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BECOME MANAGERS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ALGORITHMIC AUTHORITY, WORKER AGENCY, AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST IN INDIAN WORKPLACES

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Abstract
Algorithms increasingly perform managerial functions involving recruitment, task allocation, surveillance, performance evaluation, and reward distribution. This conceptual article examines how such algorithmic authority influences worker agency and organizational trust in Indian workplaces, where rapid digitalization intersects with informal employment, unequal digital capabilities, and evolving labour regulation. Drawing on the algorithmic control perspective, organizational justice theory, sociotechnical systems thinking, and social exchange theory, the article develops an integrative framework comprising four dimensions of algorithmic authority: decision automation, algorithmic surveillance, automated performance evaluation, and algorithmic task allocation. The framework proposes that algorithmic authority affects organizational trust directly and indirectly through two parallel mechanisms: worker agency and perceived organizational justice. Algorithmic transparency is proposed to moderate the relationship between authority and justice, employee participation to moderate the authority–agency relationship, and human oversight to moderate the direct authority–trust relationship. The framework is contextualized using evidence from India's expanding gig and platform economy and emerging algorithmic human resource practices. Ten testable propositions are developed to support future empirical research. The article contributes by distinguishing trust in an algorithm from trust in the organization deploying it and by explaining how organizational governance conditions shape the legitimacy of algorithmic authority. It recommends transparent, contestable, participatory, and human-supervised algorithmic management for Indian workplaces.

Keywords: *algorithmic management, algorithmic authority, employee agency, organizational trust, Indian workplaces, human resource management*

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Rise of Algorithmic Management in Contemporary Workplaces

Human supervisors are no longer used for scheduling, monitoring, evaluating and rewarding employees, any of these activities is now executed by software that crunches behavioural and performance data on the fly. Kellogg et al. (2020) call the shift the coming of "algorithms at work" which is an emergent space of contestation where control is manifested in code and not in human teaching. Algorithmic management is not the usual form of bureaucratic management, as it is continuous, opaque and adaptive, meaning that it learns from workers' actions and adjusts the next instructions.Algorithmic management is not the usual form of bureaucratic management, because it is continuous, opaque and adaptive; it learns from the actions of workers and adjusts subsequent instructions. It is a transformation that is not limited to gig companies and is now happening in traditional companies which employ analytics dashboards, automated scheduling, and AI-powered appraisal systems, thereby making managerial power an infrastructural function of everyday work, predominantly invisible (Jarrahi et al., 2021).

1.2 Relevance to Indian Workplaces

The Indian context is particularly interesting to them, given the high rate of digitalisation and the growing nature of informal employment relations and relative weaker labour protections. The gig and platform worker population is expected to grow by nearly 200 percent to 23.5 million by 2029-30 accounting for 4.1 percent of the total livelihood base of the country, according to NITI Aayog (2022). This is a level of growth at which algorithmic mediated managerial relations are likely to be in the near future managing the work lives of tens of millions of workers in India, many of whom do not have a defined employment contract or a formal grievance structure at their workplace (Nair, 2023).

1.3 Research Problem and Conceptual Gap

Current algorithmic management literature focuses on Western, platform-driven settings and mostly on platforms' control and platform workers' resistance processes between gig workers and couriers (Duggan et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2019). Algorithmic authority has not been notionally linked to agency of employees, and trust within the organizations in India's unique institutional landscape where informality and digital literacy prevalence collide with technology-mediated control (Kumar & Narayanan, 2026). Furthermore, very few frameworks have provided details regarding the mediating and boundary conditions that will impact how the use of algorithmic authority affects organizational trust, including perceptions of fairness, transparency, and worker participation.

1.4 Objectives and Theoretical Contributions

This paper addresses this gap by proposing an integrative conceptual framework and a set of testable propositions linking algorithmic authority, employee agency, and organizational trust within Indian workplaces. The objectives of the study are:

To conceptualize the dimensions of algorithmic authority and examine their theoretical relationship with employee agency in Indian organizational contexts

To develop a conceptual framework explaining how algorithmic authority influences organizational trust through the mediating role of perceived organizational justice

To identify the moderating conditions of algorithmic transparency, human oversight, and employee participation and to derive governance implications for Indian human resource practice and policy

1.5 Conceptual Development Approach

This article adopts a theory-synthesis research approach. It combines ideas from algorithmic management, organizational justice, worker agency and sociotechnical systems and organizational trust to account for the impact of the managerial authority vested in software on workers in Indian organizational contexts. Literature was purposefully chosen because it focused directly on algorithmic control mechanisms, their responses by workers, their perception of fair treatment, how they build trust in the institution and the nature of the platform and conventional workplaces in India. The framework has been built in three phases:

The dimensions of algorithmic authority were identified

Psychological and relational processes were specified that link algorithmic authority to organizational trust

Conditions of governance that can influence these processes were identified.

The propositions that result are theoretically derived, and need to be empirically tested.

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2. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Algorithmic Management, Authority, and Control

Algorithmic management involves using software algorithms to allocate tasks, track performance, assess output and reward and/or sanction with limited direct human intervention (Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022). It regulates its authority by means of restriction, recommendation, recording and rating, all actions that make up a pervasive infrastructure of organizational control as described by Kellogg et al. (2020). This control has a dual nature because it fosters worker efficiency in coordinating work, but also limits worker autonomy (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023). While it is less personal and less accountable than traditional supervisory authority, algorithmic authority often feels impersonal and unaccountable, influencing the perception of its authority among workers (Duggan et al., 2023).

2.2 Employee Agency and Organizational Trust

Employee agency is defined as employees' ability to make discretionary actions, voice concerns, and shape the working conditions despite algorithmic limitations (Möhlmann et al., 2021). Job autonomy is a part of worker agency. While agency relates to workers' capacity to interpret, negotiate, resist, or even ignore or collectively influence algorithmic rules, autonomy relates to discretion in doing things, how and when. Voice for employees is thus a representation of employee agency; however, not the same thing. Agency could be manifested on the individual level, through acts of compliance/non-compliance and workarounds, or at a communal level, in the organization of worker associations, protests on platforms and explanations/exceptions.

Following the definition of Mayer et al. (1995), organizational trust is the employees' expectation of ability, benevolence and integrity of the organization. An additional level of trust is needed between the trust in the algorithm and the trust in the organisation where the algorithm is being deployed. The level of trust in an algorithm is influenced by the competency, reliability, predictability and technical accuracy of the algorithm. Organizational trust is related to the perceived ability, benevolence, fairness and honesty of the deployer organization. The employee may be able to use an algorithm, but may not necessarily hold the true belief of what the algorithm is being used for in the organisation. In the present framework, organizational trust is thus considered the main result and trust in technology is a separate, yet related, judgement. It is theorized that the more an algorithmic system hacks away at discretion without transparency, the less agency there is for employees and trust there is for the organization (Glikson & Woolley, 2020). How fair and emotional the workers feel towards the automated decision, also influences the trust they give or don't give to the automated decision system (Lee, 2018).

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning the Framework

In this study four different theory frameworks are applied, which are complementary to each other. The algorithmic control approach is based on the role of software systems in the continuous effort of data collection and automatic intervention, supervision and discipline (Kellogg et al., 2020). It is a theory that explains how employees view the fairness of algorithmic processes, outcomes, explanations and interpersonal interactions (Bankins, et al., 2022). Algorithmic management is an artefact that is not a technical but is rather a product of the interconnectedness of technology, humans, organizational structure and institutional environment (Jarrahi et al., 2021), based on a sociotechnical systems perspective. Last, social exchange theory explains that if the organization is fair and transparent, employees will be more likely to trust and be loyal to their employers, but if the organization is harsh and unclear, employees will be more likely to oppose and distrust their employers (Moin et al., 2025).

Table 1 provides a summary of the four theoretical lenses that collectively contribute to the conceptual framework proposed in this research, the central tenets of each theory, and its specific contribution to the study of algorithmic authority at work.

Table 1. Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning the Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Perspective	Core Premise	Relevance to the Study
Algorithmic Control Perspective	Algorithmic systems exercise managerial control through restriction, recommendation, recording, rating, rewarding, and replacement mechanisms	Explains how algorithmic authority operates as a distinct managerial control mechanism

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Organizational Justice Theory	Fairness perceptions rest on distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions of decision-making	Provides the basis for perceived organizational justice as a mediating mechanism
Sociotechnical Systems Perspective	Workplace outcomes emerge from interactions among technological systems, human actors, organizational arrangements, and institutional conditions	Explains why similar algorithmic technologies may produce different agency and trust outcomes across Indian workplaces
Social Exchange Theory	Trust and cooperation emerge from reciprocal, perceived-fair exchanges between parties	Frames organizational trust as an outcome of employees' exchange relationship with the organization

3. Algorithmic Management in the Indian Workplace Context

3.1 Adoption Across Indian Industries and HR Functions

The algorithmic management is the most apparent in the ride-hailing sector, food delivery, logistics, warehousing, and digitally-enabled home service industry in India. For example, in these kinds of environments, there are applications on platforms which provide assignments, incentives, monitoring of performance and location, and penalties with minimal direct supervision (Kumar & Narayanan, 2026). Very little is available in terms of systematic evidence of the presence of algorithmic tools across industries in India; nevertheless, there are some indications that algorithmic tools are being used in workforce management functions beyond the traditional recruitment and workforce management functions, for instance, in workforce analytics or scheduling, or in performance management.

Table 2 shows examples of how algorithmic management is being used in four major HR processes that are typically automated in Indian organisations and platform businesses.

Table 2. Applications of Algorithmic Management Across Indian HR Functions

HR Function	Illustrative Algorithmic Application	Managerial Implication
Recruitment	Resume parsing, automated shortlisting, chatbot-based screening	Reduces recruiter workload but may embed opaque selection criteria
Performance Evaluation	Continuous rating systems, productivity dashboards, customer-rating aggregation	Shifts evaluation from periodic review to real-time surveillance
Scheduling	Demand-based shift and task allocation on platform applications	Increases operational flexibility while reducing worker control over hours
Rewards and Incentives	Algorithmically determined bonuses, surge pricing, and gamified incentives	Links pay directly to system-generated metrics rather than supervisory judgment

3.2 Institutional and Cultural Context

In Indian workplaces, formal corporate governance is complemented by informal labour practices, and they have a large digital divide between urban and rural areas, while organizational cultures are hierarchical in nature and influence how algorithmic instructions are received (Nair, 2023). According to a report by NITI Aayog in 2020-21, approximately 47% of the gig economy was medium skilled, 31% of the gig economy was in low skilled jobs and 22% was in high skilled jobs. Based on these estimates, there is likely to be a considerable number of platform workers who are exposed to algorithmic scheduling, algorithmic rating and incentive regimes, but are not able to engage in collective bargaining or formal grievance processes.

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3.3 Power Asymmetries, Surveillance, and Regulatory Concerns

It has been found that algorithmic surveillance in platform work in India has been linked to information asymmetry in favour of platform owners, similar to the global trend of algorithmic labour control (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). Limited discretion in these frameworks can additionally remove any moral obligation of employees that may not wish to accept autonomy-restricting orders (Jolly et al., 2026). The Code on Social Security, 2020 which will come into force on 21st November 2025, for the first time introduces a statutory definition of gig workers, platform workers and aggregators and extends social security coverage to them. The Code does not set out to create a comprehensive algorithmic transparency framework, a right to access worker data or a right to human review of the algorithmic decisions, or automated disciplinary decisions. For this implementation, the development of the rules, schemes, registration systems, and enforcement issues are also required. Social-security recognition should not be considered as a substitute for a full protection from potentially unfair algorithmic management practices.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, and the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, are two other laws that overlap with the concept of algorithmic governance in the workplace. These tools bolster the national system for processing personal data but can't effectively address issues of inequity in bargaining power, ongoing employee monitoring, analytical profiling, performance measurement of decisions taken by algorithms, or the possibility of meaningful contestation of algorithmic decisions in the workplace. Specific labour and employment protection laws are thus needed in addition to the general data-protection laws.

4. Proposed Conceptual Framework

4.1 Core Dimensions of Algorithmic Authority

This proposed framework outlines algorithmic authority in four aspects as summarized in Table 3, which all contribute to the level of managerial control employees feel while working with algorithms. The four dimensions of algorithmic authority are proposed as the independent construct in the conceptual framework as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Core Dimensions of Algorithmic Authority

Dimension	Definition
Decision Automation	The extent to which task assignment, evaluation, or reward decisions are generated by algorithms without human review
Algorithmic Surveillance	Continuous, data-driven monitoring of worker location, activity, and output
Performance Evaluation	Automated scoring, rating, and ranking of worker output against system-defined benchmarks
Task Allocation and Behavioural Control	System-directed assignment of tasks, routes, or schedules that shapes worker behaviour and discretion

While the four dimensions are connected they are a different phase of algorithmic control. Algorithmic surveillance is related to data on behaviour and performance. Automated performance evaluation is about the interpretation of these data using the techniques of scoring, ranking or classification. Decision automation is defined as how much managerial decisions are made without meaningful human review. Task allocation and behavioural control deal with the application of these decisions in terms of instructions, schedules, routes, incentives or restrictions. These conceptual boundaries are useful because they make it possible to avoid the potential for the dimensions to become confused and be used as synonyms for the same technological process. The conceptual framework of the study, which suggests a link between algorithmic authority and organizational trust via two mediating mechanisms worker agency and perceived organizational justice is presented in Figure 1. It also shows how the algorithmic transparency, worker participation, and meaningful human oversight influence these relationships.

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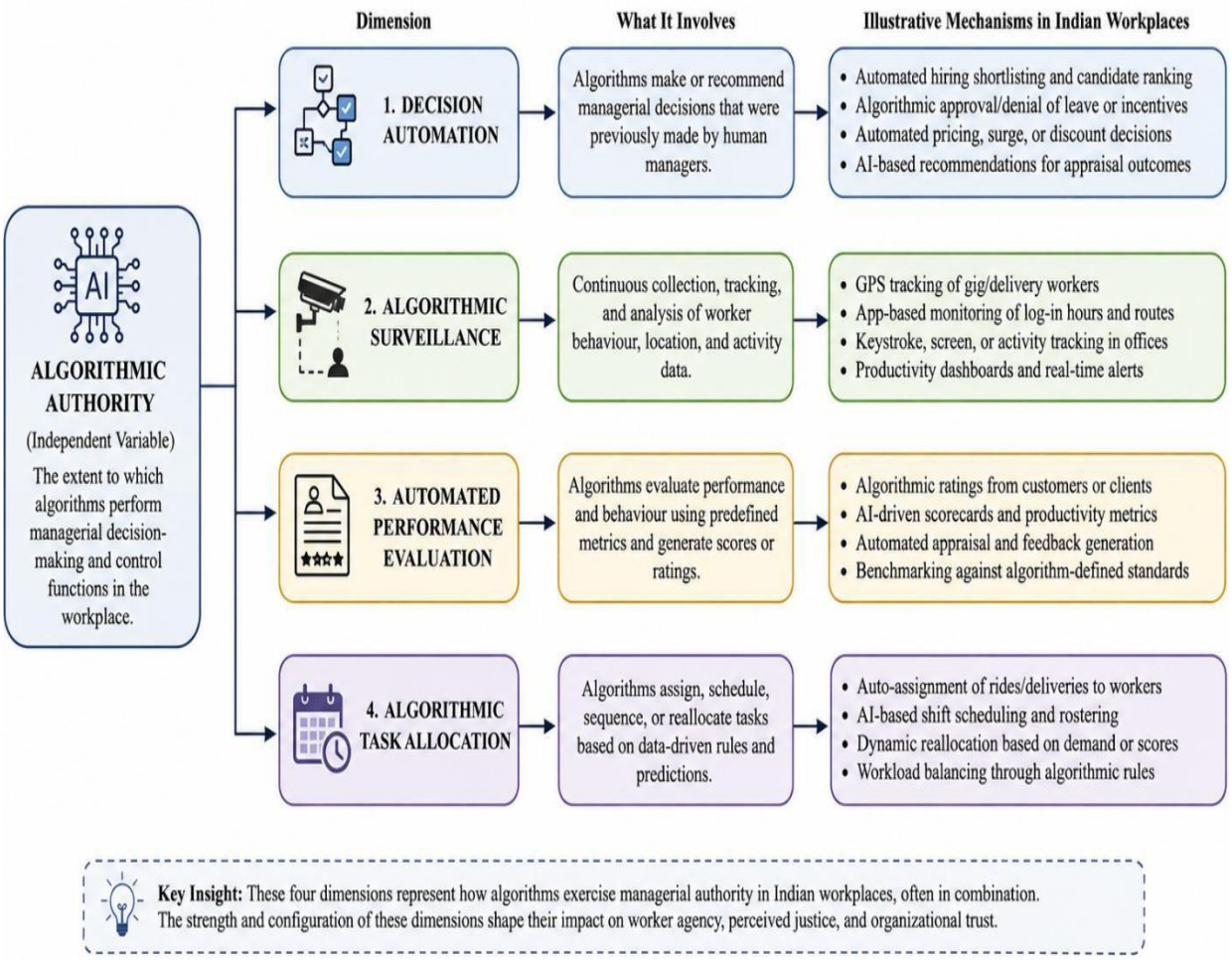


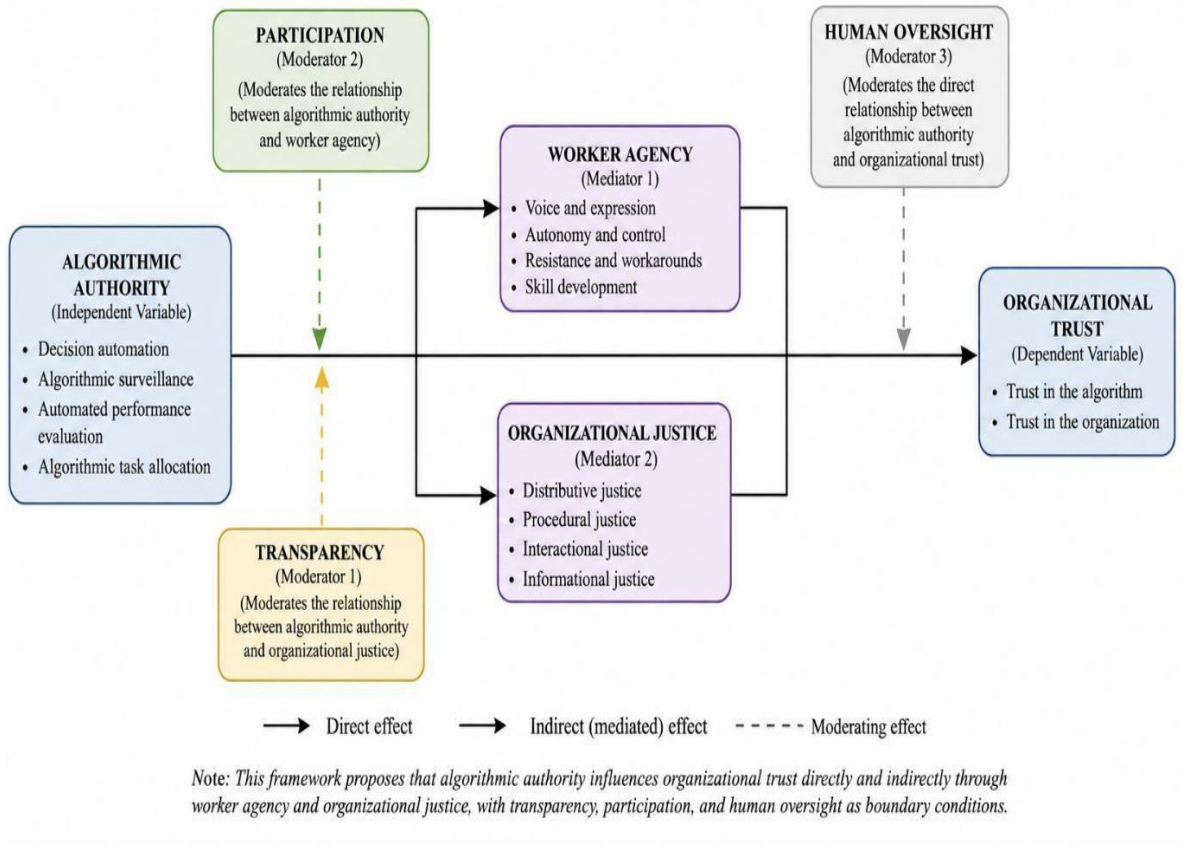
Figure 1. Components of Algorithmic Authority in Indian Workplaces: Four Dimensions and Illustrative Mechanisms

4.2 Relationships Among Algorithmic Authority, Agency, and Trust; Mediation and Moderation

The authors introduce a framework which suggests two ways in which algorithmic authority influences organizational trust: direct and indirect. First, an increased algorithmic authority can decrease worker agency through decreasing discretion, reducing voice, and increasing the difficulty of negotiating or challenging managerial rules. The reduction of agency is likely to cause a loss of trust in the organization because employees who do not have the power to make important decisions might think of the organization as not being as benevolent or as being procedurally fair. Proposed as one of the mediating mechanisms is that of worker agency. Second, the perception of organizational justice can diminish when decisions are made using algorithms that are not transparent, when there is limited or no opportunity to challenge the decision, and when the algorithmic decision is treated as impersonal by the workers.

The organizational justice dimensions of perceived procedure and perceived outcome are a parallel process, as it increases employee trust in the organization. A direct negative relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational distrust is also preserved since employees might also feel distrustful when agency and justice are statistically explained, even if the algorithm does not have an influence on them. These relationships are not always strong they rely on the governance conditions. The negative authority justice relationship is expected to be reduced by transparency, the negative authority agency relationship is expected to be reduced by employee participation and meaningful human oversight is expected to reduce the negative authority trust relationship. Figure 2 shows the four fundamental aspects by which the algorithmic authority is manifested in the current workplaces, which are decision automation, algorithmic surveillance, automated performance assessment, and algorithmic task allocation. These are separate, yet interrelated modes of how algorithmic systems impact managers' control and workers' experiences.

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Note: This framework proposes that algorithmic authority influences organizational trust directly and indirectly through worker agency and organizational justice, with transparency, participation, and human oversight as boundary conditions.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Algorithmic Authority, Mediators, and Moderators

4.3 Conceptual Propositions

4.3.1 Worker Agency as a Mediating Mechanism

Algorithmic authority can have a negative effect on worker agency by shifting decision-making power over tasks, work performance monitoring, work scheduling, and disciplinary action from workers and line managers to machines. The fewer opportunities for workers to question or alter how, when and in what order their work is conducted, the more difficult it becomes to do so when algorithmic recommendations are the ones to determine this. Further, using standardized performance measures and continuous monitoring can reduce discretion as it provides incentives for employees to be more likely to act according to system-defined indicators without using contextual judgement (Benlian et al., 2022). As such, workers' agency (P1) is hypothesized to be negatively related to higher levels of algorithmic authority. Limiting contestability also stifles worker voice. The algorithmic decision may not be transparent to workers as to the data, criteria or assumptions on which it is based, and there may be no formal processes to correct or appeal the decision. When conditions like these exist, it may seem unproductive or even hazardous to raise concerns, especially if workers are concerned about the potential for negative ratings, fewer opportunities to perform, or reprisals by management. Where workers do not receive any explanation, or meaningful reconsideration, this indicates that the organization does not value workers' experience and contextual knowledge.

Lack of agency can then result in a weakening of organizational trust. Increased trust in an organization by workers if they have some influence on decisions impacting their work and freedom to raise concerns without repercussion. On the other hand, workers' sense of being out of control may lead them to believe that algorithmic management is a tool for monitoring and one-sided control. Therefore, worker agency should be positively related to organizational trust (P2), and buffer the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational trust (P3). Yet, workers are not simply the passive objects of algorithms. They might refuse to cooperate by denying information, not completing game metrics, cooperating in combating the system, or by sneaking around the system's rules. They can also misuse algorithmic tools, basing their decisions on performance data to enhance strategies or to back up their complaints. In such responses, agency demonstrates that it is not completely absent, but rather it is limited (Jarrahi et al., 2021; Kellogg et al., 2020; Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022).

4.3.2 Organizational Justice as a Mediating Mechanism

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A second mechanism of algorithmic authority's effect on organizational trust is through organizational justice. Procedural justice is related to decisions made in an organization that are consistent, unbiased, correctable and representative. Algorithmic decisions that seem unfair, because workers are unable to make sense of the algorithm decision-making process, correct inaccurate data, and appeal an adverse decision. Distributive Justice relates to the perceived fairness of outcomes such as pay, schedules, workloads, performance ratings, promotions and access to work opportunities. If algorithms are used in an automated way to distribute favourable outcomes to a certain group of workers and not the others, those who are affected by the algorithm might doubt the algorithm's decision and the legitimacy of the organisation using it.

Informational justice relates to how well the information is communicated with respect to decisions and whether it is accurate, timely and adequate. Just saying that an algorithm was used is not enough to give an explanation of what went right or wrong. Another dimension of interactional justice, one that is often overlooked, is when consequential decisions are made without regard to the other person, and/or when managers avoid taking responsibility for the decisions by using the term "the system." Additionally, these conditions indicate that algorithmic authority could be negatively associated with perceived organizational justice (P4).

In turn, the feeling of justice will enhance corporate trust as it demonstrates that the organization treats its employees as legitimate stakeholders instead of merely inputs for information or objects to be controlled (P5). Thus, this relationship is expected to be mediated by organizational justice (P6). But most importantly, there is no substitute for transparency of procedures if they are not fair. There may be a worker who gets a very good rating but still isn't confident in a system because the criteria for that rating is not known, there is no way to correct the error, or other workers with similar responsibilities are not treated the same. Thus, outcome favourability and perceived fairness is not synonymous. Distributing fairly and procedures that are transparent, adequate explanations, respectful communication and opportunities to correct are all necessary to build sustainable trust (Bankins et al., 2022; Parent-Rocheleau et al., 2024).

4.3.3 Direct and Conditional Effects

While worker agency and organizational justice account for some of the relation, algorithmic authority could also be directly related to organizational trust. Not only is an algorithm correct, workers will also be asking why the organization has adopted it and what it will benefit for. A technically sound system can create mistrust if the workplace participants feel that it is being used as a workforce reduction, increased surveillance, cost control, or one-sided take of productivity. On the other hand, systems that claim to provide a safe, consistent or employee-developing environment will be more accepted when they are actually such. Technical performance is then seen as a mediator between algorithmic authority and agency and justice, but also between algorithmic authority and organizational trust such that agency and justice mediate the relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational trust, and after these mediators, there is a direct negative relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational trust (P7).

These effects will be conditioned by transparency but disclosure is not enough. It is better to explain to the workers that an algorithm is being used, but that alone doesn't give them any real sense of understanding. To achieve transparency, it is important to provide information on the principal reasons for decision making, on the information that was fed into the process, on the implications of a decision, on the avenues for corrections, and on the actions that can be taken to request reconsideration. These explanations help workers to evaluate consistency and errors and give constructive feedback. It should then weaken the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and perceived organizational justice (P8).

Similarly, human supervision can only be substantive in order to preserve trust. So, if it's nominal review, like when a manager has to approve an automated recommendation within a short timeframe, with limited information, expertise, and authority, it may just legitimize the algorithmic result. An effective overseeing authority must have a clearly designated reviewer, who has the authority to consider contextual evidence, go against the recommendation, give reasons and ameliorate harm. The effect of algorithmic authority on organizational trust should then dampen the direct negative influence, known as trust-algorithm, (P9).

Last, worker participation can make a difference to the impact of algorithmic authority on agency. Engaging in system design, implementation, monitoring and revision has consequences in terms of the redistribution of knowledge and decision power. Workers provide industry insight on real-life work and expose unrealistic indicators and biases, and are becoming more influential in the rules they operate by. Participation is more than just consultation, however, and must include ways by which worker involvement has the potential to influence the goals of the system, how data is utilized, worker performance measures, and the process for bringing appeals to the attention of the system. Algorithmic authority should reduce the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and worker agency (P10). Table 4 summarises the testable propositions of the framework, which will be used to empirically assess the framework in future in different Indian organizational contexts.

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Table 4. Proposed Conceptual Propositions

Proposition	Revised statement
P1	Algorithmic authority is negatively associated with worker agency.
P2	Worker agency is positively associated with organizational trust.
P3	Worker agency mediates the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational trust.
P4	Algorithmic authority is negatively associated with perceived organizational justice.
P5	Perceived organizational justice is positively associated with organizational trust.
P6	Perceived organizational justice mediates the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational trust.
P7	Algorithmic authority has a direct negative association with organizational trust after accounting for worker agency and perceived organizational justice.
P8	Algorithmic transparency weakens the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and perceived organizational justice.
P9	Meaningful human oversight weakens the direct negative relationship between algorithmic authority and organizational trust.
P10	Worker participation in algorithmic-system design weakens the negative relationship between algorithmic authority and worker agency.

Note. Propositions developed by the authors.

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1 Interpretation and Theoretical Contribution

The suggested framework proposes that algorithmic authority does not equally affect the functioning of organisations: The impact of algorithmic authority is contingent on the existence of fairness-enhancing and participatory mechanisms. This brings a new perspective on algorithmic management scholarship, which is traditionally based on the platform context in the west (Kellogg et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021), by placing the outcomes of agency and trust in the context of institutional features in India, such as informal employment arrangements and a growing gig workforce, which is projected to be 23.5 million by 2029-30 (NITI Aayog, 2022).

The framework also aligns with the growing demand for algorithmic human resource management that is more responsible and empirically-supported (Bujold et al., 2024), and for an HRM scholarship that is in tune with algorithmic technologies (Kim et al., 2025). It also builds on the "dark side" of the risks associated with the use of people analytics such as overreach of surveillance and compromised psychological safety (Giermindl et al., 2022), and adds to the study of the way AI influences organizational commitment and changing psychological contracts (Moin et al., 2025). The paper adds to organizational justice and social exchange theory approaches by bringing organizational justice and social exchange theory concepts into the non-Western, technology-mediated environment of management.

5.2 Implications for Human Resource Practice and Governance

The framework suggests that in human resource management and platform design, improving the efficiency of algorithms should be accompanied by intentional governance protections in order to maintain trust. There are a number of governance mechanisms that allow organizations to harmonize the efficiency of algorithms with employee autonomy, as described in Table 5. Table 5 provides an overview of governance strategies to allow Indian organizations to strike a balance between efficiency in algorithms and autonomy and fairness in the procedures.

Table 5. Governance Strategies for Balancing Algorithmic Efficiency and Employee Autonomy

Strategy	Description
Algorithmic Transparency Disclosure	Communicating the logic and criteria underlying automated decisions to affected employees
Human-in-the-Loop Oversight	Retaining human review for consequential decisions such as termination, penalty, or deactivation

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Participatory System Design	Involving worker representatives in the design and periodic audit of algorithmic tools
Grievance and Appeal Mechanisms	Providing accessible channels for employees to contest algorithmically generated decisions

The governance strategies have to be about more than a lip service gesture. Transparency should help to ensure that workers receive information in a manner that is understandable to them regarding variables, thresholds and consequences in a decision. Human reviewers should have the autonomy, time and context to overturn algorithmic decisions and not just rubberstamp them. The participation should start before the deployment of the system has taken place, and should be continued on a regular basis through audits and redesign. Appeal mechanisms must be available, have a time limit, are multilingual if required and are free from retaliation. Organizations should also keep documents on automated decisions, overrides, on grievances and on disparate effects on worker groups as part of their internal and external accountability.

5.3 Policy Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The implementation of the Code on Social Security, 2020 at policy level should be complemented by workplace specific provisions that ensure automated monitoring, disclosure of algorithms used in making decisions, access to data, independent auditing, grievance redressal and also provide a right to meaningful human review. The same provisions must also be used for the digital labour platforms, but also for traditional employers who are implementing algorithm-based recruitment, scheduling, performance assessment, promotion, discipline or termination processes. There are a number of things that restrict the framework.

Firstly, it is conceptually based and also is not supported by empirical research. Second, the evidence gathered in India is mostly with regard to platform work and this could reduce the transferability to the conventional organisations. Third, the framework conceptualises algorithmic authority as a multidimensional, higher-order phenomenon, whose impact of the various dimensions might vary between occupations and between type of employment arrangement. Fourth, cultural hierarchy, digital literacy, employment status, union representation and economic dependence can be other moderators. Lastly, algorithmic systems have a short lifespan and will need to be recombined as generative and agentic AI systems gain managerial competencies.

6. Conclusion

This article proposes an integrative approach to the understanding of how algorithmic authority can help redefine agency of the workers and trust within the organization in Indian context. It is an algorithmic concept of authority, involving automation of decision, surveillance, performance rating and task allocation, and clarifying the interrelatedness of these phases of software-based control. The framework suggests that the algorithmic authority affects organizational trust both directly and indirectly by reducing the agency of the worker and perceived organizational justice. It also highlights transparency, meaningful human oversight and worker participation as conditions of governance that can help to reduce these negative relationships. The framework is particularly significant for India since algorithmic work is growing on platform services and in parallel, algorithmic work is becoming a part of traditional human resource management. The implementation of the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the data-protection regime in India is lacking in certain key aspects, such as the use of algorithms in workplace decisions, constant surveillance, explanation of algorithmic decisions, and worker rights to challenge algorithmic output. Organizational responsibility needs to be more than just legal and technical correctness. It is important that systems be comprehensible, contestable, participatory and open to real human attention in order to be managed in a sustainable way algorithmically. The propositions put forward in this article serve as a starting point for empirical research in all the industries, occupations and employment forms in India. Finally, algorithmic authority will only be seen as legitimate if it is done in a way that is efficient, yet that also respects and includes the dignity of workers, their voice, their procedural fairness and responsible organizational decision-making.

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