DIGITAL NOMADISM IN WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH

An Integrative Review and a Future Research Agenda

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Why Digital Nomadism Matters

153%

Growth in the US digital nomad workforce

Increase over 2019-2025 (MBO Partners, 2025)

61%

Salaried employees

Share of digital nomads in 2025 (MBO Partners, 2025)

A growing management and workforce phenomenon

- Work can happen across locations
- Organisations engage digital nomads as employees or contractors

Why organisations engage digital nomads

Lower administrative requirements • Cost savings • Less physical workspace • Access to scarce skills

Existing Reviews

- Bibliometric reviews (e.g., Başaran, 2025; Šímová, 2023; Sousa et al., 2025)
- Systematic reviews (e.g., Bozzi, 2024; Jaiswal et al., 2025; Shukla & Khatri, 2022)

Limitations of Current Reviews

01

Limited focus on work and management

02

Overly focusing on quantitative indicators, and overly broad and generic

03

Limited conceptual integration

Conceptualising Digital Nomadism

Our refined definition:

Digital nomads use digital technologies to work while travelling across geographic locations, through work arrangements that enable this mobility.

Three defining characteristics

01

Digital work

Work enabled by digital technologies

02

Geographic mobility

Work performed across locations

03

Work + travel

Professional responsibilities integrated with travel

Digital Nomads and Related Groups

GROUP	KEY DISTINCTION
Workcationers	Temporary work during vacation; return home after vacation
Business travellers	Employer-driven, task-oriented mobility
Hybrid tourists	Leisure-focused; work is occasional
Backpackers	May work occasionally, with less dependence on digital infrastructure
Telecommuters	Remote work while remaining geographically fixed
Digital nomads	Ongoing digital work, geographic mobility and greater autonomy

Systematic Literature Review Method

DATABASES

Scopus
Web of Science (WoS)

SEARCH FIELDS

Article title
Abstract
Keywords

SEARCH TERMS

“digital nomad”
“digital nomadism”
“digital nomads”
“nomadic work”

Screening scope

English-language journal articles • Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) • No publication-year restriction

Literature Review Search

2,225

Records identified

Scopus 562
Web of Science 1,663

618

After refinements

Scopus 275
Web of Science 343

480

Records screened

138 duplicates removed

235

Final sample

245 excluded as unrelated to digital nomads and work context

Records removed during database refinements: Scopus 287 • Web of Science 1,320

Source: Authors' own work

Final Sample and Coding

235

Articles
2005–2026

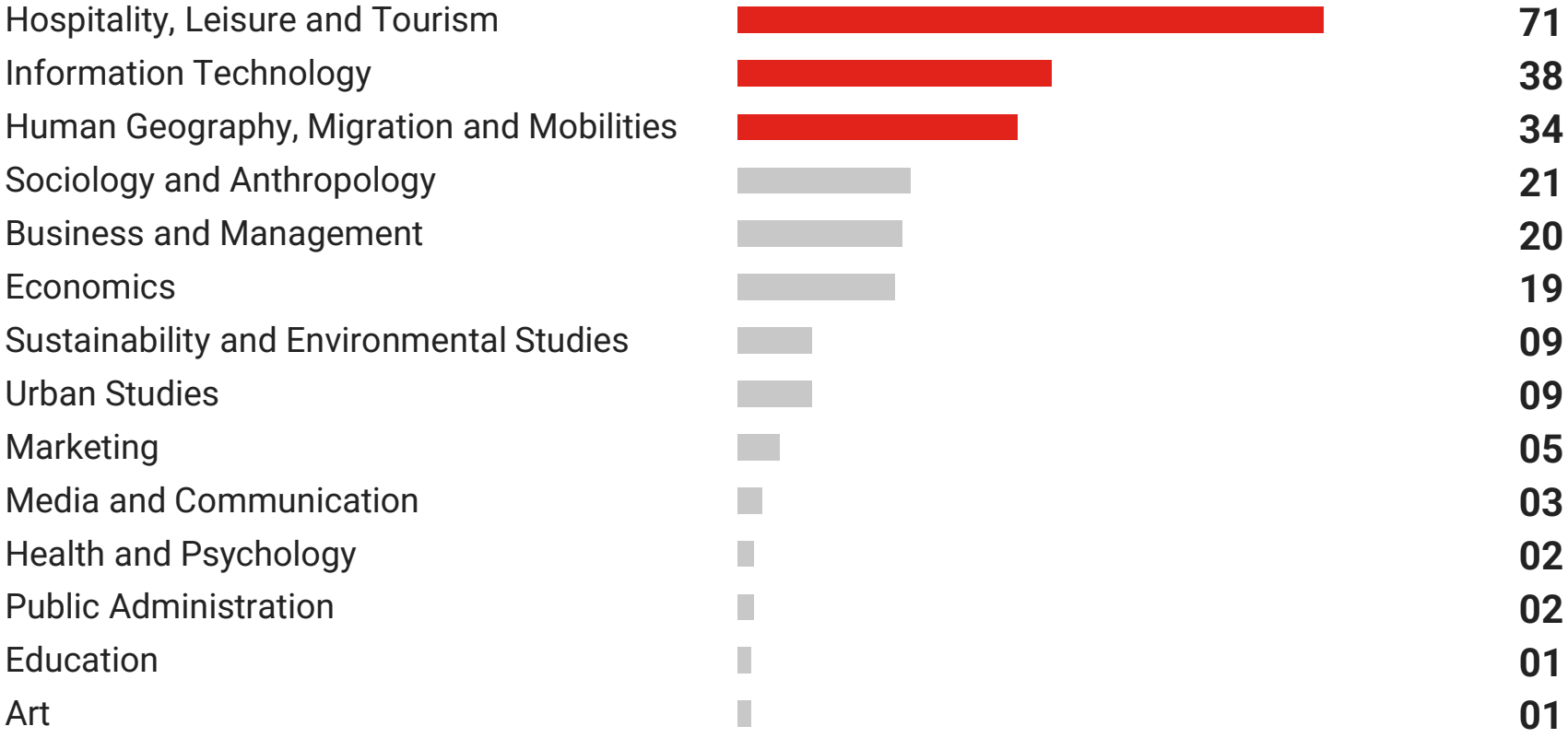
Research designs



Coding process

- Full-text review of eligible studies
- Key findings, themes and methods extracted
- Categories developed inductively and iteratively

Disciplines Represented in the Review



Source: Authors' own work

Theoretical Frameworks from the Work/Organizational Perspective

Psychological Needs Theory (e.g. SDT and Maslow's Needs Theory)

DM lifestyle provide opportunities to exercise autonomy over work and life, develop competencies to manage location-independent work, and build social and professional connections while travelling (e.g., Li & Zhong, 2025), and the desire to fulfill these needs also motivate individuals to pursue this lifestyle (Wilkesmann & Bassyiouny, 2025)

Job Demands-Resources Theory

Digital connectivity and tele-pressure can be the key demands while psychological resources such as resilience help DMs cope (Xu et al., 2026).

Identity Theory

how corporate digital nomads develop and maintain their professional identities while combining corporate employment with a mobile lifestyle and sustaining their nomadic identities (Marx et al., 2023)

Intelligent Careers Framework

Careers are managed through Knowing-Why (aspirations), Knowing-How (skills and practical challenges) and Knowing-Whom (networks) (Zikic et al., 2025).

Boundary Theory

Digital technologies, leisure, remote work, and geographic mobility can make conventional boundaries between work and non-work domains more fluid (Rainoldi et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2026)

Enablers of Digital Nomadism

MOST STUDIES

Macro-level factors

- COVID-19
- Globalisation
- Technological advances
- Destination conditions: cost of living, natural environment, visa and tax policies, physical and digital infrastructure, safety, healthcare, and local culture and acceptance.

SOME STUDIES

Personal factors

- Lifestyle aspirations (autonomy, escape from bureaucracy, work–life balance, travel and cultural experience)
- Self-actualisation and self-esteem
- Social and environmental values

FEW STUDIES

Organisational factors

- Flexible and remote-work policies
- Manager support

Psychological Experiences of Digital Nomads

Work–life dynamics	Work–life boundaries • Freedom vs. productivity • Mobility and stability
Identity tension	Professional vs. nomadic identity • Idealised identity vs. lived reality
Motivational and affective mechanisms	Psychological needs • Emotional experiences
Social and cultural experiences	Loneliness • (transient) Sense of belonging • Gendered perspectives

Implications of Digital Nomadism

Macro-level

- Brain circulation
- Rural revitalisation
- Host-country development & economic impact
- Gentrification and sustainability concerns

Organisational

- Knowledge acquisition
- Innovation capacity

Individual

- Positive work behaviours and enhanced creativity
- Stress and work-life imbalance which can lead to poorer performance
- Reduced career stability
- Quality of life and personal growth
- Isolation and relationship challenges

Resources That Facilitate Digital Nomadism

Very limited research examines resources as moderators

SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Support from local people
- Interactions with other digital nomads

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

- Psychological resilience

Proposed Integrative Conceptual Model



Future Research Directions

Strengthen theory integration	Many studies lack a clear theoretical lens, potential theoretical perspectives such as work design models and job crafting could help understand the unique characteristics of DM's jobs; process-oriented career models could help understand the dynamic nature of DM's career trajectories; boundary theory and work-life interface could help understand how DM maintain work-life balance.
Improve methodology	Most studies have adopted qualitative methods, commonly relying on cross-sectional interviews; we encourage further studies to employ longitudinal qualitative designs as well as rigorous quantitative research to improve generalisability of findings. Big data analysis and cross-cultural studies are also of value.
Expanding knowledge	Only a few studies have attempted to understand motivational and emotional mechanisms and very limited research has examined the moderating effect of digital nomadism.

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Questions & discussion

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