusters and through backward and forward citation chasing. The stopping criterion was met when additional screening yielded only duplicates or studies that were substantively confirmatory, and no newly eligible source introduced a new challenge domain, control mechanism, evidence layer, or material counterpoint. Saturation is therefore used as a pragmatic stopping rule for this bounded review, not as a claim that every potentially relevant publication was captured.

4.3 Inclusion, Exclusion, Duplicates, and Borderline Handling

Materials were included when they were published in English and took the form of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly theses or dissertations, high-quality institutional reports, or a small number of foundational scholarly books. They also had to address at least one substantive domain of the review (algorithmic management, digital surveillance, worker voice, representation, or platform labour conditions); focus on location-based platform work or generate findings meaningfully transferable to delivery work; and, where possible, contain evidence relevant to Nigeria, Africa, or comparable Global South labour markets. Items were excluded if they were purely technical optimisation studies without labour-process implications, opinion pieces without an evidentiary base, or materials not meaningfully comparable to location-based service platforms. Duplicate handling followed a conservative rule: when the same study appeared in multiple places, only the most complete and citable version was retained. Borderline cases were included only when they materially improved delivery-specific, Global South, or worker-voice coverage.

4.4 Numeric Source-Flow Trail

A total of 312 records were identified through the bounded search process and citation chasing. After 58 duplicates or superseded versions were removed, 254 records remained for title and abstract screening. Of these, 178 were excluded at the first screening stage, mainly because they focused on technical optimisation, customer-side service quality, or forms of digital labour that were not meaningfully comparable. Seventy-six full-text records were then assessed. Forty-five were excluded after full-text assessment: 16 for insufficient relevance to worker control or voice, 11 for focusing on non-location-based platform work, 8 for lacking usable evidence, 6 for duplicating a more complete version, and 4 for being inaccessible in sufficient bibliographic form.

Thirty-one sources were included in the final synthesis. Table 2 summarises search-cluster yields, Figure 1 visualises the source-flow trail, and Tables 3 and 4 report the numeric source-flow trail and final corpus profile.

4.5 Data extraction and analysis

A structured extraction template recorded bibliographic details, geographical setting, sector, design, source type, core concepts, key findings, support strength and relevance to the research questions. Analysis then proceeded through first-order coding, category building, cross-study comparison, support-strength mapping, and theory-led synthesis. The review workbook also records the protocol summary, screening trail, corpus profile, source-level extraction matrix, coding traceability, and tables-and-figures index to support the audit trail and any OSF archiving. Each included source was assigned one or more synthesis roles: conceptual foundation, delivery-specific evidence, Nigeria-direct context, Nigeria-adjacent transfer, governance framing, or method support. This made it possible to distinguish more clearly between strongly evidenced claims, mixed findings, and bounded inferential transfer.

4.6 Quality assurance, source-quality justification, and limitations

Priority was given to peer-reviewed studies and institutionally credible reports. The five core challenge domains rest primarily on peer-reviewed and delivery-specific studies; policy and institutional sources are used chiefly to deepen governance context, support Nigeria-specific regulatory interpretation and add labour-process detail that is not yet well developed in the journal literature. Non-journal sources were retained only where they added clear contextual or governance value: the Lagos doctoral dissertation offered distinctive Nigeria-adjacent labour-process detail; Fairwork, ILO and OECD reports added governance and regulatory evidence not yet fully absorbed into journal scholarship; and one scholarly book was kept for its contribution to debates on collective struggle in platform labour. Methodological guidance sources were used only to justify the review design.

Table 2 reports the bounded search log and the yields from each search cluster used in the review. It identifies the search source, the representative search string, the search date, the number of records screened, and the records preliminarily retained for each cluster. Read together, the entries show how the corpus was assembled across platform-control, surveillance, worker-voice, delivery-work, Nigeria-specific, and institutional evidence streams.

Table 2: Bounded Search Log and Search-Cluster Yields

Search cluster	Search source	Representative string	Date	Records screened	Preliminary records retained
C1 Platform control	Google Scholar	“algorithmic management” AND “platform work”	1 Apr 2026	42	8
C2 Surveillance	Google Scholar	“digital surveillance” AND “gig work”	1 Apr 2026	34	5

Search cluster	Search source	Representative string	Date	Records screened	Preliminary records retained
C3 Worker voice	Google Scholar	“worker voice” AND “platform economy”	2 Apr 2026	32	4
C4 Delivery work	Google Scholar	“delivery riders” AND “algorithmic management”	2 Apr 2026	40	7
C5 Performance and sanctions	Publisher platforms	delivery workers AND surveillance AND ratings	3 Apr 2026	36	6
C6 Nigeria	Google Scholar	Nigeria AND “gig economy” AND “worker voice”	4 Apr 2026	28	5
C7 Lagos and adjacent context	Google Scholar	Lagos AND (delivery platforms OR ride-hailing)	4 Apr 2026	24	4
C8 Institutional evidence	ILO/OECD/Fairwork	Fairwork Nigeria platform workers	5 Apr 2026	28	6
C9 Citation chasing	Backward/forward chasing	Foundational and highly relevant sources	5–6 Apr 2026	48	11

Table 3 provides the numeric source-flow trail for the bounded structured integrative review. It records the number of records identified, duplicates removed, title and abstract records screened, exclusions at each stage, full-text records assessed, and final included sources. It therefore gives the reader a concise numerical audit of the screening and selection process alongside the visual flow figure.

Table 3: Numeric Source-Flow Trail

Stage	Count	Notes
Records identified	312	Bounded search clusters plus backward/forward citation chasing.
Duplicates or superseded versions removed	58	Duplicate indexing, conference-paper/journal-paper overlaps, or later fuller versions.
Title/abstract records screened	254	All remaining records were screened for relevance to control, surveillance, voice, and delivery.
Excluded at title/abstract stage	178	Mostly technical optimisation, customer-only studies, or non-comparable digital labour.
Full texts assessed	76	Full texts or sufficiently detailed abstract-level bibliographic records were assessed.

Stage	Count	Notes
Excluded after full-text assessment	45	Insufficient relevance (16), non-location-based work (11), inadequate evidence (8), duplicate fuller version (6), insufficient bibliographic access (4).
Final included sources	31	19 journal articles, 1 dissertation, 7 reports, 1 scholarly book, 3 method sources.

Table 4 profiles the final corpus included in the review. It summarises the composition of the evidence base by source type, recency, delivery specificity, Nigeria or Lagos relevance, and attention to worker voice or representation. The table therefore helps the reader judge the breadth, balance, and contextual depth of the material on which the analysis rests.

Table 4: Final Corpus Profile

Corpus characteristic	Count or note
Total included sources	31
Peer-reviewed journal articles	19
Doctoral dissertation	1
Institutional/policy reports	7
Scholarly book	1
Methodological guidance sources	3
Sources published 2023–2026	16
Delivery-specific substantive sources	12
Nigeria-specific or Lagos-specific sources	6
Sources directly addressing worker voice or representation	8

Figure 1 visualises the source-flow trail for the bounded structured integrative review. It traces the movement from initial identification through duplicate removal, staged screening, full-text assessment and final inclusion. As such, it provides a compact visual counterpart to the more detailed numeric trail reported in Table 3.

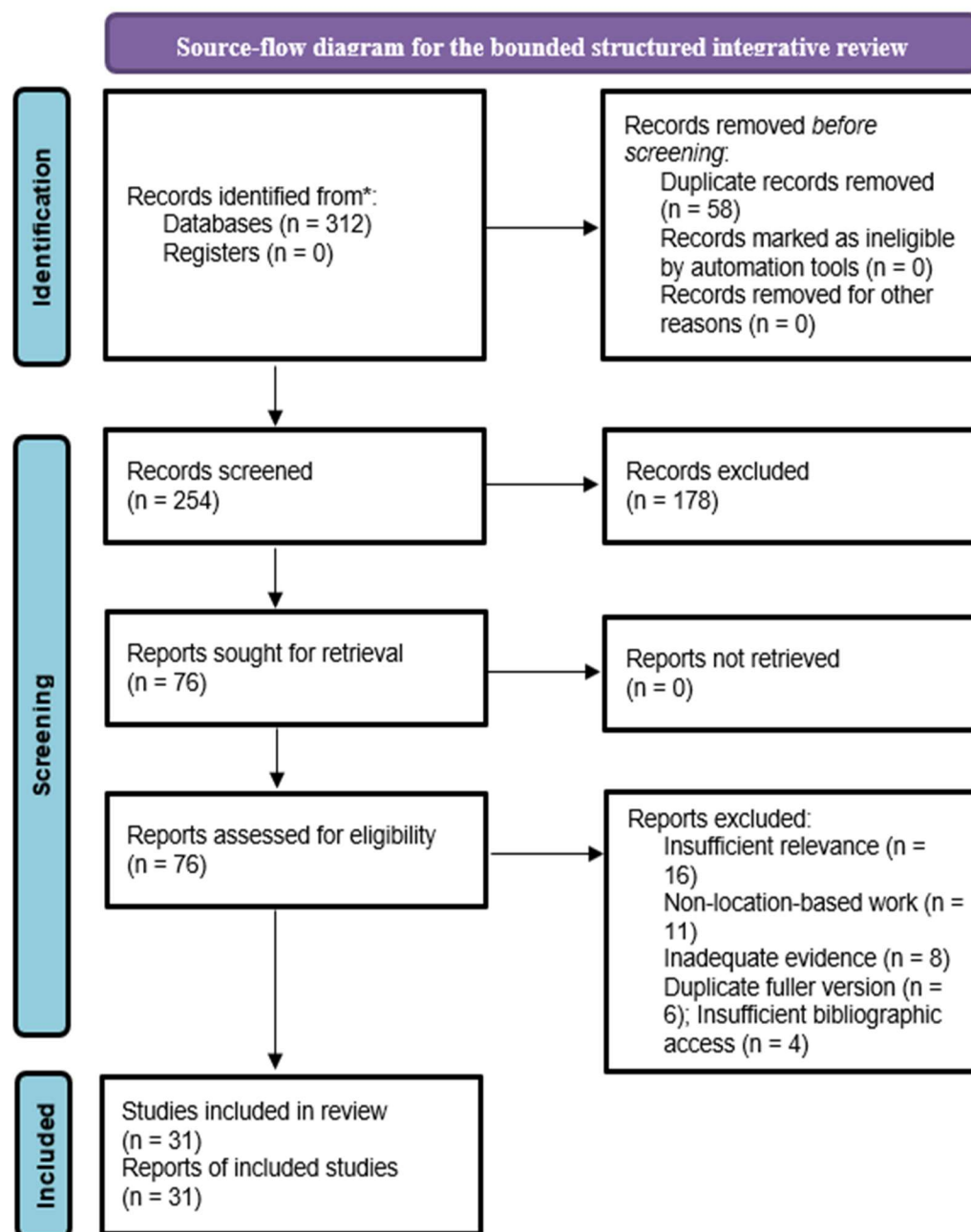


Figure 1: Source-flow diagram for the bounded structured integrative review.

5. Findings

5.1 Challenge 1: Opaque Algorithmic Allocation and Evaluation

Opaque allocation and evaluation was the most strongly supported challenge domain, appearing in 16 of the 28 substantive sources. Evidence in this area draws on direct Nigerian material, delivery-specific international studies and bounded transfer from adjacent Lagos ride-hailing research. Across that literature, workers generally know that ratings, cancellations, response times, acceptance behaviour and geolocation matter, but they are rarely able to see how those variables are weighted or combined. For delivery riders, that opacity shapes both immediate earnings and

longer-term platform standing. A notable counterpoint in the literature is that standardised systems may reduce arbitrary human favouritism; even so, that potential benefit depends on explainability, which opaque systems seldom provide.

5.2 Challenge 2: Surveillance-Driven Behavioural Discipline

Surveillance-driven discipline was supported by 14 substantive sources and qualified by three studies that emphasised the benefits of coordination from live monitoring. The evidence combines direct Nigerian material on insecurity and safety, delivery-specific international studies on monitoring and risky behaviour, and bounded transfer from adjacent Lagos platform research. Geolocation tracking, delivery-time monitoring, completion records, and communication histories enable platforms to monitor riders continuously. Although some monitoring is functionally necessary for safety and coordination, the line between operational tracking and disciplinary surveillance is often blurred. Riders may respond through anticipatory compliance, taking risks to avoid lateness, accepting poor jobs to protect metrics or avoiding complaints for fear of attracting scrutiny. In Lagos, where congestion and road hazards are routine, that pressure can intensify stress and encourage unsafe work practices.

5.3 Challenge 3: Asymmetric Risk Transfer and Earnings Insecurity

Asymmetric risk transfer appeared across 13 substantive sources and was especially evident in African gig-work research, food-delivery studies, and governance reports. Direct Nigerian evidence comes chiefly from the Fairwork Nigeria reports. At the same time, delivery-specific international studies and bounded Lagos-adjacent transfers help clarify mechanisms around fuel costs, merchant delays, and operational insecurity. Riders absorb fuel-price volatility, weather shocks, road conditions, motorcycle maintenance, theft risk and merchant-side delays, while compensation remains mediated by platform pricing rules and fluctuations in demand. The main counterpoint is that gig work can still offer labour-market entry and a degree of scheduling flexibility. The review nonetheless suggests that such flexibility is often conditional on workers absorbing substantial operational risk, which, in turn, reduces the likelihood that economically insecure riders will challenge managerial decisions.

5.4 Challenge 4: Weak Procedural Voice and Fear of Retaliation

Weak procedural voice was supported in 12 substantive sources and is strongly evidenced in worker-voice research, Fairwork-style governance assessments, delivery-specific justice studies and Nigerian research on representation. The evidence here combines direct Nigerian material, delivery-specific international studies and bounded transfer from adjacent Lagos ride-hailing research. Formal support channels are often individualised, reactive and scripted. Workers may submit complaints only to receive generic or delayed responses, with little confidence that anyone with authority has meaningfully reviewed the case. A small strand of the literature suggests that informal digital communities can help workers solve practical problems quickly; this review interprets those communities less as substitutes for voice than as signs that formal procedural voice remains weak.

5.5 Challenge 5: Fragmented but Expanding Collective Representation

Fragmented but expanding collective representation was supported in 11 substantive sources. Direct Nigerian evidence is particularly important here, especially Ajonbadi et al. (2025) and the Fairwork Nigeria reports, supplemented by delivery-specific international studies on courier power resources

and wider research on worker organising under platform capitalism. Platform workers increasingly rely on WhatsApp groups, social media, informal rider communities and unions or worker associations to share information, compare experiences and coordinate responses to perceived injustice. The counterpoint is that such organising remains uneven and often fragile. Even so, the literature consistently suggests that where direct platform voice is thin, extra-platform representation becomes more rather than less important.

5.6 Cross-Study Tensions and Explicit Debate Structure

The enlarged corpus reveals four recurring interpretations of platform delivery work. The efficiency or coordination view highlights rapid matching, lower entry barriers and real-time service quality. The precarity or control view emphasises asymmetrical information, insecurity and technologically mediated domination. The adaptive-voice view treats worker-created digital communities as practical problem-solving mechanisms that partly compensate for the absence of institutions. The critical representation-gap view sees those same communities as evidence of institutional failure. Rather than endorsing one perspective outright, this article argues that platform management can yield coordination gains, but that such gains are incomplete where voice is procedurally weak. Whether monitoring is experienced as support or domination depends on the governance architecture within which it is embedded and the contextual frictions workers must navigate.

5.7 Integrative Synthesis

Taken together, the five challenge domains suggest that algorithmic management does not simply silence workers. It reallocates voice away from formal, firm-controlled channels and towards informal, collective and sometimes openly adversarial forms of expression. The central finding is therefore relational: decision opacity, surveillance intensity, sanction uncertainty and risk transfer weaken direct voice, while the pressures of Lagos increase the value of extra-platform coordination and collective response. Table 5 brings those patterns together by showing the strength of support, the main counterpoints and the governance implications associated with each challenge domain. Table 5 synthesises the five challenge domains identified in the review and links each one to its evidential strength, principal counterpoint in the literature and governance implication. It therefore serves as a concise analytical summary of the findings section, showing not only the major challenges but also how strongly they are supported and the kinds of institutional responses they imply.

Table 5: Challenge Domains, Evidential Strength, Counterpoints, and Governance Implications

Challenge domain	Support strength	Main counterpoint in literature	Governance implication
Opaque allocation and evaluation	Strong (16 sources)	Standardisation may reduce arbitrary human discretion.	Explainability, auditable decision logs, and review criteria disclosure.
Surveillance-driven discipline	Strong (14 sources)	Live monitoring can aid coordination and safety.	Proportionate monitoring and limits on punitive automation.

Challenge domain	Support strength	Main counterpoint in literature	Governance implication
Risk transfer and earnings insecurity	Strong (13 sources)	Flexibility and labour-market entry retain value for some riders.	Context-sensitive metrics and fair-pay safeguards.
Weak procedural voice	Strong (12 sources)	Informal groups may solve some issues quickly.	Time-bound human review by authorised decision-makers, written reasons, and documented appeals.
Fragmented representation	Moderate to strong (11 sources)	Collective coordination remains uneven and fragile.	Recognised representative forums and regular consultation with reasoned responses.

6. Discussion: Theoretical Interpretation and Governance Value

The findings support a relational interpretation of platform delivery work: coordination gains and labour-control costs are not mutually exclusive, but their balance depends on the procedural architecture through which platform decisions are explained, reviewed and contested. The discussion therefore moves beyond a simple efficiency-versus-control opposition and asks under what governance conditions data-driven management becomes legitimate, contestable and capable of supporting organisational learning.

What the model adds to existing theory is straightforward. Labour process theory helps to explain control, but on its own, it does not fully explain how contention migrates from formal organisational channels to informal and extra-platform arenas once management is embedded in software. Worker voice theory explains why people speak or remain silent, but, on its own, it does not capture the specific importance of explainability, sanction uncertainty, and platform-mediated complaint costs. The model developed here shows how these elements work together. In that sense, voice reconfiguration is not simply another description of declining participation; it is an account of how platform governance redistributes the conditions under which workers can contest, comply or organise.

6.1 Voice-Reconfiguration Governance Model

The voice-reconfiguration governance model proposed here links platform control mechanisms, contextual moderators, voice outcomes and institutional levers. Decision opacity, surveillance intensity, sanction uncertainty, and risk transfer operate through Lagos-specific conditions such as congestion, road-safety risk, merchant delays, fuel-cost volatility, and weak procedural protections. Together, they shape outcomes, including reduced direct voice, higher complaint costs, fear-induced silence, and a shift to extra-platform collective voice. Governance levers, including explainability, human review, context-sensitive metrics and representative consultation, can interrupt those pathways. The model therefore moves beyond description to show how platform governance might be redesigned so that worker voice becomes a source of organisational learning rather than a source of conflict alone.

Figure 2 presents the voice-reconfiguration governance model developed from the review. It shows how platform control mechanisms interact with Lagos-specific contextual moderators to shape worker-voice outcomes, and how governance levers may interrupt those pathways. In visual form, the figure captures the article's central theoretical claim about the redistribution of voice under algorithmic control.

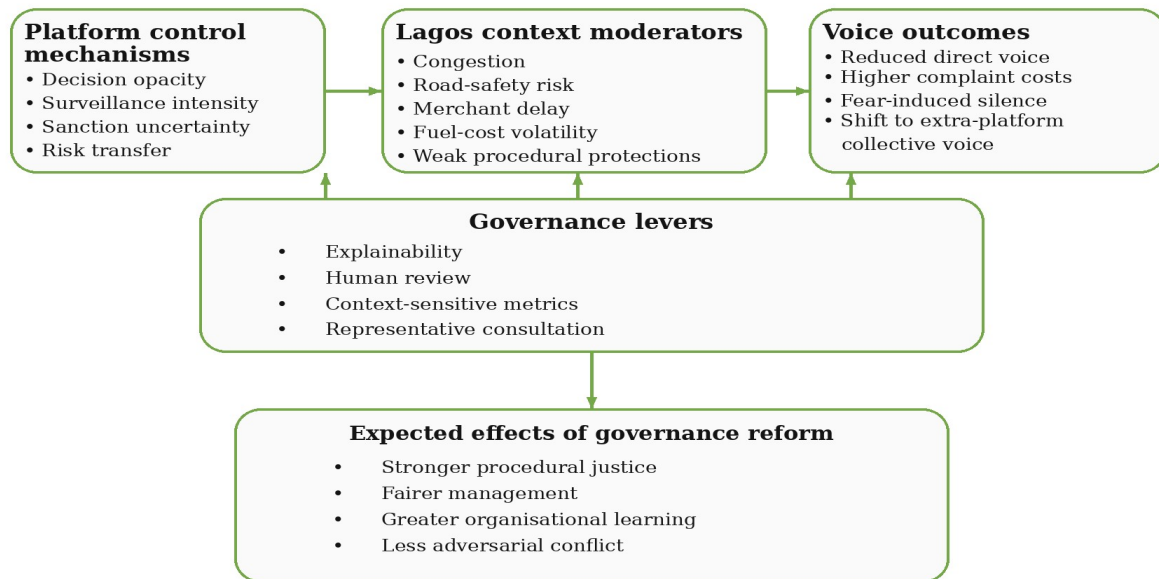


Figure 2: Voice-reconfiguration governance model of platform control in Lagos delivery work

6.2 Conceptual propositions and evidential anchors

Proposition 1: Higher decision opacity in platform management increases perceived procedural injustice and reduces the likelihood of effective direct voice. This proposition is strongly supported by algorithmic management studies documenting information asymmetry, opaque ratings, and limited explainability.

Proposition 2: Greater surveillance intensity increases performance pressure and sanction anxiety, which in turn suppresses individual complaint behaviour. Support comes from surveillance-focused and delivery-specific studies linking continuous monitoring to stress, anticipatory compliance, and unsafe behaviour.

Proposition 3: Asymmetric transfer of operational risk deepens economic dependency and lowers workers' willingness to challenge platform decisions. This proposition is strongly anchored in African gig-work research, food-delivery studies, and Nigeria-specific work on employment relationships.

Proposition 4: Weak formal grievance channels increase reliance on extra-platform collective voice mechanisms, including peer networks, social media, and representative associations. Support is strongest in worker-voice and representation studies, particularly those focused on Nigeria and food-delivery labour.

Proposition 5: Lagos-specific urban conditions (congestion, safety risk, merchant delay, fuel-cost volatility, and weak procedural protections) amplify the negative effect of opaque metrics on

worker voice. This proposition is supported by direct Lagos or Nigeria evidence and by bounded transfer from adjacent delivery and ride-hailing studies.

Proposition 6: Platforms with explainable decision rules, human review of sanctions, and recognised consultation structures are more likely to convert worker voice into learning rather than conflict. This proposition is inferential and governance-oriented, synthesising the implications of the reviewed literature rather than claiming one-study proof.

6.3 Boundaries of the Lagos contribution

The Lagos contribution should be interpreted carefully. Not all evidence in the corpus is drawn directly from delivery riders in Lagos; some is transferred from adjacent ride-hailing studies and broader food-delivery research. To avoid overclaiming, the article distinguishes three evidence layers: direct Lagos or Nigeria evidence, adjacent Nigeria ride-hailing evidence used by bounded analogy, and international platform or delivery studies used for mechanism-level transfer. This boundary work strengthens rather than weakens the argument because it makes clear which claims are strongly evidenced, which are mixed, and which remain inferential and therefore suitable targets for future empirical study.

7. Implications for Employment Relations, HRM, and Public Policy

7.1 Implications for platform firms

Platforms that allocate work, monitor labour, shape pay opportunities and sanction performance exercise managerial power regardless of contractual terminology. A fairer platform-management system would therefore include intelligible decision rules, audit trails for consequential decisions and context-adjusted performance evaluation. Automated warnings, suspensions or deactivations should be reviewable within a stated timeframe by a trained human decision-maker who has authority to overturn the outcome, provide written reasons and preserve a documented appeal trail. Voice architecture should also operate at two levels: accessible, anti-retaliation-protected channels for individual complaints and recognised consultation forums through which rider representatives or associations can raise collective concerns and receive reasoned responses.

7.2 Implications for regulators in Nigeria

Regulatory guidance in Nigeria needs to address algorithmic transparency, data governance, dispute resolution, occupational safety, minimum earnings protections and safeguards against arbitrary deactivation. Where private digital systems already exercise quasi-managerial authority, regulatory silence effectively leaves employment governance in the hands of opaque software systems.

7.3 Implications for unions and worker associations

Extra-platform coordination remains important because it reduces isolation and allows workers to pool information. However, reactive protest alone is unlikely to secure durable change. More lasting improvements depend on institutional recognition, access to negotiation, and enforceable procedural rights. The review therefore points towards representative arrangements that can move workers from improvised resistance to recognised consultation.

7.4 Implications for research

For research in employment relations and HRM, the review has three implications. First, analyses of platform work should treat worker voice as a central governance variable rather than as a residual outcome of technology adoption. Second, Global South platform research needs to distinguish more

carefully between direct contextual evidence and bounded analytical transfer, especially where delivery labour remains less studied than ride-hailing. Third, future work should connect labour process theory, worker voice theory, and algorithmic-governance research more explicitly, so that digital control is examined not only in terms of efficiency but also in terms of procedural justice, contestation, and institutional learning.

8. Recommendations

Table 6 translates the article's findings into actionable recommendations by linking each recommendation to its primary challenge domain, the relevant conceptual propositions, and the stakeholder most directly positioned to respond. In that sense, it connects the article's conceptual contribution to a practical agenda for platforms, regulators, worker organisations and researchers.

Table 6. Recommendations linked to challenge domains, propositions, and stakeholders

Recommendation	Primary challenge	Linked proposition(s)	Primary stakeholder
Publish intelligible explanations of order allocation, ratings, and deactivation variables.	Opacity	P1, P6	Platforms
Require human review of automated sanctions within a stated time frame, with written reasons and a documented appeal trail.	Weak procedural voice	P2, P4, P6	Platforms / regulators
Adjust performance metrics for congestion, merchant delay, weather, and verified safety incidents.	Risk transfer; Lagos moderators	P3, P5	Platforms
Create recognised worker-consultation forums that receive and provide reasoned responses to collective concerns.	Weak procedural voice; representation	P4, P6	Platforms / worker bodies
Adopt algorithmic-accountability rules and anti-retaliation protections.	Opacity; surveillance; voice	P1, P2, P4, P6	Regulators
Prioritise empirical studies of Lagos delivery riders, including gender, safety, and earnings volatility.	Evidence gaps	P5	Researchers

Taken together, the recommendations suggest a staged agenda. In the short term, platforms can improve explainability, provide human review of sanctions and adopt context-sensitive performance metrics. Over the medium term, governance reforms should focus on recognised consultation structures, anti-retaliation safeguards and minimum standards for data use and fair management. The longer-term research agenda remains clear: original studies of delivery riders in Lagos are still needed if future research is to rely less on bounded transfer from adjacent ride-hailing evidence.

9. Limitations of the Review

The review is constrained by the available evidence base. Restricting the search to English-language material may have excluded some relevant studies. Although the revised protocol is more auditable than a conventional narrative review, Google Scholar, publisher platforms, and institutional repositories remain less reproducible than a tightly delimited multi-database search. The Nigerian literature is still richer on ride-hailing than on delivery riders specifically, so some bounded interpretive transfer remains necessary. The inclusion of institutional reports improves contextual sensitivity, but also introduces variation in method and evidentiary depth. These limitations do not invalidate the review; they set the bounds within which its claims should be read and underline the need for original empirical research on delivery riders in Lagos. PRISMA-ScR and JBI are therefore used here as transparency guides rather than as evidence of checklist-perfect compliance with a registered scoping-review protocol.

10. Conclusion

The central employment-relations problem in platform delivery work is not simply that riders are digitally managed. They are managed through systems that are often opaque, surveillance-intensive, risk-shifting and procedurally weak. Under those conditions, workers remain highly visible to platforms while lacking equivalent means of making platforms answerable. The review identified five interrelated challenge domains: opaque evaluation, surveillance-driven discipline, asymmetric risk transfer, weak procedural voice, and fragmented representation. It showed how these pressures jointly weaken direct voice while encouraging extra-platform forms of organisation.

The article's central conceptual claim is therefore clear: platform voice is not reduced by technology alone; it is redistributed by the governance architecture of algorithmic control. Lagos shows how contextual frictions can turn abstract efficiency metrics into mechanisms of procedural injustice. A platform economy that tracks workers without hearing them may be operationally effective in the short term, but it remains institutionally incomplete and, in the longer run, less sustainable.

10.1 Contributions to knowledge

This review makes five contributions to knowledge. First, it integrates algorithmic management, digital surveillance and worker voice within a single employment-relations account. Second, it centres app-based delivery labour in Lagos State rather than treating delivery as a subsidiary form of ride-hailing or assuming that Global North evidence transfers without qualification. Third, it strengthens the empirical base with newer delivery-specific evidence and explicitly distinguishes direct Nigeria evidence, Nigeria-adjacent transfer and international mechanism-level evidence. Fourth, it develops a voice-reconfiguration governance model that extends labour process theory and worker voice theory by explaining how opacity, surveillance intensity, sanction uncertainty and risk transfer redistribute voice across firm-controlled and extra-platform channels. Fifth, it translates the identified challenges into managerial, regulatory and research implications. Taken together, these contributions show that worker voice is not reduced by technology alone; it is redistributed through the governance architecture of algorithmic control, while Lagos-specific frictions can turn apparently neutral efficiency metrics into sources of procedural injustice.

Data availability and supplementary materials

The review workbook, source-flow figure, governance-model figure, search log, and appendix materials are archived on the Open Science Framework (OSF; project ab54e). These materials are

available subject to journal requirements and any copyright restrictions affecting third-party sources.

Appendix A. Exact Search Strings and Source Domains

Table A1 sets out the exact search strings, search sources, dates and screening rules used in the review. Its purpose is to improve reproducibility by providing a more precise account of how the bounded search protocol was executed. The table allows readers to trace how search terms were operationalised across different source environments.

Table A1: Exact Search Strings, Search Sources, and Dated Logs

Cluster	Search source	Exact string	Search date	Screened rule
C1	Google Scholar	“algorithmic management” AND “platform work”	1 Apr 2026	First 42 relevance-ranked records screened.
C2	Google Scholar	“digital surveillance” AND “gig work”	1 Apr 2026	First 34 relevance-ranked records screened.
C3	Google Scholar	“worker voice” AND “platform economy”	2 Apr 2026	First 32 relevance-ranked records screened.
C4	Google Scholar	“delivery riders” AND “algorithmic management”	2 Apr 2026	First 40 relevance-ranked records screened.
C5	Publisher platforms	delivery workers AND surveillance AND ratings	3 Apr 2026	Top publisher-interface hits screened for delivery-specific evidence.
C6	Google Scholar	Nigeria AND “gig economy” AND “worker voice”	4 Apr 2026	First 28 relevance-ranked records screened.
C7	Google Scholar	Lagos AND (delivery platforms OR ride-hailing)	4 Apr 2026	First 24 relevance-ranked records screened.
C8	Institutional sites	Fairwork Nigeria platform workers; ILO algorithmic management; OECD algorithmic management	5 Apr 2026	Relevant reports and policy resources screened.
C9	Citation chasing	Backward and forward chasing from highly relevant sources	5–6 Apr 2026	Only citation-linked sources with clear substantive value were retained.

Note. AND and OR are shown in capitals to identify Boolean operators. Google Scholar treats AND as implicit, whereas OR, quotation marks, and grouping were used explicitly where supported; interface-specific syntax was adapted without changing the underlying concept combinations.

Appendix B. Evidence-Layer Map and Inferential Boundaries

Table B1 maps the evidence layers and inferential boundaries used in the review. It distinguishes between direct Lagos or Nigeria evidence, Nigeria-adjacent ride-hailing evidence, delivery-specific international evidence and broader international conceptual or governance evidence. Its importance lies in clarifying which claims are strongly grounded in local evidence and which depend on bounded analytical transfer.

Table B1: Evidence Layers and Inferential Boundaries

Evidence layer	Typical sources	Use in this review	Boundary note
Direct Lagos/Nigeria evidence	Fairwork (2023a, 2023b); Adekoya et al.; Ajonbadi et al.; Arubayi	Used where the article makes context-specific claims about worker voice, representation, or labour control.	Strongest basis for contextual claims.
Nigeria-adjacent ride-hailing evidence	Lagos ride-hailing and Nigerian gig-work studies	Used by bounded analogy where delivery-specific Nigerian evidence is sparse.	Supports careful transfer, not overgeneralisation.
Delivery-specific international evidence	Lee; Mendonça & Kougiannou; Xiao; Xiang; Xu; Useche et al.	Used to deepen delivery-rider mechanisms around opacity, fairness, dignity, safety, and collective power.	Supports sector-specific mechanism transfer.
International conceptual/governance evidence	Kellogg et al.; Rosenblat & Stark; ILO; OECD; Fredman et al.	Used to explain control mechanisms, regulation, and governance design.	Supports mechanism-level reasoning rather than direct Lagos proof.

Appendix C. Included-Sources Evidence Matrix

Table C1 provides an evidence matrix for the sources included in the review. For each source, it identifies the context and sector, design or evidence base, main extracted finding, and role in the synthesis. The table offers a transparent overview of how individual sources contribute to the development of the article's challenge domains, governance arguments, and theoretical model.

Table C1: Included Studies and Role in the Synthesis

Source	Context and sector	Design / evidence base	Main extracted finding	Role in synthesis
Adekoya et al. (2024)	Nigeria; ride-hailing	Qualitative journal article	Algorithmic management reshapes employment relationships and insecurity in a developing-country context.	Nigeria-direct context
Ajonbadi et al. (2025)	Nigeria; location-based and cloud work	Qualitative journal article	Workers use mixed formal and informal voice mechanisms to pursue decent work.	Nigeria-direct voice evidence
Anwar & Graham (2021)	Africa; gig economy	Journal article	Flexibility is shadowed by vulnerability and precarity in African gig work.	Regional context
Arubayi (2022)	Lagos, Nigeria; ride-hailing	Doctoral dissertation	Algorithmic management in Lagos is negotiated through everyday resistance.	Nigeria-adjacent transfer
Ball (2021)	Comparative; digital labour platforms	ILO report	Surveillance generates compliance pressure, risk, and resistance dynamics.	Surveillance framing
Bertolini & Dukes (2021)	United Kingdom; platform work	Journal article	Union strategies are shaped by legal exclusion and resource constraints.	Representation framing
Collins & Atkinson (2024)	Comparative; digital labour	Policy/research report	Algorithmic management has political and governance implications beyond technical efficiency.	Political-economy framing
De Stefano (2019)	Comparative; digital labour broadly	Legal-conceptual article	Automation and algorithmic control raise questions of labour protection and due process.	Regulatory framing
Fairwork (2023a)	Nigeria; ride-hailing and delivery	Institutional report	Fair management, safety, and representation remain uneven in the Nigerian platform economy.	Direct Nigerian context
Fairwork (2023b)	Nigeria; ride-hailing and delivery	Institutional report	Platform work in Nigeria is marked by weak fair-management, insecurity, and limited representation across delivery and ride-hailing platforms.	Direct Nigerian context
Fredman et al. (2025)	Comparative; platform work regulation	Journal article	Legal regulation of platform work should address algorithmic management and substantive rights.	Comparative governance

Source	Context and sector	Design / evidence base	Main extracted finding	Role in synthesis
International Labour Organisation (2024)	Global; digital labour platforms	Institutional report	Platform work raises governance issues around protection, representation, and management power.	Comparative policy context
International Labour Organisation (2025)	Global; platform economy	Conference report	Decent-work regulation must address management power, data governance, and worker protection.	Comparative policy context
Kellogg et al. (2020)	Comparative; algorithmically managed work	Review article	Algorithms reconfigure control, coordination, and contestation.	Conceptual foundation
Lee et al. (2015)	United States; app-mediated work	Conference paper	Early evidence that data-driven management reshapes worker discretion and experience.	Conceptual foundation
Lee (2024a)	Taiwan; food delivery	Journal article	Riders occupy a hybrid quasi-employee status under platform governance.	Delivery-specific institutional evidence
Lee (2024b)	Taiwan; food delivery	Journal article	Procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice remain central in platform delivery work.	Delivery-specific voice and justice
Lee (2025)	Taiwan; food delivery	Journal article	Workplace dignity and psychological contract are undermined by platform management practices.	Delivery-specific dignity
Mendonça & Kougiannou (2025)	United Kingdom; food delivery	Journal article	Courier groups build uneven collective and individual power resources.	Delivery-specific collective voice
OECD (2025)	Comparative; workplace algorithmic management	Policy report	Explainability, accountability, and oversight matter in algorithmic management.	Comparative governance
Lin (2025)	China; food delivery	Journal article	Riders interpret their legal status ambiguously in a weakly settled legal field.	Delivery-specific legal consciousness

Source	Context and sector	Design / evidence base	Main extracted finding	Role in synthesis
Rosenblat & Stark (2016)	United States; ride-hailing	Case study article	Information asymmetry undermines worker understanding and contestation.	Conceptual and comparative
Useche et al. (2025)	Comparative; last-mile delivery	Systematic review article	Poor working conditions are linked to stress, burnout, and risky riding or driving outcomes.	Delivery-specific safety evidence
Wood et al. (2019)	Global; gig economy	Survey-based journal article	Autonomy coexists with strong algorithmic control and insecurity.	Conceptual and comparative
Woodcock (2021)	Global; platform capitalism	Scholarly book	Worker struggle and collective organisation are central to platform labour politics.	Collective voice framing
Xiang et al. (2025)	China; food delivery	Journal article	Opaque algorithmic systems shape fairness perceptions heuristically.	Delivery-specific fairness
Xiao et al. (2024)	China; food delivery	Journal article	Daily contingencies and tacit conventions mediate the lived work of delivery service.	Delivery-specific labour process
Xu et al. (2025)	China; food delivery	Journal article	Navigation, time estimation, order distribution, and rating systems challenge autonomy and trigger coping strategies.	Delivery-specific algorithm interaction
Snyder (2019)	Methodological	Methodological article	Review articles require design clarity, contribution logic, and transparent synthesis.	Method support
Torraco (2016)	Methodological	Methodological article	Integrative reviews should use existing literature to create new knowledge, develop conceptual insight, and identify future directions rather than merely summarise.	Method support
Tricco et al. (2018); Peters et al. (2020)	Methodological	Reporting/guidance sources	Transparent reporting strengthens credibility in broad evidence syntheses.	Method support

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