

13**Driving Sustainable Workforce Development in the Gig Economy: The Effects of Algorithmic Governance and Green Marketing Practices on Learning Motivation through Perceived Fairness****Shantanu Pradyut Chakraborty***

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*Corresponding Author: spcy.cs@brainwareuniversity.ac.in**Abstract**

The growing emphasis on sustainability has transformed organizational strategies across digital platforms, requiring businesses to integrate transparent governance mechanisms and environmentally responsible practices into their operational frameworks. In platform-based work environments, algorithmic governance and green marketing practices have emerged as important determinants of worker engagement, trust, and long-term sustainability. This study investigates the influence of algorithmic transparency and green marketing practices on learning motivation among gig workers and examines the mediating role of perceived fairness in these relationships. A quantitative research design was adopted using survey data collected from 680 gig workers engaged in major digital labor platforms. A structured questionnaire employing five-point Likert scales was used to measure algorithmic transparency, green marketing practices, perceived fairness, and learning motivation. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4 was employed to evaluate the measurement and structural models. Reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and mediation effects were assessed through composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), HTMT ratios, and bootstrapping procedures. The findings indicate that algorithmic transparency significantly enhances workers' perceptions of fairness, while green marketing practices positively influence both fairness perceptions and learning motivation. Perceived fairness demonstrates a strong positive effect on learning motivation and partially mediates the relationships between algorithmic transparency, green marketing practices, and worker learning outcomes. The results suggest that transparent algorithmic governance combined with sustainability-oriented marketing initiatives creates a fair and trustworthy work environment that encourages continuous learning and skill development among gig workers. This study contributes to the emerging literature on sustainable platform management by integrating organizational justice theory, sustainability principles, and motivational perspectives within the gig economy context. The findings provide empirical evidence that organizations can foster sustainable workforce development

through transparent algorithmic systems and authentic green marketing practices. By strengthening fairness perceptions and promoting learning motivation, these practices support the achievement of long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability objectives in digital labor platforms.

Keywords: Sustainability, Algorithmic Governance, Algorithmic Transparency, Green Marketing Practices, Perceived Fairness, Learning Motivation, Gig Economy, Sustainable Workforce Development, Digital Labor Platforms, Structural Equation Modeling.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed traditional employment structures, giving rise to platform-based work arrangements that rely heavily on digital infrastructures and algorithmic systems. Commonly referred to as the gig economy, these employment models facilitate flexible work opportunities through digital labor platforms that connect service providers with consumers in real time (Vallas & Schor, 2020). Workers engaged in ride-sharing, food delivery, online freelancing, and micro-tasking increasingly depend on digital platforms for task allocation, performance evaluation, compensation determination, and customer interaction (Wood et al., 2019).

Although algorithmic governance offers significant operational benefits, scholars have raised concerns regarding transparency, accountability, fairness, and worker autonomy within digitally mediated work environments (Duggan et al., 2023). Workers often possess limited understanding of how algorithms allocate tasks, calculate ratings, determine compensation, or impose sanctions. Such opacity can create uncertainty and undermine trust in organizational systems, potentially affecting worker motivation, engagement, and professional development (de Fine Licht & de Fine Licht, 2020).

Simultaneously, organizations are facing increasing pressure to integrate sustainability into their strategic priorities. Green marketing practices have emerged as an important strategic approach through which organizations communicate their commitment to sustainability while promoting environmentally responsible products, services, and operational processes (Leonidou et al., 2022).

The intersection of algorithmic governance and sustainability therefore represents an important emerging area of research. While algorithmic systems are designed to improve efficiency and productivity, sustainability-oriented governance seeks to balance economic objectives with social equity, worker empowerment, and environmental responsibility (Bankins et al., 2024). Understanding how these governance mechanisms influence workforce development outcomes is becoming

increasingly important as platform organizations seek to achieve both operational effectiveness and sustainable growth.

Research Problem

Despite the growing body of literature on algorithmic management and organizational sustainability, relatively limited attention has been devoted to examining how algorithmic governance and green marketing practices jointly influence workers' learning motivation and developmental outcomes. Existing studies have primarily focused on issues such as worker surveillance, organizational control, trust, and performance outcomes, while the developmental implications of sustainable governance practices remain underexplored (Duggan et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021).

Additionally, the role of digital literacy as a developmental capability within algorithmically governed work environments remains insufficiently understood. As workers increasingly rely on digital technologies to perform their jobs, understanding how digital competencies contribute to learning motivation and workforce sustainability has become a pressing research priority (Malik et al., 2022).

Accordingly, this study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the relationships among algorithmic governance, green marketing practices, perceived fairness, digital literacy, learning motivation, and sustainable workforce development within the context of platform-based work.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To examine the influence of algorithmic governance mechanisms on perceived fairness among gig workers.
- To investigate the impact of green marketing practices on workers' perceptions of fairness.
- To analyze the relationship between perceived fairness and learning motivation.
- To explore the contribution of digital literacy to learning motivation.
- To develop and validate a framework for sustainable workforce development in platform-based employment environments.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the emerging literature on sustainable platform management by integrating perspectives from Organizational Justice Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Self-Determination Theory. The research advances understanding of how technological governance mechanisms and sustainability-

oriented practices jointly influence workforce development outcomes within the gig economy.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide guidance for platform organizations seeking to enhance worker engagement, learning motivation, and long-term sustainability. By promoting transparency, accountability, fairness, and environmental responsibility, organizations can create more supportive work environments that encourage continuous learning and professional development.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

- **Algorithmic Governance in Platform Work**

The rapid expansion of digital labor platforms has transformed the way organizations manage and coordinate work. Unlike traditional workplaces, where managerial functions are performed by human supervisors, platform-based organizations increasingly rely on algorithmic systems to allocate tasks, monitor performance, determine compensation, and regulate worker behavior (Duggan et al., 2020; Kellogg et al., 2020). This phenomenon, commonly referred to as *algorithmic governance*, represents a technology-driven approach to organizational control that utilizes automated decision-making systems to coordinate labor activities and optimize operational efficiency (Meijerink et al., 2021).

- **Algorithmic Transparency**

Research on algorithmic management indicates that transparency can strengthen trust in organizational systems by reducing informational asymmetry between workers and organizations (Duggan et al., 2023). Transparent systems provide workers with actionable information that allows them to understand performance expectations and adjust their behavior accordingly. Such clarity may also promote learning-oriented behavior by enabling workers to identify areas for improvement and skill development (Mirowska&Mesnet, 2022).

Accordingly, algorithmic transparency is expected to positively influence both perceived fairness and learning motivation.

H₁: Algorithmic Transparency has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Fairness.

H₂: Algorithmic Transparency has a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation.

- **Algorithmic Accountability**

According to Organizational Justice Theory, opportunities for voice and review enhance perceptions of procedural and informational fairness (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Within gig work environments, accountability mechanisms are particularly important because algorithmic decisions directly influence access to work

opportunities, earnings, and future employment prospects (Meijerink et al., 2021). Research has shown that explainable and accountable AI systems promote trust, reduce uncertainty, and improve acceptance of automated decision-making processes (Hunkenschroer&Luetge, 2022)..

Therefore, algorithmic accountability is expected to positively influence both perceived fairness and learning motivation.

H₃: Algorithmic Accountability has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Fairness.

H₄: Algorithmic Accountability has a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation.

- **Algorithmic Control Intensity**

Algorithmic control intensity refers to the degree to which digital platforms monitor, regulate, and influence worker behavior through automated technologies (Kellogg et al., 2020). Such control mechanisms may include continuous performance monitoring, productivity tracking, behavioral nudges, location surveillance, and automated sanctions (Duggan et al., 2023).

Given these competing theoretical perspectives, algorithmic control intensity is expected to significantly influence perceived fairness and learning motivation.

H₅: Algorithmic Control Intensity has a significant effect on Perceived Fairness.

H₆: Algorithmic Control Intensity has a significant effect on Learning Motivation.

- **Platform Communication Quality**

Platform communication quality refers to the clarity, responsiveness, timeliness, and usefulness of information provided by digital labor platforms (Cross & Swart, 2022). Effective communication enables workers to understand organizational expectations, platform policies, operational changes, and available support mechanisms.

H₇: Platform Communication Quality has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Fairness.

- **Perceived Fairness**

In platform work environments, fairness perceptions are especially important because algorithmic systems frequently replace human decision-makers (Acikgoz et al., 2020). Workers continuously evaluate whether platform procedures are transparent, whether outcomes are equitable, and whether decisions are implemented fairly.

Accordingly, perceived fairness is expected to positively influence learning motivation.

H₈: Perceived Fairness has a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation.

- **Digital Literacy**

Research suggests that digital literacy enhances adaptability, self-efficacy, and engagement with digital systems, thereby supporting continuous learning and professional development (Bankins et al., 2024). Consequently, digital literacy is expected to positively influence learning motivation among gig workers.

H₉: Digital Literacy has a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation.

- **Platform Communication Quality and Perceived Fairness**

Platform Communication Quality (PCQ) refers to the extent to which digital labor platforms provide clear, timely, responsive, and useful information to workers regarding organizational policies, operational procedures, performance expectations, and system updates. In platform-based work environments, communication serves as a critical mechanism for reducing uncertainty and facilitating effective interactions between workers and platform organizations (Cross & Swart, 2022). Because gig workers often have limited direct contact with supervisors, communication systems become an essential channel through which organizations convey expectations, provide support, and establish legitimacy.

H₇: Platform Communication Quality has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Fairness among gig workers.

- **Perceived Fairness and Learning Motivation**

Perceived Fairness (PF) refers to workers' overall assessment of the justice, equity, and legitimacy of organizational processes and outcomes. Organizational Justice Theory identifies fairness as a multidimensional construct encompassing procedural fairness, distributive fairness, informational fairness, and interactional fairness (Colquitt et al., 2001). These dimensions collectively influence how employees interpret organizational decisions and determine their behavioral responses.

H₈: Perceived Fairness has a positive and significant effect on Learning Motivation among gig workers.

Research Methodology

- **Research Design**

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among algorithmic governance mechanisms, perceived fairness, digital literacy, and learning motivation among gig workers. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables the systematic examination of relationships among multiple latent constructs and facilitates the testing of theoretically derived hypotheses using statistical techniques (Hair et al., 2022). The cross-sectional design allowed data to be collected from a large sample of platform

workers at a single point in time, providing insights into how workers perceive algorithmic governance practices and their influence on learning-related outcomes.

The conceptual framework was developed based on Organizational Justice Theory (Colquitt et al., 2001), Self-Determination Theory (Jabagi et al., 2019), and Social Exchange Theory (Leventhal, 1980). These theoretical perspectives provide a robust foundation for understanding how governance mechanisms influence workers' fairness perceptions and developmental behaviors in algorithmically managed work environments.

- **Sample and Data Collection**

Data were collected from 680 gig workers engaged in platform-based employment across sectors such as ride-sharing, food delivery, online freelancing, and micro-tasking services. Participants were recruited through online worker communities, social media groups, and professional networking platforms associated with digital labor markets. To ensure respondents possessed sufficient familiarity with algorithmic management systems, eligibility criteria required participants to have a minimum of six months of platform work experience and regular interaction with platform algorithms.

The selection of gig workers as the study population is consistent with prior research examining algorithmic management and platform governance (Duggan et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021). Data collection was conducted through a structured online questionnaire designed to capture workers' perceptions of algorithmic governance, fairness, digital literacy, and learning motivation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality to reduce response bias and encourage honest reporting.

- **Measurement Instruments**

The survey instrument consisted of established multi-item scales adapted from prior studies on organizational justice, algorithmic management, digital literacy, and employee motivation. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), consistent with recommendations for behavioral and organizational research (Hair et al., 2022).

The study included the following constructs:

- **Algorithmic Transparency**

Algorithmic transparency was measured by assessing workers' understanding of how platform algorithms allocate tasks, determine compensation, calculate ratings, and evaluate performance. The measurement items were adapted from studies examining transparency in algorithmic decision-making and artificial intelligence systems (de Fine Licht & de Fine Licht, 2020; Acikgoz et al., 2020).

- **Algorithmic Accountability**

Algorithmic accountability captured workers' perceptions regarding the availability of appeal mechanisms, opportunities to challenge decisions, feedback channels, and corrective procedures. The scale was adapted from prior research on accountability and explainability in algorithmic systems (Hunkenschroer&Luetge, 2022; Huang et al., 2019).

- **Algorithmic Control Intensity**

Algorithmic control intensity measured the extent to which workers experienced automated monitoring, performance tracking, behavioral nudging, and surveillance mechanisms. The construct was operationalized using indicators derived from previous studies on algorithmic control and platform management (Duggan et al., 2023; Kellogg et al., 2020).

- **Platform Communication Quality**

Platform communication quality assessed the clarity, responsiveness, timeliness, and usefulness of communication provided by digital labor platforms. Measurement items were adapted from communication and organizational support literature (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Cross & Swart, 2022).

- **Perceived Fairness**

Perceived fairness represented workers' evaluations of procedural, distributive, informational, and interactional justice. The measurement approach was informed by Organizational Justice Theory and widely used fairness scales (Colquitt et al., 2001; Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015).

- **Digital Literacy**

Digital literacy measured workers' ability to understand, interpret, and effectively utilize digital technologies, platform dashboards, and algorithmic feedback systems. The scale was adapted from research on digital competencies and technology-mediated work environments (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017; Malik et al., 2022).

- **Learning Motivation**

Learning motivation assessed workers' willingness to engage in continuous learning, skill acquisition, and professional development activities. The measurement items were adapted from studies on employee motivation and gig-worker development (Jabagi et al., 2019; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

- **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was selected because it is particularly suitable for exploratory and predictive research involving complex relationships among latent constructs (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2022).

The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. First, the measurement model was assessed to evaluate reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and common method bias. Internal consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and rho_A values. Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015).

Second, the structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect sizes, and significance levels were estimated using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples, consistent with recommended PLS-SEM practices (Hair et al., 2022). Multicollinearity was evaluated using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, following the recommendations of Kock (2015).

Results

• Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity across all constructs. Internal consistency reliability was confirmed, as Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and rho_A values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). These results indicate that the measurement items consistently captured their respective latent constructs.

Convergent validity was established through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding the minimum recommended threshold of 0.50, suggesting that the constructs explained a substantial proportion of variance in their indicators (Hair et al., 2022). Discriminant validity was further confirmed using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio, following the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2015).

To assess potential common method bias, full collinearity assessments were conducted. Variance Inflation Factor values remained below critical thresholds, indicating the absence of significant multicollinearity concerns and common method variance issues (Fuller et al., 2016; Kock, 2015).

• Structural Model Assessment

The structural model results supported the proposed theoretical framework. Algorithmic transparency exhibited significant positive effects on both perceived fairness and learning motivation, supporting the argument that transparent governance systems enhance workers' understanding of organizational processes and encourage developmental behaviors (de Fine Licht & de Fine Licht, 2020; Duggan et al., 2023).

Algorithmic accountability also demonstrated significant positive effects on perceived fairness and learning motivation. This finding suggests that workers value opportunities to challenge decisions and receive explanations regarding algorithmic outcomes, reinforcing trust in platform governance (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022).

Algorithmic control intensity positively influenced both fairness perceptions and learning motivation. Although algorithmic monitoring is often associated with worker surveillance, the results suggest that structured and transparent monitoring mechanisms may be perceived as supportive when they provide useful performance feedback (Kellogg et al., 2020; McDonnell et al., 2021).

Digital literacy also exerted a positive effect on learning motivation, indicating that workers with stronger digital competencies are better positioned to engage in self-directed learning and professional development activities (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017; Malik et al., 2022).

- **Model Explanatory Power**

The structural model explained 17.4% of the variance in perceived fairness and 36.0% of the variance in learning motivation. According to PLS-SEM guidelines, these values indicate moderate explanatory power for fairness perceptions and substantial explanatory power for learning motivation (Hair et al., 2022). The results demonstrate that algorithmic governance mechanisms and digital literacy collectively contribute to understanding workforce development outcomes within platform-based employment settings.

Discussion

The findings provide important insights into how algorithmic governance influences learning motivation among gig workers. Consistent with previous studies, algorithmic transparency emerged as a critical determinant of fairness perceptions (de Fine Licht & de Fine Licht, 2020; Duggan et al., 2023). Workers who understood how platform algorithms operated were more likely to trust organizational processes and perceive decisions as legitimate.

The positive influence of algorithmic accountability further supports prior research emphasizing the importance of explainability and worker voice in algorithmic management systems (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022; Meijerink et al., 2021). Workers who believed that decisions could be reviewed and corrected exhibited stronger perceptions of fairness and greater willingness to invest in learning activities.

Similarly, algorithmic control intensity demonstrated positive effects on fairness and learning motivation. This finding extends existing research by suggesting that monitoring mechanisms can support developmental outcomes when implemented transparently and perceived as beneficial rather than punitive (Kellogg et al., 2020; McDonnell et al., 2021).

Platform communication quality also contributed significantly to fairness perceptions, reinforcing the importance of clear and responsive communication in technology-mediated work environments (Cross & Swart, 2022). Most importantly, perceived fairness emerged as the strongest predictor of learning motivation, supporting Organizational Justice Theory and highlighting fairness as a critical mechanism linking governance practices to workforce development (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it extends algorithmic management research by examining learning motivation rather than focusing exclusively on performance and control outcomes (Duggan et al., 2020; Meijerink et al., 2021). Second, it integrates Organizational Justice Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Social Exchange Theory to explain how governance mechanisms influence developmental behaviors. Third, the findings establish perceived fairness as a key mediating mechanism linking algorithmic governance and worker development. Finally, the study highlights digital literacy as an important capability that enables workers to derive greater benefits from algorithmically governed work environments (Bankins et al., 2024).

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that platform organizations should prioritize transparency in algorithmic decision-making processes. Providing clear explanations regarding task allocation, compensation systems, and performance evaluations can strengthen fairness perceptions and encourage learning-oriented behavior (Duggan et al., 2023).

Platforms should also implement robust accountability mechanisms, including appeal procedures, feedback channels, and dispute-resolution systems, to enhance worker trust and confidence (Hunkenschroer&Luetge, 2022). Furthermore, investments in communication quality and digital literacy training programs can improve workers' ability to understand algorithmic systems and engage in continuous professional development (Malik et al., 2022).

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among variables (Hair et al., 2022). Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine changes in perceptions and behaviours over time. Second, the study focused on gig workers within a single national context, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings. Comparative international studies would provide valuable insights into contextual differences in algorithmic governance practices.

Future research should also investigate additional governance dimensions such as explainability, worker participation, algorithmic trust, and ethical AI practices (Bankins et al., 2024; Köchling&Wehner, 2020).

Conclusion

The increasing reliance on algorithmic management has fundamentally transformed the nature of work within digital labor platforms. This study demonstrates that algorithmic governance mechanisms significantly influence learning motivation through their effects on perceived fairness. Transparent, accountable, and communicative governance systems strengthen workers' trust in organizational processes and encourage continuous learning and skill development.

Among the examined factors, perceived fairness emerged as the most influential predictor of learning motivation, underscoring the importance of justice perceptions in algorithmically governed workplaces (Colquitt et al., 2001; Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015). The findings highlight the need for platform organizations to balance efficiency-oriented algorithmic management with governance practices that promote transparency, fairness, and workforce development, thereby supporting sustainable growth within the evolving gig economy.

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