



Quiet Quitting: Building a Comprehensive Theoretical Framework

Sessiz İstifa: Kapsamlı Bir Teorik Çerçeve Oluşturma

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to introduce the recently popular concept of quiet quitting to organizational behavior literature.

Design/Methodology: We have drawn a theoretical framework of quiet quitting grounding on Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory and Theory of Generations in addition to literature review.

Findings: As a result of the literature review and aforementioned theories, first we defined the issue briefly. Then we classified antecedents of the problem into two groups as managerial/organizational factors and employee based factors. Similarly we decided the possible outcomes of quiet quitting and presented the ways to handle with it. On the other hand we presented three factors which have bi-directional effects of quiet quitting as both an antecedent and an outcome. We also argued that whether it is in scope of business ethics or against it.

Limitations: The study is based on three theories and limited number of studies. Therefore, as more studies relating with this problem conducted, scholars will be better understanding the nature of the concept.

Originality/Value: The topic is such a new one in organizational behavior literature. Although we have met a handful of studies on the concept, we realized that the relevant studies do not address the concept comprehensively based on any theoretical background but only one. Therefore, we conducted this study, which is still in its infancy, for further researchers to conduct it empirically within the scope of cause-and-effect relationships in the organizational behavior literature.

Keywords: Quiet Quitting, Quiet Quitters, Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, Theory of Generations.

Öz

Amaç: Bu araştırmanın amacı, son zamanlarda popüler olan sessiz istifa kavramını örgütsel davranış literatürüne kazandırmaktır.

Tasarım/Yöntem: Literatür taramasına ek olarak Sosyal Mübadele Teorisi, Kaynakların Korunması Teorisi ve Kuşaklar Teorisi'nden yola çıkılarak sessiz istifa kavramının teorik çerçevesi çizilmiştir.

Bulgular: Literatür taraması ve bahsi geçen teoriler sonucunda öncelikle konu kısaca tanımlanmıştır. Daha sonra sorunsalın öncülleri yönetsel/örgütsel faktörler ve çalışan kaynaklı faktörler olarak iki gruba ayrılmıştır. Aynı şekilde sessiz istifanın olası sonuçları belirlenmiş ve bununla baş etmenin yollarını sunulmuştur. Öte yandan hem öncül hem de sonuç olarak sessiz istifayı çift yönlü etkileyen üç faktör sunulmuştur. Ayrıca konunun iş etiği kapsamına ne yönlü girdiği tartışılmıştır.

Sınırlılıklar: Çalışma üç teoriye ve sınırlı sayıda çalışmaya dayanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu sorunla ilgili daha fazla çalışma yapıldıkça, araştırmacılar kavramın doğasını daha iyi anlayacaklardır.

Özgünlük/Değer: Konu, örgütsel davranış literatüründe çok yeni bir konudur. Kavramla ilgili çok az sayıda çalışmaya rastlanmış olmasına rağmen, ilgili çalışmalardan biri haricinde kavramın herhangi bir kuramsal teoriye dayalı olarak kapsamlı bir şekilde ele alınmadığı görülmüştür. Bu nedenle henüz başlangıç aşamasında olan bu konu, örgütsel davranış literatüründeki neden-sonuç ilişkileri kapsamında ampirik olarak daha fazla araştırmacının yapabileceği için çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sessiz İstifa, Sessiz İstifacılar, Sosyal Mübadele Teorisi, Kaynakların Korunması Teorisi, Kuşaklar Teorisi

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays quiet quitting (QQ), which has existed before as a form of organizational behavior, has been named recently because it has come to the fore since 2019 and is beginning to take place in studies (Formica and Sfodera, 2022). The term was first introduced by Mark Boldger in a symposium titled “Texas A&M Economics Symposium” in 2009 but became popular in 2021 with the Tang Ping movement in China and 2022 with a short video recorded by Zaid Khan via TikTok application (Yıkılmaz, 2022). QQ is limiting one’s tasks within the job description to avoid working hours or baring minimum to get the job done and set boundaries to improve work-life balance (WLB) (Kilpatrick, 2022; Yıkılmaz, 2022). Although the term incorporates two terms quiet and quitting, employees here do not quit their jobs, instead, they actualize only what is required in their job definition (Scheyett, 2022). It is a major rejection of hustle culture and not taking a job too seriously (Ellis & Yang, 2022). In addition, some employees may consider revealing extra-role performance as an unpaid norm (Tong, 2022). It is a sign that the employee is not happy or experiencing burnout, which is why it is kind of a way to deal with it by alleviating stress (Hetler, 2022). Employees who reveal QQ behavior (QQB) disrupt attending meetings, arrive late or leave early, contribute to team projects less, and show poorer performance with a lack of passion or enthusiasm (Hetler, 2022).

The previous understanding of “living to work” has now evolved into “working to live” (Lord, 2022). In this evolution, generational differences which are driven by the change in standards of living, and technological, social, and economic developments play a significant role (Espada, 2022). QQ is prevalent among young people; while 82% of Americans of age 65 go beyond, it goes down by half in 18-29 aged people (Elgan, 2022). The share of generations that feels unprepared for a potential recession in the U.S. is 51% for Gen Z, 44% for both Gen Y and Gen X, and 35% for Baby Boomers (datawrapper, 2022). Gen Z and young Gen Y report the lowest engagement, they also look out for themselves over employers (Ellis & Yang, 2022). Thus, quiet quitters (QQers) could be detrimental to organizations mostly in crisis. Along with the pandemic, working from home encourage them in terms of complacency. The lack of office structure, combined with the decreased motivation to “climb the corporate ladder”, influences the low effort and concern that Gen Z demonstrates (Barsouk, 2022). According to the same study, the bad news is that this is expected to continue. Expectations of high schools and universities declined during the digital learning pandemic. Students didn’t experience the typical workload and diligence that school normally requires. The new norm of doing as little as required will trickle down into the labor force (Barsouk, 2022).

Many reasons could lie behind QQB such as poor pay, unmanageable workload, burnout, being stuck in a career plateau, low intrinsic motivation, work-life imbalance, lack of growth/opportunities and appreciation, and not receiving recognition at work (Dawson, 2022; Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Biased managers who prefer micro managing such as showing quiet firing (QF) which is deliberately withholding raises, promotions, development, and opportunities from some specific employees, also trigger them to reveal QQB (Zenger & Folkman, 2022). When some of these reasons arise, people start to question their careers if their careers are sustainable. When employees do not see a future in their professions, they tend to either quit or perform QQB.

QQ may seem unimportant at first glance. But considering the term deeply, it could lead to a decrease in job engagement by staying in a job just for its monetary benefits. Shortly, QQers can be called “actively disengaged workers” (Harter, 2022). It removes any effective investment an employee might acquire from the job, which is a very sad and excogitative situation, considering that most people's active hours are spent at work (Tong, 2022). Moreover, it can result in a lack of motivation, underdevelopment of skills, lack of flexibility, and inability to work in a team setting, and because of injustice felt of having different workloads it can cause conflicts between employees (Tong, 2022). The bad news is, there are more than 50% of the workforce is QQers in the U.S., says Gallup (Harter, 2022). Especially for medical workers during pandemics, for law enforcement during the war, or the ones in key positions in organizations, it is important to go beyond their roles. Performing extra-role behaviors in terms of organizational citizenship is significant for making an organization sustainable and competitive. Today most work areas require collaboration and extra effort to meet customer needs (Harter, 2022). If employees only follow the guidelines in the job description, customer satisfaction in

that organization will decrease (eliker and Güzeller, 2022). Therefore, to meet and exceed customer expectations, going beyond settled routines, and performing citizenship behaviors are required (Ma & Qu, 2011). Although QQ has come to the forefront in terms of the frequency with which it has been exhibited with the pandemic, it is a fact that this behavior has existed before, as it is a typical organizational behavior issue. But according to Gallup studies, the ratio of QQ has risen recently (Elgan, 2022). Along with the pandemic, some sectors came to the forefront in terms of the nature and importance of their activities. Health workers, in particular, have shown superhuman performance in this process. In addition to the importance of the situation, due to a lack of resources, unpreparedness for the situation, information pollution, and the easily contagious nature of the virus, healthcare workers had to exhibit extra-role behaviors and were physically and mentally exhausted.

Furthermore, during a pandemic, the government's decision to shut down to reduce the spread of the virus has disrupted the activities of businesses, especially those in which there is a high person-to-person interaction. This situation affected these businesses economically. The economic impact on businesses has directly affected their employees, with situations such as increased layoffs or the inability to pay salaries on time. This impact has been relatively less on employees especially those who are highly qualified and exhibit extra-role behaviors. This is because organizations want to keep such employees in difficult situations by considering their earnings. Because when the economy fails, QQers are the first to be fired (Ellis & Yang, 2022), in addition to health workers, the ones who work as frontline employees in service sectors such as restaurants, hotels, etc. also had to exhibit extra-role behaviors in order not to be unemployed.

In addition to layoffs, the pandemic has made people realize the preciousness of life and allowed them to find jobs with better opportunities. This so-called “great resignation” (GR), along with the comfort of remote working enabling better WLB both of which Covid-19 catalyzed (Formica & Sfodera, 2022), made people think that they should not work for longer hours, that there is no need to go above and beyond and instead, doing what job description requires is enough (Espada, 2022). Furthermore, baring minimum at the office and complying with 9 am-5 pm seemed satisfying for employees (Espada, 2022). According to CNBC news, QQ is a residual impact of Covid-19 and GR which employees felt empowered to take control of their work and personal life (Tong, 2022). But along with GR, it is assumed that everyone has somewhere to go, but for those who do not feel to have alternative jobs to do and therefore had to stay employed, QQ became a new alternative (Scheyett, 2022; Tong, 2022).

To the best of our knowledge, there are some scientific studies that address QQ conceptually with an extended framework based on available resources (e.g Aydın & Azizođlu, 2022; Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Loewy & Spinthe, 2022; Salem, 2022; Scheyett, 2022; Yıkılmaz, 2022; Hamouche et al., 2023; Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). But among these studies there are only two which provide a theoretical background for the concept. According to Aydın and Azizođlu’s study (2022) QQ could be grounded on self-determination theory. But we think that the concept could be predicated on a much more comprehensive theoretical base. Similarly, based on Hamouche et al.’s study (2023) the term is grounded on organizational citizenship behavior, social exchange, psychological contract, organizational justice, conflict theory, equity theory, two-factor theory, job demands-resources and conservation of resources theories. But this study specifically contextualized the term within the scope of tourism and hospitality while pointing the term has not been discussed in human resource management and organizational behavior generally. Therefore, to fill this gap, this study aims to build an extended theoretical frame of QQ based on theories of organizational behavior. Moreover, it is discussed in this paper whether it is a legal right of employees because they fulfill their in-role duties or whether it is something against work ethics as they set a bad example for others by not involving in duties those to take the business beyond its competitors or make it sustainable. The study also aims to provide possible antecedents of the concept, its destructive consequences, and the ways to prevent them.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the work environment, employees fulfill their duties and responsibilities by using their resources (labor, personal characteristics, skills, knowledge, time, etc.) (Hobfoll, 2012) and expect resource gain/increase (wage, reward, promotion, improvement in working conditions, etc.) in return

for the resources they use. This expectation refers to individuals' motivation to acquire, protect and increase their resources in the context of the 'Conservation of Resources Theory (COR)' (Holmgren et al., 2017). For individuals, the loss or threat of loss of resources is very important. This is because the value of resources is assessed on a wide range of issues, from the need for survival to maintaining one's status (Hobfoll and Schumm, 2009). Therefore, the focus of the theory is on responses to environmental events that affect resources. Thus, a problem that occurs after resource investment is defined as a reaction to the environment in which the threat of resource loss or resource shortage arises (Hobfoll et al., 2016). This situation can be expressed as the process of reacting to the organization with the perception of an employee whose resources are diminished or jeopardized when using for his/her job in an organizational sense by thinking that he/she is not getting paid. In addition, within the cycle of resource expenditure and recovery, COR theory emphasizes the strategies that individuals can use when trying to balance resources in situations of risk that may occur in resource acquisition (Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). In this context, individuals exhibiting QQB can be included in the strategies expressed by COR theory. When employees do not get the expected return for the resources they use, they may exhibit QQB to prevent further resource loss. Within the scope of COR theory, individuals may exhibit a strategic behavior in order not to cause further resource loss at the point where they perceive that they cannot recover or increase the resources they use while working. Therefore, QQB can be interpreted with COR theory.

On the other hand, based on the QQB of the employees explained above, the situation of whether their expectations are met in return for the resources they use is also addressed within the scope of the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which includes expectation and reciprocity theories. It is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding organizational behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). SET is based on the assumption that an organization-employee relationship can go beyond a simple labor-wage exchange agreement and can become a social exchange relationship based on exchange gains (Blau, 1968). In this exchange, employees rely on the exchange relationship and organizational support (Meira & Hancer, 2021) and thus strive to create benefits beyond the requirements of their job (Ye et al., 2022). SET has two elements (expectancy and reciprocity) to reinforce individuals' behaviors. These elements constitute the rules of SET and the intensity with which these elements are met can direct the organizational behaviors of individuals (Emerson, 1972). Expectancy and reciprocity theories are also important in terms of explaining the causality of QQB since they are the components of SET.

The first of these, the principle of reciprocity, is the most important rule of social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to Goulder (1960), it takes place in a bidirectional way, mutually complementing each other. It is defined as providing benefits in return for the benefits received (Emerson, 1972). The principle is expressed from an organizational perspective in the form of 'reciprocity of service and return service' as well as a moral obligation and norm of reciprocity. Here, the moral obligation can be explained as the expected performance of the employee in return for the wage received in the context of the business relationship. However, the disruption that may occur in the two-way benefit flow that forms the basis of reciprocity carries the exchange to a risky situation (Molm et al., 2007). This risk situation is referred to as negative reciprocity, which is known as the reaction to the disruption in the reciprocity balance (Biron, 2010). It is thought that employees who expect to obtain a benefit within the framework of the reciprocity flow in organizations may engage in deviant behaviors in response to weak exchange relationships with organizational partners (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Accordingly, the employee reacts to protect his/her resources and establish a balance if the return he/she expects to obtain in the exchange flow is interrupted. In terms of negative reciprocity, individuals who cannot obtain the expected benefit in the reciprocity flow that continues in its old course can reduce this flow to a new level (Hu et al., 2022). In this context, QQB can be expressed as that the employees aim to maintain balance by fulfilling only their limited tasks in the face of the disruption in the reciprocity flow. Indeed, the 'striving for benefits beyond the requirements of the job' (Ye et al., 2022) observed in the ordinary course of social exchange is rebalanced in the contemporary situation and the employee only performs 'the requirements of the job'.

The second element, the expectancy principle, is based on the idea that individuals will receive a return that will ensure the continuity of the exchange flow (Chiang & Jang, 2008). According to this

theory, the expectation process of individuals consists of a rational probability process (Behling and Starke, 1973) that a particular endeavor will result in an objective benefit (Hitchcock, 1903). The expectancy principle supports the reciprocity theory at the micro level and the SET at the macro level. Therefore, expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), which is a motivational tool, refers to the process of deciding on behavioral alternatives according to whether or not the expected benefit is obtained in response to the effort (Chiang & Jang, 2008). While expectancy theory focuses on what motivates individuals in general (Vroom, 1964), in the context of the flow of exchange it focuses on the possibility of receiving a response to the effort (Blau, 1968). It also suggests a causal relationship between expectation attitudes and motivation (Lawler and Suttle 1973). Therefore, when individuals' expectations are not met, a motivational loss is predicted to occur. In parallel to this, individuals who experience motivational loss are also expected to experience a decline in their performance. In this context, when the performance/efforts of the employees in the organization do not meet their expectations, individuals are likely to experience motivational loss and perform less.

Another theory that plays an important role in explaining QQB is the theory of generations (TOG). In general, QQB brings generations to the forefront in terms of the emergence process and the characteristics of those who apply the behavior pattern. In the research on the concept of QQ, Generation Z (Pandey, 2022) is pointed out in terms of the tendency to adopt and practice this behavior. Today, working conditions are not the same as they were beforehand. The majority of Baby Boomers retired and withdrew from working life, and Generation X used to work long hours while doing what they loved, and at the same time had a corporate culture and belonging. On the other hand, Generations Y and Z are relatively new in working life, and the idea of stable and sacrificial work is being distressed (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Therefore, the character of working life changes with generations and begins to transform into a structure that is in line with the general characteristics of new generations (Howe, 2006). According to Mannheim's Generations Theory (1970), this situation can be explained by the fact that individuals of the same age group in the same periods have similar behavior patterns and desires (Soni et al., 2022). Therefore, the fact that generations create a mindset, lifestyle, wishes, and expectations within themselves and act accordingly (Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015) can explain the changes that may occur in the character of working life. In the literature, it is stated that GenY and GenZ have weak organizational commitment and see work only as a way to earn the money they need to live (Crampton & Hodge, 2007). Therefore, the fact that the majority of the employees who exhibit QQB in working life consist of GenY and GenZ is due to the common behavior and thought structure that makes up the generations as well as the difference in the meaning they attribute to working life. This intergenerational differentiation is effective in the emergence of new and generation-specific behaviors such as QQ.

3. WHAT IS QUIET QUITTING?

In parallel with the developments in the external environment, the existence of different elements that closely concern and affect the workforce due to changing working conditions is increasing day by day (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Especially in the aftermath of the pandemic, QQ is among these elements that are more frequently voiced. Despite the recent interest, it is seen that valid and useful evaluations and a common definition of QQ in organizations are not yet available. In its simplest definition, QQ can be expressed as employees not exhibiting extra-role behaviors. In terms of QQ, employees limit their workload, perform their assigned tasks at a minimum level (Harter, 2022; Hetler, 2022; Formica & Sfodera, 2022), prefer not to go beyond their role descriptions by not taking on work-related responsibilities outside their main roles (Thapa, 2022). They prefer to work as much as specified in their job descriptions instead of placing their work at the center of their lives and prefer to spare time for their lives outside the organization (Ellis & Yang, 2022). Empirical studies show that employees with high levels of organizational commitment make greater efforts beyond their role definitions because they identify with their jobs (Öztürk & Özdoğan, 2022). Contrary to the expectations of managers for performance and extra-role behaviors that they can exhibit at a high level from their employees, QQ, which we based on theories of COR, SET, and TOG, is the call for a change in which employees are not willing to exhibit extra-role behaviors outside their duties specified in their

organizational roles, trying to establish WLB by not dealing with work-related issues outside office hours, and as a result, managers need to revise their HR strategies with different approaches.

3.1. Discussion about Ethics of QQ

There are two opposite views about whether what QQers do is ethical or not. Scheyett (2022) claims that QQ could be counted as a violation of ethical principles because it conflicts with the Code of Ethics which says “Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest” and “Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice” of Ethical Principles of National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Considering the definition of “actively disengaged workers” and “barring at a minimum level by avoiding extra-role behavior” of QQ, we can say that QQers behave unethically. Moreover, according to Takacs Haynes and Raskovic (2021) with a lack of moral awareness, as QQers are claimed to suffer, employees can make unethical decisions, ultimately leading to organizational corruption. On the other hand, according to Scheyett’s study again (2022) QQB could also be supported by the ethical principle that says “Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally”. In this regard, the logic lies behind what QQers do to take care of their well-being and consider their own WLB complies with business ethics. In addition, because QQers fulfill their main role responsibilities, that fits with business ethics. Regarding these two opposite opinions, we think that this debate requires further discussion to decide whether it is unethical behavior or the right of an employee. But what we are certain of is what is unethical in this behavior issue. That is how some employers respond to QQB, called quiet firing (QF). QF is the deliberate denial of employees' personal and career-related rights such as promotion, raises, and development (Elgan, 2022). It is a specific pressure on the employee with limited time off, increased workloads but not in payment, increased demands, and lack of respect.

3.2. Possible Antecedents

The antecedents underlying employees' QQB can be examined under two sub-headings managerial/organizational and employee-related factors.

3.2.1. Managerial/Organizational Factors

QQ is a way for employees to express their dissatisfaction to their employer in a way that does not harm them in the face of the fact that their efforts are not recognized by their managers and they feel that they are not valued properly (Scheyett, 2022). Therefore, within the scope of SET, managers' attitudes and behaviors toward their employees are the determinants of QQB. The perception of organizational injustice, which is defined as the belief that employees have that they or their colleagues are treated unfairly due to the attitudes and behaviors of managers/management towards themselves, arises in cases where employees do not receive the promotion, income increase, reward, etc. that they believe they deserve in return for their experience, performance, and efforts at work (Tutar & Köse, 2018). In constantly developing and changing working environments, the most important role for organizations to provide a competitive advantage sustainably falls to their employees. Organizational justice perception is effective on variables such as job satisfaction, greater trust in the organization, organizational commitment, improved job performance, reduced conflict behaviors, benevolent citizenship behaviors, and intentions to leave, which help ensure that employees who have this important role perform at the expected level (Bal Akkoç & Düşükcan, 2021). In organizations where there is organizational injustice, employees will not exhibit the positive behaviors expected from them, and this situation will psychologically distract them from the organizations that they perceive as unjust (Jahanzeb et al., 2021) and may cause them to engage in QQB.

Organizational commitment, in the context of managers' attitudes and behaviors and organizational justice, is the employees' acceptance of organizational goals and values, their willingness to exhibit all their skills and abilities to achieve these goals, and their strong will to stay in the organization (Swailes, 2002). Employees with strong organizational commitment have high performance (Öztürk & Özdoğan, 2022) and are less likely to quit their jobs (Allen & Meyer, 1990). However, continuance commitment, which constitutes organizational commitment and which Becker explains based on the Side-bet theory (Swailes, 2002: 159) is that employees continue their organizational commitment as they do not want to cut off their relations with their organizations, thinking that the cost of leaving their organization will be high such as not being able to find an

alternative job, employment opportunities with equivalent or higher conditions (Allen & Meyer, 1990). It is observed that employees who cannot achieve organizational commitment avoid performing at a high level in activities related to their jobs, and their desire to maintain their continuance commitment with the thought that the cost of giving up their jobs will be high shows that organizational commitment can be counted among the reasons that push employees to QQB.

It is seen that the characteristics of managers (such as intelligence, credibility, empathy, etc.) are also effective on employees' attitudes toward their jobs, motivation, performance, organizational justice, and organizational commitment (Uçkun et al., 2022). When these traits are negative (e.g., narcissistic leadership), they decrease employees' productivity and prevent them from taking initiative (Yağcı & Aydın Küçük, 2022).

Lack of motivation, which is a result of the effects of these characteristics of managers on employees and which decreases organizational commitment (Zhou et al., 2022), is also thought to cause employees to exhibit QQB. While it is seen that employees with high motivation levels are more willing to achieve organizational goals (Oamen & Omorenuwa, 2021), it is seen that unmotivated employees do not offer the best they can do in matters related to their jobs and therefore contributes less to organizational performance (Feria et al., 2018), and since this situation is similar to the behaviors of employees who exhibit QQB, it is seen that it provides a basis for the argument that lack of motivation is the reason for QQ.

Managers' adopting a micro-management/biased management approach that negatively affects employees' motivation, constantly controlling their employees, focusing on the process rather than the goals (Irani-Williams et al., 2021) may cause employees to question their self-confidence, as well as questioning their abilities, and may lead to disengagement from work. This situation may cause the employees to exhibit QQB as it damages their trust and loyalty to their job, manager, and organization. Another factor that can be seen in the advanced levels of micro-management and causes employees to exhibit QQB is mobbing behaviors. Employees whose job satisfaction decreases due to mobbing are restricted from showing reluctance and creative behaviors toward their jobs and their attention are diverted from the goals of the organization and the importance of their duties (Machado et. al., 2021). Unmanageable workload, which is a kind of mobbing, is among the determinant causes of burnout in employees (Lou et al., 2022). An unmanageable workload increases burnout and desensitization towards work (Turpin et. al., 2021) and leads to a deterioration in WLB, which can trigger QQB. This is because work-life imbalance causes employees' health to deteriorate. Employees do not have the time they need to educate themselves and allocate limited time for their social lives (Shin et al., 2022), and naturally, this situation reduces employees' commitment to the organization, efficiency, and productivity, and increases their absenteeism (Bekmezci et al., 2021).

Finally, in toxic organizations (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard 2007), where there are interpersonal, tenure, and promotion conflicts (Özbilgin et al., 2019), the lack of merit in the career development of employees, career advancement through unfair appointments by ignoring their skills, competencies, labor, education level and performance in their career advancement, and keeping them stuck on the career plateau, undermine employees' trust in the organization and their perceptions of organizational justice. In addition to this, although employees fulfill the requirements of their role definitions and sometimes exhibit more than their best, they do not get paid for their efforts, thus blunting their desire to exhibit extra-role behaviors. Similarly, it seems inevitable that employees whose job satisfaction level decreases due to the thought that they do not receive a wage that is equivalent to their labor (Çalış & Kaya, 2021) will engage in QQB due to the negative effects of working in toxic workplaces, lack of effective career management, merit, and wage dissatisfaction.

3.2.2. Employee-based Factors

According to Hetler (2022), employees exhibit QQB to mitigate stress. Within the scope of the COR theory (Holmgren et al., 2017), it can be said that employees exhibit QQB in order not to lose organizational motivation, productivity, performance, and job satisfaction (Erdoğan & Ak, 2021) that they will lose in the face of organizational stress they experience for different reasons such as work, role conflict, and ambiguity, physical conditions of working environments, lack of social support, career development concerns, etc. It is not rational for employees to struggle with this stress they

experience in the workplace alone. Thus, management should also take an initiative in this matter. In this sense, with the perceived organizational support that explains the relationship between managers and employees based on SET, employees value participation more and care more about organizational efficiency and well-being, in response to the thoughts that the organization and managers they are affiliated with will meet their socio-emotional needs and reward their trans-role efforts on behalf of the organization (Baran et al., 2012). Therefore, it is thought that insufficient perceived organizational support may cause employees to engage in QQB.

In addition, the personality traits of the employee are effective in managing stress (Agbaria & Mokh, 2022). Positive affect, which is associated with extroverted personalities of employees, and negative affect, which is argued to be associated with neurotic personalities, can be considered among the factors that will cause employees to exhibit QQB. It is observed that employees with high levels of negative affect are more pessimistic, have more negative self-perceptions, and have lower life and job satisfaction (Erol Korkmaz, 2022). In particular, employees' dissatisfaction with their jobs due to the intensity of negative affect will bring them closer to QQ. The organizational equivalent of negative affect is workplace unhappiness. Although workplace happiness/unhappiness is valid at the organizational level, it is examined under this subheading because it is a subjective situation. Unhappy employees are less inclined to engage in acting extra-role behaviors.

Although personality traits have an important role in ensuring the trust of the employee in the organization (Köse et al., 2020), another factor that is effective in the construction of this trust is job security, which can be expressed as the belief that the manager will not terminate the employee's employment contract without a justified or valid reason. Considering that employees' job insecurity is negatively related to their job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels (Kaynak, 2021), it is thought to be a reason for them to exhibit QQB.

Ensuring employee-job harmony with the job characteristics model, which carries the qualities of the variety of skills that employees exhibit in their work, the identity of the job, and making the person feel important (Johari et al., 2022), increases employees' job satisfaction and motivation and creates a sense of responsibility for the job (Kaya & Dinç Elmalı, 2021). It is expected that employees have a meaningful job where they have a high level of harmony with their work, feel valued while doing their job, and have a high level of work engagement, which develops accordingly and can be defined simply as the integration of the individual's self with his/her job (Akdemir & İnal, 2022). When employees do not find their jobs meaningful and do not exhibit behaviors beyond the role expected of them due to their inability to dedicate themselves to work may indicate that they are acting QQB. Generally saying, if the job characteristics do not fit with the employee, it reduces the sense of satisfaction with the job and causes him/her to exhibit QQB. It is thought that perceived overqualification, which occurs when the employee's expectations and the characteristics of the job do not meet the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the employee as mentioned above, may also trigger QQB. Employees who feel overqualified in an organization may compare themselves with their colleagues who have qualifications that match their positions and they may conclude that they are treated unfairly due to a lower output/input ratio as their KSAs surpass others' (Liu, 2012). Within the scope of COR, these employees can stop engaging in extra-role behavior by doing only what is necessary to protect their well-being and resources.

3.3. Expected Outcomes

As aforementioned, what QQers do may not seem dangerous at first when it is considered an innocent reaction to hustle culture to stay healthy, especially mentally. But there is a consensus that in specific times or as time progresses, this behavior can have both, directly and indirectly, detrimental effects on organizations.

Since QQers are simply defined as “actively disengaged workers”, it is first necessary to address the consequences of disengagement. While engaged employees are more active and willing to pay more to an organization to contribute to organizational overall well-being, and have better health, more satisfaction from work, more positive behavior and higher organizational commitment, and less willingness to leave the organization (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019) disengaged employees perform the reverse within the scope of COR theory. Therefore, QQers will show lower performance in terms of

both quantitatively and qualitatively, more absenteeism and presenteeism behavior instead of leaving, all of which have negative effects on the organization. As time progresses, because discharging only what is required, the employee will have a chance to get bored of doing the same routine which results in bore-out syndrome.

Apart from the definition of “actively disengaged employees”, QQ can also cause conflicts between employees in terms of justice (Tong, 2022). This perceived organizational injustice can create a climate of unrest in the workplace. It also triggers hostile behaviors (Peterson et al., 2022), deviant workplace behaviors (Khattak et al., 2019) regarding SET. Moreover, it can lead to a decrease in business performance for everyone and can cause significant economic losses on a global scale (Yıkılmaz, 2022).

In extraordinary situations, employees are expected to perform extra-role behaviors. During the pandemic, people witnessed medical employees’ performance which played a substantial role in coping with the situation in the world. In wartime, soldiers and their commanders on the battlefield should do more than they expected. In a financial crisis, top management members must do their best in taking decisions. Suppose that the employees in key roles in one of these situations exhibit QQB. Although its effects are slowly fading today, the most recent global event, the pandemic, could still have been ongoing, perhaps even worse. In an example of the organization suffering from a financial crisis, that organization could have gone bankrupt and in the war example, the relative army could have lost the battle. Not only in this kind of situation but also in service sector, particularly frontline employees should perform extra-role behaviors to gain and sustain customer satisfaction. Because service is something that is produced and reduced simultaneously. In this short moment, the customer shouldn’t be dissatisfied or unpleasant. When this undesired situation happens, because of “the word of mouth” effect, the negativity effect, and the impact of negative information, this will harm the corporate reputation and the brand value of the company (Arar et al., 2022).

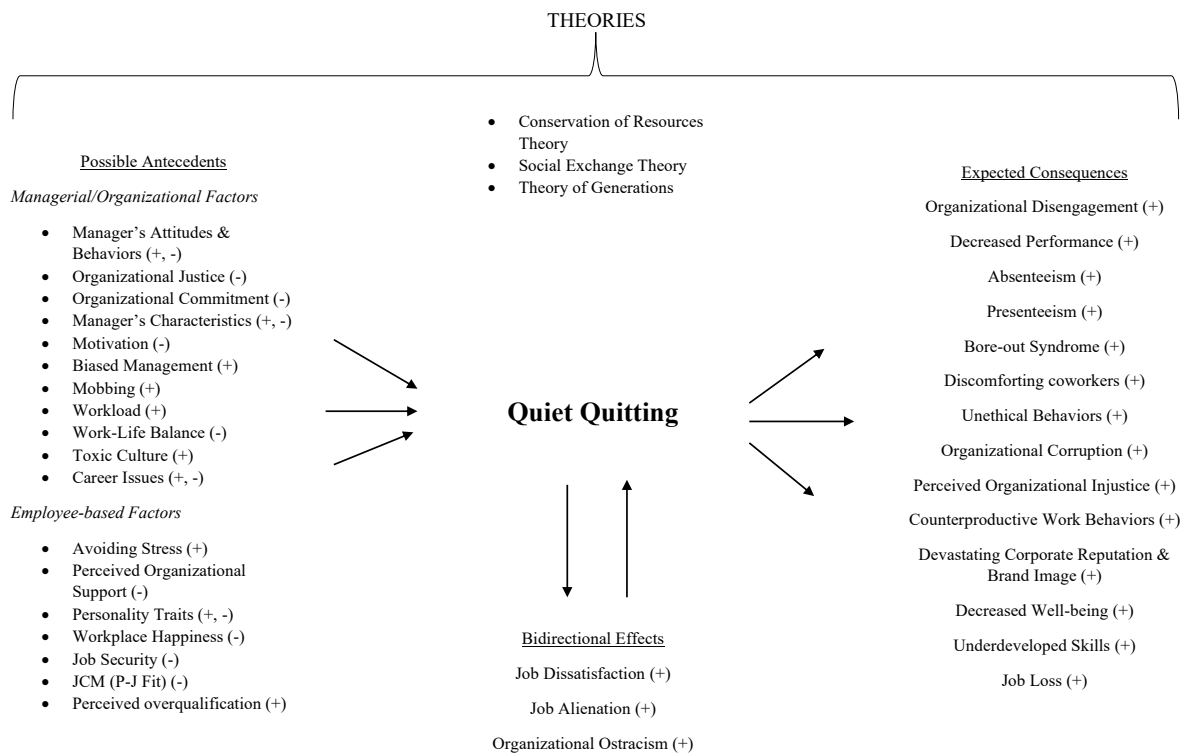
Despite the consensus in the organizational context about the negative effects of QQ, there is a disagreement in the literature about the individual effects of QQ. Tong (2022) claimed that QQ enables employees to refresh themselves and gives them personal happiness and satisfaction. This can be true because employees prefer exhibiting QQB to mitigate stress (Hetler, 2022) and avoid job burnout (Elgan, 2022). But according to Yıkılmaz (2022) it can lead to a decline in the physiological and psychological well-being of the employees in addition to the underdevelopment of skills. Failure to develop skills will render the employee inadequate in the face of a constantly evolving and changing labor market and increasing job demands. Thus, QQers are also the first to be fired (Ellis & Yang, 2022) if required. Therefore, such behavior can cause the employee to lose his or her job, which is very difficult to find again in today’s conditions.

3.4. Bidirectional Effects

In the organizational context, there are some attitudes and behaviors which may have bidirectional effects on QQ as we foresee. That means these attitudes and behaviors can be both antecedents and outcomes of QQ. These are job dissatisfaction, organizational ostracism, and job alienation. Within the scope of the job, dissatisfied employees are more likely to exhibit QQB while QQers are more inclined to get dissatisfied with work because of fulfilling only the requirements of the job without taking initiative. Similarly, when employees alienate from what they do in the office, they may start exhibiting QQB. In the same vein, as time progresses by exhibiting QQB, they may start alienating from the job. Finally, a member who is ostracized by coworkers is more tended to exhibit QQB while QQers are more likely to get ostracized by others in an organization due to the feeling of organizational injustice.

Considering all the antecedents, consequences, and the ones of bidirectional effects, we proposed a conceptual framework of QQB as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Quiet Quitting



3.5. How To Handle It?

Dealing with QQB requires focusing on the source of the problem. These sources can be classified as communication channels & information sharing, organizational procedures and practices, manager/leadership responsibilities, person-job fit and HRM.

The first is communication and information-based problems, which are also important causes of QQB in organizations. Especially since QQB is seen as a communication problem (Elgan, 2022), information and communication-based measures such as improving communication channels in organizations, creating a feedback culture, supporting cooperation & collaboration among colleagues, and providing clear information about the career process constitute the first step (Hetler, 2022).

Second one is about organizational procedures and practices. The level of importance and necessity of workflow in organizations should be determined objectively, and organizational support should be provided for employees to establish a WLB (Hetler, 2022). In addition, an equal distribution approach should be adopted in allocating the workload among employees, a performance-based rewarding culture should be developed, in order to ensure high performance of employees by taking into account job sharing based on qualification and ability in the tasks assigned to them (Elgan, 2022). In terms of management culture, it is necessary to be open to innovation and change (flexibility in rest and working hours, feeling like a family member in the organization, management engineering, etc.) and to implement successful examples such as Japanese organizational culture (Barsouk, 2022).

Third, measures that can be taken at the managerial/leadership level are very important as they bring together two important components of the organization (employee and manager) in the cause-and-effect context of QQB. At this point, managers/leaders should bear most of the responsibility as they need to play a balancing role between the interests of employees and the organization. In particular, it is necessary to establish a relationship of consistency and trust between this two parties,

and to give the employees the perception that they are a valuable part of the organization (Dawson, 2022). Taking measures in a way that does not leave the employee to the initiative of the manager in manager-related problems (toxic leadership, mobbing, etc.) is also substantial (Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

Fourth is considering person-job fit within scope of HRM. When people perform well and long working hours are not a problem, it means that they actually enjoy their work. Today, employees (especially with a generational difference) desire to work in jobs that make them happy. In a job that they are not happy or that is meaningless for them, they work only on the basis of continuance commitment (Altan & Turun, 2021). The employee's relationship with the organization only at the point of continuance commitment should be the issue that the HR team should especially focus on during the personnel selection process (Lamba, 2022). The fact that the right employee is not selected for the right job may actually create an antecedent that can prepare a suitable environment for QQB.

Finally, organizations need to accept that the employee profile and understanding of work have changed in the current era. In addition, organizations need to work towards ensuring organizational transformation and sustainability in line with changing value judgments and information and technology.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we emphasized the term QQ which has gained popularity in the business environment as well as in the academic field. However, it seems that the term itself is in its infancy in literature. Therefore, to define the term we benefited from all available sources, mostly online. Although there are also scientific papers discussing this term, there isn't any theoretical background provided among them as a basis for the term. Thus, we first grounded the concept on scientific theories that can explain it in a cause-and-effect relationship. In this context, we decided that COR, SET, and TOG are the theories that can explain the concept most comprehensively. We then addressed the possible antecedents and expected consequences of the concept might be. Therefore, we proposed a conceptual model for QQ comprising hypotheses to be tested (see Figure 1). Finally, we suggested to academics, practitioners, and managers how to cope with this behavior and actors. For further studies, researchers can examine the possible cause-and-effect relationships of the antecedents and consequences empirically we proposed in this study. To realize this goal there is a questionnaire required for QQB. Furthermore, qualitative studies could be conducted to understand the term more deeply. In this way, this term will also be introduced into organizational behavior literature with empirical studies.

Etik Beyan: Bu alıřmada "Etik Kurul" izini alınmasını gerektiren bir yntem kullanılmamıřtır.

Katkı Beyanı: Tm yazarların katkı oranı eřittir.

ıkar Beyanı: Yazarlar arasında ıkar atıřması yoktur.

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