



## Exploring Humanization in the GIG Economy: A Systematic Review of Gojek and Organizational Theories

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### ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the gig economy in Indonesia, especially through platforms such as Gojek, has reshaped work relations while leaving many workers exposed to income instability, weak social protection, and psychological strain. This article conducts a systematic literature review to examine how the humanization of work is articulated in studies on Gojek and how these studies engage with organizational management theories. Using PRISMA principles, the review identifies and synthesizes ten empirical and conceptual studies published between 2010 and 2023 that focus on Gojek or gig work in Indonesia. The findings reveal persistent tensions between algorithmic control and workers' expectations for fair treatment, recognition, and voice, as well as a fragmented use of theories such as organizational justice, psychological contracts, and organizational control. The review proposes a Three-Dimensional Humanization Conceptual Model that integrates these perspectives and highlights implications for platform governance, public policy, and future research on gig work in Indonesia.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The gig economy, mediated by digital platforms, has changed the way people work and the nature of employment relationships in countries such as Indonesia, replacing permanent contracts with task-based work through apps like Gojek. This change has opened up income opportunities for millions of people, but it has also raised concerns about income uncertainty, unequal social protection, and psychological pressure on workers who depend on algorithms and platform policies in their daily activities.

Several international and national studies have examined the dynamics of work in the gig economy, including algorithmic management, procedural justice, psychological contracts, and the social vulnerability of platform workers. Research by Gandini, Vallas & Schor, Chen & He, and Setyawan et al., for example, shows that ratings, incentive schemes, and deactivation mechanisms form a new control regime that suppresses worker autonomy and may reduce their welfare. In Indonesia, several studies on Gojek and gig workers highlight unstable income, lack of social security, and high workloads. However, discussions on how organizational management theories—such as organizational justice, psychological contracts, and organizational control—are used to interpret the experiences of gig workers are still limited and scattered across various disciplines.

A preliminary review of the literature shows that research systematically linking the perspective of work humanization with organizational management theory in the context of the gig economy in Indonesia is still very limited, especially in the case of Gojek. Most existing studies tend to separate the issue of worker welfare from managerial aspects, without providing a comprehensive conceptual framework for viewing gig workers as subjects within an organization who have dignity, a voice, and long-term relationships with the platform. In addition, many theoretical references are still tied to the Western context, making them less relevant to the unique social, cultural, and institutional characteristics of Indonesia. This situation opens up opportunities for the emergence of a more contextual model of humanization—a model that can integrate empirical findings with organizational management theory to formulate platform governance that is more equitable, sustainable, and respectful of humanity.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study applies a systematic literature review method to identify, screen, and analyze various articles discussing humanization in the gig economy, particularly those related to the Gojek platform in Indonesia. The review process was conducted following the PRISMA protocol, which consists of four main stages: literature identification, selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction, and synthesis of findings from relevant studies.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study applies a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology by following the PRISMA guidelines to ensure a structured and transparent

process in identifying, selecting, screening, and analyzing relevant literature various articles discussing humanization in the gig economy, with a focus on the Gojek platform in Indonesia. The review process was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA protocol, which consists of four main stages: literature identification, selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction, and synthesis of findings from relevant studies.

The search focused on primary publications, including journal articles, selected proceedings, and limited book chapters, in both Indonesian and English, published between 2010 and 2023. The search process was conducted using a combination of keywords such as 'Gojek', 'gig economy', 'humanization', 'welfare', and 'organizational management' to ensure that the literature obtained was comprehensive and relevant to the research focus.

Inclusion criteria include a focus on gig/platform workers in Indonesia, an examination of the humanization dimension, and the provision of empirical data or in-depth theoretical reviews. Studies that focus solely on purely economic variables, non-scientific news, or foreign contexts are excluded from the analysis.

Of the total 475 articles identified, 10 final articles were selected after undergoing title-abstract screening, full-text examination, and quality and relevance testing. The extracted data included research design, gig context or platform, organizational management theory applied, dimensions of humanization reviewed, and policy or practice implications. As data sources, this study utilized major academic databases such as Scopus; the publications searched included journal articles, selected proceedings, and relevant book chapters published between 2010 and 2023 in Indonesian and English. The keyword combination "Gojek," "gig economy," "humanization," "welfare," and "organizational management" was used in the search process to ensure that the literature found was relevant and comprehensive.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of ten relevant studies shows that Gojek gig workers in Indonesia face various forms of vulnerability, ranging from income uncertainty and weak social protection to constant psychological pressure. These findings are in line with the results of studies by Gandini (2019) and Latri (2024), which reveal that algorithmic control mechanisms tend to reinforce the dominant position of platforms while limiting workers' autonomy. On the other hand, some studies also highlight the flexibility of working hours and the opportunity to earn additional income as two factors that make gig work attractive, despite the high levels of stress and lack of job security that accompany it.

On the other hand, several studies have also observed that flexible working hours and opportunities to earn additional income are two key factors that make gig work attractive, despite the stress and lack of job security. The application of psychological contract theory in the research by Tuzovic and Kjellberg (2022) explains that narratives of partnership often contradict the lack of real support for workers, so that violations of psychological contracts become a source of dissatisfaction and burnout.

The conceptual model generated from this literature synthesis places algorithmic system design as one of the main factors influencing the work experience of gig workers. The emphasis on efficiency and productivity regulated by algorithms often conflicts with workers' expectations of reward, fairness, recognition, and space for participation. Humanizing values in the work environment begin to emerge when platforms strive to build more transparent communication, provide responsive complaint mechanisms, and involve workers in the formulation of work policies. In ideal conditions, participatory managerial interventions based on humanistic values can strengthen loyalty, increase job satisfaction, and deepen the quality of the relationship between platforms and workers.

The main implications of this review cover theoretical and practical aspects. From a theoretical perspective, the integration of organizational justice theory, psychological contracts, and organizational control is enriched through a humanization perspective, which places the human dimension as an important part of the managerial framework of the gig economy in Indonesia. Meanwhile, from a practical standpoint, the results of this study emphasize the need to reevaluate algorithmic systems, incentive and sanction governance, and strengthen more inclusive social protection policies for gig workers. The proposed Three-Dimensional Humanization Conceptual Model represents the integration of technological design, workers' subjective experiences, and equitable governance as the foundation for a more humane and sustainable platform ecosystem.

The limitations of this review include the relatively small number of studies, the dominance of qualitative approaches, and the emphasis on one main platform. Therefore, further research is needed to conduct more in-depth testing of this conceptual model on various types of platforms and to expand the scope of methods, including empirical exploration of the impact of new policies or more specific managerial interventions. Nevertheless, this study provides an important basis for efforts to strengthen the position of gig workers as dignified subjects and enrich the discourse on organizational management in the era of digital work.

Table 1. Previous Research Map (2020-2025)

<b>Researcher (Year)</b>	<b>Focus of Study</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Interrelationships Between Studies</b>
Vallas & Schor (2020)	Deprivation of agency among gig workers	Gig workers experience deprivation of agency due to strict algorithmic control	This finding is reinforced by Setyawan et al. (2021), who link deprivation of agency to the Gojek rating system.
Setyawan et al. (2021)	The rating system and its impact on workers	Criticism of the rating system that causes pressure and stress on Gojek workers	Supporting Vallas & Schor's findings on digital control and reduced worker autonomy

Researcher (Year)	Focus of Study	Key Findings	Interrelationships Between Studies
Latri (2024)	Instability of gig workers' welfare	Emphasis on mental health and social protection for gig workers	In line with Gandini (2019), who also discusses stress caused by algorithmic management
Gandini (2019)	Algorithmic management	Algorithms as a control tool that limits the autonomy of gig workers	Supported by Omid et al. (2023), who proposed adaptive management with a humanistic approach
Omid et al. (2025)	Adaptive management and humanization	Participatory managerial strategies and transparent communication improve worker welfare	Proposing solutions to digital management issues identified by Gandini and Vallas & Schor
Izza et al. (2024)	Characteristics of gig workers in Indonesia	Uncertain income and minimal social protection are major problems for gig workers	Supporting Latri's (2024) study on the social vulnerability of gig workers
(Malik et al., 2021)	Platform policies and governance	Employment policies must fully protect the rights of gig workers	Support the Indonesian government's push to revise the Labor Law

Source: data processed, 2025

Table 1, a research map compiled from studies conducted between 2020 and 2025, illustrates that the main focus of research has shifted from initial descriptions of algorithmic management and worker agency deprivation to analyses that increasingly emphasize mental health issues, social protection, and the need for fairer governance. Several studies confirm that algorithms act as invisible bosses, determining access to orders, bonuses, and sanctions, thereby limiting workers' bargaining power and reducing their sense of control over their own work. Other studies show that more participatory managerial interventions—such as transparent communication, worker involvement in policy formulation, and clear complaint mechanisms—can reduce tension and increase feelings of appreciation. This pattern reinforces the argument that humanization is not only a matter of empathy, but is directly related to the institutional and technological design that regulates work.

The review shows that humanization in gig work is basically understood as an effort to reorganize work design and platform governance to better respect the dignity, autonomy, and well-being of gig workers. Humanization is

not only related to providing adequate compensation, but also to how platforms recognize the contributions of workers as subjects who have voices, emotions, and social needs. The main dimensions of humanization that emerge from the literature include fairness in the assignment and assessment processes, algorithm transparency, recognition of workers' work and identity, social and psychological support, and opportunities for workers to participate in decisions that affect their working lives. In the context of Gojek, these dimensions are evident when studies review drivers' experiences with rating systems, bonuses, sanctions, and access to communication channels and assistance from the company.

The relevance of organizational justice theory appears strong when these studies explain workers' dissatisfaction with algorithmic mechanisms that they consider opaque and unpredictable. Procedural justice becomes the primary lens for interpreting complaints about order distribution, incentive changes, and account deactivation processes that are perceived as providing no room for clarification or appeal. Psychological contract theory complements this perspective by showing how narratives of partnership, promises of support, and the platform's image as a "partner" create certain expectations among workers, which, when unmet, lead to feelings of betrayal, frustration, and a desire to leave. Meanwhile, organizational control theory helps explain how a combination of application rules, partner identity symbols, and communication campaigns is used to direct worker behavior while minimizing resistance, so that control is not only bureaucratic and technical, but also ideological.

Although these three theoretical frameworks are widely used, explicit integration between humanization and organizational management theory in the Indonesian context is still limited. Most studies examine issues of justice, psychological contracts, or algorithmic control separately, without developing a conceptual model that integrates these dimensions into a comprehensive humanization framework. In addition, many theoretical references still adopt findings and concepts from Western contexts without adequate adjustments to Indonesian social, cultural, and institutional characteristics, such as the strong informal sector, the role of local communities, and the position of labour regulations that are currently undergoing transformation. This situation highlights an important gap: the need for a conceptual model of gig work humanization specifically designed for the context of Gojek and Indonesia, which connects algorithm design, worker experience, and platform governance within a clear organizational management theoretical framework.

The synthesis of findings also shows that the application of organizational management theory in the context of Gojek is still fragmented. Organizational justice theory is widely used to review feelings of unfairness regarding performance appraisals and incentive distribution, but it has not always been integrated with discussions of psychological contracts and organizational control. Several studies identify breaches of psychological contracts when workers feel that promises of support, security, or rewards have not been fulfilled, but few have systematically tracked the consequences for workers' intentions to leave, collective protests, or adaptation strategies.

Meanwhile, organizational control theory is commonly used to explain the role of application rules and narratives of “partnership” in shaping worker behaviour, but it is rarely explicitly linked to the humanization agenda. This situation indicates the need for a conceptual framework that better integrates these various theoretical perspectives. Based on this gap, this article proposes a Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Humanization that combines empirical findings and organizational management theory.

The first dimension focuses on system design and algorithmic control, which includes how the platform manages task distribution, performance evaluation, and sanction mechanisms. The second-dimension highlights workers' subjective experiences, such as a sense of fairness, recognition, security, and meaning of work, which can be interpreted through the lens of psychological contracts and organizational justice. The third dimension relates to governance and policy, namely a set of rules, institutional dialogue, and social protection that connects the platform, the state, and workers. The interconnection of these three dimensions is demonstrated through a conceptual flow that shows that system designs that overly emphasize algorithmic efficiency without protection and participation trigger breaches of psychological contracts and encourage exit intentions or resistance, while more humanistic managerial approaches can reduce these tensions and strengthen the sustainability of working relationships.

The results of this review have several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the proposed model extends the use of organizational justice theory, psychological contracts, and organizational control to the context of platform work in Indonesia by explicitly incorporating the dimension of humanization as a managerial goal. Practically, these findings emphasize the importance for platforms such as Gojek and policymakers to review algorithm design, assessment mechanisms, and social protection schemes to better align with the principles of fairness and respect for workers' dignity. At the same time, the review results also reveal limitations, namely the limited number of studies and the dominance of qualitative approaches with specific case contexts, necessitating further research with more diverse methodologies and across platforms to test and refine the proposed humanization model.

The review process followed PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency and reproducibility in this study. The protocol covered stages from planning to reporting and helped maintain the integrity of the review while making the methodology easier for readers to follow.

In the Identification, Screening, and Eligibility stage, which resulted in several final articles (N=10) for synthesis. The screening process was carried out in three stages: (1) Identification: Aggregates articles based on a predefined search strategy. (2) Screening: Assess the relevance of articles based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and (3) Inclusion: Select articles that meet the criteria for further analysis. presented in the diagram.

Table 2. PRISMA Stages

PRISMA Stages	Initial Articles (Based on Your Sources)	Final Article (Per Abstract)
Identification	475 articles identified from the database	475
Screening	450 articles checked by Title & Abstract	450
Issued at Screening	150 articles removed (irrelevant, non-academic, etc.)	150
Qualifying for the Qualification Level	300 (450 - 150)	300
Eligibility	300 <i>full-text articles</i> were examined.	300
Issued on Eligibility	290 were issued (non-focus Gojek/Indonesia, non-humanization, etc.).	290
Inclusion	Article inserted for Narrative Synthesis.	10

Source: data processed, 2025

Definition of Humanization: A critical analysis that humanization is a redesign of a platform control system to integrate justice, well-being, and dignity, beyond just CSR (Martínez-García & Fernández-Izquierdo, 2024). The Work Status Dilemma: An analysis of the role of Algorithmic Management as an invisible boss that moves risk (Chen & He, 2020) reinforces the need for human-centered design (Lee & Hu, 2024). But few conceptual models are contextual in Indonesia, and they integrate humanization with management theory explicitly

The main conflict in the gig economy lies in the tension between the efficiency of algorithms and the relational expectations of workers. The algorithmic control system implemented by platforms such as Gojek is designed to maximize efficiency and productivity by managing assignments, performance evaluation, and revenue distribution automatically. However, this highly algorithm-dependent approach often ignores the principle of procedural justice that demands a transparent, fair, and participatory decision-making process for workers. The lack of clarity in the decision-making mechanism and the lack of space for workers to raise objections led to a systematic sense of injustice.

In addition, the Relational Psychological Contract, which is usually rooted in interpersonal relationships and trust between workers and management, has become eroded by mechanistic and impersonal interactions through algorithms. Workers feel treated as resources controlled by the system without considering the emotional needs, attachments, and rewards that typically exist in conventional work relationships. As a result, stress, isolation, and dissatisfaction increase, disrupting workers' well-being and loyalty.

Various studies state that to overcome this conflict, a more humanist and adaptive managerial approach is needed, which integrates the principles of procedural justice and strengthens relational bonds even in a digital framework. In other words, not only must algorithms be optimized for efficiency, but mechanisms must also be developed that prioritize transparency, worker participation, and empathetic communication to restore a sense of justice and human connection in the management of gig workers. This approach is important to create a balance between the need for platform efficiency and workers' rights so that the gig economy model can be sustainable and bring prosperity to all parties.

This conceptual model adopts a modified Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework to describe the relationships between the following elements: (1) Algorithmic Control: An aspect that shows how decisions and interactions within a gig platform are controlled by algorithms, which affects the experience of workers. (2) Breach of Psychological Contract: A situation in which the worker's expectations regarding treatment and support are not met, leading to dissatisfaction. (3) Intent to Exit: An employee's desire or decision to leave a gig platform. (4) Organizational Paternalism (Humanization): An approach that prioritizes attention and support to workers, serving as a moderation variable in the relationship.

This research offers novelty by integrating the Theory of Organizational Paternalism within the framework of SOR for the context of the gig economy in Southeast Asia, providing a theoretical basis for the development of humanization output measurement instruments.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the gig economy landscape, the tension between algorithmic control and humanization approaches is a central issue that affects worker welfare. Algorithmic control, implemented through automated rating, monitoring, and task allocation systems, often limits workers' agency and causes psychological stress, such as fatigue, anxiety, and insecurity. Although algorithms offer flexibility and efficiency, many workers feel trapped by rigid performance and rating demands, making working relationships increasingly impersonal and mechanical.

In response, humanization approaches are beginning to be seen as a solution for creating a healthier and more sustainable work environment. Humanization in the gig economy emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the emotional, social, and psychological needs of workers, for example, by providing opportunities for participation, transparency, and a fair reward system. Studies show that when platforms adopt humanization principles—such as building affective trust, paying attention to work-life balance, and reducing algorithmic pressure—workers tend to be more engaged, loyal, and productive.

To realize a sustainable gig economy, it is necessary to restructure the control system from one that is entirely algorithm-based to a model that is more balanced between technology and human values. By treating workers as

individuals with hopes and needs, rather than mere resources, platforms can create a work ecosystem that is not only economically profitable but also supports the long-term mental and social health of workers.

In facing the challenges of the gig economy, there is a need for a more grounded theoretical lens that brings together insights from social psychology, organizational studies, and human resource management. Rather than treating algorithms as neutral tools, this lens views them as part of a wider social system that shapes how workers experience fairness, pressure, and belonging in their everyday work. Recent studies show that platform codes and rating systems not only distribute tasks but also quietly influence how workers see themselves, how they are judged, and how they relate to the platform.

Within this broader view, agency theory becomes particularly helpful to understand how gig workers can regain space to act, negotiate, and be heard under strong algorithmic control. When workers are given real opportunities to participate in system design, understand how key decisions are made, or transparently access their own data, they tend to feel more respected and more able to push for fairer terms. Platform models that consciously strengthen worker agency—such as cooperatively owned platforms or schemes where incentives are co-designed with workers—show that it is possible to combine efficiency with dignity and to build loyalty based on trust rather than fear.

Finally, humanization is expected to become the policy framework in formulating regulations and managerial practices in the gig economy. This approach emphasizes the importance of collaboration between workers, platforms, and regulators to create a work environment that is not only productive but also considers the social and emotional needs of workers. By involving workers' voices in the policy and system design process, the gig economy can move towards a more sustainable and equitable model.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations, so further research on this topic is still needed.

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