

ALGORITHMIC MANAGEMENT AND THE FUTURE OF WORK: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE AUTONOMY, TRUST, WELL-BEING, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL IN AI-DRIVEN WORKPLACES

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ABSTRACT

Algorithmic management has become a key part of AI-driven workplaces, changing task allocation, performance monitoring, decision-making, and control. This comprehensive review synthesizes current evidence on the implications of algorithmic management for employee autonomy, trust, well-being, and the future of work. A structured search of academic literature identified relevant studies, which was organized by thematic synthesis to explore common themes, conflicting results, theories and governance issues. The review reveals that algorithmic management can improve coordination, flexibility, and decision support, while at the same time limiting discretion by closely monitoring, standardizing the evaluation, and automating the control. Transparency, explainability, accountability, perceived fairness and contextual legitimacy are all important factors of employee trust. The wellbeing effects are also mixed; while increased efficiency may have positive effects, so can increased work intensification, psychological strain, surveillance and dehumanization. Important conditions that come to light are human-AI collaboration, participatory design, worker voice, and clear institutional protections to balance organizational efficiency with employee agency. The review suggests that the development of algorithmic management will not be solely about technologies but also about responsible governance, human oversight and work design to ensure autonomy, fairness, trust and well-being.

Keyword: Algorithmic management, Employee autonomy, Employee trust, Workplace well-being, Organizational control

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1. Introduction

The organisation of work is changing due to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to reach beyond the operational level of work and bring digital tools to the tasks previously entrusted to managers and their managerial control. One of the major aspects of this shift is algorithmic management, where data-driven systems are used to organise workers, allocate tasks, track activities, evaluate performance and shape work decisions. Algorithmic management is not one technology but rather a set of related algorithms and computational practices by which certain aspects and/or all aspects of management are delegated to algorithmic processes (Jarrahi et al., 2021). The diffusion of AI into professional settings is part of a larger trend in which intelligent technologies are becoming a part of routine practice in organizational and occupational settings (Kurian et al., 2023). The future of work is therefore more dependent than ever on the organization's ability to structure human, managerial and intelligent systems interactions.

There is a lot of room for improving organizational decision-making with AI-driven management. The synergy between human and AI capabilities can provide computational power and context-aware information, thereby complementing management knowledge and expertise in decision-making, rather than replacing it (Jarrahi, 2018). Likewise, automation with AI can complement human skills by reconfiguring work and redistributing it across technological systems and workers (Tschang & Almirall, 2021). In complex organizational settings with lots of information to be processed quickly, these features are especially relevant. AI and machine learning can aid in the process of making decisions and controlling complex tasks while reducing the amount of manual effort required and allowing for more timely and informed decision-making (Elbasheer et al., 2022). Dynamic computational methods can also illustrate how intelligent methods can be used to optimize task scheduling and resource allocation when operating conditions change (Ghelani, 2024).

Whether these efficiency-driven features are beneficial to the employee experience of algorithmically organized work has raised important questions. In particular, autonomy is important because it is possible to make technological systems flexible and at the same time limit autonomy by imposing specific rules, constant monitoring, or specific actions. Past studies indicate that job autonomy can have a positive or negative effect depending on the type, level and context of job demands (Kubicek et al., 2017). A focus on human experience also needs to be included in redesigning managerial systems, as do employee participation and involvement, which are also closely connected with well-being and organizational performance (Wood & Ogbonnaya, 2018). They gain significance in broader discussions on technological change, employment arrangements, skills, and work organization, as well as the changing quality of working life (QWL) (Balliester & Elsheikhi, 2018).

Although there is a growing number of studies on AI and work, the literature is still scattered across algorithmic control, autonomy, automation, organizational trust, well-being, and technology-mediated management. While previous research has often explored only single aspects of technology or employee outcomes, it often fails to adequately incorporate the interplay between autonomy, trust, employee well-being, and organizational control in AI-enabled work environments. This fragmentation is a hindrance to the understanding of why algorithmic management can serve as a supportive augmentation and when it's a mechanism of intensified organizational control.

This comprehensive review therefore seeks to critically synthesize the existing knowledge about algorithmic management and the future of work; to explore how algorithmic management of work affects employee autonomy, trust and well-being, and to consider the transformations in organizational control and what conditions and research priorities are required to enable more responsible and human-centred governance of work.

2. Review Methodology

A comprehensive review approach was adopted to examine current evidence on algorithmic management and its implications for employee autonomy, trust, well-being, and organizational control. Relevant literature was identified through targeted searches of academic sources using combinations of terms related to algorithmic management, artificial intelligence, workplace autonomy, employee trust, fairness, well-being, organizational control, and the future of work. Directly relevant articles from peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, scholarly reviews, and selected institutional reports were considered. The studies were filtered based on topical relevance, theoretical contribution, and applicability to AI-driven workplaces. Records that were not relevant to the study, were duplicated or were peripheral were excluded. The literature selected was then thematically structured and critically analyzed, looking for common themes, diverging results, theories, governance issues and research priorities.

3. Conceptual Foundations of Algorithmic Management

Algorithmic management is the management that uses computational systems, data and algorithmic procedures to execute or assist functions traditionally assigned to human managers. It is unique because it translates the goals of an organization into systems of data-based tools that direct, assess and coordinate employee behavior. Algorithmic management is thus not just about workplace automation; it also involves a managerial architecture to enable organizational decisions and employment relationships to be mediated by computational systems (Stark & Vanden Broeck, 2024). In the wider context, algorithmic management can be applied to task allocation, scheduling work, measuring performance, monitoring staff, evaluating performance and directing staff behavior. Such systems have the potential to reshape work organization in terms of who gets the task, how performance is made manifest, and how management is applied. The effects of their work are strongly contingent on the situation's design and the organizational context, specifically how much human discretion and employee involvement is involved in algorithmic recommendations (Wood, 2021). There has been a recent shift in the understanding of algorithmic management as an organisational change that fundamentally shifts managerial roles, relations of employment, decision authority and formal ways in which work is coordinated (Zhang et al., 2025).

One of the conceptual quandaries is whether AI replaces managerial action or enhances human managerial capacity. This paradox is referred to as the automation–augmentation paradox because AI can be used to automate certain managerial tasks and augment other managerial tasks. While automation moves the activities from human to technological systems, augmentation sets up complementary arrangements where managers and algorithms bring different competencies to bear in the decision-making process (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). The resultant configurations can greatly impact how authority is distributed among the employee, manager, and algorithmic system.

Another key conceptual underpinning is algorithmic control. Digital systems can influence behaviour in the workplace by collecting data, calculating scores, ranking, recommending, providing incentives, and providing automated feedback. The case of platform work shows that workers can enjoy significant flexibility without losing the much more algorithmic direction and evaluation that they are subject to, thus posing a challenge to the opposition between autonomy and control (Wood et al., 2019). These co-existences can be described in terms of algorithmic regulation, whereby a set of standards is set and compliance with them is monitored by a system of data, which can shape behaviour by way of computations (Yeung, 2018). These systems can be further interpreted with the use of existing organizational theories, and the responses of employees to those systems. Job Demands–Resources theory is a tool for identifying practices that create job demands (e.g., monitoring intensity, workload

pressure) and practices that provide job resources (e.g., flexibility, supports goal achievement) that support performance and that contribute to well-being (Bakker et al., 2023). The study of self-determination theory also provides insights into how algorithmic management can impact motivation, as the experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are key factors in achieving motivational outcomes; therefore, system design and implementation are key to the success of the algorithm in the context of motivation (Gagné et al., 2022). Organizational justice is another lens, as the employee's acceptance of managerial decisions is closely related to the perception of a fair and responsive organization (Burdziej et al., 2024).

Algorithmic management is a multidimensional mode of management of the work, which shifts the powers of the employee, manager and software. The implications for its organization will be influenced by the interplay between algorithmic control and human discretion, motivation of employees, job resources and perceived fairness. The implementation of algorithmic management takes place in several interconnected ways, such as task allocation, scheduling, monitoring and evaluating, decision support and behavioral control, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Core Dimensions of Algorithmic Management

Dimension	Typical Practice	Primary Function	Employee Implication
Task allocation	Automated assignment	Work coordination	Reduced or increased discretion
Scheduling	Algorithmic rostering	Time optimization	Flexibility or constraint
Monitoring	Digital tracking	Performance visibility	Surveillance pressure
Evaluation	Data-based scoring	Performance assessment	Perceived fairness concerns
Decision support	AI recommendations	Managerial assistance	Human–AI collaboration
Behavioral control	Ratings and incentives	Conduct regulation	Adaptive behavior

4. Algorithmic Management and Employee Autonomy

In algorithmically managed workplaces, one of the most important questions to consider is the extent to which work is to be done by the algorithm, and when. Discretion can be influenced by algorithmic management processes, including automated scheduling, performance monitoring, task assignment and data-driven evaluation. Research conducted in Europe suggests that such measures have significant implications for well-being at the workplace, and the maintenance of employee agency is relevant in the design of the workplace using technology (Kinowska & Sienkiewicz, 2023). Not all algorithmic

management can be limiting to autonomy. While algorithmic systems can diminish discretion in task prescription, set strict task performance standards, and track employee behavior continually, they can also help employees gain autonomy in accessing information and in how tasks are performed. In the eyes of a systematic review, this tension is a continuum between more extreme versions of Tayloristic control and systems that can enable workers to be autonomous, and outcomes are highly sensitive to the design and implementation of technologies (Noponen et al., 2024).

This is explained in part by the differences in work design. Digitalisation alone can't predict whether employees will be given more or less autonomy; organisational decisions about task structures, decision sharing, monitoring, and participation affect the impact of technology on employees' autonomy. Thus, algorithm design, that is, creating jobs that are more about control mechanisms rather than resources for employees, can have an impact on how algorithms are used and perceived (Parker & Grote, 2022). In addition, there is an alternative that is not the automation of decisions entirely, but rather the collaboration of humans and AI to ensure that decisions made in an organization are still human-centric, while the AI can offer analytical information. (Trunk et al., 2020)

But employee agency is still important when algorithmic systems exercise significant control. Workers don't always have to be passive recipients of technologically determined management practices. They can make sense of, adapt to, negotiate and challenge algorithmic demands; they assert their influence over algorithmic working conditions in individual and collective ways. Responding in this way can build a worker's resilience in the face of limiting and opaque algorithmic control (Williams & Rani, 2025). Online labor platforms also provide evidence of covert resistance, be it behavioral adaptation or strategy, to overcome or navigate algorithmically-imposed restrictions (Jiang, 2023). These dynamics are also subjecting the institutional safeguarding of employee autonomy to question. When managers make decisions based on algorithms, there can be information and bargaining power disparities if workers lack understanding of how the algorithms measure performance or how they can impact their employment. To ensure meaningful worker agency, it is important to have mechanisms in place that allow workers to comprehend, question and negotiate the conditions of their work – not just be ruled by unilateral technological systems (De Stefano, 2019).

However, the employee autonomy granted by algorithmic management is not necessarily reduced, nor is it automatically increased. It relies on work design, on meaningful human engagement, on openness and transparency, on having opportunities for workers' voices and on having workers' agency in algorithmically managed contexts. Figure 1 offers an illustration of the ways in which algorithmic management practices can limit and foster employee autonomy, and how worker agency and institutional protections mould the reactions to algorithmic control.

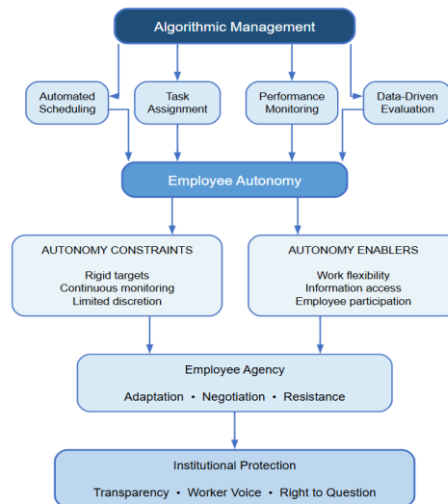


Figure 1. Conceptual Pathways Linking Algorithmic Management with Employee Autonomy, Agency, and Institutional Protection

5. Trust, Transparency, and Perceived Fairness in AI-Driven Management

Trust is key to the acceptance of AI-driven management and is essential for employee acceptance, as algorithmic systems are increasingly involved in decisions around performance, work allocation, evaluation, and opportunities. When employees feel they can trust the functioning and results of AI, they are more likely to interact with it constructively. Current evidence shows that trust is a multi-faceted construct in AI-supported decision-making influenced by the reliability of the AI system, the organizational environment, the perceived risks, and the interplay between human and AI judgment (Montealegre-López, 2025). There is a close relationship between transparency and this trust relationship, since an employee's ability to make sense of managerial decisions will be affected if the computations are not transparent. Giving appropriate explanations can enhance understanding of the processes used in making algorithmic decisions and bolster their perceived legitimacy. Transparency, however, should not be limited to the disclosure of the use of AI, but also to the presentation of intelligible information regarding the reasons, criteria and processes that lead to consequential decisions (de Fine Licht & de Fine Licht, 2020). Another imperative for ethical governance is to link transparency to accountability and inclusiveness. While there is limited protection in transparent systems, it is less effective when the responsibility for algorithmic outcomes is not clear, and when those affected by this responsibility have limited opportunities to engage in governance. A circular approach to AI ethics highlights the interdependence of three ethical principles: transparency, accountability, and inclusion, indicating that ethical implementation should be ongoing, as technical measures are not enough (Hosseini Tabaghdehi & Ayaz, 2025). Fairness, accountability, transparency and explainability are thus the interdependent aspects of responsible data-driven decision-making and not separate ethical goals (Jo & Raj, 2024).

The notion of fairness also relies on the ability to provide additional arguments beyond technical performance for algorithmic decisions. A high level of predictive accuracy does not imply that the automated decision is legitimate, especially when optimisation goals are not sufficiently social, institutional or relevant to the interests of those impacted by the decision. When assessing AI-driven management, it is necessary to consider the suitability of decision criteria and organizational purposes besides predictive performance (Wang et al., 2024). The attitudes of employees to AI can also differ by social and cultural contexts in which employees are introduced to such technology. Existing research

on cultural orientations shows that the way employees adopt and respond to intelligent technologies is linked to overall organizational and cultural contexts of use, highlighting the need to consider cultural contexts when assessing how employees experience employee autonomy and creative self-efficacy in the presence of AI (Xavier & Korunka, 2025). Trust-building strategies should therefore not be universal, but take into consideration the differences in expectations in terms of autonomy, authority, participation and technology among employees.

Trust in AI-powered management requires more than simply accuracy in the algorithms. To achieve sustainable employee acceptance, it is important to make decisions that are understandable, accountable, are meaningful, and are sensitive to the organizational and cultural context in which algorithmic systems have managerial influence. In this summary, I have captured key insights from the various factors that influence perceived fairness, trust in AI in the workplace, and the legitimacy of such algorithms, a topic that was explored in detail by the group. The group had a detailed discussion about factors that influence perceived fairness, employee trust and the legitimacy of AI-driven management, and I have summarized the key findings in Figure 2.

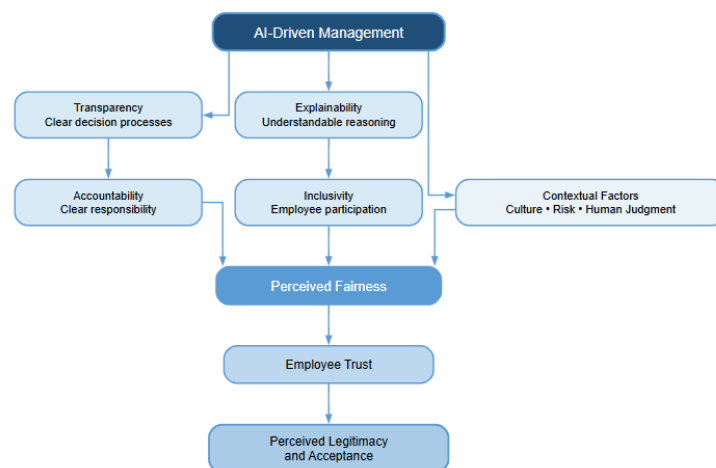


Figure 2. Pathways Linking Transparency, Fairness, Trust, and Legitimacy in AI-Driven Management

6. Employee Well-Being and the Human Consequences of Algorithmic Control

With the advent of algorithmic systems that are central to workload, performance expectations, communication and managerial decision-making, employee well-being is a critical concern. When technology is used simply for increased efficiency and the psychological and social aspects of the employee have not been taken into account, Human–AI interaction can have unwanted side effects. Findings of entrepreneurial companies suggest that the consequences of AI integration are multifaceted and result in various well-being effects, thus stressing the importance of understanding how employees feel and cope with an AI-driven working world (Zheng et al., 2025). Algorithmic management can impact occupational health in interrelated psychosocial ways. Uncertainty of algorithmic decisions, limited decision latitude, work intensification, automated evaluation, and continuous monitoring can be workplace stressors. The growing evidence of algorithmic working and stress, mental health, occupational safety and worker health issues in general is largely correlational, with important gaps in empirical evidence on medium- and long-term and context-specific impacts (Vignola et al., 2023).

Algorithmic control is most significant where there is low worker control over the standards of performance and management. The digital mediation of control can influence workers' behaviour and wellbeing through both the methods by which performance is monitored, evaluated and rewarded. These

are mechanisms which show algorithmic control is not only an operational tool, but also a managerial arrangement which can shape employees' psychological reactions and behavioral adaptations (Cram et al., 2020). Human side effects are more noticeable when production is turned into quantifiable results, and workers are not given interpersonal recognition. Studies of digital platforms link algorithmic management to issues of dehumanisation of work, as this intensification of technological control reduces the quality of human interaction and reduces the quality of work, mostly measured by indicators, ratings and algorithm scores (Darmawan, 2024). However, managerial decision-making with the help of AI must take into account the impact of human judgment and organizational responsibility in situations where the technology system affects crucial decisions at work (Çeri & Erhan, 2025). An important avenue of participation for addressing these risks is through the work of employees. The participatory algorithmic management is about engaging employees in the process of defining the values, preferences, and priorities of algorithmic systems that will affect their lives. The approaches used to elicit worker-centred models of well-being illustrate how worker knowledge can be used for designing algorithms instead of being understood only as a target for automated management of workers (Lee et al., 2021). This engagement can help to expand the scope of system goals beyond productivity and allow organisations to identify aspects of working life that can be overlooked by traditional measures of performance.

Employee wellness under algorithmic control is dependent on the balance between technological efficiency and psychological well-being, the meaning of the work, the role of humans and the role of employee participation. For human-centred algorithmic management, well-being needs to be considered as a central design and governance goal and not merely a side effect of the technology. The impacts of algorithmic management on employee outcomes are not necessarily negative; Table 2 illustrates the relationship between each of the ALM conditions and employee outcomes.

Table 2. Employee-Level Consequences of Algorithmic Management

Employee Dimension	Potential Benefit	Potential Risk	Key Condition
Autonomy	Flexible task execution	Reduced discretion	Work design
Trust	Consistent decisions	Algorithmic distrust	Transparency
Fairness	Standardized evaluation	Perceived bias	Explainability
Well-being	Reduced routine burden	Stress and strain	Workload control
Agency	Better information access	Restricted influence	Worker voice
Motivation	Goal clarity	Loss of self-determination	Human involvement

7. Organizational Control, Future of Work, and Research Agenda

Algorithmic management is changing how organizations are managed, transferring some of the tasks of managing, coordinating, and regulating performance from humans to data. This is not to say that it removes organisational politics or employee participation, but rather that it alters the nature of the relationship with and the exercise of authority by employees. The allocation of decision authority is a key question in digitally transformed workplaces, as research proves algorithmic management can be a way to enhance managerial control while simultaneously providing new opportunities for workers to participate in decision-making (Krzywdzinski et al., 2025). Algorithmic control can also take place in ways that are not as overt as managerial control. Workers can adjust their behaviour in response to performance measures, ratings and incentives, and platform rules even if they are not directly supervised by humans. Food delivery apps provide examples of how workers can agree to and take on the algorithms that regulate them: organizational control can be enacted both from the outside and from the inside, and it is possible to consent to and internalize algorithms as other means of control (Galière, 2020).

So, the idea that intelligent systems will soon replace managers in the making of decisions in an organisation is not likely to become a reality. While both human and artificial intelligence have unique strengths, they can be leveraged together in making decisions to best fit an organization, especially when computational analysis needs to be coupled with context and strategy (Trunk et al., 2020). Human-machine collaboration is also a governance option that involves algorithmic capacity as an enabling tool to perform managerial functions but in which meaningful human participation is a key part of the decision process (Haesevoets et al., 2021). The shift in thinking from AI's role in management to the distribution of responsibility versus decision rights between people and intelligent systems. The governance aspect is particularly relevant when algorithmic systems are used for the purposes of supervision, compliance and decision-making, which have implications. The risks associated with algorithmic authority, algorithmic governance, algorithmic accountability and the proper scope of automated decision-making are introduced by intelligent transformation. Risk-prevention strategies thus must evolve with the introduction of technology, enabling organizations to put in place safeguards that are able to detect and resolve new governance issues (Zhang & Li, 2025).

There are some priorities for future studies that remain from the existing literature. Further longitudinal and multi-level studies are required to determine the longer-term impact of algorithmic control in an organization and the variance in impact among employees, teams, occupations, and institutional contexts. Conventional workplaces should not be compared with gig work, but a comparison should be made between the two rather than between traditional and platform-based workplaces. There is a need also to focus more on generative AI, increasingly autonomous workplace agents, employee involvement in algorithm design, contestability of automated decisions and the new accountability of human managers. Moving forward, further research is needed to combine organizational performance metrics with outcomes related to employees to assess which human-AI combinations are most likely to maintain productivity while reducing the need for greater autonomy, trust, fairness, and well-being. How companies share control, participation and accountability between people and machines will determine the future of algorithmic management. Future studies need to shift the focus from automation compared with human management to find governance structures that integrate human responsibility and accountability for governance with the capabilities of technology.

The organizational implications of algorithmic management are not limited to the issue of technology uptake, but also include issues of authority, transparency, participation and accountability, as highlighted in the main governance and research issues presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Organizational Governance and Future Research Priorities

Area	Current Challenge	Governance Need	Research Priority
Decision authority	Human–AI role ambiguity	Clear responsibility	Decision-right models
Transparency	Opaque algorithms	Explainable processes	Explainability effects
Participation	Limited worker voice	Employee involvement	Participatory design
Accountability	Diffused responsibility	Human oversight	Accountability models
Work design	Control–autonomy tension	Balanced job design	Longitudinal studies
AI evolution	Autonomous systems	Adaptive governance	Generative AI research

8. Conclusion

The future of work is changing with algorithmic management, by delegating managerial power among employees, human managers, and intelligent systems. Its consequences are not necessarily good or bad; they are dependent upon the design, governance and work practices of algorithmic control. Employee autonomy can be compromised by monitoring and by having tight targets and automated decision-making processes in place, but it can also be supported by flexible working, genuine human involvement and access to relevant information. When AI-driven decisions are opaque, lack transparency, and are not well governed, they can compromise trust and acceptance; when they're transparent, explainable, accountable, and perceived as fair, they foster trust and acceptance. There is also a precarious relationship between efficiency requirements and psychological, social and participatory requirements of employees. In the future, algorithmic management will not only rely on the technical sophistication of the algorithm, but on responsible organisational design. As AI evolves to work more independently, it must continue to be guided by human values and practices of worker voice, participatory governance, clear accountability, and context-specific implementation. Longitudinal, multilevel, cross-sector, and generative-AI studies are needed to better understand governance mechanisms that can ensure continued performance without compromising autonomy, trust, fairness, or well-being, as well as inform future research.

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