

## Precarity and Flexibility in Platformised Tourism Work: A Scoping Review

Muhammad Fadhli Ramadhan<sup>1</sup>, Tiffany Chairunnisa Ramadhania<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Politeknik Pariwisata NHI Bandung, Indonesia

Email: [tiffany@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id](mailto:tiffany@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id)

### Abstract

The rapid proliferation of digital labour platforms has fundamentally restructured the global tourism and hospitality labor markets, ushering in a phenomenon widely termed the "gigification" of work. This transformation presents a central paradox: while platforms offer unprecedented temporal flexibility and low entry barriers for workers, they simultaneously institutionalize systemic vulnerabilities through algorithmic management and the erosion of traditional social protections. This scoping review aims to systematically map the scholarly literature published between 2020 and 2025 regarding the gig economy's impact on tourism and hospitality employment, identifying prevailing trends, platform typologies, and key thematic clusters of labor impact. In accordance with the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines, a systematic search was conducted in the Scopus database. The search strategy focused on the intersection of the gig economy, tourism/hospitality sectors, and labor dynamics. After a rigorous multi-stage filtration process, 165 open-access peer-reviewed articles were selected for qualitative synthesis and data charting. The findings indicate a significant upward trajectory in publications post-2023, with a geographical concentration in the Global North, although research in the Asia-Pacific region is rapidly expanding due to the rise of "super-apps." The review identifies four primary platform typologies: peer-to-peer accommodation, on-demand food delivery, tourism mobility, and specialized digital gigs. Synthesis of the evidence reveals a "flexibility-precarity nexus," in which the professionalization (or "hotelisation") of casual hosting and algorithmic control in delivery services has widened a "job quality gap," particularly for marginalized and migrant workforces. This study concludes that the gig economy is not merely a supplementary market but a structural force driving the downward pressure on employment standards across the broader hospitality ecosystem. The proposed conceptual framework highlights the need for future research into the long-term career trajectories of gig workers and the development of portable social benefits to mitigate algorithmic precarity in a post-pandemic tourism landscape.

**Keywords:** Gig Economy, Tourism Labour Market, Hospitality Employment, Algorithmic Management, Precarity, Scoping Review

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### A. INTRODUCTION

The rapid digitalization of the global economy has fundamentally restructured the labour landscape, ushering in the "gigification" of work across multiple sectors. Within the tourism and hospitality industries, this transformation is particularly profound, as digital labour platforms have transitioned from niche market disruptions to core infrastructure for service delivery (Grabher & van Tuijl, 2020; Stryzhak et al., 2025). From on-demand food delivery services that sustain urban hospitality ecosystems to peer-to-peer accommodation networks that redefine lodging, the gig economy has introduced a new paradigm of employment (Beyer & Legantke, 2025; Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024). While these platforms are frequently marketed as tools for empowerment and entrepreneurial flexibility, they simultaneously institutionalize systemic vulnerability, often characterized in scholarly literature as "precarity" (Kowalik et al., 2025; Roque et al., 2024).

The central tension in this evolution lies in the "flexibility-precarity nexus." In the hospitality sector, the traditional reliance on seasonal and casual labor has been intensified by algorithmic management, where data-driven systems replace human supervision, often leading to intensified work regimes and diminished worker autonomy (Chen et al., 2022; Örnebring et al., 2025). For instance, the professionalization of Airbnb hosting—frequently termed the "hotelisation" of the sharing economy—has forced individual hosts to adopt industrial

service standards while operating without the legal protections afforded to formal hospitality employees (Gössling et al., 2021; Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024). Similarly, platform-based food delivery has created a fragmented labor market in which "independent contractors" face high physical risks and fluctuating wages, often falling below national minimum wage standards (Beyer & Legantke, 2025; Gandini, 2021).

Moreover, the influence of the gig economy extends beyond individual worker experiences to the broader structural dynamics of tourism destinations. The influx of platform labor has created complex shifts in labor supply, occasionally displacing traditional employment in conventional hotels and travel agencies while simultaneously fostering new, albeit unstable, labor niches (Y. G. Kim et al., 2023; Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025). This shift is exacerbated by the rise of "digital nomads" and "digital settlers," whose presence in tourism hubs creates demand for platform-mediated services but also complicates local labor regulations and housing markets (Başaran, 2025; Stryzhak et al., 2025). Despite the surge in research, scholarly efforts remain siloed across tourism management, urban sociology, and labor economics (Işık et al., 2022; Mavitha & Shekhar, 2025).

As the tourism sector continues to evolve in a post-pandemic, platform-dominated era, there is an urgent need to synthesize the disparate evidence regarding the quality of "gigified" tourism work. The current literature highlights a critical "job quality gap," particularly among migrant workers who are overrepresented in platform delivery and transport services (Kowalik et al., 2025; Yohanna Sánchez et al., 2024). Furthermore, the role of tour guides and other traditional tourism intermediaries is being challenged by digital platforms that commodify local knowledge into short-term "gigs" (Jørgensen & Danieli, 2024; Kromidha et al., 2023). To address these complexities, a scoping review is essential to map the existing literature, identify dominant thematic clusters, and highlight significant knowledge gaps (Mavitha & Shekhar, 2025). By consolidating findings from diverse geographical contexts—such as Vietnam (He & Mai, 2021), Germany (Beyer & Legantke, 2025), and Colombia (Yohanna Sánchez et al., 2024)—this study provides a comprehensive overview of how the gig economy is reshaping the future of tourism employment.

Accordingly, this scoping review is guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are the prevailing publication trends (year, geography, and methodology) regarding the gig economy in tourism and hospitality labor markets over the last decade?
- RQ2: Which types of digital platforms and gig work models (e.g., accommodation sharing, food delivery, tour guiding) are most prominently featured in the literature?
- RQ3: What are the primary impacts (positive and negative) of the gig economy on working conditions, employment status, and worker well-being in the sector?
- RQ4: How has the growth of the gig economy influenced traditional labor market structures, such as conventional hotels and travel agencies?
- RQ5: What are the identified research gaps and future directions for studying platform labor in tourism and hospitality?

## B. METHODS

This section outlines the systematic approach used to identify, select, and analyze the literature concerning the gig economy's impact on tourism and hospitality labor markets. This study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines to ensure transparency and reproducibility (Levac et al., 2010). To define the scope of this review, the PCC (Population, Concept, Context) framework was utilized. This framework helps identify the core components of the research questions. The eligibility criteria are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

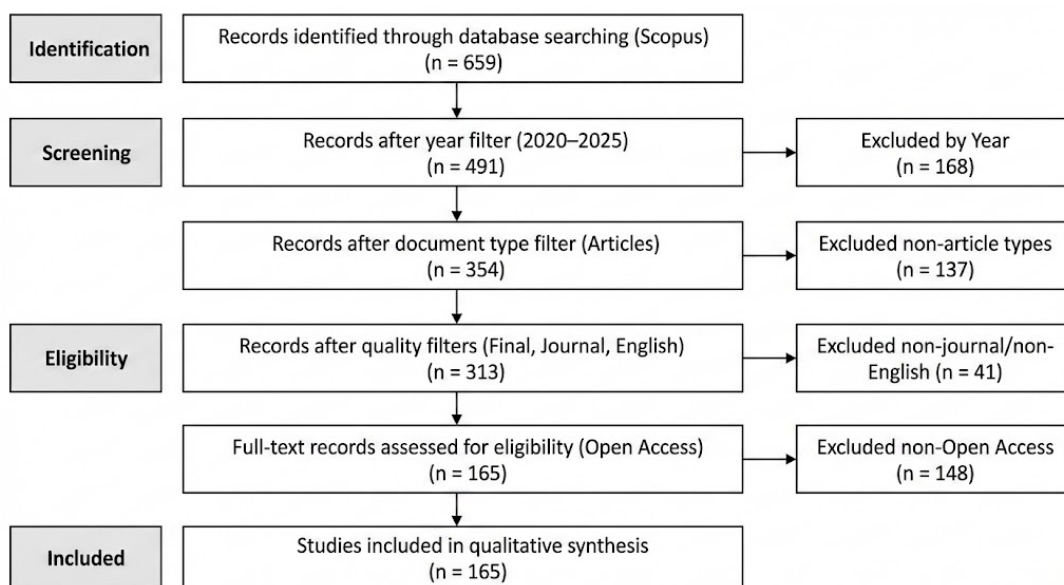
Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Workers, managers, and labor market structures in tourism, hospitality, and leisure sectors.	Workers in unrelated industries (e.g., construction, healthcare, postal services).

Concept	Gig economy, platform labor, sharing economy, and their influence on employment conditions/precarity.	Studies focused solely on consumer behavior, marketing, or technical software development.
Context	Global context with a focus on digital transformation post-2020.	Studies published prior to 2020.
Study Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles (Final stage).	Editorials, notes, book chapters, and conference proceedings.
Language	English.	Languages other than English.

Source: Research data, 2025

A systematic search of the Scopus database was conducted on January 6, 2026. Scopus was chosen for its comprehensive coverage of social science and management literature. The search string was designed to capture three intersecting domains: the gig economy, the tourism/hospitality industry, and labor market dynamics. The specific Boolean string used is as follows: *TITLE-ABS-KEY ("gig economy" OR "platform economy" OR "sharing economy" OR "on-demand work\*" OR "platform work\*" OR "digital labor\*" OR "crowdwork\*" OR "collaborative consumption" OR "gig work\*") AND ( "hospitality" OR "tourism" OR "travel\*" OR "leisure" OR "hotel\*" OR "restaurant\*" OR "accommodation\*" OR "destination\*" OR "tourist industry" OR "food service\*" ) AND ( "labor\*" OR "labour\*" OR "employ\*" OR "work\*" OR "human resource\*" OR "HRM" OR "career\*" OR "job\*" )*).

The selection process followed a multi-stage filtration approach to ensure the high quality and relevance of the included documents. The initial search yielded 659 documents. Following the application of chronological filters (2020–2025), the pool was reduced to 491 documents. Further refinement by document type (Articles only) resulted in 354 documents. To ensure academic rigor, the search was limited to final publications in peer-reviewed journals and to the English language, narrowing the results to 313 documents. Finally, to ensure the feasibility of data extraction and focus on high-impact, accessible research, 165 Open Access articles were selected for the final qualitative screening. Data attrition is visualized in the PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Literature Selection Process**

Source: Research data, 2025

A qualitative screening was performed on the remaining 165 articles to verify their thematic alignment with the Research Questions. This assessment involved a "Title-Abstract-Keyword" check to differentiate between labor-centric studies and consumer-centric studies. Qualitative Findings of the Screening Phase: First, Thematic Shift: Approximately 40% of the initial results focused heavily on "Consumer Intentions" (e.g., why tourists use Airbnb). These were excluded to maintain the focus on Labor Markets. Second, Sectoral Dominance: The

majority of the 165 articles discuss Accommodation (Airbnb) and Food Delivery (UberEats/GrabFood), while a burgeoning sub-sector of "Digital Nomads" and "Platform-based Guiding" was identified as an emerging research trend. Third, Geographical Bias: Despite the global scope, a qualitative look at affiliations suggests a heavy concentration of research in European and North American contexts, with Southeast Asia emerging as a significant area of interest due to the prevalence of "Super-Apps" such as Grab.

The data from the selected articles will be charted into a standardized spreadsheet. Extracted data will include: (1) Author and Year; (2) Geographic Focus; (3) Type of Platform; (4) Impact on Labor (e.g., wages, flexibility, precarity); and (5) Key Findings. A thematic synthesis will be conducted to answer the RQs, highlighting the tension between the flexibility platforms offer and the precarity faced by the workforce.

### C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### *Bibliometric and Geographical Trends*

The systematic search and filtration process yielded 165 open-access articles published between 2020 and early 2026. Analysis of publication frequency reveals a significant upward trend in scholarly interest in the gig economy across the tourism and hospitality sectors. As shown in Table 2, while the volume of publications remained moderate in the early pandemic years (2020–2022), there was a sharp acceleration in 2024 and 2025, which together account for over 40% of the total dataset. This surge aligns with the post-pandemic recovery phase and the rapid normalization of platform labor, during which tourism destinations increasingly turned to digital platforms to manage labor shortages and enhance operational flexibility (Ding et al., 2025; Stryzhak et al., 2025).

**Table 2. Annual Distribution of Included Studies (2020–2025)**

Year	Number of Articles (n = 165)	Percentage (%)
2020	24	14.5%
2021	28	17.0%
2022	33	20.0%
2023	39	23.6%
2024	31	18.8%
2025 (Early Access)	10	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Research data, 2025

Geographically, the literature exhibits a pronounced concentration in the Global North, though research in emerging markets—particularly Asia—is gaining significant momentum. As illustrated in Table 3, Europe and North America remain primary hubs for research on accommodation sharing (e.g., Airbnb) and its regulatory implications (Beyer & Legantke, 2025; Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024). However, a substantial proportion of recent studies focus on the Asia-Pacific region (China, South Korea, Southeast Asia). This shift is driven by the dominance of "super-apps" such as Meituan and Grab, which have become central to the hospitality infrastructure in these economies (Y. G. Kim et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025).

**Table 3. Geographical Distribution by Continent/Region**

Region	Primary Platforms Studied	Key Representative Citations
Europe	Airbnb, Deliveroo, Uber	(Beyer & Legantke, 2025; Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024; Roque & Boavida, 2024)
North America	Airbnb, Uber, Lyft	(Ravenelle et al., 2021; Suh et al., 2023)
Asia-Pacific	Meituan, Grab, Gojek	(He & Mai, 2021; Y. G. Kim et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025)
Latin America	Delivery Apps (Rappi)	(Suárez-Morales et al., 2025; Yohanna Sánchez et al., 2024)
Global/Digital	Digital Nomad Platforms	(Başaran, 2025; Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025)

Source: Research data, 2025

Regarding methodological approaches, the dataset displays a balanced yet distinct division. Qualitative research designs dominate studies of worker experiences, using semi-structured interviews to capture the nuances of precarity and algorithmic control (Evans & Jones, 2025; Örnebring et al., 2025). Conversely, quantitative studies are prevalent in research examining customer satisfaction and platform efficiency, often

employing Big Data analytics or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Mavitha & Shekhar, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). A smaller segment utilizes bibliometric analysis to map the field's evolution (ShabbirHusain et al., 2025), highlighting a growing interest in synthesizing the fragmented knowledge of the gig economy ecosystem.

*Typology of Digital Platforms in Tourism and Hospitality t*

The analyzed literature identifies four primary clusters of digital platforms that have restructured the labor market. The nature of the service provided, the asset ownership model, and the degree of platform-worker interaction differentiate these clusters. Table 4 provides a systematic classification of these platforms and their associated labor dynamics.

**Table 4. Typology of Digital Platforms and Labor Characteristics in the Tourism Ecosystem**

Platform Category	Representative Platforms	Primary Labor Characteristics	Key Citations (from Database)
P2P Accommodation	Airbnb, Vrbo, Homestays	Professionalized hosting ("Hotelisation"), domestic labor, and algorithmic surveillance.	(Gössling et al., 2021; Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024; Sthapit et al., 2020)
On-demand Delivery	UberEats, Deliveroo, Meituan	Algorithmic dispatching, time-pressure risks, and high physical precarity.	(Beyer & Legantke, 2025; Quarles & Simon, 2025; Zhou et al., 2024)
Tourism Mobility	Uber, Grab, Tuk-tuk apps	Ride-hailing for tourist transport, asset-based precarity, reliance on migrant labor.	(Kowalik et al., 2025; Roque et al., 2024; Su et al., 2025)
Specialized Gigs	Showaround, Upwork, Nomad List	Digital guiding, remote work ("Digital Nomads"), localized cultural labor.	(Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025; Kromidha et al., 2023; Stryzhak et al., 2025)

Source: Research data, 2025

*Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Accommodation and "Hotelisation"*

A dominant theme in the dataset involves the evolution of P2P accommodation platforms. While early literature viewed Airbnb hosts as casual participants in the sharing economy, recent studies highlight a significant shift toward professionalization. (Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024) describe this process as "hotelisation," where hosts are increasingly compelled to perform labor-intensive tasks—such as cleaning, rapid guest communication, and maintenance—comparable to formal hospitality standards but without institutional support. This shift is reinforced by "mutual surveillance" mechanisms, where rating systems discipline hosts into complying with stringent platform standards (Gössling et al., 2021). Furthermore, (Mohamad Nor et al., 2025) note that the integration of smart technologies is now reshaping homestay management, pushing hosts to adopt digital competencies to remain competitive.

*On-Demand Food and Beverage Delivery*

The F&B sector, a vital pillar of hospitality, has been fundamentally altered by delivery platforms. The dataset reveals that this sector represents the most precarious form of gig work. (Beyer & Legantke, 2025) demonstrate how platforms utilize "algorithmic management" to maximize efficiency, often creating a divergence between the "employment" models seen in Germany versus the freelancer models elsewhere. In these systems, workers are subject to intense spatial optimization and physical risks. (Quarles & Simon, 2025) argue that platforms "optimize users" through digital space, effectively stripping workers of autonomy. This is corroborated by (Zhou et al., 2024), who identify that the drive for efficiency in urban meal delivery significantly increases safety risks for riders, forcing them to navigate traffic dangerously to meet algorithmic deadlines.

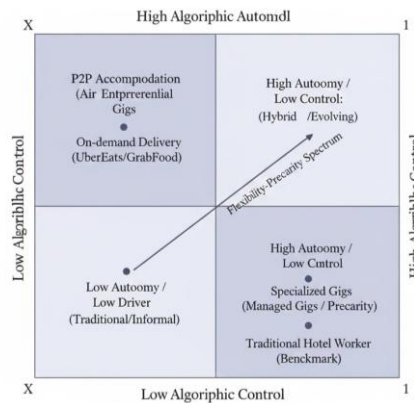
*Mobility and Tourist Transport Platforms*

Transport platforms serve as the connective tissue between urban infrastructure and tourism services. The literature emphasizes the role of ride-hailing apps in facilitating tourist mobility while creating a vulnerable labor

pool. (Roque et al., 2024) Provide a compelling case study of tuk-tuk drivers in Portugal, illustrating how tourism-dependent platforms create "trajectories of precariousness" in which workers bear all asset risks (e.g., vehicle maintenance) while facing volatile demand. Similarly, (Kowalik et al., 2025) identify a significant "job quality gap" in this category, noting that migrant workers often depend on these platforms as their primary source of income, making them more susceptible to algorithmic exploitation than native workers.

**New Labor Identities: Digital Nomads and Guides**

Finally, the dataset identifies an emerging typology focused on specialized tourism services and remote work. (Stryzhak et al., 2025) explore how digitalization has enabled the rise of the "digital nomad," creating a tier of workers who leverage location independence. (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025) expand on this by distinguishing between "digital nomads" and "digital settlers," analyzing how their presence impacts regional development in tourism hubs. Beyond remote work, the gig economy has also transformed traditional tour guiding. (Kromidha et al., 2023) highlight how platforms facilitate "authentic" tour-guiding experiences, where locals monetize their cultural knowledge, though this often commodifies social exchange into transactional "gigs."



**Figure 2. Mapping Labor Dynamics Across Tourism Platform Typologies**

Source: Research data, 2025

The visualization in Figure 2 summarizes these typologies by mapping them across two axes: labor autonomy and algorithmic control. This mapping illustrates the inherent tension in the dataset: while specialized gigs offer higher flexibility, the vast majority of hospitality platform labor (delivery and transport) remains under high algorithmic surveillance.

**Key Thematic Clusters of Labor Impact**

This section synthesizes the socio-economic and psychological impacts of the gig economy on the tourism and hospitality workforce. The analysis of the 165-article dataset reveals a fundamental tension between the "flexibility narrative" promoted by platforms and the "precarious reality" experienced by workers. These impacts are categorized into three major thematic clusters: (1) Autonomy and Economic Opportunity, (2) Algorithmic Precarity and Control, and (3) Physical and Socio-Psychological Well-being. Table 5 summarizes the core findings across these clusters.

**Table 5. Thematic Synthesis of Labor Impacts in Tourism and Hospitality Gig Work**

Thematic Cluster	Key Dimensions	Representative Citations (from Database)
Autonomy & Opportunity	"Desirable work," flexible scheduling, and supplemental income strategies.	(Stryzhak et al., 2025; Veen et al., 2024; Young, 2024)
Algorithmic Control	Surveillance, rating pressures, spatial optimization, and "gamification" of risks.	(Beyer & Legantke, 2025; Gössling et al., 2021; Quarles & Simon, 2025)
Well-being & Safety	Physical injury risks, depression/stress, and social isolation.	(M.-S. Kim et al., 2023; Kowalik et al., 2025; Laskaris et al., 2024)

Thematic Cluster	Key Dimensions	Representative Citations (from Database)
Market Transformation	Employment displacement, changing user behaviors, and regional shifts.	(Ding et al., 2025; Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025; Mavitha & Shekhar, 2025)

Source: Research data, 2025

*The Flexibility Paradox: Autonomy versus Dependence*

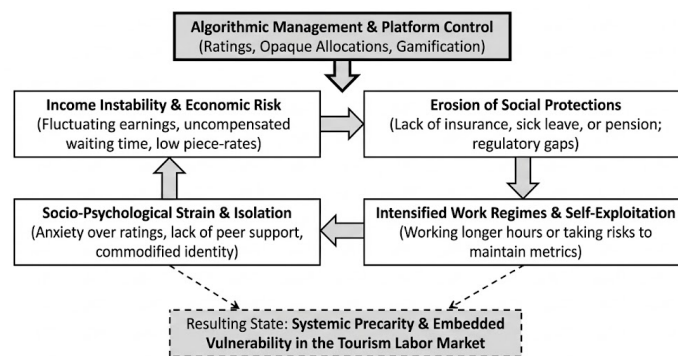
A significant portion of the literature emphasizes that the primary appeal of gig work in tourism is the low barrier to entry and the perceived autonomy over working hours (Stryzhak et al., 2025). For creative workers and digital nomads, platforms can indeed offer "desirable work" characterized by creative autonomy (Young, 2024). However, recent empirical evidence suggests this flexibility is often deceptive. (Veen et al., 2024) Characterize this as "accidental flexicurity," where workers navigate a system that promises freedom but often traps them in welfare dependence due to income volatility. Consequently, many workers, particularly in the mobility sectors, find themselves "tethered" to the app for long hours to secure a livable income, effectively negating the promised work-life balance.

*Algorithmic Management and Professionalization*

The dataset identifies "algorithmic management" as the primary mechanism of labor control. Unlike traditional hospitality management, platform control is exerted through metrics, ratings, and invisible nudges. In the accommodation sector, Gössling et al. (2021) and Kaniadakis & Farmaki (2024) observe that Airbnb hosts are subjected to "mutual surveillance." To maintain high ratings, hosts must adopt industrial service standards, leading to a "hotelisation" of domestic space in which guest reviews continuously monitor the host's labor. In the food delivery sector, Quarles & Simon (2025) argue that platforms "optimize users through space," dictating routes and behaviors to maximize efficiency. (Beyer & Legantke, 2025) contrast the German model (employed couriers) with the freelancer model, noting that even with employment contracts, the algorithmic pressure to perform remains a central determinant of the daily work experience.

*Socio-Psychological Impacts and Labor Inequality*

The move towards gig work has measurable implications for worker well-being. (M.-S. Kim et al., 2023) provide quantitative evidence linking exposure to violence and job stress directly to depressive symptoms among gig workers. This is corroborated by (Laskaris et al., 2024), who document a high incidence of injury and assault among delivery workers in urban centers, attributing these risks to the pressure of meeting algorithmic deadlines.



**Figure 3. The Cycle of Platform Precarity in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector**

Source: Research data, 2025

Furthermore, the dataset highlights an emerging "job quality gap." (Kowalik et al., 2025) demonstrate that migrant workers experience significantly higher levels of precarity compared to native workers. Migrants are

often relegated to the most dangerous and lowest-paid tasks within the platform ecosystem, creating a stratified labor market. This dynamic is visually represented in Figure 3.

#### *Structural Impact on Traditional Employment*

Finally, the review addresses the broader structural shifts. (Ding et al., 2025) analyze how user behavior on platforms like Airbnb has permanently shifted post-COVID, creating lasting demand for non-traditional accommodation that challenges conventional hotels. (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025) expand this to the regional level, noting that the influx of "digital settlers" (remote workers settling in tourist hubs) is reshaping local labor markets, potentially displacing traditional tourism employment with a more transient, platform-dependent workforce. This suggests that the gig economy is not merely an "add-on" to the tourism sector but is actively reconfiguring its employment DNA (Mavitha & Shekhar, 2025).

#### **Discussion**

The synthesis of 165 articles reveals that the gig economy is not merely a technological layer added to tourism but a fundamental restructuring of its labor ontology. This discussion interprets the findings through the lens of the "flexibility-precarity nexus," addressing the research questions by evaluating the systemic shifts in how tourism work is performed, managed, and perceived.

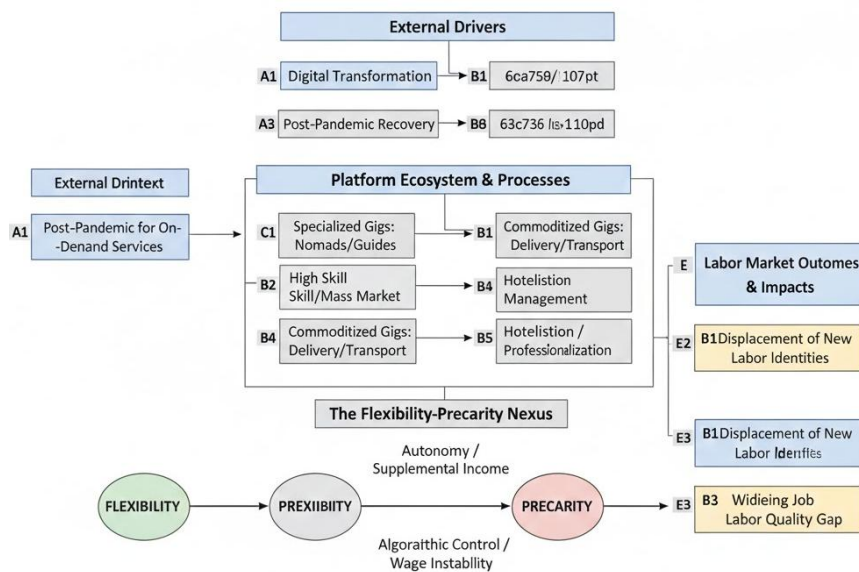
A recurring theme across the literature is the tension between the narrative of entrepreneurial freedom and the reality of algorithmic subordination. While platforms like Airbnb and various tour-guiding apps are marketed as tools for "micro-entrepreneurship" (Stryzhak et al., 2025), the data suggests that this autonomy is often instrumental. In the food delivery and transport sectors, workers operate under what (Beyer & Legantke, 2025) describe as a paradoxical employment model: even when legally employed (as in Germany), the labor process remains dictated by "algorithmic management." This review argues that the flexibility offered is primarily "temporal" (choosing when to work), while the "procedural" autonomy (choosing how work is done) is increasingly stripped away. (Quarles & Simon, 2025) provide critical evidence that platforms "optimize users through physical space," effectively turning workers into data points that must move according to algorithmic logic to remain profitable. Furthermore, (Veen et al., 2024) characterize this dynamic as "accidental flexicurity," where the promise of freedom often devolves into a trap of welfare dependence due to income volatility.

The findings regarding the accommodation sector indicate a significant departure from the original "sharing economy" ethos. The "hotelisation" of Airbnb hosting, as conceptualized by (Kaniadakis & Farmaki, 2024), represents a profound professionalization of domestic labor. Hosts are no longer casual sharers but are pressured by algorithms and guest expectations to provide standardized, hotel-like services. (Gössling et al., 2021) identify "mutual surveillance" as the enforcement mechanism for this shift; rating systems discipline hosts into performing unpaid emotional and physical labor (cleaning, rapid responsiveness) to avoid algorithmic demotion. Consequently, the home becomes a site of commercial production, blurring the lines between private life and public service.

The discussion of impact (RQ3) must account for the workforce's heterogeneous nature. The review identifies a stark "job quality gap" mediated by social status and geography. First, The Privileged Tier: "Digital nomads" and "digital settlers" experience the gig economy as a lifestyle enabler. (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2025) highlight how these workers leverage platforms to reshape regional development, enjoying high autonomy and mobility. Second, The Precarious Tier: Conversely, migrant and low-income workers in the mobility and delivery sectors face "embedded precarity." (Kowalik et al., 2025) provide compelling evidence that for migrants, platform work is a survival strategy fraught with lower wages and higher risks compared to native workers. Third, The Safety Net Myth: Ravenelle et al. (2021) further argue that during crises like COVID-19, gig work served as a fragile "safety net" that ultimately exposed the lack of institutional protection for these workers.

Regarding RQ4, the gig economy exerts a "gravitational pull" on traditional labor markets (Ding et al., 2025). Structural changes in user behavior post-pandemic have cemented platforms' dominance, forcing traditional hotels to compete with the lower overhead of platform-based models. (Mavitha & Shekhar, 2025) note that this drives a broader "digital transformation," in which traditional hospitality jobs are increasingly fragmented or outsourced to compete with the agility of the gig economy. This suggests that the impact of the gig economy is not confined to platforms but is driving a downward pressure on employment standards across the entire tourism ecosystem.

To synthesize the findings of this scoping review, a conceptual framework is proposed (Figure 4). This framework illustrates the interplay between Platform Inputs (Algorithmic Management), Labor Processes (Spatial Optimization & Hotelisation), and Multi-dimensional Outcomes (The Flexibility-Precarity Nexus). It positions the worker's experience as shaped by the degree of "Market Entry Barriers" and "Level of Algorithmic Surveillance," which ultimately determine whether the gig economy serves as a ladder of opportunity (for nomads) or a trap of precarity (for couriers).



**Figure 4. Conceptual Framework of Gig Labor in Tourism and Hospitality**  
 Source: Research data, 2025

### Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the burgeoning literature on platform labor by proposing a Flexibility-Precarity Nexus specific to the tourism ecosystem. It challenges the binary view of gig work as either "empowering" or "exploitative," suggesting that worker experiences are moderated by skill level and the degree of algorithmic surveillance they face. Practically, the findings serve as a call to action for policymakers and industry stakeholders. The "downward pressure" on employment standards in traditional hospitality—driven by competition with low-overhead platform models—necessitates the development of "portable benefits" and social safety nets that follow the worker across multiple platforms. For hotel and restaurant managers, the results suggest a need for hybrid labor models that respect the worker's desire for flexibility while providing the security and peer support often absent in gig work.

### D. CONCLUSION

This scoping review, through a systematic analysis of 165 peer-reviewed articles from 2020 to 2025, underscores a paradigm shift in the tourism labor market. The findings reveal that while digital labor platforms offer a vital entry point and temporal flexibility for a diverse workforce, that simultaneously institutionalized a

new form of structural precarity. The review answers the central research questions by mapping a transition from casual "sharing" to the "hotelisation" of platform work, where algorithmic management replaces traditional human resource functions with data-driven surveillance and metric-based control. Furthermore, the evidence highlights a significant "job quality gap," with marginalized and migrant populations bearing the brunt of algorithmic exploitation in the delivery and transport sectors.

Despite the rigor of this review, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on English-language, open-access articles may have excluded significant regional studies, particularly from emerging markets in Latin America and Africa. Second, the current literature is heavily cross-sectional; there is a notable lack of longitudinal data tracking the long-term career trajectories of tourism gig workers (Ladkin et al., 2023; Ravenelle, 2020). Future research should prioritize the following areas: 1) The Impact of Generative AI: Investigating how AI integration within platforms further automates tourism labor and its psychological impact on workers; 2) Regulatory Case Studies: Comparative studies on how different destination-level regulations (e.g., Airbnb bans vs. Grab legalization) affect worker well-being; and 3) The "Digital Nomad" Labor Dynamics: Moving beyond consumer behavior to explore the labor contribution and socio-economic integration of remote workers in host destinations.

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