

Quiet Quitting in the Thai Workplace: Analyzing Factors Influencing Employee Disengagement and Organizational Performance

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Abstract

Recent workplace trends have highlighted an emerging phenomenon known as "quiet quitting," where employees feel disengaged from their workplace and consciously limit their performance to minimum job requirements while remaining employed. This phenomenon affects workplace learning, organizational adaptability and agility, and long-term business performance and competitiveness. This research investigates the prevalence and impact of quiet quitting through a comprehensive study of 169 office workers in Thailand. The study examines key factors influencing this behavior, including job satisfaction, workload management, recognition systems, professional development opportunities, and organizational support structures. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the relationships among these variables to understand their collective influence on employee disengagement are analyzed. By understanding the root causes of quiet quitting, employers can develop targeted strategies to enhance workforce engagement, improve retention, and maintain organizational performance.

Keywords: quiet quitting, employee engagement, workplace performance, organizational support, PLS-SEM, Thailand workplace, workload balance

INTRODUCTION

Recent workplace trends have highlighted an emerging phenomenon known as "quiet quitting," where employees consciously limit their performance to minimum job requirements while remaining employed.

This subtle form of disengagement represents a significant shift in workplace dynamics that warrants careful examination.

Our research investigates the prevalence and impact of quiet quitting through a comprehensive study of 169 office workers in Thailand. The study examines key factors influencing this behavior, including job satisfaction, workload management, recognition systems, professional development opportunities, and organizational support structures. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), we analyze the relationships between these variables to understand their collective influence on employee disengagement.

This study's relevance is heightened by the transformation of workplace dynamics and employee expectations in the post-pandemic era. Our findings aim to provide organizations with actionable insights to address employee disengagement effectively. By understanding the root causes of quiet quitting, employers can develop targeted strategies to enhance workforce engagement, improve retention, and maintain organizational performance.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this independent study are

1. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the quiet quitting phenomenon, its prevalence, causes, and impact on employee well-being and organizational performance.
2. Identify the factors contributing to quiet quitting: Examine the individual emotional and psychological drivers that lead employees to disengage from their work.

Scope of the Study

This study assumes the following conditions:

- The sample consists of employee staff (office workers), Company A.
 - The sample size of data collected from office workers in Thailand is 169 respondents.
- LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Quiet Quitting

Quiet quitting describes a situation where employees consciously choose to limit their contributions to fulfilling only the basic job requirements, refraining from engaging in extra tasks or discretionary effort that go beyond their formal duties (Personio, n.d.). First gaining traction on social media platforms like TikTok in 2022, this phenomenon represents a notable shift in employee attitudes and behaviors.

The significance of quiet quitting extends far beyond a passing trend; it reflects profound shifts in employee expectations and values, particularly as a response to the post-COVID workplace environment (Noor, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a reassessment of priorities for many workers, fostering a new focus

on work-life balance and personal well-being that contrasts with the pre-pandemic emphasis on "hustle culture" and unbounded commitment to work.

Quiet Quitting as a Post-Pandemic Workplace Trend

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed workplace dynamics, reshaping employee priorities, work models, and attitudes toward work-life balance (Hetler, 2024). As employees returned to a post-pandemic environment, they began questioning traditional expectations that prioritized productivity over well-being.

Remote work during the pandemic blurred personal and professional boundaries, subjecting employees to longer hours, higher stress, and less personal time. This experience made workers more aware of work-life balance, leading many to question their dedication to "hustle culture" and the pressure to exceed expectations. Quiet quitting emerged as a response to overwork, with employees protecting their well-being by setting clear boundaries around work responsibilities.

This trend is especially common among Millennials and Generation Z, who openly prioritize mental health and meaningful work (Forum, 2020). These groups tend to seek positions that match their values and offer flexibility, independence, and appreciation.

Factors Contributing to Quiet Quitting

Several key factors influence quiet quitting behavior:

- **Ineffective Management Practices:** Poor communication and inconsistent feedback from managers can make employees feel undervalued, leading to disengagement (Jelen, 2024). Micromanagement and limited autonomy further reduce motivation, causing employees to withdraw from additional responsibilities.
- **Excessive Workloads and Burnout:** The rise of burnout, especially post-pandemic, is a driving force behind quiet quitting. Excessive workloads often compounded by understaffing and high-performance expectations lead many employees to experience stress and exhaustion (Intuition, 2023).
- **Inadequate Recognition and Compensation:** Employees who feel that their efforts are not appreciated or fairly rewarded are more likely to disengage (Bremen, 2022). The absence of acknowledgment or rewards for going above and beyond creates an environment where employees see little incentive to exceed basic job requirements. **Limited Opportunities for Career Growth:** Employees are more likely to disengage if they feel they lack opportunities for professional development, promotion, or skill enhancement. A lack of clear pathways for advancement can result in employees feeling trapped or unmotivated (Jelen, 2024).
- **Shifting Employee Expectations Post-COVID:** The pandemic has transformed employee expectations, putting work-life balance and well-being at the forefront of workplace

priorities. This represents a decisive shift away from pre-pandemic "hustle culture." (World Economic Forum, 2021)

Recognizing the Signs and Consequences of Quiet Quitting

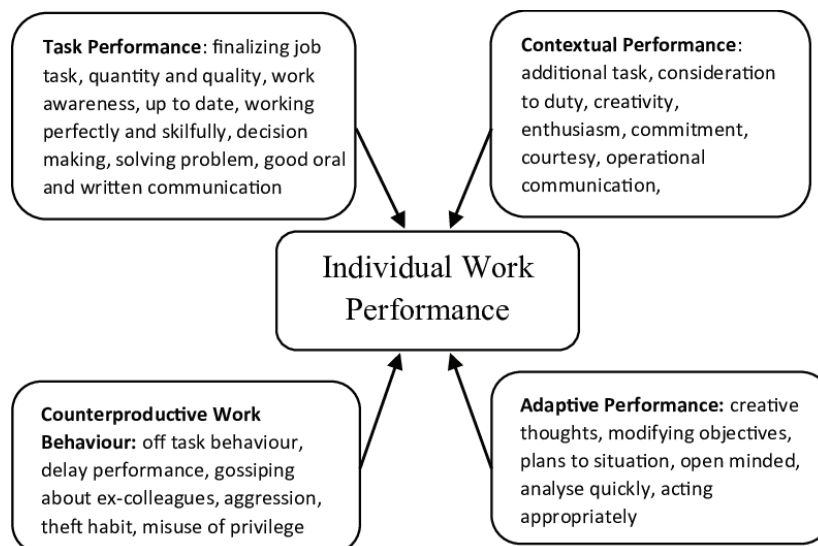
According to Officely (Brouge, 2023), identifying quiet quitting early is essential for organizations to address disengagement and prevent negative impacts on productivity, team dynamics, and workplace morale. Soroya's conceptual framework (Soroya, 2022) shows quiet quitting affects multiple dimensions of work performance: task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive behavior.

In task performance, quiet quitters demonstrate minimal effort, avoid quality improvements, delay completion, and lack proactive problem-solving (Tera Allas, 2024). They decline additional responsibilities and avoid volunteering for projects, contrasting with engaged employees. Contextual performance suffers through diminished enthusiasm, creativity, and reduced cooperation, with employees limiting communication to essentials and withdrawing socially, undermining team cohesion.

Adaptive performance impacts are particularly significant in today's post-COVID workplace, with quiet quitters resisting workflow changes, new technologies, and evolving objectives. This resistance, coupled with limited problem-solving and innovation, indicates reduced organizational alignment and diminished change adaptation.

Counterproductive behaviors manifest through increased off-task activities, procrastination, passive resistance, and responsibility avoidance. Additional indicators include declining work quality, increased tardiness or absences, and minimal participation in company initiatives.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of individual work performance. (Soroya, 2022)



Quiet Quitting in Southeast Asia and Thailand

A 2023 Gallup report revealed that the proportion of "quiet quitters" or disengaged employees in Southeast Asia has risen to 68% (GALLUP, 2024) —three percentage points above the global average. This indicates that nearly seven out of ten employees in the region feel disconnected from their employers.

In Thailand specifically, a recent survey by Mahidol University revealed widespread burnout among workers across all sectors. State enterprise employees top the list at 77%, followed by private sector workers (73%), government officials (58%), and business owners (48%). Faced with this burnout, some employees are opting for "quiet quitting" rather than outright resignation (Bunnag, 2022).

This trend is particularly pronounced among younger workers, with millennials and Gen-Z employees more likely to adopt this approach (Johnson, 2024). Key factors contributing to this phenomenon include a desire for better work-life balance, dissatisfaction with current job conditions, and a shift in priorities following the COVID-19 pandemic. METHODOLOGY

Survey Design

The survey consisted of 10 distinct sections, adapted from Nastja Pevec's 'Identifying Factors of Quiet Quitting in Organizations' (Pevec, 2023) and informed by research from AIMS Public Health (Galanis, 2023). The study used a 5-point Likert scale for measuring attitudes and opinions. The sections included:

- Demography
- Job Satisfaction and Motivation (JSM)
- Workload and Balance (WB)
- Engagement and Commitment (EC)
- Recognition and Feedback (RF)
- Career Development and Growth (CDG)
- Communication and Relationships (CR)
- Organizational Support (OS)
- Performance (Task, Contextual, and Adaptive)
- Quiet Quitting Intention (QQ)

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was distributed to a diverse sample of employees across various departments. Its anonymous nature encouraged honest responses, leading to more accurate insights. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM to identify patterns and correlations among the various factors.

We developed a comprehensive structural equation model to examine the independent variables and consequences of quiet quitting intention. The model variables included:

Table 1: Model variables

Independent variables	Mediating variables	Dependent variables (Outcome variables)
• Job Satisfaction and Motivation • Workload and Balance • Engagement and Commitment • Recognition and Feedback • Career Development and Growth • Communication and Relationships • Organizational Support • Demographic; Gender, Age, Experience	• Quiet Quitting Intention	• Task Performance • Contextual Performance • Adaptive Performance

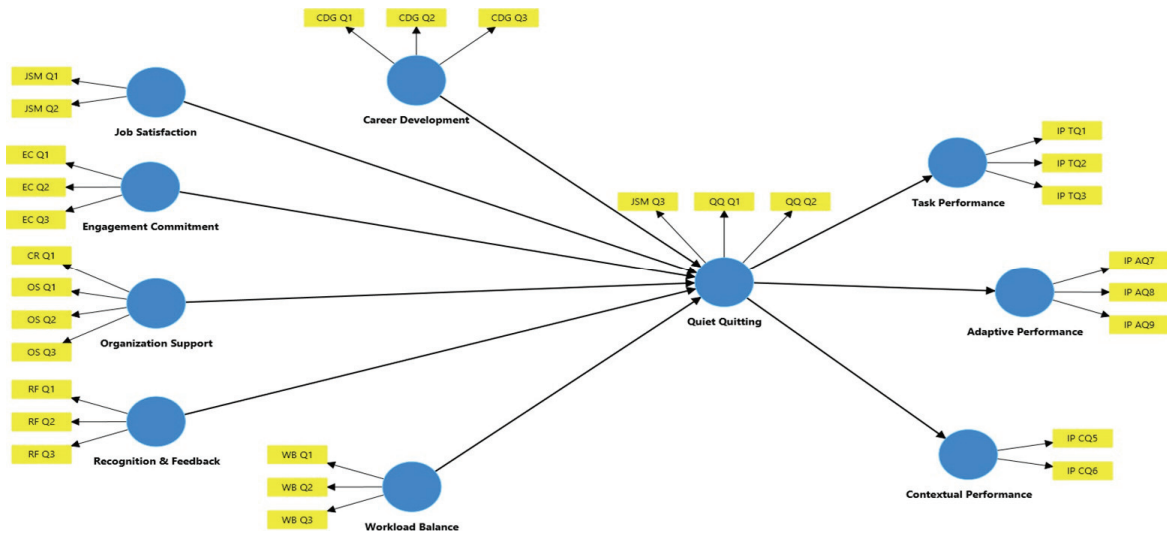
Model Refinement

The initial model testing revealed some limitations in measurement reliability and validity. To address these limitations, we refined the model by:

1. Question Filtering: Retaining only items with strong item-to-total correlations.
2. Factor Analysis for Regrouping: Identifying underlying data structures and regrouping questions based on factor loadings.

These adjustments resulted in a more robust and interpretable model. The refined model demonstrated good reliability and validity across all constructs.

Figure 2: Model Refinement through Question Selection and Factor Analysis



RESULTS

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity using several established criteria. This assessment was crucial to ensure that our constructs were accurately measured before proceeding to hypothesis testing.

Types and organisation of a paper

Reliability Analysis

- Composite reliability values: 0.813 to 0.934 (above 0.70 threshold)
- Strong internal consistency reliability across constructs
- Analysis follows recommendations by Joseph F Hair (Joseph F Hair)
- Most constructs: Cronbach's alpha > 0.70
- Adaptive Performance: $\alpha = 0.684$ (slightly below threshold but acceptable by PLS-SEM standards)
- **Convergent Validity**
 - AVE values: 0.595 to 0.875 (all above 0.50 minimum threshold)
 - Adequate convergent validity - items effectively represent intended constructs

- Highest AVE: Job Satisfaction (0.875) - 87.5% variance captured
- Lowest AVE: Adaptive Performance (0.595) - still above threshold
- **Discriminant Validity**
 - Strong discriminant validity using heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
 - All HTMT ratios below conservative 0.90 threshold
 - Each construct empirically distinct from others
 - Constructs measure different aspects of workplace environment and employee behavior
- **Indicator Reliability**
 - Strong indicator reliability across most constructs
 - Most indicators: loadings > 0.7 (above recommended threshold)
 - Good item reliability demonstrated
 - Few indicators with moderate loadings (0.58-0.67) were retained
 - Retention justified by theoretical significance and contribution to content validity

Structural Model Results

- Path analysis conducted at 5% significance level
- Several significant relationships with Quiet Quitting (QQ) identified
- Strong positive correlations with QQ:
 - Contextual Performance: path coefficient = 0.804 ($p < 0.001$)
 - Task Performance: path coefficient = 0.541 ($p < 0.001$)
- Moderate positive relationships with QQ, path coefficient between 0.240-0.299:
 - Workload Balance
 - Organizational Support
 - Engagement Commitment

- Significant positive relationship with Adaptive Performance, Path coefficient = 0.268 ($p = 0.011$)
- Weak or non-significant relationships with QQ, $p > 0.05$:
 - Career Development
 - Recognition & Feedback
 - Job Satisfaction

DISCUSSION

This comprehensive study of quiet quitting among Thai office workers has revealed significant insights into the complex dynamics of workplace engagement and performance. The research findings demonstrate that quiet quitting is not merely a trend but a substantive workplace phenomenon with measurable impacts on organizational performance and employee behavior.

• Key Factors Influencing Quiet Quitting

The study identifies workload balance as a key predictor of quiet quitting, with employees experiencing poor work-life balance more likely to disengage, a finding consistent with post-pandemic workplace trends. Organizational support strongly correlates with quiet quitting intention, as employees receiving inadequate support tend to disengage. This highlights the crucial role supportive workplace environments play in maintaining employee engagement, further reinforced by the significant connection between engagement commitment and quiet quitting behavior.

• Impact of Quiet Quitting on Performance Dimensions

Quiet quitting strongly correlates with multiple performance dimensions, most notably with contextual performance ($\beta = 0.804$), indicating disengaged employees rarely exhibit voluntary behaviors benefiting colleagues and the organization—undermining team cohesion and organizational citizenship. It also significantly impacts task performance ($\beta = 0.541$), affecting core job responsibilities and potentially reducing productivity and work quality. Though less pronounced, its effect on adaptive performance ($\beta = 0.268$) suggests quiet quitting impairs employees' ability to adapt to changes and solve problems effectively, all of which substantially impact organizational effectiveness.

• Unexpected Findings

Interestingly, traditional employee engagement drivers showed weaker connections to quiet quitting than expected. Career development, recognition, and feedback had non-significant effects, while job satisfaction showed only minimal correlation. These unexpected results challenge conventional understanding of engagement drivers and suggest quiet quitting is more complex than previously thought. The study's specific Thai organizational context likely influenced these findings differently than in other research settings, with cultural elements, industry characteristics, and regional factors potentially shaping these outcomes.

Additionally, post-pandemic work evolution may be fundamentally altering relationships between workplace factors and employee behavior, indicating quiet quitting stems from more intricate mechanisms that reflect emerging engagement patterns.

- **Cultural Context and Implications**

Cultural context significantly shapes quiet quitting in Thai workplaces. Traditional Thai values of hierarchy, collectivism, and conflict avoidance may explain why workload balance emerged as a key factor—employees avoid confronting management about excessive demands, opting instead to quietly disengage. Similarly, the strong influence of organizational support on quiet quitting likely reflects Thai collectivist culture, where employees expect reciprocal care from employers and may feel justified in limiting their engagement when this support is lacking.

CONCLUSION

This research contributes significantly to our understanding of quiet quitting as a complex workplace phenomenon with measurable impacts on organizational performance. The findings emphasize the importance of creating balanced, supportive work environments that acknowledge evolving employee expectations and values.

The study confirms that workload balance, organizational support, and engagement commitment are significant predictors of quiet quitting intention among Thai office workers. It also establishes that quiet quitting substantially impacts all aspects of performance, with particularly strong effects on contextual performance and task performance. These findings provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to address employee disengagement and maintain performance in the post-pandemic workplace.

As organizations continue to navigate post-pandemic workplace dynamics, addressing the factors that contribute to quiet quitting will become increasingly crucial for maintaining organizational effectiveness and employee well-being. The insights gained from this study provide a foundation for developing evidence-based strategies to enhance workplace engagement and performance in the contemporary business environment.

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