Journal of Organizational Behavior Review
(JOB Review)

Cilt/Vol.: 7, Sayı/Is.: 2
Yıl/Year: 2025, Sayfa/Pages: 201-223
Başvuru Tarihi: 31.03.2025
Kabul Tarihi: 09.07.2025
Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

A Model Suggestion On The Conditions And Factors Influencing Quiet Quitting: A Qualitative Study[1]

Özge KOBAK[2]

Abstract

This study examines the "quiet quitting" concept as perceived by white-collar employees and employers in Türkiye, with a specific focus on generational differences among Gen X, Y, and Z in the workplace. It aims to understand how quiet quitting is perceived and experienced across generations, and how shifting workplace conditions—particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic—have shaped employee attitudes and engagement. It seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of quiet quitting, its prevalence in the workplace, and its potential consequences on organizations. Using qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and analysis via MAXQDA software, the study employs descriptive analysis and grounded theory to interpret the findings. Results indicate that quiet quitting is often driven by dissatisfaction, low motivation, and disengagement, with contributing factors such as remote work, blurred work-life boundaries, lack of recognition, poor leadership, and weakened communication. Economic pressures and social isolation, exacerbated by the pandemic, also play a role. Economic stress and social isolation since the pandemic have intensified these effects. The study proposes a conceptual model to explain generational dynamics in quiet quitting and offers practical recommendations for organizations to enhance recognition, feedback, and leadership strategies. These insights aim to help organizations mitigate long-term disengagement and serve as a reference point for further research in other socio-economic contexts.

Keywords: *Quiet Quitting, Organizational Citizenship, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Human Resources, Neglect Behaviour*

Sessiz İstifa Kavramına İlişkin Bir Model Önerisi

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki beyaz yakalı çalışanlar ve işverenler nezdinde "sessiz istifa" olgusunu kuşaklar arası farklılıklar bağlamında ele almakta; özellikle X, Y ve Z kuşakları arasında bu olgunun algılanış ve deneyimleniş biçimlerini, COVID-19 pandemisi sonrasında değişen çalışma koşullarının çalışan tutumları ve örgütsel bağlılık üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Araştırma, yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar ve MAXQDA yazılımı kullanarak nitel yöntemler uygulamakta; bulguları yorumlamak için tanımlayıcı analiz ve yerleştirilmiş teori kullanmaktadır. Veriler, sessiz iş bırakmanın çalışan memnuniyetsizliği, minimal katılım ve motivasyon kaybıyla bağlantılı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Buna katkıda bulunan başlıca faktörler arasında uzaktan çalışma, iş-yaşam dengesi zorlukları, tanınmama, etkisiz iletişim ve kötü liderlik bulunmaktadır. Pandemi tarafından artırılan ekonomik baskılar ve sosyal izolasyon da rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışma, "sessiz istifa" kavramını açıklayan bir model önermekte ve organizasyonların bu konsepti tanımaları ve çözmeleri için geri bildirim, takdir etme ve liderlik uygulamalarında iyileştirmeler yapmaları gerektiğine dair öneriler sunarak, uzun vadeli olumsuz etkilerin önlenmesini amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sessiz İstifa, Örgütsel Vatandaşlık, Çalışan Bağlılığı, İş Tatmini, İnsan Kaynakları*

Atıf / Cite this Article: Kobak, Ö. (2025). A Model Suggestion On The Conditions And Factors Influencing Quiet Quitting: A Qualitative Study, *Journal of Organizational Behavior Review*, *7*(2), 201-223.

[1] This research is derived from the author's Master's thesis titled "A Model Proposal for the Concept of Quiet Quitting".

[2] Graduate Student, Yildiz Technical University, Human Resources Management, İstanbul/TÜRKİYE, hereozgekobak@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly shifted habits and routines, leading to new work modes that emphasize flexibility over traditional styles. The widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work during this period has redefined employee work environments and their commitment to employers, marking a transition to a new era in work life. This study examines the evolving discourse surrounding workplace disengagement, particularly the concept of "quiet quitting," or “quiet resignation,” which has gained prominence in recent years. While quiet quitting is often associated with Generation Z (Gen-Z) and the pandemic (Yılmaz, 2024), it aligns with long-standing discussions on employee disengagement, previously studied under terms such as neglect behavior (Lee & Varon, 2016). However, the unique influence of contemporary social media and the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to new workplace dynamics, shaping disengagement in ways that may differ from traditional forms of neglect or burnout. By exploring generational characteristics and corporate responses, this study aims to contextualize quiet quitting within the broader historical and theoretical framework of workplace disengagement.

Additionally, this research aims to provide insights into the concept of "quiet quitting" in the context of Türkiye, offering a case study that may contribute to a broader understanding of the phenomenon. While the concept has gained popularity, studies on quiet quitting remain relatively limited, particularly in the Turkish context. While recent studies, including Ellis and Yang (2022), have examined quiet quitting in contexts such as social media, research specifically focusing on its implications in the Turkish post-pandemic work environment seems to remain limited or less visible in the current literature. By addressing this gap, this study seeks to build on existing literature and offer a nuanced analysis of quiet quitting within a specific cultural and economic setting. Existing literature largely focuses on quantitative analyses, which may not fully capture the complex, subjective experiences of employees or the evolving nature of disengagement in modern work settings. In contrast, this study adopts a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of quiet quitting, emphasizing personal perceptions and impacts, particularly within the context of remote work and the changing workforce dynamics brought on by Gen-Z’s entry into the labor market. Additionally, this research contributes to the literature by addressing contemporary work conditions and accounts for factors like post-pandemic adjustments and shifting work structures. This study explores the concept of quiet quitting in relation to job satisfaction and burnout, generational differences—particularly how Gen Z’s entry into the workforce has

influenced workplace behavior, employee initiative-taking, and the varying pressures faced by different generations—and the post-COVID impact on organizational commitment. Ultimately, it contributes to developing a model for employers, providing actionable insights on how to recognize, address, and prevent quiet quitting through the cultivation of a supportive work environment.

In line with this objective, the opinions of authorized Human Resources (HR) professionals and employees have been examined to identify the causes and consequences of quiet quitting, aiming to support employers in prevention efforts. It examines organizational responses during the pandemic, changes in employee loyalty, and related factors influencing burnout and job satisfaction. The findings offer valuable insights for developing policies that enhance employee well-being while maintaining productivity.

2. Literature Review

Quiet quitting is a complex phenomenon influenced by individual and organizational dynamics. Therefore, the literature review not only focuses on defining the concept itself but also examines key related themes such as generational differences, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and burnout, which are key to understanding employee behavior, especially in the post-pandemic work environment. The following subsections provide a framework to analyze quiet quitting in its broader context.

2.1. General Overview of Generations: X, Y, and Z

Each individual possesses unique characteristics and beliefs that distinguish them from their environment and society. However, those born in the same period often share similarities in reactions, empathy, and perspectives due to experiencing similar societal events. These shared experiences shape societal norms, customs, and traditions. The Turkish Language Association defines "generation" as a group of individuals born around the same time who face common challenges and responsibilities stemming from their shared conditions and experiences (TDK, n.d.).

Evrim Kuran highlights that the X generation, comprising 20% of the Turkish population, holds significant leadership positions in today's business life. Raised with the notion that "success equals happiness," they face constant pressure to initiate, lead, and compete with themselves. Moreover, early in their careers, they were often urged to set aside their emotions (Kuran, 2018).

As for Gen-Y, communication technologies have become indispensable tools for self-expression (Şalap, 2016). Bayhan (2014) identifies Gen-Y as "creative" individuals who value comfortable living. They enjoy working but prioritize a balanced life, aiming to deliver quality work within short time frames. Generation Y is the generation that demands the most from work life (Yüksekbilgili, 2013).

Regarding Gen-Z, the flexible work environment and sense of freedom have advanced significantly. According to Kuran, Gen-Z are natives of the digital world to the extent that they won't have time to get bored (Kuran, 2021). Therefore, they significantly differ from other generations regarding important factors in their working life, particularly emphasizing social responsibility. The COVID-19 pandemic marked the beginning of their careers, shifting work models from occasional remote work to fully remote and more structured hybrid arrangements. These changes, coupled with Gen-Z's unique traits, might have impacted organizational commitment and work-life dynamics.

2.2. Concepts related to Quite Quitting

Although the term “quiet quitting” is a contemporary term, the concept is not new, dating back to Hirschman’s (1970) EVLN model and the concept of “neglect behavior”. The framework developed by Hirschman identifies four main reactions individuals exhibit in response to dissatisfaction: they may choose to exit (leave the situation), voice their concerns (seek changes), demonstrate loyalty (remain supportive despite issues), or display neglect (ignore responsibilities). Dan Farrell (1983) further explored and validated this framework in the context of job dissatisfaction by categorizing behaviors associated with these responses. His study shows a diverse range of behavioral options available to employees when facing dissatisfaction in the workplace such as talking to a supervisor to address issues directly under the category “voice”, exhibiting “loyalty” by "waiting patiently" with the hope for improvement without action, showing “neglect” by "calling in sick" to avoid dealing with problems and disengaging from their responsibilities, or opting for “exit” by "deciding to quit", demonstrating a proactive move to leave a dissatisfying situation.

2.3. Organizational Commitment Within the Pandemic Framework

Organizational commitment refers to an individual's attachment, devotion, and belief in their workplace's values, involving dedication to the organization's goals and a willingness to make sacrifices (Eren, 2015). This concept is crucial for companies, as they invest time and resources in hiring and developing their workforce, aiming to retain key representatives

who can attract future talent. Literature suggests that employee perception forms the foundation of motivation, leading to higher organizational commitment, which is a negative predictor of turnover (Muthuveloo & Rose, 2005; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Human resource management (HRM) should view investments in personnel as future investments rather than expenses and should organize training programs for employee development. This perspective can help reduce employee turnover since strongly committed employees are the least likely to leave the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Çavuşoğlu & Güler, 2016).

The pandemic has increasingly intertwined the concepts of organizational commitment and remote work. While remote work can challenge older employees who are not tech-savvy (Prasad et al., 2020), the American Psychological Association states that, when implemented correctly, it can enhance team satisfaction. Employees working remotely tend to experience higher job satisfaction, leading to increased productivity, greater engagement, and a lower likelihood of resigning (ILO, 2020).

As COVID-19 impacts wane, organizations increasingly adopt remote or hybrid work models to boost employee engagement. While remote work can enhance autonomy, it may also cause loneliness and weaken social ties (Garrad, 2022). Effective managerial training can promote commitment (Ara & Akbar, 2016). Notably, companies recognized as top workplaces in 2022 that use hybrid or remote models report positive outcomes, highlighting their impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Great Place To Work, 2022).

2.4. Job Satisfaction and Burnout

Job satisfaction reflects a sense of success and accomplishment linked to productivity and well-being through enjoyment of work, effective performance, and recognition. It is essential for achieving goals like promotion and fulfillment (Kaliski, 2007). Companies should measure employee job satisfaction through surveys to assess satisfaction levels and implement appropriate development methods, as low job satisfaction can decrease productivity and increase turnover rates while serving as a source of happiness and efficiency (Herzberg et al., 1959; Locke, 1970; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Şimşir & Seyran, 2020).

In addition, another concept negatively impacting employee commitment and satisfaction is burnout. It is described as the depletion of energy both mentally and physically in an individual, arising as a result of the long-term effects of both job-related and organizational factors, causing stress in the organization (Arı & Bal, 2008).

The pandemic has exacerbated burnout, particularly among Gen-Z, increasing risks for companies as today's youth are expected to become future leaders. Organizations must address burnout's root causes, as emotional exhaustion impairs employees' psychological capacity (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). HR should adopt measurable interventions like job rotation, enrichment, participative management, healthy communication, professional development, and teamwork (Taşdan, 2008). Such strategies help prevent burnout and enhance employee performance, as higher well-being correlates with greater effectiveness (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999).

2.5. Post-pandemic Challenges and Adaptation

The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for employees, such as mental health issues, blurred work-home boundaries, ergonomic concerns, reduced face-to-face interaction, and increased burnout risks (Göktepe, 2020; Greenhaus & Collins, 2003; ILO, 2020; Kim et al., 2018; McCulley, 2020). Employers and HR professionals must proactively support employees, establish boundaries, and foster connections within remote teams to enhance resilience and satisfaction (Agarwal et al., 2020). Additionally, employees may struggle with visibility and recognition in online environments, highlighting the importance of personal branding as a self-marketing strategy (Khedher, 2014) that communicates professional value (Çakır, 2008).

3. Quiet quitting: A conceptual framework

3.1. Modern Emergence and Definition of Quiet Quitting

Social media, particularly TikTok, significantly impacts communication today, especially among Gen-Z, who often spend their leisure time expressing various issues. During the pandemic, the concept of "quiet quitting" gained traction on this platform. This term emerged as white-collar remote workers, facing harsh conditions, and African Americans feeling racially disadvantaged in the workplace began using it to describe their experiences. Quiet quitting has become not only a popular term but also a practice among many employees, leading to widespread discussions among experts. The term gained notoriety from a viral TikTok video by 24-year-old engineer Zaid Khan, who defined quiet quitting as performing job tasks while mentally disengaging from the hustle culture that prioritizes work over personal worth (Ellis & Yang, 2022; Thapa, 2022).

3.2. The Concept of Quiet Quitting

In the traditional work system, constant preoccupation with work, even during holidays, is common, often leading to burnout and unhappiness. The pandemic has shifted these norms, as many now prioritize life outside of work and complete only the minimum required tasks. While older generations may cling to past standards, some Gen-X and Gen-Y members also resist work's control over their lives (Ellis & Yang, 2022). Individuals engaging in "quiet quitting" fulfill their primary responsibilities but are less inclined to participate in activities known as citizenship behaviors. As economic conditions worsen, this approach becomes more appealing, especially since completely quitting is often not feasible (Klotz & Bolino, 2022). The hashtag #quietquitting gained over 366 million views on TikTok from September to November, building on the Chinese #TangPing or "lying flat" movement that rejects the high-stress, low-reward work culture in favor of attainable success and relaxation (Allen, 2021).

Employer perspectives vary; some view demanding excessive commitment as normal and threaten layoffs for less committed workers, while others offer flexible arrangements and blame poor management for employee disengagement (Ellis & Yang, 2022). Quiet Quitting, though recently in the spotlight, has deep roots among African American workers, stretching back generations. It's not a novel concept, especially for marginalized groups. This pressure to overwork extends beyond corporate environments to schools, where expectations persist even during lunch breaks (Harper, 2022). There is no national record of quiet quitters, making demographic analysis difficult.

The quiet quitting concept is expected to encourage companies to adopt more flexible work systems. While some executives may view this negatively, lessons from quiet quitting can enhance employee loyalty, especially for those lacking alternative job options. As CNBC reports, employees desire to be proud of their work and have a meaningful impact, but quiet quitting may hinder this. Quiet quitting can enhance focus during work hours, but often indicates low motivation and teamwork issues, sometimes leading to conflicts. However, it may also inspire creativity and increased productivity (Tong, 2022).

4. Research methodology

4.1. Method of the Research

A qualitative method was utilized in this research. A semi-structured interview form was preferred, where the interviewer prepares questions in advance to ensure they are clear.

During the interview, the interviewer may rephrase or adjust questions if unexpected issues arise or the participant does not understand them (Polat, 2022).

4.2. Data Collection Tool

The perception of quiet quitting in Türkiye was examined through semi-structured interviews and separate questionnaires for employers and employees (see Supplementary Material 1). Questions, included demographics and informed consent forms. The research was evaluated with the decision numbered 2022/12 at the meeting of the Yildiz Technical University Ethics Committee held on 27.12.2027 and deemed ethically appropriate.

The interview questions were formulated by drawing upon many studies found in the literature. Studies on "organizational commitment," "employee commitment," "work-life balance," "remote work," and "job satisfaction" were reviewed to prepare interview questions. The study drew upon Allen and Meyer's (1990) work on organizational commitment, Greenhaus and Collins's (2003) study on work-life balance, Prasad et al.'s (2020) research on remote work, and Spector's (1994) survey study on job satisfaction. For the concept of "quiet resignation," Thapa's (2020) and Harter's (2022a, 2022b) articles were examined, and relevant concepts were evaluated and blended with the study's purpose to shape the interview questions.

4.3. Sampling

A snowball sampling method was used in the research. This method aims to create a sample for a study by making referrals among individuals who possess the characteristics of interest to the research (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Within the scope of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants, 1 employer, and 1 employee from each of 10 different companies headquartered in Istanbul. Participants were purposefully selected to represent diverse job roles and responsibilities to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the quiet quitting phenomenon across hierarchical levels. Due to confidentiality agreements, company names are withheld, but sectoral information is provided in the following sections and supplementary material. All participating companies are large-scale organizations operating internationally with global headquarters—employing over 14 thousand to 340 thousand personnel. The sample was purposefully selected to reflect a diverse range of industries, including telecommunications, finance, automotive, retail, machinery, and human resources, ensuring that different organizational cultures and work

environments were represented. Participants held various roles and hierarchical positions—from assistant specialists and engineers to heads and directors, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Positions and Sectors of Participants

Participant	Sector	Title/Position
Employer 1	Telecommunications	Human Resources Business Partner Department Head
Employer 2	Finance	Foreign Trade, Procurement and Operations Director
Employer 3	Automotive	Second Hand Wholesale Sales Manager
Employer 4	Retail	E-Commerce Planning Manager
Employer 5	Machinery	Process Excellence Leader
Employer 6	Finance	Marketing Director
Employer 7	Human Resources	Team Leader
Employer 8	Automotive	Product Manager
Employer 9	Industrial	Human Resources Director
Employer 10	Retail	E-Commerce Planning and Analytical Group Manager
Employee 1	Automotive	Marketing Product Specialist
Employee 2	Human Resources	Recruitment Consultant
Employee 3	Retail	Assistant E-Commerce Planning Specialist
Employee 4	Automotive	Product Management Specialist
Employee 5	Industrial	Human Resources Business Partner
Employee 6	Telecommunications	Technical Product Manager
Employee 7	Banking	Talent Management Assistant Manager
Employee 8	Machinery	Quality Engineer
Employee 9	Retail	E-Commerce Planning Specialist
Employee 10	Finance	Senior Specialist

This diversity enabled the study to capture the perceptions of both decision-makers and employees involved in operational processes. All participants were actively working in white-collar positions, had relevant experience in their respective roles, and were selected based on their ability to provide insight into workplace dynamics and behavioral responses related to job satisfaction and motivation. Detailed demographic data, including gender, marital status, age, sector, and work experience, were collected and are presented in Supplementary Material 2. Interview information, such as interview date, method (online or phone), and duration, is shown in Supplementary Material 3. To account for possible differences in perspectives across hierarchical levels, comparative coding and analysis were conducted during data interpretation. This approach contributed to a more nuanced understanding of how organizational position and experience shape views on the concept of "quiet quitting."

4.4. Implementation of the Research

The interviews were conducted via the online meeting platform Zoom, recorded with the participants' permission, and then transcribed (See Supplementary Material 3 for details). To avoid technical issues, four interviews were conducted via phone calls, as per the

preference of the interviewees. These recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and imported into MAXQDA in Word format for systematic analysis.

4.5. Data Analysis

In the research, numbers were assigned to participants to ensure confidentiality for private sector employees, protecting their identities with participant numbers (e.g., Employee 1-10, Employer 1-10) instead of names. Interviews yielded an average audio recording of 21 minutes (18 minutes for employees and 23 minutes for employers), totaling 411 minutes. Descriptive analysis was employed, and grounded theory was chosen as a framework due to the novelty of the "quiet quitting" concept in literature. Grounded theory is a qualitative research design that uses data from individuals to explore complex or under-researched phenomena by uncovering their underlying causes (Bulduklu, 2019). It can also help develop theory-based interventions for practical applications (Oktay, 2012). Grounded theory was applied through a structured coding procedure using MAXQDA software, which facilitated coding and frequency identification. Initially, interview transcripts were open-coded to identify emerging concepts. In qualitative analysis using MAXQDA, codes are short textual labels attached to specific parts of the data—usually a sentence or paragraph—that represent an idea, emotion, or behavior expressed by participants. Codes help break down the data and identify recurring patterns. For example, labels such as “Promotion Uncertainty”, “Increased Workload”, or “Lack of Communication with Supervisor” were used to capture participants’ perceptions. These codes were then grouped and related via axial coding, allowing exploration of connections and patterns. Finally, selective coding was used to integrate core categories and build a cohesive theoretical framework representing the ‘quiet quitting’ phenomenon. This structured analysis enabled the development of a conceptual model explaining the underlying causes of the quiet quitting phenomenon, firmly grounded in participants’ lived experiences.

The systematic coding and analysis facilitated by MAXQDA resulted in well-defined themes that significantly aided in interpreting the research findings and tabulation. During the coding process, responses were analyzed based on key questions addressing the factors that might lead employees to consider leaving their jobs, revealing eight recurring themes for conceptualization:

1. Lack of appreciation, respect, and perceived fairness in the current organization

2. More attractive offers from other companies (e.g., enhanced fringe benefits, career advancement opportunities)
3. Perceived lack of productivity or limited opportunities for personal and professional development in the current company
4. Mandatory personal circumstances such as relocation
5. Lack of open communication and constructive feedback within the current organization
6. Opportunities for acquiring diverse experiences and cross-functional skills in the offering company
7. More competitive salary packages are offered by another company
8. A promise of a more structured and balanced lifestyle by the offering company

The findings were grouped into two main dimensions: working environment and conditions (e.g., remote work, work-life balance, benefits) and social and psychological factors (e.g., lack of leadership, feedback, communication, and recognition). Based on input from both employees and employers, these themes informed the development of the quiet quitting model which is presented in the results as Figure 2.

5. Results

5.1. Demographic Findings

Each company was represented by one employee and one employer, resulting in a total of 20 participants, comprising 12 males and 8 females. The average age of the participants was 35.5 years. This average was 39.8 years in the employer group and 31.4 years in the employee group. In terms of work experience, the overall average was found to be 12 years. This average was 15.6 years in the employer group and 8.4 years in the employee group. Regarding educational background, 9 participants had a bachelor's degree, and 11 had a master's degree. While the majority of the employee group had a bachelor's degree, the majority of the employer group had a master's degree.

5.2. Findings Related to the Research Topic

5.2.1. Remote work. The majority of participants (16 individuals) reported adhering to a fixed office-based working style, while four adapted to a flexible approach. Although some mentioned project-based work, they predominantly emphasized regular office hours.

Participants from the same company expressed satisfaction with their "highly flexible" work system. All 20 participants worked for companies with a hybrid model, with most required to be in the office twice a week. Some noted the absence of a standard for office attendance, attending in specific situations instead. Overall, all participants had more remote workdays than office days, though company policies varied by department, and some employees were required to be in the office full-time.

5.2.2. Changes during the pandemic period. Participants were asked about changes in their work methods during and after the pandemic. All noted a shift from a predominantly physical work model to either fully remote or hybrid arrangements. Changes included remote work adoption, hybrid models, preference for online meetings, elimination of strict office hours, digitization, and flexibility in working conditions, emphasizing a greater trust and focus on results. Only employers were surveyed regarding employee perceptions of these changes. All employers viewed remote work positively, highlighting increased productivity and comfort that enhances employee loyalty, although they also acknowledged challenges during the transition and noted generational differences.

5.2.3. Employee engagement. An interesting finding is that when employers evaluated employee loyalty during and after the pandemic, responses varied: half reported increased loyalty, while the other half observed a decline. The new hybrid model positively influenced employee loyalty, but despite increased happiness, many have prioritized different factors, resulting in decreased commitment to work. A diminished sense of belonging—including among managers—and Türkiye's inflation have further impacted loyalty, causing fluctuating motivation. Although happiness increased, job-change intentions have risen since pre-pandemic, varying by generation. Employers believe Gen-X and Y have a greater sense of responsibility towards work, but face challenges with remote arrangements. For these generations, accustomed to an office-centric culture, remote work poses challenges. Gen-Z adapts easily to remote work, often questions tasks, and prioritizes individuality, though sometimes seen as demanding. They are willing to change sectors and careers. All companies conducted job satisfaction surveys, including salary satisfaction, but results showed lower-than-expected satisfaction. Adjustments were made based on benchmarks, though one employer removed salary questions based on global headquarters guidance. Despite some improvements, widespread dissatisfaction remains regarding survey responses, highlighting the need for companies to reassess efforts amid Türkiye's economic challenges.

5.2.4. Employee initiative-taking behavior. The study explored employers' reactions to employees declining tasks outside their job descriptions. While some consider this normal, taking initiative is viewed as a valuable developmental opportunity that fosters teamwork and aligns with team goals. The extent of initiative correlates with an individual's passion and dedication. Employers emphasize that taking initiative is a positive trait contributing to career advancement and is also expected by their managers.

5.2.5. Work-life balance. In the study, employees were surveyed about their work-life balance, with most reporting success, though some faced challenges influenced by workload, work pressure, or personal life changes. Adaptation skills and a supportive work environment were seen as crucial for managing these fluctuations, while a lack of HR support hindered balance. One participant highlighted difficulty finding inspiration after long days of virtual meetings. Employers recognized that it's normal for employees to decline after-hours tasks, though urgent situations may require them. Respect for work-life balance is essential, and after-hours work should only occur when necessary, as it impacts balance.

5.2.6. Productivity, recognition, and status. All employees believe they contribute to the company but do not consider themselves irreplaceable, recognizing that their roles could be filled, albeit with some challenges. They expressed feeling appreciated, attributing this to the company's reward systems. When asked about societal status, most felt their jobs provided it, and felt respected by their families. However, the social impact is less significant since many peers share similar job roles.

5.2.7. Factors leading to employee departure. The study identified economic instability and low productivity as the primary reasons employees consider leaving their jobs. Employees are concerned about securing a stable financial future amid inflation, which influences their job-changing decisions. Additionally, those who wish to succeed and develop their skills tend to feel demotivated if they perceive themselves as unproductive, prompting them to seek new opportunities.

5.3. Findings Regarding the Concept of Quiet Quitting

5.3.1. Quiet quitting for the employer group. Participants predominantly define quiet quitting as employee dissatisfaction. Employers note that it arises when employees are unhappy, unproductive, and feel stagnant. Unhappy employees threaten company sustainability, and equal performance is expected. Those focused on self-improvement are

less likely to quiet quit, while neglect and feeling overlooked are seen as key causes. One participant defines quiet quitting as "employee resentment." Another participant suggests that someone engaging in quiet quitting may be punishing the company. It is stated that one of the main reasons for quiet quitting is productivity, with employees turning to this option when they feel they cannot develop themselves. Additionally, the absence of regular communication is emphasized as a significant factor. Employer 7 has highlighted a significant finding, emphasizing that quiet quitting began in the healthcare sector during this period.

"I believe that quiet quitting particularly entered our lives during the pandemic period. I personally think it initially started, especially, more in the healthcare sector in Türkiye. Because during that period, doctors and nurses were under serious pressure, and it was a process where everyone just piled responsibilities onto them without really caring about the conditions they were working in."

5.3.2. Quiet quitting for the employee group. In the employee group, quiet quitting is described as slowing down work, minimizing effort, and avoiding additional responsibilities to remain under the radar. This behaviour, described as "physical presence but mental disengagement", can lead to a loss of loyalty and motivation among employees. While challenging to measure in the short term, its long-term impact poses a significant threat to companies. Employees acknowledge quiet quitting in themselves and their peers, underscoring its prevalence. One participant described her transition into the workforce, initially struggling with negativity and quietly disengaging. She later adopted a positive, proactive mindset, stressing the need to confront challenges for career growth. Overcoming negativity strengthened her, reinforcing the belief that facing adversity can be empowering. Another participant views quiet quitting as rebellion, attributing it to empowered employees influenced by new generational trends and pandemic awareness. He notes employees expressing ideas and entrepreneurial spirit outside organizations where they feel excluded, with many pursuing freelance work alongside their jobs as a modern solution.

5.3.3. The pros and cons of quiet quitting. The majority of participants believe that this concept has no positive aspects. However, it serves as a warning for companies. Employers view it as feedback that, with proactive management and open communication, can improve organizations. However, quiet quitting financially burdens companies, fosters unproductive routines, and risks losing valuable employees, leading to wasted investments and decreased performance. While stepping out of one's comfort zone for career

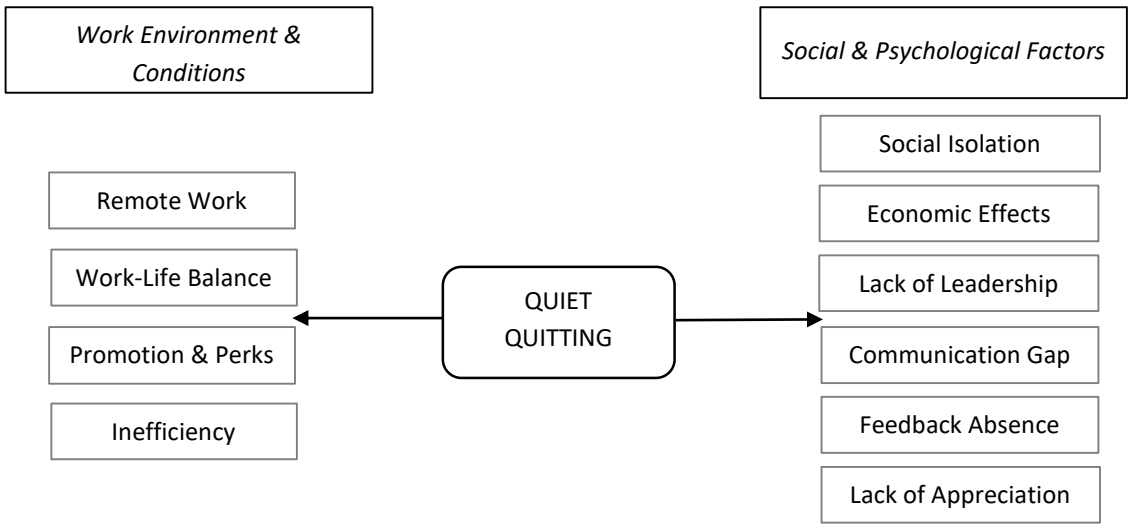
development is seen as a potential positive, challenges in cost and productivity are anticipated. Losing valued employees through quiet quitting is a significant risk, with some viewing it as purely detrimental, leading to decreased performance and a loss of value for the company. Working with individuals in a state of quiet quitting negatively impacts employees, hindering communication and productivity which is believed to decrease self-awareness and impede personal development, leading to unhappiness and negative emotions.

5.4. A Proposed Model for the Concept of Quiet Quitting

The study examined how quiet quitting is perceived in Türkiye and the factors influencing it. According to participants, quiet quitting signifies the employee's unhappiness and loss of motivation. According to the factors influencing this situation, the determinants of quiet quitting are the pandemic and the resulting changes in the work environment and conditions. These conditions include remote work, work-life balance, promotions and benefits, and inefficiency. The biggest factor contributing to the emergence of quiet quitting is the shift in priorities during the pandemic period. Employees have become more individualized with remote work and the accompanying social isolation, defining work-life balance with a new adaptation process. Despite increased employee happiness, commitment to the company has declined. This decrease in loyalty among satisfied employees is significant, reflecting a redefined sense of belonging and a risk of reduced citizenship behaviors. Additionally, one factor that prevents quiet quitting is the open communication established by employees with their managers. Feedback received from managers supports employees' ability to produce and also increases their sense of appreciation, thus enhancing their loyalty. This suggests employees desire leaders, not just task assigners. Employees indicated that inflation significantly impacts salary satisfaction. Figure 1 outlines factors influencing quiet quitting. Although remote work can provide flexibility, it can also blur the boundaries between work and personal life and allow work to intrude into home life, leading to excessive workload, stress, and burnout. The employee journey within a company is crucial. Promotions and benefits boost commitment and motivation, but motivation can decline when expected promotions are withheld. Employees who feel denied their rightful benefits may retaliate by reducing effort, increasing the risk of quiet quitting. Moreover, feeling productive is essential; employees who perceive themselves as unproductive may consider leaving. A lack of motivation and feelings of inefficiency can lead to employees feeling undervalued and dissatisfied.

Figure 1

Conditions and Factors Influencing Quiet Quitting



Employees can trigger the quiet quitting state based on the work environment and conditions indicated in Figure 1. Remote work, work-life balance, promotions and benefits, and inefficiency are precursors that could contribute to the emergence of quiet quitting. Factors such as lack of appreciation, not receiving feedback, lacking open communication within the team and with their manager, economic factors, and social isolation, employees may affect employers to become unhappy, experience decreased motivation, and lose their sense of belonging, leading them to resort to quiet quitting. When the concept of quiet quitting is examined in detail based on these factors, it can be classified under three headings: Working conditions and pandemic effects, career planning and benefits, business management and communication, which are summarized in Figure 2.

5.4.1. Work environment and conditions - effects of the pandemic. The pandemic brought major changes to the work environment, with new models like remote work reshaping work-life balance. While offering personal flexibility, remote work reduces physical presence and teamwork, potentially lowering organizational citizenship behaviors due to social isolation and limited in-person interaction. Effective communication and maintaining interaction with colleagues are essential for promoting organizational citizenship behaviors.

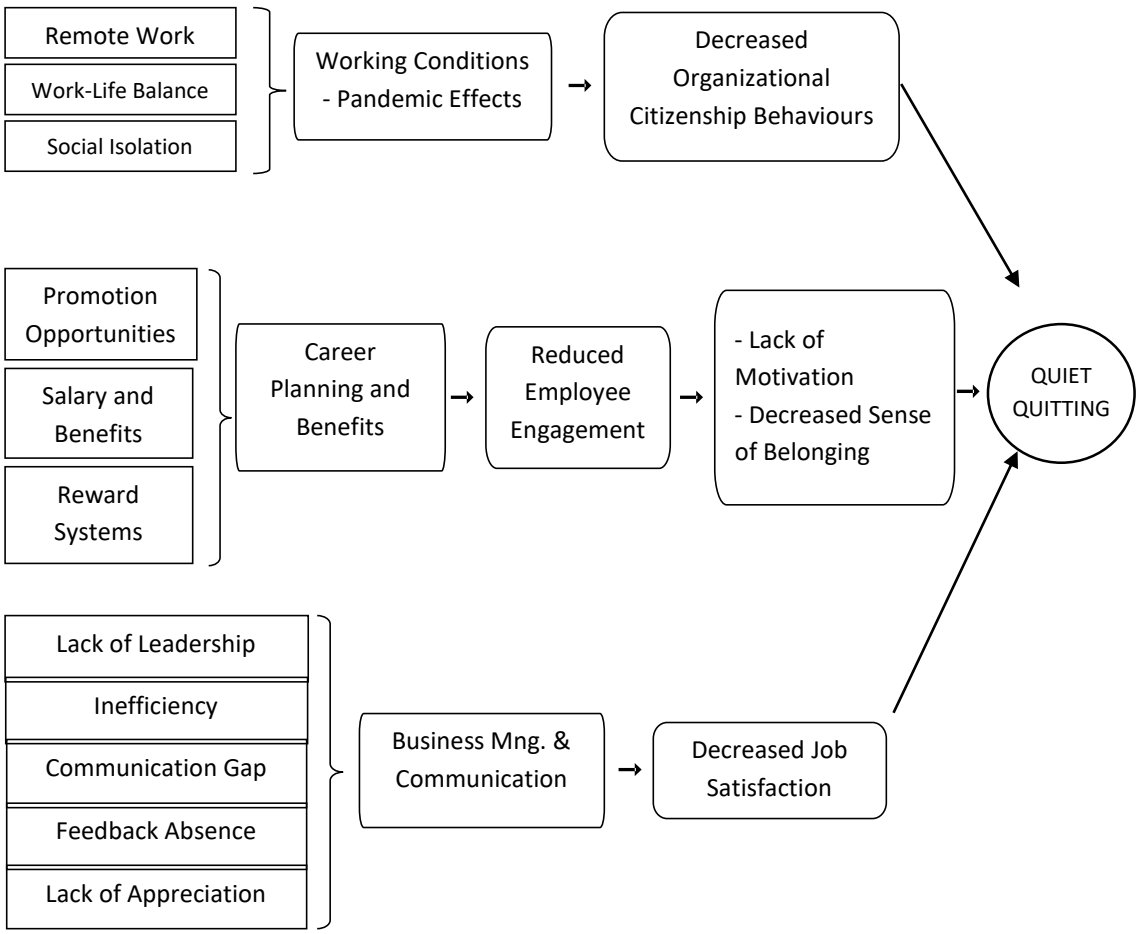
5.4.2. Career planning and benefits. Employees expect fair and satisfactory compensation for their efforts, valuing factors like career planning, promotion opportunities, salary, benefits, and reward systems. Clear advancement paths are essential for setting career

goals. Uncertainty, inadequate compensation, and unfairness lower motivation. Transparent, fair, performance-based reward systems impact loyalty. Imbalances in these factors may lead to employee demotivation and quiet quitting.

5.4.3. Business management and communication. Business management and communication significantly impact employee satisfaction. Lack of leadership, inefficiency, poor communication, feedback gaps, and lack of appreciation all contribute to the concept of quiet quitting. Leadership gaps impede direction and support. Communication issues, obscure roles and expectations. Open communication fosters problem-solving and idea exchange. Feedback aids performance improvement. Without appreciation or feedback, employees feel undervalued, affecting commitment.

Figure 2

Quiet Quitting Model Proposal



5.5. Recommendations for Companies

Employees expect effective leadership and good communication from managers to foster progress toward company goals. Constructive criticism, rather than harsh reactions to

mistakes, can help prevent quiet quitting. Recommendations for supporting employees include fair task distribution, motivational activities, internal entrepreneurship projects, and increased internal rotations. Some employers suggest conducting quarterly job satisfaction surveys and prioritizing forward feedback.

6. Discussion and conclusion

6.1. Discussion

This study involved interviews with employers and employees from companies in Istanbul to explore the concept of "quiet quitting" and its recognition in Türkiye. All participants were familiar with the concept, although some had limited knowledge. The perception of quiet quitting in Türkiye aligns with existing literature, particularly with Ellis and Yang (2022), who highlight its significant impact on social media, which is also evident in Türkiye. HR managers recognize this concept, influenced by Gen-Z, noting that "unhappy employees" are a defining characteristic of quiet quitting, often viewed as a temporary state that can improve with better communication.

Identifying quiet quitting can alleviate negative conditions, allowing employees to re-engage. This research suggests that activities like job rotation can positively impact this state. The study evaluated employees' views, revealing additional results related to this concept. Situations where employees cannot deliver results, feel unrecognized, etc., lead them to seek other job opportunities or become open to different job offers. Even if the employee does not resign, due to their minimal engagement with work requirements and loss of commitment, they may evaluate and make decisions on different opportunities more freely. As Allen and Meyer (1990) observed, highly committed employees are less likely to leave, a finding supported here.

Quiet quitting is less common among motivated employees, but factors such as changing work conditions, post-pandemic adaptation, and economic issues can affect motivation. Employees weigh their contributions against the benefits offered by their company, including personal development, training, and salaries, which aligns with Çavuşoğlu and Güler's (2016) suggestion that skill-enhancing training programs can help reduce turnover and mitigate quiet quitting.

Although 80% of firms in the study adhered to traditional office hours, there were instances of flexibility due to remote work, allowing employees to address personal matters during work hours and make up the time later. Furthermore, due to the reasons brought about

by remote working, there are also instances of employees staying late. Thus, working hours can be flexible, both positively and negatively.

The shift to a hybrid work model due to the pandemic has significantly altered employees' lives. According to employer data, those previously committed to their jobs have adapted more easily to this new era, expressing readiness for change. Additionally, the entry of Gen-Z into the workforce has facilitated this adaptation, thanks to their familiarity with technology and evolving work methods mentioned in Kuran (2021), making these changes feel more natural for them.

In Türkiye, quiet quitting is viewed as "the minimum fulfillment of responsibilities due to unhappiness and lack of motivation." Often termed "silent resignation," it reflects a loss of commitment and a means for employees to express dissatisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of measures to enhance employee motivation and commitment. As Tong (2022) states, quiet quitting can emerge from decreased motivation, even if employees do not fully understand the concept. Interviews conducted here corroborate Klotz and Bolino's (2022) observations that the worsening economic climate has popularized quiet quitting, reinforcing its prevalence in Türkiye.

To improve organizational commitment and employee satisfaction, companies should offer competitive salaries, value employee input, involve them in decision-making, and provide growth opportunities. Regular recognition of achievements is essential. Supporting work-life balance is crucial, as noted by Eren (2015) and Muthuveloo and Rose (2005), who emphasize that perceptions influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction. However, Arı and Bal (2008) highlight an intensified link between job satisfaction and burnout post-pandemic, with burnout contributing to increased quiet quitting. Although the hybrid model has aided work-life balance, constant accessibility for managers may disrupt it. Shifting company culture can improve motivation and mitigate quiet quitting, as employees in fixed-hour roles often struggle with balance, while those in flexible environments exhibit higher commitment.

Employers often see quiet quitting as a sign of reduced productivity. Though it can be challenging to identify, open communication is essential for addressing it. The lack of effort from quiet quitters can lead to negative perceptions among other employees.

6.2. Conclusion

This research presents a model based on interview analyses, highlighting the importance of the work environment and conditions in preventing quiet quitting. Remote work, which became prevalent during the pandemic, can contribute to quiet quitting; however, proactive measures by companies can mitigate this. Ensuring employees maintain work-life balance, access promotions, and receive fair compensation is crucial for motivation. If employees feel undervalued or perceive unfair treatment, they may resort to quiet quitting. Additionally, inefficiency in the workplace can lead to reduced self-development and increased quiet quitting likelihood. For example, someone who cannot maintain their work-life balance or works remotely may lose their commitment to the company due to social isolation. In cases of leadership deficiencies from the manager, lack of recognition within the company, lack of open communication, and not receiving feedback, the employee may completely lose their sense of belonging.

Quiet quitting poses a long-term threat to companies, as Gen-Z prioritizes their own needs and is less loyal to employers than previous generations. However, employees at every level can experience quiet quitting, presenting significant risks for companies in terms of human resources and future productivity.

In conclusion, quiet quitting stems from factors like a lack of motivation, feeling undervalued, and not being appreciated. Enhancing working conditions, promoting employee engagement, increasing recognition, and prioritizing work-life balance can boost organizational commitment and prevent quiet quitting. Such improvements benefit both employees and employers, and employers should actively work to maintain high employee motivation.

6.3. Limitations and Future Studies

The study involved interviews with 20 participants and reflects the inherent constraints of qualitative research, which typically requires more time and effort than quantitative research. The processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation can be time-consuming, and direct interaction with participants often demands additional costs and resources. Qualitative research seeks to gather in-depth data, making it challenging to generalize results to other contexts. The concept of quiet quitting is relatively new in the literature and lacks sufficient data, limiting the reviewed studies. While the interview target group consisted of white-collar workers, quiet quitting is observed across various industries,

with the pandemic exacerbating the issue in healthcare. Future research should investigate this phenomenon in different sectors, particularly healthcare, and examine the relationship between quiet quitting, post-pandemic work life, and Gen Z leadership roles. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing the potential threat to companies, as each study contributes insights into adoption processes, sectoral differences, and the implications of quiet quitting.

Support Information: This study did not receive support from any organization such as public, commercial or non-profit organizations.

Conflict of Interest: On behalf of all authors, the responsible author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval: The research was evaluated with the decision numbered 2022/12 at the meeting of the Yildiz Technical University Ethics Committee held on 27.12.2027 and deemed ethically appropriate.

Informed Consent Form: Informed consent forms were obtained from all individual participants participating in the study.

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