

## QUIET QUITTING: TREND OR TEMPORARY PHENOMENON IN THE LABOR MARKET?

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**Purpose:** The phenomenon of quiet quitting has gained significant popularity in public discourse and on social media, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It refers to performing only those tasks that are formally part of one's job description, without putting in extra effort, working overtime, or "going above and beyond." Quiet quitting does not mean physically leaving one's job, but rather giving up the identification of one's self-worth with productivity. The aim of this study is to determine whether quiet quitting is a temporary trend or a lasting shift that will influence perceptions of job responsibilities and workplace relationships.

**Design/methodology/approach:** In addition to a literature review, the study draws on survey data from 162 active respondents across three generations: X, Y, and Z. The Cramér's V coefficient was used to analyze the relationships between the survey variables, and their statistical significance was tested.

**Findings:** The survey results reveal significant generational differences in attitudes toward various aspects of work in the context of quiet quitting. Younger generations place greater emphasis on well-being, work-life balance, and independence, which can lead them to disengage from excessive involvement in situations that do not meet their expectations. In contrast, older generations tend to adhere to a more traditional approach, valuing loyalty to the employer and a willingness to make sacrifices for career advancement.

**Originality/value:** This study provides a timely and relevant perspective on one of the most widely discussed phenomena in today's labor market. It presents quiet quitting not as a fleeting trend, but as a reflection of deeper changes in employees' expectations toward employers. The findings can serve as a valuable resource for HR departments and organizational leaders in developing strategies to manage employee engagement and satisfaction.

**Keywords:** quiet quitting, engagement, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z, Motivation, Work-Life Balance.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## 1. Introduction

The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapidly changing labor markets in the post-pandemic period have led to a reevaluation of career paths and the broader significance of work in people's lives (Rossi et al., 2024; Pearce, 2022). Many workers have come to realize that work should not be the sole source of their identity or fulfillment. Consequently, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of individuals choosing to change careers or leave their current jobs in search of greater professional and personal satisfaction (Park et al., 2024). The pandemic also exposed numerous shortcomings in existing work systems, including issues such as job burnout and the lack of work-life balance (Burrowes et al., 2023; Costin et al., 2023; Kuralová et al., 2024). As a result, many employees have begun to seek more flexibility in the workplace, leading to the rising popularity of remote and hybrid work models (Smite et al., 2023). This shift has influenced changes in how employers structure work arrangements and adapt their offerings to better meet employees' needs. In response to these transformations in the labor market, a trend known as quiet quitting has emerged. It refers to employees' growing tendency to reduce their professional engagement without formally resigning from their positions (Hamouche et al., 2023). Although the term was first introduced by Mark Boldger during an economics symposium at Texas A&M University in 2009, it only gained widespread attention in the social media era, especially on the TikTok platform (Drela, 2024; Nikolova, 2024; Yıldız, 2023). A key moment in the popularization of the phenomenon was a video posted by user Zaid Khan (@zaidleppin), who famously stated: "Work is not your life, and your value is not defined by productivity." This type of content sparked widespread online discussion and quickly became a topic of academic interest as well (Yikilmaz, 2022; Moczydłowska, Moczydłowska, 2024).

The purpose of this study is to answer the question posed in its title — namely, whether quiet quitting is merely a temporary trend or a lasting shift that will permanently influence how job responsibilities and workplace relationships are perceived. This study aims to address a gap in the existing literature and contribute to ongoing research on this topic in the following ways:

1. Currently, research on quiet quitting is still in its early stages, with initial studies primarily focused on defining the concept (Campton et al., 2023; Nikolova, 2024).
2. Existing literature has largely concentrated on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Yıldız, 2023; Lu et al., 2023).

The findings of this study will provide insights into employees' general attitudes toward quiet quitting and explore generational differences in perspectives on the phenomenon — among Generations X, Y, and Z.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Recently, the concept of quiet quitting has emerged as a significant framework for understanding the behavior of employees who deliberately minimize their commitment and effort at work (Mahand, Caldwell, 2023; Klotz, Bolino, 2022; Caldwell et al., 2023). In many ways, quiet quitting can be seen as an evolution of the concept of turnover intention—the intention to leave one's job—which, in this case, does not culminate in actual resignation. Instead, employees remain formally employed but limit their efforts strictly to the scope of their contractual obligations (Lu et al., 2023; Ellis, Yang, 2022; Scheyett, 2022). Unlike traditional quitters, meek quitters reject the notion that work should dominate their lives (Formica, Sfodera, 2022). These employees perform only the minimum required to retain job stability, consciously avoiding overtime, excessive commitment, extracurricular work activities, or emotional investment in the workplace (Boy, Sürmeli, 2023; Bell, Kennebrew, 2023; Wu, Wei, 2024). In this way, quiet quitting can be interpreted as a form of protest or a response to perceived organizational neglect, especially when employees feel that their needs and expectations are not acknowledged or addressed—ultimately leading to a decline in motivation and engagement (Dilekçi et al., 2025; Johar et al., 2023; Kim, Sohn, 2024). It is important to note that this withdrawal from additional effort is not due to personal laziness or lack of ambition. Rather, employees often see no meaningful incentive to take on extra responsibilities without fair compensation or recognition (Malinsky, 2022). Instead of viewing work as central to their identity and the ultimate life goal, an increasing number of employees—especially those from Generation Z—are prioritizing work-life balance (Lipinski, Koczy, 2023; Galanis et al., 2023; Zieba, 2023). This shift stems from a growing awareness of the importance of psychological well-being, the quality of personal relationships, and the pursuit of self-actualization outside the professional sphere (Arar et al., 2023). Work-life balance is now perceived not only as essential to health and life satisfaction, but also as a form of resistance to a culture of overcommitment—one that expects employees to be constantly available, flexible, and willing to exceed formal job duties without any guarantee of appropriate compensation or recognition (Schieman et al., 2009; Sirgy, Lee, 2018; Dillard et al., 2024). This emphasis on balance may therefore reflect a broader socio-cultural transformation in which work is no longer viewed as the supreme value, but rather as one of many aspects of life that should coexist in harmony with others (Twenge, 2017; Seemiller, Grace, 2016). Employees engaging in quiet quitting may perceive their actions as the only viable way to express dissatisfaction or a sense of misalignment with the new professional reality—shaped by remote work, increased flexibility, and evolving organizational cultures (Xueyun et al., 2023). This approach can be understood through the lens of boundary balancing (Pearce, 2022), wherein employees consciously define where professional obligations end and personal life begins. According to Anand et al. (2023),

quiet quitting is also a response to factors such as excessive workloads, long working hours, unrealistic performance expectations, workplace stress, and burnout.

Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1: Quiet quitting is an enduring trend, driven by emerging values such as work-life balance and professional independence.*

*H2: Quiet quitting is a short-lived fad, amplified by social media and online influencers.*

### 3. Research Methodology, Research Subject and Research Sample

To achieve the main objective of this study, a diagnostic survey was conducted using a questionnaire inspired by the work of Nikolov (2024) and Patel et al. (2023), who examined the phenomenon of quiet quitting in relation to employee engagement, job satisfaction, and perceptions of work-life boundaries. The questionnaire included items addressing these aspects, supplemented with original questions developed by the author to explore quiet quitting in the context of current labor market trends and social dynamics.

A purposive sampling method was employed (Chen, 2023), targeting individuals from three generational cohorts: Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
*Characteristics of Generation X, Y, Z*

Generation	Birth Years	General Characteristics	Work Expectations	Preferred Work Environment
X	1964-1979	Loyal, disciplined, value stability and security. Attached to full-time employment and clear rules.	Stable employment, clearly defined responsibilities, social security. Respect authority and hierarchy.	Office with a structured environment, clear division of roles, stable work schedule.
Y	1980-1994	Flexible, ambitious, development-oriented. Raised in times of prosperity.	Opportunities for growth, feedback, flexible working hours, remote work. Value work-life balance and team atmosphere.	Project-based work, flexible hours, home office, startup-like work culture, less hierarchy.
Z	Since 1995	Digital generation, fully immersed in technology. Value authenticity, speed, diversity, and freedom of choice.	Clear company values, diversity, flexibility, development opportunities, influence, and fast career progression. Expect mental health support.	Hybrid or remote work, culture of openness and collaboration, strong focus on technology, creative spaces.

Source: Wiktorowicz, Warwas (2016); Krawczyńska-Zaucha (2021); Pietruszyńska (2023).

The selection of participants was based on their generational affiliation and current employment status. A total of 162 individuals participated in the study, of whom 70.4% were women and 29.6% were men. Regarding generational distribution, the sample included 36 participants from Generation X, 42 from Generation Y, and 84 from Generation Z. All respondents were economically active at the time of the survey.

#### 4. Presentation of research results

The survey revealed that 48.1% of all respondents currently identify with the concept of quiet quitting, indicating that this phenomenon is relatively widespread among employees across generations. However, generational differences appear to influence how individuals perceive and experience quiet quitting. Notably, 33.3% of respondents stated that they had previously identified with the idea of quiet quitting, which may suggest fluctuating attitudes toward professional engagement at various stages of one's career. In contrast, only 18.5% of respondents reported never identifying with the concept throughout their professional lives, implying that the majority of employees have encountered this phenomenon—whether temporarily or more consistently—at some point during their careers.

As part of the study, employees' perceptions and behaviors related to quiet quitting were analyzed. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Opinions on employee behavior through the lens of Generation X, Y, Z*

Research Aspect	Generational Approach			Chi <sup>2</sup>	Cramér's V
	Gen X	Gen Y	Gen Z		
Concern for mental health, even at the cost of work	Moderate	Mixed	Very strong agreement	86.85	<b>0.522</b>
Willingness to show greater commitment when aiming for promotion	Strong agreement	Agreement	Mixed	69.53	0.466
Engagement limited to official working hours	Agreement	Mixed	Strong agreement	57.47	0.429
Reducing involvement due to exhaustion	Agreement	Mixed	Strong agreement	57.16	0.427
Working without sacrificing personal time	Agreement	Agreement	Agreement	65.94	0.451
Performing only contractually defined duties	Agreement	Mixed	Strong agreement	25.33	<b>0.281</b>

Source: own research.

The survey results indicate significant generational differences in attitudes toward various aspects of work related to quiet quitting. Based on the chi-square (Chi<sup>2</sup>) test, it was found that for all examined aspects, there are statistically significant relationships between generational affiliation (Gen X, Y, Z) and attitudes towards work. The strongest relationship appeared in the area of prioritizing mental health over work duties (Chi<sup>2</sup> = 86.85), indicating clear generational differences. In other areas, such as engagement limited to working hours or response to exhaustion, the Chi<sup>2</sup> values also exceed the significance thresholds, confirming that attitudes towards work vary by generation. The strongest correlation observed in the study (Cramér's V = 0.522) concerns the importance of mental health, even at the expense of work. Generation Z expressed the strongest agreement with this notion, highlighting their prioritization of mental well-being over complete work dedication. This likely reflects their stronger emphasis on maintaining a healthy work-life balance. In contrast, Generation X showed a more moderate stance, suggesting that values such as loyalty to work and full commitment remain more

important for older cohorts. Another notable relationship ( $V = 0.466$ ) pertains to the level of commitment expected for career advancement. Respondents from Generations X and Y were more inclined to agree that greater personal investment is necessary for promotion. In comparison, Generation Z demonstrated less support for this idea, which may reflect a growing detachment from traditional work-centric values and a stronger inclination toward alternative priorities, such as personal health and leisure. This generational divergence points to a broader cultural shift in workplace expectations and values, especially among younger professionals. Additional differences emerged in responses to working strictly within designated hours ( $V = 0.429$ ) and reducing involvement due to fatigue ( $V = 0.427$ ). Generation Z clearly demonstrates their approach to the limits of work-life balance. Generation Z strongly defends work-life boundaries, treating work as something that should be confined to defined hours and not extended—particularly in cases of fatigue. In contrast, older generations, especially Generation X, tend to view these boundaries more flexibly and are more accepting of sacrificing personal time for professional duties. When it comes to the issue of performing work without compromising private time ( $V = 0.451$ ), responses were consistent across all generations, suggesting that this aspect is universally important. This points to a growing cross-generational awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life. Regarding the notion of performing only the duties outlined in one's employment contract ( $V = 0.281$ ), the differences between generations were minimal. All age groups shared similar views, treating defined job responsibilities as a standard framework for work, without significant divergence in opinions. The results of the survey showed that the phenomenon of quiet quitting is seen by the majority of respondents (85.2% of representatives of all generations) as a trend that could permanently affect the way work will be approached in the future. Taking into account the different generations, it is noted that:

- Generation X sees quiet quitting as a phenomenon that could lead to permanent changes in work organization, which may reflect their stronger attachment to stability and structure in the workplace.
- Generation Y is more divided on the sustainability of the phenomenon. While some in this group recognize the potential for changes in how work is organized, not all are convinced that quiet quitting is a trend that will persist in the long term.
- Generation Z is the most convinced of the long-term viability of quiet quitting, which may stem from their greater flexibility in approaching work, their strong preference for work-life balance, and their emphasis on intangible values, such as psychological well-being.

Thus, in reference to hypothesis *H1—that quiet quitting is a phenomenon with the potential for lasting change in work organization—and H2—that it is a term trend—it* appears more reasonable to support H1. The data suggest that quiet quitting reflects a deeper, value-driven shift in employee attitudes, rather than a fleeting social media trend. The generational differences observed in the study further illustrate how evolving values and expectations,

particularly around work-life balance, autonomy, and well-being, are likely to influence the future structure and culture of work. These findings indicate that quiet quitting may indeed contribute to a long-term transformation in the way work is perceived and organized across the labor market.

## Summary

This study examined perceptions of the quiet quitting phenomenon, with a particular focus on its potential sustainability as a long-term trend in the workplace. The survey findings indicate that the majority of respondents view quiet quitting as a development that could bring about lasting changes in how work is organized and experienced. Although interpretations of the phenomenon vary by generation, its growing prominence reflects broader shifts in professional values—particularly concerning work-life balance and psychological well-being. Generation Z appears to be the most convinced of the phenomenon's permanence, prioritizing flexibility, mental health, and personal fulfillment over traditional notions of occupational dedication. Generation X also recognizes the potential for long-term organizational changes, albeit from a perspective that values structure and may be more accepting of work encroaching on private time. Meanwhile, Generation Y demonstrates more mixed views: while some see quiet quitting as indicative of lasting transformation, others remain skeptical of its enduring impact. These generational differences highlight the evolving landscape of employee expectations and suggest that the future of work may increasingly revolve around balance, autonomy, and well-being.

In conclusion, the study reveals that younger generations place greater emphasis on work-life balance and autonomy, whereas older generations expect a higher degree of professional commitment. These changing attitudes toward work suggest that organizations must adapt their human resource management strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of different generations.

As the future of work continues to evolve, the implications for organizations are significant: they will need to implement flexible and responsive HR strategies that align with the expectations of newer generations. Therefore, further research is necessary to gain deeper insights into the impact of quiet quitting across various professional sectors and to develop effective approaches for managing employees in this dynamic environment.

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