Research Article

Algorithmic Control on Digital Platforms: A Comparative Analysis of Rating, Scoring, Ranking, and Behavioral Nudging Mechanisms

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Abstract: This study examines rating, scoring, ranking, and behavioral guidance mechanisms that play a central role in the operation of digital platforms through the framework of algorithmic management literature. Contrary to the common discourse that platforms are neutral technological intermediaries, the study demonstrates that these mechanisms are not isolated technical tools that measure labor. Rather, they function as integrated systems of algorithmic control that regulate visibility, access to work, income opportunities, and continuity within the platform. The study examines the official documents of Uber, Upwork, Deliveroo, Glovo, BiTaksi, Armut, and Yemeksepeti Express comparatively using the qualitative document analysis method. The findings show that rating inputs are combined with scoring, ranking, and incentive mechanisms and related to visibility, access, status, reward, and the exclusion risk of platform workers. Furthermore, while more explicit metric systems stand out in international platforms, more implicit incentives and parametric income architectures become evident in the Turkish sample. However, the study concludes that a common managerial logic operates in both groups. The study's main contribution is that it reconstructs the discussion on algorithmic management not merely as a problem of technical opacity, but within the context of labor access, distribution of opportunity, and corporate accountability.

Keywords: algorithmic management, algorithmic control, platform labor, scoring, nudging
Jel Codes: J81, J24, L86

Dijital Platformlarda Algoritmik Disiplin: Puanlama, Skorlaştırma, Sıralama ve Davranışsal Yönlendirme Mekanizmalarının Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

Öz: Bu çalışma, dijital platformların işleyişinde merkezi bir rol oynayan derecelendirme (rating), skorlandırma (scoring), sıralama (ranking) ve davranışsal yönlendirme mekanizmalarını algoritmik yönetim literatürü çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Platformların tarafsız teknolojik aracılar olduğu yönündeki yaygın söylemin aksine, çalışma bu mekanizmaların emeği ölçen birbirinden bağımsız teknik araçlar olmadığını göstermektedir. Aksine, bu mekanizmalar platform içindeki görünürlüğü, işe erişimi, gelir fırsatlarını ve platformda kalıcılığı düzenleyen bütünleşik algoritmik kontrol sistemleri olarak işlev görmektedir. Araştırmada Uber, Upwork, Deliveroo, Glovo, BiTaksi, Armut ve Yemeksepeti Express platformlarının resmî belgeleri nitel belge analizi yöntemiyle karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmiştir. Bulgular, derecelendirme verilerinin skorlandırma, sıralama ve teşvik mekanizmalarıyla birleştirildiğini; görünürlük, işe erişim, statü, ödül ve platform çalışanlarının dışlanma riskiyle ilişkilendirildiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca uluslararası platformlarda daha açık ve görünür metrik sistemleri öne çıkarken, Türkiye örnekleminde daha örtük teşvik mekanizmaları ve parametrik gelir mimarileri dikkat çekmektedir. Bununla birlikte çalışma, her iki grup platformda da ortak bir yönetsel mantığın işlediği sonucuna ulaşmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel katkısı, algoritmik yönetim tartışmasını yalnızca teknik opaklık sorunu olarak değil; emeğe erişim, fırsatların dağılımı ve kurumsal hesap verebilirlik bağlamında yeniden ele almasıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: algoritmik yönetim, algoritmik kontrol, platform emeği, skorlaştırma, davranışsal yönlendirme
Jel Kodları: J81, J24, L86

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1. Introduction

The digital platforms are commonly perceived as neutral tools for matching supply and demand. They allow for the offering of services and improved experiences for users. However, increasingly control and guidance functions are being exercised on digital platforms. Functions such as rating, scoring, ranking and nudging on platforms reveal that beyond their technical nature to coordinate, digital platforms function as specific managerial architectures that influence human behavior, hierarchically evaluate the performance of platform participants and distribute their visibility on the platform.

In this article we present a conceptual and analytical contribution to the mechanisms of digital platforms. Focusing on the framework of the algorithmic management literature, we study the tools used by digital platforms for managing work and how these tools are legitimized by the platforms' promises of trust, efficiency, user satisfaction and optimization. Next to these values the study shows that these tools are also functions of control, discipline, distribution of visibility and behavioral guidance implemented by digital platforms. Therefore, the study argues that digital platforms can be considered as active governance infrastructures which organize, evaluate and regulate labor by means of measurement, evaluation, ranking and behavioral nudging.

This study investigates the ways in which the platforms' objectives are put into practice through the official documentation provided by the platforms. It focuses on the discourse of the platforms as opposed to the practices, subjectivities and experiences of resistance by workers. The rating, scoring, ranking and behavioral nudging are analyzed in the official documentation of the platforms as a complex of tools which, in different ways, are connected. Together they form the core of the algorithmic control, i.e. the disciplinary governance of platforms (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Kellogg et al., 2020)

Accordingly, the paper is organized around three research questions:

How are rating, scoring, ranking, and behavioral nudging mechanisms articulated in official platform documents as instruments of algorithmic control over digital labor?

How do these mechanisms connect performance measurement to visibility, work allocation, income opportunities, and continuity within digital labor platforms?

To what extent do international and Turkish platforms differ in the explicitness of their control architectures and managerial logics?

These questions form the analytical axis that connects the theoretical discussion on algorithmic management and platform labor with the document-based empirical analysis presented in the study.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section provides a theoretical analysis of how work on digital labor platforms is organized through rating, scoring and ranking of workers as well as through behavioral nudging. These types of technical tools for the management and control of work are not isolated and are part of an ever more widespread management logic for work that is composed of a variety of intermediations. These intermediations, as we shall see in more detail, in fact, make the workers visible, determine access to employment, calculate the wage due to workers, and also modulate the employment relationship between the platform and the worker. Table 1 below reports the acronyms that we shall use in the rest of the paper to analyze these two types of tools.

Table 1. Fundamental Concepts of Algorithmic Control

Concept	Core Meaning	Data/Operating Mode	Managerial Effect
Rating	Generation of individual performance data	Individual data points such as star ratings, comments, customer feedback, acceptance/cancellation data	Enables performance to become visible
Scoring	Transformation of different performance data into a numerical indicator	Calculated metrics such as average score, success score, performance index	Enables comparison of workers and standardization of performance
Ranking	Relative positioning based on calculated performance signals	Listing, prioritization, visibility order, probability of receiving invitations	Regulates visibility, access, and distribution of opportunities
Nudging (Behavioral Guidance)	Channeling behavior toward specific directions through incentives and interface design	Bonuses, badges, notifications, targets, surge signals, and gamification tools	Reinforces compliance, pace, and work behavior

Source: Prepared by the author

This distinction allows us to explain how measurement, visibility, and behavioral management operate as distinct yet complementary mechanisms that embody the same managerial logic that characterizes the platform economy. In the following subsections, we draw on the relevant literature on the platform economy to provide examples of how each tool is used.

2.1 Platform economy and algorithmic management

In contemporary capitalism digital platforms have become key organizational players: Beyond their function as simple intermediaries between suppliers and demanders of goods and services, today they have become organizational infrastructures that coordinate labor, gather user data, and organize economic activities through digital systems. Algorithms have in the meantime become a crucial management tool for monitoring, evaluating, allocating, and increasing the intensity of labor processes within digital platforms.

Recent platform economy literature has increasingly focused on the role of algorithms in creating a new form of management through task allocation, performance measurement, and monitoring functions (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Kellogg et al., 2020). In this context, algorithmic management is defined as the execution of traditional managerial functions (job assignment, process optimization, performance evaluation, etc.) through software systems and data-driven infrastructures (Lee et al., 2015, pp. 1603–1604). However, this system is not merely a passive measurement and tracking mechanism. As Jarrahi et al. (2021, pp. 5–6) also point out, management through algorithms goes beyond simple measurement and monitoring, and instead also enables the dynamic coordination of organizational processes and provision of strategic guidance to workers. Sfetcu (2024, pp. 408–409) interprets this situation as the imposition of standardized procedures through algorithms intensifying bureaucratic impersonality and transforming discipline from human oversight into a data-driven, ever-present control regime

Therefore, the digital platform should not be understood merely as a technical medium where work takes place, but as a governance infrastructure where labor is organized, evaluated, and disciplined. Studies on platform labor show that control is established not only through technical allocation mechanisms but also through the organization and intensification of the labor process and the continuous monitoring of performance (Veen et al., 2020). Similarly, platform work is presented to workers and clients in the rhetoric of autonomy and flexibility. However, this freedom is often complemented by an increasing focus on performance, by permanent availability and by a number of requirements with which workers must comply and that are monitored by means of data (Wood et al., 2019, pp. 66–68). Thus, the digital platforms are more than just digital markets where workers and clients encounter each other autonomously to carry out work at will and to conclude agreements. Rather, they function as management tools

that evaluate the quality of work and regulate the behavior of workers through specific metrics. From a labor process perspective, the work evaluation mechanisms of digital platforms not only measure the work that has already been done. In addition, they also influence the allocation, execution, remuneration and continued existence of work on platforms.

The key point of this management form is not that all control is transferred from the human manager to the computer program. Rather, control is reestablished in a code, in a set of indicators and interfaces for monitoring and managing action. This management form can be developed by means of the concept of the algocracy by Aneesh (2009, pp. 347–349). The algocratic system is a form of governance, which is programmed by software, executed by a variety of programming schemes, and integrated into the work process. The crucial point here is that action is controlled not by explicit rules, but by a pre-programmed set of options, by given constraints and possibilities for action. Thus, algorithmic management constitutes a distinct type of management that concentrates control while at the same time externalizing responsibility.

The operation of algorithmic management can be understood through complementary theoretical perspectives that address visibility, continuous control, and data extraction. Foucault's (1977) concept of discipline helps explain how visibility, performance norms, and self-monitoring become central to the regulation of conduct. Deleuze's (1992) account of control societies is useful for understanding how platform control operates through fluid boundaries, dynamic targets, and continuous recalibration rather than fixed workplace rules alone. Zuboff's (2019) analysis of surveillance capitalism further shows how behavioral data become economically and managerially valuable for prediction, optimization, and intervention. Taken together, these perspectives help explain how platform governance combines disciplinary visibility, continuous control, and data-driven optimization within a single managerial architecture. The disciplinary dimensions of algorithmic control in the platform economy therefore encompass both the management of behavior at the micro level and broader data-driven accumulation processes at the macro level.

2.2 Rating and scoring

Rating refers to the creation of individual performance data on platforms. Data such as star ratings, customer reviews, feedback, and acceptance/cancellation rates fall into this category. In this way, rating creates the first layer of data showing a worker's performance and reputation on the platform. Customer reviews, in particular, allow platforms to classify workers through external evaluations. Therefore, rating is not only a feedback mechanism but also a form of control where the authority to evaluate is distributed through customers and users (Kellogg et al., 2020, pp. 377–378).

In this system, customers not only receive a service, but also indirectly manage the performance of the worker providing that service. Rosenblat (2018, pp. 138–140) has noted how, for Uber drivers, customers have become "unpaid middle managers," with some of the burden of control shifting from the company to the customer. Similarly, Glöss et al. (2016, p. 1) state that to receive high rates, workers must demonstrate not only technical competency, but also engage in high levels of emotional labor to meet customer's social expectations. Rating therefore makes customer satisfaction a disciplined measure and transforms emotional labor into a visible, measurable, and enforceable object of management.

Scoring is the numerical representation of performance indicators through transforming scattered rating data using specific calculation methods. While rating generates raw data, scoring transforms this information into standardized indicators that can be more readily incorporated into organizational decision-making processes. Early studies focusing on online reputation systems discuss how rating data is incorporated into decision-making processes and reveal that this standardized scattered evaluation data becomes a significant determinant of performance (Resnick et al., 2000; Resnick &

Zeckhauser, 2002; Dellarocas, 2003; Jøsang et al., 2007). Platforms use this standardized data to categorize labor processes into measurable and comparable categories and, subsequently organize and reorganize workflows through a new hierarchy based on metrics and data (Lee et al., 2015, pp. 1603–1606; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016, pp. 3772–3775).

This transformation can be better understood through Beer's concept of "metric power" and Mau's discussion of scoring as a gatekeeping mechanism. Beer (2016, pp. 123–134, 192–193) discuss the 'metric power' that metrics have to shape organizational decision-making. The organization as a system can be seen as the organizational infrastructure of valuation. This infrastructure enables the organization to make decisions about performance on the basis of the metrics that are used to report on it. The organization's system of valuation thus is determined by the metrics that are used to assess performance. In this sense, while metrics report on performance, the system of valuation created by them is what determines access to opportunities within the organization.

Mau (2019, pp. 20, 60) complements this perspective by treating scores and scoring on freelance platforms as social gatekeeping. Instead of just measuring qualifications and work quality of platform workers by their scores, they classify platform workers, open up or bar access to resources on platforms, and rank platform workers. Thus, scores function as organizational filters and enable platforms to distribute work and to govern platform workers on a continuous basis by measuring their performance with the help of platform metrics and giving them visibility, work and rewards on the basis of the measurement. In this sense, scoring and platform metrics in general are to be perceived as an organizational instrument.

As platform labor has grown, empirical studies of the sector have argued that the methods that platforms use to measure worker performance are not neutral measurement technologies. Lee et al. (2015, pp. 1605–1610) state that acceptance rates and the five-star rating system have become significant metrics determining whether workers will be allowed to keep working on the platform, structuring a persistent fear of job loss. Online scores derived from continuous monitoring, Rosenblat (2018: 134) argues, control the future quality of drivers' work, because workers modify their behavior in order to try to achieve a higher rating. Jarrahi et al. (2021, p. 5) stress that algorithms used by the platforms to process the job-related data ignore contextual elements of jobs while translating worker performance into scores. Therefore, rating and scoring systems on digital labor platforms can be understood as mechanisms of algorithmic control that translate complex labor processes into quantifiable indicators. In doing so, they may reduce contextual differences while encouraging workers to align their behavior with platform-defined performance standards.

2.3 Ranking mechanisms

Ranking is the translation of scoring and rating outputs into relative positioning. While ranking translates scoring and rating outputs into relative positions, it also functions as a mechanism for allocating visibility, work opportunities, and access to platform resources. Hence, while working for ranking positions on the online work platform, workers are competing for different allocations of how work will be allocated, how tasks are given prominence on the platform, and how opportunities will be distributed. According to Beer (2016, p. 173), metric power not only is the performance measured and judged, but also what is visible and what is rendered invisible. Therefore, competition on the platform is not a result of natural market dynamics. It is a result of the design and governance of the platform by means of metrics and rankings.

In order to make workers exchangeable, ranking mechanisms in the digital labor market objectify workers and make them comparable. As a result, workers are encouraged to turn their work into data that is relevant for the platform; in other words, they work for the data, not for the work itself, and consequently labor becomes increasingly defined by the metrics that the system registers (Röttgen et al., 2024, p. 8). Ranking can therefore be understood not only as a reward mechanism but also as a disciplinary dimension of

algorithmic control. While it has the promise of rewarding better performers, it also generates the fear of being worse off than others and keeps workers in a permanent state of motion (Mau, 2019, p. 173).

The ranking system not only tracks the performance of individual workers and gives them feedback on their work but it also determines how the opportunities on the platform are distributed. Every ranking system links a number of performance indicators to a number of possible outcomes (e.g. more visibility, higher priority when assigning tasks, better paid jobs etc.).

From a labor process perspective, rankings serve to link performance indicators to the distribution of work, thus translating measures of worker performance into concrete ways in which that work is managed on the platform. By giving priority to certain tasks, increasing the visibility of a worker to clients, allowing workers to choose from jobs that are scheduled at times that are preferred, or even simply by paying more for the same work, performance indicators manage the distribution of opportunities on the platform. The ranking system of a platform not only enables the classification of workers but also influences the distribution of work opportunities and the fulfillment of performance targets on the platform.

Other complementary elements, such as incentives, notifications, and interface design, also shape workers' behavior and reinforce broader systems of algorithmic control over labor.

2.4. Behavioral Nudging

Nudging in systems of algorithmic management is a form of control, which is of an indirect and adaptive nature. By making behavior predictable while keeping all options open and the economic incentives essentially unchanged, such behavior can be steered in a very predictable way. The decision context is changed, thus the behavioral nudging literature discusses this intentional design through the concept of "choice architecture" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Yeung's (2017) concept of the "hypernudge" is a form of control by means of data, that is hyper in the sense that it constantly changes the decision environment of employees in order to increase its control capacity in an individualized and adaptive manner by means of a series of individualized nudges.

The tools of behavioral guidance are used as management tools on platforms that steer work behavior of workers without direct command-and-control. Bonuses, score targets, intensity signals, notifications, and interfaces steer workers towards faster, more compliant and more accessible work by influencing their preferences. At first glance, behavioral guidance thus appears to be a 'soft' incentive. However, it is deeply embedded in rating, scoring and ranking systems which are a fundamental component of the algorithmic control of work on digital platforms. On the platforms under investigation, indirect systems of control such as scores, targets, bonuses, suggestion systems for improvement as well as interfaces for applications of work replace the explicit commands for work that are typical of direct pressure on the labor process. This does not mean that behavioral guidance is a field in which disciplinary mechanisms of the classical type (monitoring and performance control) are no longer effective. Rather, in the context of platform-governance these two forms of control are increasingly combined in a more indirect manner and are increasingly transferred into technical systems of behavioral steering that are in turn adapted to the respective conditions in a more internalized way.

Building on this perspective, Jarrahi et al. (2021, p. 6) highlight that algorithms nudge users into certain behaviors by controlling information flow and by providing users with choices as opposed to directives. Similarly, in the context of ride-hailing platforms, workers are influenced by dynamic pricing maps, which determine where and when workers log onto the platform to work (Lee et al., 2015, pp.1604, 1607). Workers on ride-hailing platforms are further influenced by in-app notifications, such as reminders that there are earnings to be made by logging back onto the platform (Rosenblat, 2018, pp. 44–47, 121–125, 135). As a result, workers on platforms are increasingly subject to behavioral

guidance, or how the platform's interface structures the worker's attention and influences their decision-making in order to elicit particular behaviors (Schüll, 2012, pp. 19, 167, 173, 177, 224). In sum, this design strategy structures workers' behavior towards the ends that the platform designer has in mind without giving them direct instructions to do so.

While behavioral nudging may be secondary to pay in influencing the behavior of platform workers, the way performance-oriented incentives are embedded into the platform's user interface (to guide users' attention and decisions and bring about certain behavior) is essential to understanding the nature of behavioral nudging. This form of nudging is an integral part of algorithmic management that reinforces other control measures over platform workers.

2.5. Opacity, asymmetric power, and institutional responsibility

Another challenge for algorithmic governance is the lack of transparency and accountability for its decision-making processes. Pasquale (2015) critically discusses black-boxes in algorithmic suspect identification and predictive policing and concludes that such systems constitute a redistribution of power in society. Burrell (2016) identifies and exemplifies several types of algorithmic opacity; and Ananny and Crawford (2018) in turn critically discuss the transparency ideal. In the platform economy, this opacity is further deepened by the fact that it is often unclear how scoring and ranking results are calculated. This means that workers are forced to optimize their performance without clearly knowing the rules (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). Not only does this data measure and record their performance and record it, it also predicts and affects their future behavior. In this sense, platform management is not an isolated entity but rather part of a larger system of data extraction and intervention into behavioral patterns (Zuboff, 2019). While opacity is framed as a problem for investigators to solve as a technical issue, it is also a governance issue. The opacity of platforms to their workers enables and reinforces asymmetric power relations between platform companies and platform workers. Such opacity prevents workers from knowing what is going on with the platform and from being able to understand, contest and negotiate the decisions made by the platform.

The power imbalance also becomes apparent at the institutional and legal level. The concentration of power to the hands of a few within institutions and the law of work of platforms is such that the risks of work of these platforms are transferred to the workers. Discussions about opacity and accountability therefore are not only to be viewed from a technical perspective (i.e. from the perspective of transparency) but also from the perspective of fair opportunities, labor governance and institutional accountability.

In summary, rating, scoring, ranking, and behavioral nudging should be understood as interconnected components of a broader architecture of algorithmic control rather than as isolated technical mechanisms. The rating of a worker's profile on the platform can be used by the system to track and collect data on the digital footprints of this worker's labor. The scoring of these digital footprints of labor then gives an indication of this worker's performance for certain tasks of work. Ranking these workers on the basis of their scores for work then leads to a differential visibility of work opportunities which in turn leads to a differential access to income potential on the platform. In the end the control mechanism of rating, scoring, ranking and nudging also influences the daily behavior of the worker. An integrated framework of rating, scoring, ranking and nudging therefore is the theoretical framework for the document analysis presented in this study.

3. Method

This study is based on a qualitative document analysis examining how rating, scoring, ranking, and behavioral nudging mechanisms are established on digital platforms (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2013). The research is conducted within a qualitative design framework aimed at analyzing the institutional logic of platform management and how this logic is constructed within official discourse, rather than a quantitative measurement of impact. Accordingly, the study focuses on the discursive and institutional

articulation of algorithmic control rather than on the direct observation of workers' lived experiences or workplace practices.

The research dataset consists of two groups of documents. The first group consists of studies by academics on algorithmic governance, platform labor, reputation systems, behavioral and gamification strategies as well as studies on opacity and platform capitalism. This first group of studies has been used to develop a conceptual framework and to derive categories for the document analysis. The second group consists of official help and support pages of the different platforms, performance and status reports, application advertisements and promotional campaigns as well as information provided by the platforms on how they work internally. The literature review was conducted as a theoretically informed and purposive review aimed at identifying studies most relevant to the research questions, conceptual framework, and analytical categories employed in the study (Patton, 2002).

The empirical document set was obtained from seven platforms. Uber, Upwork, Deliveroo, and Glovo were selected from the international sample; BiTaksi, Armut, and Yemeksepeti Express were selected from the Turkish sample. These platforms were chosen using a purposive sampling approach to compare how algorithmic management tools are established in different sectors and to make visible the specific forms of the platformed labor regime in Türkiye. Accordingly, the sample was diversified by including different business models such as transportation, freelance labor, and delivery, and in the Turkish context, platforms with widespread and high corporate visibility were included. All the documents examined are texts accessible from the publicly available official websites of the platforms.

The choice of platforms primarily focuses on different fields of platform labor, i.e. transport, work on a freelance basis and delivery of food. In addition, it is particularly important to distinguish between internationally active platforms and platforms that are limited to Türkiye. For this purpose, the express service of Yemeksepeti was chosen for analysis. There is a lot of publicly available documentation about the work of its couriers and the institutional form of the algorithmic management of Yemeksepeti Express. Incentives of the couriers, earnings related aspects of the operating procedures of Yemeksepeti Express as well as the influence of the company's procedures on earnings and the visibility of opportunities for work of the platform's couriers can be analyzed in detail.

For the document analysis all expressions of rating, score, rate, threshold, priority, bonus, reward, sanction and incentives on platform texts were analyzed for their effects on visibility, access, status, income opportunities and work on platform. The coding of platform texts followed a two-step procedure (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2021). In a first step all expressions referring to measurement, allocation and incentives of a platform were retrieved from the respective texts. In a second step the expressions were categorized by using a common analytical scheme and assigned to the respective categories. This scheme is based on four fundamental questions: Which data point is used as a performance signal? Within what time window is the measurement calculated? Does the result produce an absolute threshold or a relative ranking? Which incentive or interface tool reinforces the behavior? Where a particular statement reflected more than one analytical category, coding was based on its dominant managerial function, while overlapping codes were recorded when necessary to capture multiple dimensions of platform governance.

In the analysis, the intra-platform effects of the rules contained in the documents were also evaluated at three levels: increase in access and visibility, neutral effect, and risk of loss of access or exclusion. To increase the reliability of the findings, multiple document types were read together as much as possible for each platform; document-based inferences were cross-evaluated with conceptual and empirical findings in the relevant literature. Thus, the study aimed to perform a comparative reading between the platforms' own institutional discourses and the algorithmic management literature. The

analysis did not seek equivalence in document volume across platforms. Rather, comparison was based on the functional equivalence of managerial rules and mechanisms. Consequently, differences in document length or disclosure practices were treated as substantive findings rather than methodological obstacles.

There are a couple of limitations to this study. First, the research is based on publicly available platform documents. Thus, there is a risk of misinterpreting stated practice as actual practice, of failing to account for missing technical parameters and decision rules that are not documented indirectly in the analysis. Moreover, platform documents offer insight into the ways in which managerial and disciplinary practices are represented, articulated, and made legitimate within official platform discourse. In other words, this research does not aim to present a complete and nuanced portrait of practices on the platform. Rather, it offers an analysis of the managerial visibility that is created by certain platform metrics, of the behaviors that are encouraged by various platform practices, and of the ways in which respective sets of managerial tools are legitimized by particular disciplinary discourses that are represented within official platform documents. Therefore, rather than claiming to fully represent the actual operation of algorithmic management, the study aims to reveal how algorithmic control and disciplinary logics are institutionally defined, articulated, and legitimized through official platform documents.

4. Findings

Although the names, presentation and language of the metrics and scores differ between platforms, the underlying managerial logics are largely comparable. The seven platforms under investigation reveal rating inputs, scoring and ranking rules, and nudging tools towards workers in varying degrees. In the international platforms, this underlying managerial logic is more visible due to a more explicit metric system. In the Turkish platforms, however, the logic is hidden behind the language of incentives, intensity, matching and parametric income.

This comparative framework points to three basic patterns. In the first place, rating data is not an isolated parameter; it is either correlated with overall scores, visibility or even access rules. In the second place, these performance signals have consequences for the allocation i.e., receiving matches, slots or other matching priorities, status, rewards or simply remaining active in the platform. In the third place, instruments such as bonuses, performance targets, point programs, status levels, intensity and earnings parameters translate into daily labor practices through behavioral nudging.

4.1. Close reading of platform documents

Comparative reading of documents from platforms reveals that the technologies of rating, scoring, ranking and behavioral nudging are mainly implemented through the language of quality, reliability, success, and opportunity to earn. However, when we look at the frequent references in the documents to the same set of metrics, it appears that these metrics do not only have an informative function, but they form an effective system of managerial control in the three dimensions of visibility, access to work, and intra-platform continuity.

Uber's official documentation presents a managerial system in which ratings, acceptance rates, cancellation rates, and status mechanisms are closely connected to visibility, rewards, and continued access to platform opportunities. To calculate a driver's acceptance rate, Uber divides the accepted trips by trips offered. All timed out or unreplied to requests are automatically counted as rejections. A driver's "driver star rating" is based on the average from the last 500 trips, including acceptance rates and cancellation rates. Through the Uber Pro program, all of these metrics are organized into a status and reward system for drivers. Depending on their high star rating, high acceptance rate, and low cancellation rate, drivers receive certain status, privileges, and rewards and access to selected requests. Just as there are thresholds for promotion to higher levels of status, there are thresholds for cancellation rates above which one will

either never be promoted, or have existing status and benefits taken away. The thresholds for these cancellation rates directly influence the outcomes of work allocation decisions. The risk of drivers losing access to the application entirely if they fall below the minimum average thresholds determined on a city basis forms the foundation of this disciplinary line. Finally, drivers are unable to see the reasons behind the ratings that passengers give them, which removes transparency from the evaluation process and contributes to a system in which performance is continuously assessed against standards that remain only partially visible to workers(Uber, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

On Upwork, the algorithm reduces a freelancer's entire history and client interactions to a percentage called the Job Success Score (JSS). This is a more distinct scoring system compared to other platforms. This performance metric, consisting of client feedback and contract outcomes, becomes a significant indicator of position in the market. A high JSS makes the profile more visible and facilitates receiving work invitations. This suggests that scoring functions as an algorithmic filter shaping access to work opportunities on the platform. In the calculation system, long-term relationships exceeding 90 days are also rewarded. Each 90-day payment period is weighted as an additional "successful job," measuring the worker's stability. Furthermore, the fact that high-earning projects have a much larger impact on the score creates performance pressures that encourage workers to minimize errors, as mistakes in jobs with high financial value may have a stronger effect on their overall score. The calculation of the JSS on a rolling basis over the last 24 months, and the automatic deletion of activities older than 24 months from the system, nudges the freelancer to stay continuously active and exhibit high performance in every project to protect their reputation on the platform. Finally, supervisory mechanisms, such as detailed feedback becoming visible only after 14 days or after the courier/worker has made their own comment, transform the process into constant uncertainty and pressure for compliance for the worker (Upwork, 2026a, 2026b, 2026c).

Deliveroo's documentation presents a ranking-based managerial architecture in which customer ratings, visibility, and access to work opportunities are closely interconnected. All comments are ranked by date too - those over two years old are automatically removed from the site in order to keep the information up to date. The best rated 'couriers' get the early access to choose from available 'slots' in which to work, becoming part of a tangible ranking hierarchy. The algorithm called "Frank" automates order assignment decisions, linking work distribution to a centralized calculation logic. The system nudges the courier toward constant service continuity with warnings that any breaks such as holidays could lower the statistics that the worker has worked so hard to attain. Additionally, the platform has the right to unilaterally close the accounts of consumers if it detects mistreatment or abuse (Deliveroo, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

Glovo carries out algorithmic management through a "reputation" system directly linked to the courier profile. The reputation of the courier is calculated entirely and automatically by the platform on the basis of the information provided by customers and stores. When the platform optimizes work distribution, several parameters affect the algorithm that distributes orders among the workers, including the distance from the collection point, the type of vehicle in possession of the courier and the load capacity of the vehicle. Glovo states that algorithmic decisions depend on the courier's "voluntary actions" and focus only on service performance; it uses these metrics as a ranking tool that provides access to work and visibility. The disciplinary regime is reinforced by the threat of permanent account closure (deactivation) for reasons such as unethical behavior, abuse of the platform, or "reputational damage." Taken together, these mechanisms indicate a managerial logic in which performance signals are connected to visibility, work allocation, and continued access to the platform (Glovo, 2022).

BiTaksi applies disciplinary measures through the rating and scoring system on BiTaksi platform to maintain quality of service and grant or withdraw access to the platform. Drivers are removed from the system based on the star average, which must be 4.5 and above according to the official rules and conditions of service on BiTaksi platform.

Drivers can monitor their performance through “performance tracking” tool and also view their earnings through graphs on the application. Thus, the algorithm is monitored by drivers in a very natural way and it has become a part of their work life where they are constantly measured while they are performing their jobs. The automatic routing of the taxi closest to the customer's location during the order assignment process is used as a logistic scoring and efficiency optimization. Furthermore, the platform reserves the right to terminate relationships with drivers who repeat offenders based on customer complaints, as well as to remove customers from the app who refuse to take a taxi without a valid reason, thus transforming discipline into a two-way monitoring mechanism. This entire structure creates an algorithmic editorial regime that promises the customer the "highest-rated driver" through a ranking hierarchy operating in the background (BiTaksi, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

On the Armut, service providers' visibility and access to job opportunities are determined by the "Priority Ranking" and "My Performance" panels. The platform’s managerial logic is articulated through these panels. All service providers are ranked hierarchically by the system algorithm according to several criteria (e.g. customer satisfaction, acceptance rate of jobs, degree of completion of service provider’s profile and distance to user). According to platform’s performance targets, the workers are expected to achieve an average rating of 4.8 stars or a cancellation rate of maximum 35% and failure to meet these thresholds creates a direct control mechanism with warnings and guidance. Service providers are encouraged to improve their scores and remain consistent with the platform's "best pro" promise by adhering to specific behavioral norms such as arriving on time, professional attire, not smoking, and leaving the area clean (nudging). Furthermore, taking the job outside of Armut or requesting cash payment is strictly prohibited. Thus, an algorithmic editorial regime is established that keeps the employee's activities within the platform, reinforcing their digital visibility and dependence on the platform (Armut, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

Yemeksepeti Express presents a managerial architecture that combines gamification, financial incentives, and automated monitoring mechanisms. Within the scope of the platform's "Reward Program," professional activity is transformed into a digital point economy by giving couriers +1 point for each order delivered; while daily and weekly bonuses determined according to the total number of packages and the earnings-per-kilometer structure make performance metrics a direct component of the wage. The work order is managed through slots automatically created according to package density and level (batch) numbers representing the performance of the couriers; a ranking hierarchy is created within the platform by giving high-level couriers (1-2-3-7) priority in choosing advantageous working slots. The supervision process mandates the use of logoed equipment that makes the courier more visible both physically and brand-wise in traffic. In cases such as late package acceptance, package rejection, fake GPS use, or working hour non-compliance, the system automatically suspends the courier account and these access barriers cannot be intervened in manually (Yemeksepeti, 2026a, 2026b, 2026c).

From international cases to the platforms of Turkish labor market, another key feature is that of managerial control. In international cases, managerial control is often implemented through several tools that are visibly measured in order to control and to distribute tasks according to hierarchy of status. This is different in case of the platforms of Turkish labor market where similar logics of managerial control are put into practice via the mechanisms of incentives, matching priorities, rules of operation and parameters that affect earnings. Here, in both cases, performance signals are connected with visibility, access to opportunities and to platform continuity.

Two distinct logics of access have been identified, which are embedded in the criteria under which users are granted access to the digital labor platforms. In the BiTaksi case, an absolute threshold logic of access was identified, whereby users below a certain rating threshold would be at risk of access denial. In contrast, in the Deliveroo, Upwork and Armut cases, user access was granted based on a ranking logic, whereby users are

awarded certain outcomes such as increased visibility, work invitations, or priority over others. This distinction is analytically important because the threshold regime produces a sharper risk of exclusion, while the ranking regime creates a more continuous pressure of competition. Nevertheless, both regimes reinforce broader systems of algorithmic control by redistributing access to opportunities within the platform environment.

4.2. Comparative platform sample and analytical evaluation

The comparative platform sampling allows for the evaluation of metrics tracked in platform documentation not as individual examples, but within a common analytical framework. This framework is based on four questions: What performance inputs are collected by the platform? Are these inputs converted into a score, status, or priority rule? To which outcomes such as visibility, matching, slot access, status, reward, or platform continuity are these metrics linked? Which behavioral guidance tools such as bonuses, targets, intensity compensation, points programs, or earnings narratives reinforce these outcomes?

The indicator table created within this framework systematically reveals how a similar algorithmic management logic is repeated across different sectors.

Table 2. Comparative indicator table for seven platforms

Platform	Rating Input	Scoring / Ranking Rule	Behavioral Nudging Tool	Institutional Outcome	Expected Effect
Uber	Star rating, acceptance rate, cancellation rate	Average of last 500 evaluations; acceptance/cancellation rates; Uber Pro point and status system	Uber Pro, point targets, periodic rewards, surge hour points	Status differentiation, reward access, account risk, selected trip advantages	Visibility and advantage differentiation; compliance pressure; risk of exclusion
Upwork	Client feedback, contract outcomes	Job Success Score; 6/12/24 month windows; top score visible on profile	Badges, Top Rated status, profile optimization pressure	Profile visibility, search rank, probability of receiving job invitations	Intra-market access inequality; self-monitoring; score optimization
Deliveroo	Customer ratings	Average of last 400 ratings; visible score	Indirect incentive toward raising quality	Listing/visibility effect	Transformation of customer evaluation into a ranking filter
Glovo	Customer rating, acceptance-rejection, no-show	Excellence Score	Slot selection, calendar priority, performance-oriented reminders	Differentiation of slot and calendar access	Regulation of work time through the score
BiTaksi	Driver rating	Average rating; high/low rating distinction	Emphasis on high-rated drivers	Matching advantage; risk of falling out of the system at low ratings	Points acting as both reward and sanction tools
Armut	Comment average, cancellation rate	Priority ranking and performance profile	Target and visibility pressure	Priority visibility, probability of getting jobs	Distribution of opportunity through performance signals
Yemeksepeti Express	Number of orders, km, bonus, tip, points	Parametric earnings and point/reward logic instead of an explicit central score	Slot selection, bonuses, point accumulation, reward program	Relative advantage during higher volume and busier hours	Increase in tempo, staying online longer, self-incentive

Source: Prepared by the author

The comparative indicator table shows that in international platforms, rating data is more visibly transformed into calculated performance signals; in the courier platforms within the Turkish sample, more implicit but similarly functional incentive and income architectures stand out. While the link between metrics and allocation outcomes is established more explicitly in the cases of Uber, Upwork, Deliveroo, and Glovo; in the Turkish sample, rating and priority mechanisms in BiTaksi and Armut, and incentive and parametric income architecture in Yemeksepeti Express, become more prominent. Conversely, a common order is observed in both samples where the axes of data, access, and incentive are interconnected. These findings suggest that the distinction between the

international and Turkish samples lies less in the existence of algorithmic control than in the institutional forms through which it is articulated and made visible.

A second table was created to systematize these differentiations in terms of evidence clarity and managerial impact.

Table 3. Analytical evaluation table for seven platforms

Platform	Rating/Metric Clarity	Allocation / Access Impact Clarity	Behavioral Nudging Clarity	Exclusion / Vulnerability Risk	General Strength of Evidence
Uber	Very High	Very High	Very High	High	High
Upwork	Very High	High	Medium	Medium	High
Deliveroo	High	Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Medium
Glovo	High	High	Medium-High	Medium	Medium-High
BiTaksi	Medium-High	High	Low	High	Medium-High
Armut	Medium-High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium-High
Yemeksepeti Express	Low-Medium	Medium	High	Low-Medium	Medium

Source: Prepared by the author

This second table shows that the difference between platforms is not about the existence of oversight, but about through which tools and to what extent that oversight is made visible. In examples like Uber and Upwork, scoring and access impact are presented with high clarity, whereas in delivery platforms, the managerial architecture becomes visible more through earnings language and incentive mechanisms. Therefore, rather than revealing a single uniform model of platform governance, the findings point to different institutional configurations of a common algorithmic control architecture.

Taken together, the comparative findings indicate that platform governance does not operate through a single mechanism. Rather, rating, scoring, ranking, and behavioral nudging function as interconnected components of a broader managerial architecture. While the specific instruments vary across sectors and national contexts, performance signals are consistently linked to visibility, access to opportunities, and platform continuity.

The analytical value of the comparative platform sample does not necessarily lie in placing individual platform examples next to each other as separate cases; rather, the comparative presentation of the elements of algorithmic control and disciplinary governance across the seven platforms reveals several important aspects of algorithmic management. By examining Table 2 and 3 together, it is possible to systematically follow the data collected by the platforms, how this data is translated into performance indicators, the access outcomes that are linked to these indicators and the incentive tools that are used to strengthen them. Even though different tools and discourses are used, the findings reveal a common managerial logic that links data collection, performance evaluation, opportunity allocation, and behavioral guidance within a broader architecture of algorithmic control.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study undertakes a comparative document analysis on seven platforms. A view into the official documentation from the platforms studied clearly indicates that algorithmic control is more than a theoretical framework and has become a default feature or institutionalized organizational design. Although metrics and their corresponding indicators, as well as ways to earn incentives through rating via apps of platforms studied, are diverse across sectors, they embed a common underlying design logic: (1) Labor is translated into data points; (2) Such data points are converted into corporate performance metrics; (3) Opportunities are distributed on the basis of said performance metrics. The study's findings show that the technical infrastructures of the platforms function as more than just passive intermediaries coordinating processes. Specifically, they function as governance infrastructures through which labor is measured, evaluated, ranked, and directed by means of metrics, performance thresholds, and incentive systems.

The comparative findings reveal three key dimensions of how algorithmic control is articulated across platform environments. Firstly, the rating does not function as neutral feedback on the platform; it has consequences for workers' visibility, for the chances of receiving invitations or potential income, for workers' status, and for the continuation of the platform. Second, the fundamental difference between platforms is not the presence of oversight. Instead, the difference lies in the tools and, to an extent, in which oversight is made visible. While metrics and their outcomes for allocation are defined more concretely on international platforms, some Turkish platforms operate under the same rules more through the distribution of incentives, increased intensity, matching priorities, and a parametric language of revenue. This distinction suggests that differences between the international and Turkish samples lie primarily in the institutional presentation of managerial control rather than in the existence of control itself. One possible explanation for this distinction lies in the institutional and market environments within which platforms operate. International platforms, many of which operate across multiple regulatory jurisdictions and standardized global business models, may rely more heavily on explicit metrics, formalized status systems, and transparent performance indicators. By contrast, Turkish platforms appear to articulate similar managerial logics through incentive schemes, matching priorities, operational rules, and earnings-related parameters that are more closely embedded in local labor market conditions and platform-specific practices. Differences in regulatory environments, market maturity, documentation conventions, and platform strategies may therefore shape how algorithmic control becomes institutionally visible, even when the underlying managerial logic remains comparable. In addition, the greater sensitivity of platform labor to short-term earnings fluctuations in the Turkish context may contribute to the effectiveness of dynamic incentives and parametric reward structures as mechanisms of behavioral coordination rather than long-term status hierarchies based on explicit performance scores**.** Third, particularly on delivery and courier platforms, bonuses, intensity, slot regulations, and revenue structures based on delivery volume are used as the main management tools, replacing the explicit chain of command.

The findings also resonate with broader theoretical discussions on discipline, control, and data extraction. The visibility created through ratings and performance metrics reflects Foucauldian forms of disciplinary observation and self-monitoring, whereby workers are encouraged to internalize platform expectations and continuously regulate their own conduct. The continuous recalibration of scores, rankings, incentives, and status systems corresponds closely to Deleuze's notion of societies of control characterized by fluid and ongoing modulation rather than fixed institutional boundaries. Finally, the conversion of behavioral traces such as ratings, acceptance rates, delivery volumes, and interaction data into managerial and economic value aligns with Zuboff's analysis of surveillance capitalism, where behavioral data become resources for prediction, optimization, and intervention. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that platform governance combines disciplinary visibility, continuous control, and data-driven extraction within a single managerial architecture.

The platform documents are not only a repository of information, but also a space for corporate discourse that justifies the use of managerial tools. The points, scores, statuses, and incentives are presented within promises of high-quality services, success, reliability, and flexibility. In this discourse, an allocation logic is at work that redistributes visibility, conditions access, and generates the risk of exclusion in various forms. Therefore, the official language of the platforms naturalizes and justifies these rules tied to metrics. While performance metrics are commonly presented as tools for measuring quality and reliability, the findings suggest that they also function as mechanisms through which visibility, access, and opportunity are distributed within platform environments. They also serve as system-wide gatekeepers, determining under what conditions and to what extent they can find a place within the system.

The results of the comparative analysis also show that there is no single control model on freelance, transportation, and delivery platforms. One framework of managerial rationality, however, is implemented in different organizational forms. The control models pursued for freelance platforms differ with regard to the parameters of visibility and the probability of receiving invitations, on transportation platforms with regard to the combination of points, acceptance/cancellation rate, and account risk, and on delivery platforms with regard to slots, density, delivery volume, and earning parameters. These different organizational forms do not translate into differing management logics. Rather, the model of work organization on platforms studied here is characterized by the increasing translation of worker activities into measurable and traceable data points and the orientation of behavior in accordance with a data-driven distribution logic. In this respect, algorithmic management functions as an integrated management regime that measures, classifies, prioritizes, and directs labor, going beyond providing technical coordination.

Based on the results, the so-called 'opacity debate' about algorithmic management needs a more nuanced reappraisal. In current debates, two aspects are brought together: on the one hand, the specificities of the metrics used to govern work, and on the other hand, the technical configuration of the algorithms that capture and process these metrics. The findings suggest that the debate should focus not only on how these systems are technically configured but also on how they distribute visibility, access, and opportunities within labor processes. What is critical is how they distribute or fail to distribute visibility, access, and opportunity into the labor process in a fair, accountable, and contestable manner. Viewing algorithmic management requires a rethink of work, access to work, opportunities into the labor process, and corporate accountability.

However, the study has some limitations. Because the research is based only on official documents of the platforms, it cannot directly compare between institutional discourse and actual practice. Similarly, technical parameters of data collection and decision-making rules for the application of management tools not explicitly visible in the documents can only be traced indirectly. However, this limitation does not diminish the analytical value of official documents. On the contrary, these documents provide an important resource in showing which metrics platforms make visible, which behaviors they encourage, and through which discourses they legitimize their governance tools.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that rating, scoring, ranking, and behavioral nudging mechanisms on digital platforms should be understood as interconnected components of a broader architecture of algorithmic control rather than as isolated technical tools. The study's main contribution is that it reconstructs the discussion on algorithmic management not merely as a problem of technical opacity, but within the context of labor access, distribution of opportunity, and corporate accountability. By comparing international and Turkish platform samples, the study also shows that similar managerial logics may be institutionalized through different organizational and discursive forms. In this context, future research investigating the relationship between managerial discourse established in official documents and the actual experiences of workers, the effects of allocation logics in different sectors on labor processes, and workers' ability to challenge algorithmic decisions will contribute to the development of the literature in this direction.

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