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The Silent Exodus: A Systematic Review of Quiet Quitting and Its Impact on Employee Productivity and Organizational Culture

Han Purnomo[a*], Nur Wening[b], Rian Oktafiani[c]

[a,b]Program Doktor Ilmu Manajemen, Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[c]Program Studi Sistem Informasi, Universitas Cendikia Mitra Indonesia, Indonesia
* Corresponding author e-mail: 7240111003.hanpurnomo@student.uty.ac.id

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Quiet quitting refers to employees performing only their assigned duties without additional engagement, often triggered by a lack of appreciation, unfair compensation, job burnout, and an unsupportive organizational culture, which in turn affects productivity, employee retention, and organizational stability. This study aims to identify its causes, impact on employee productivity and organizational culture, and effective mitigation strategies. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with PRISMA guidelines, 12 relevant articles were selected from 78 identified in the Scopus database (2015–2025). Findings indicate that fair compensation, employee well-being, a positive work culture, and supportive leadership can reduce quiet quitting, while policies promoting work-life balance and transparent communication enhance employee engagement. These insights contribute to HR management strategies, with future research recommended to explore organizational interventions across industries for a more comprehensive approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Quiet quitting" refers to the phenomenon in which employees reduce their work effort to the minimum level required to maintain their jobs (Georgiadou et al., 2025; Hamouche et al., 2023). The phenomenon of quiet quitting has become a crucial issue in human resource management, especially in the post-pandemic era. Hundreds of millions of workers worked remotely or did not work at all in spring 2020, spending most of the year at home, and when they were asked to return to work in spring 2021, many chose not to return, so that by the end of 2021, more than 47 million Americans voluntarily resigned from their jobs (Giunta, 2023). The term refers to the tendency of employees to only work according to their job description without putting in extra effort or showing high emotional involvement in the job (Hamouche et al., 2023). In contrast to conventional *resignation*, where employees physically leave the company, *quiet quitting* is more psychological, where individuals continue to work but with minimal engagement (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Karrani et al., 2024). This phenomenon raises an important question: is *quiet quitting* a form of resistance to unrealistic work expectations or is it an indication of declining employee commitment and motivation in the organization? Only a small percentage of workers around the world feel fully engaged in their work, while the majority experience a lack of engagement or are even actively disengaged (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Shen & Ren, 2023). This debate has come to the fore with the rising trend of *burnout* (Gün et al., 2025; Thu Trang & Thi Thu Trang, 2024), *work-life* balance, and the shifting values of millennials and Gen Z in the workplace (Adedeji et al., 2023; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

The phenomenon of quiet quitting has broad implications for employee productivity and organizational culture (Rugiubei & Cruceanu, 2024). On the one hand, this practice can signal to organizations that excessive work expectations without commensurate compensation, or rewards need to change (Georgiadou et al., 2025). However, on the other hand, a decrease in employee engagement can impact team effectiveness, creativity, as well as the company's competitiveness in the long run (Yadav et al., 2022). Several studies have shown that a positive organizational culture, support from superiors, and work-life balance can increase employee engagement and reduce the risk of quiet quitting (Hamouche et al., 2023; Rocha et al., 2024; Rugiubei & Cruceanu, 2024). However, not many studies have examined specifically how this phenomenon develops and how organizations can deal with it effectively.

Several strategies have been proposed to address quiet quitting, including employee well-being-based approaches (Lu et al., 2023; Rocha et al., 2024) more flexible job redesign (Liu-Lastres et al., 2024), more transparent communication between management and employees (Srivastava et al., 2024), and the implementation of more adaptive work flexibility policies(Hamouche et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of these strategies is still debatable and requires further study based on empirical data. Various studies have discussed aspects of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational culture, which are closely related to quiet quitting. For example, Memon et al. (2021) and Wen et al. (2022) highlighted that employee engagement is positively correlated with productivity and job satisfaction, while disengagement is associated with turnover intention. In addition, research by Bakker & Demerouti (2024) in the Job

Demands-Resources (JD-R) model suggests that high workloads without supporting resources can lead to burnout and fatigue, which then increases the likelihood of employees engaging in quiet quitting. However, specific research on quiet quitting as a stand-alone phenomenon is limited, especially in the context of its impact on productivity and organizational dynamics. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by systematically reviewing the existing literature.

Although several studies have explored employee engagement and job satisfaction, a significant knowledge gap remains in understanding how quiet quitting emerges, evolves, and impacts organizations across different industries. Furthermore, systematic literature reviews on this topic are scarce, limiting a comprehensive understanding of its implications. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a rigorous systematic review to examine the key factors contributing to quiet quitting, its impact on employee productivity and organizational culture, and effective strategies for mitigating this phenomenon. By synthesizing findings from Scopus-indexed academic literature, this study aims to provide valuable insights for HR professionals and scholars in designing policies that enhance employee engagement while maintaining work-life balance.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to identify, select, evaluate, and synthesize academic literature related to the quiet quitting phenomenon. The PRISMA approach was applied to ensure transparency and accuracy in the literature selection process (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021). Literature was collected from the Scopus database, which is known for its wide coverage of high-quality academic publications. The selection process was based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included articles published within the last 10 years (2015-2025) to remain relevant to the current situation, studies that addressed quiet quitting, employee engagement, burnout, job satisfaction, organizational culture, or employee productivity, as well as empirical or conceptual-based research with various methods. In addition, only articles published in peer-reviewed journals and written in English were considered. On the other hand, exclusion criteria included articles that only discussed turnover intention without any link to quiet quitting, studies that were too industry-specific without broad implications, articles that were not available in full access and conference papers.

Articles were searched in the Scopus database using keywords such as "quiet quitting" AND "employee productivity", "quiet quitting" AND "organizational culture", "work disengagement" AND "employee motivation", and "burnout" AND "job satisfaction". The literature selection process followed the PRISMA Flow Diagram method which consists of four main stages. In the first stage (Identification), articles were searched using keywords in the Scopus database and duplicated articles were removed. Next, at the Screening stage, the titles

and abstracts of the remaining articles were reviewed to assess suitability to the inclusion criteria. Then, at the Eligibility stage, articles that passed the screening stage were further evaluated by reading the methodology and results sections to ensure relevance to this study. Finally, at the Included Studies stage, articles that met all criteria were included in the systematic analysis to gain deeper insights into the impact of quiet quitting on employee productivity and organizational culture. The PRISMA SLR research method stage began with the identification of 78 articles from Scopus, of which 20 duplicates were removed, 58 were screened, 30 were eliminated, and 28 passed the eligibility stage. After full reading of 20 articles, 8 were excluded, so the final 12 articles were analyzed. These stages are further described in Figure 1.
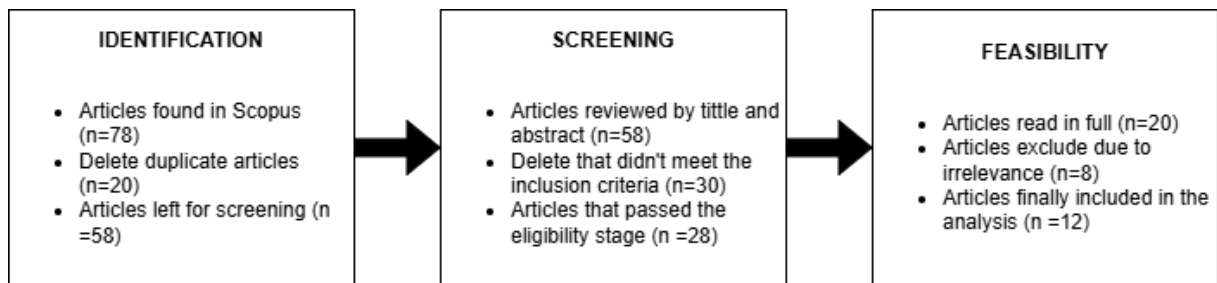

Figure 1. Review Method with PRISMA SLR

2. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

RESULT. The following table presents a structured review of the article "The Silent Exodus: A Systematic Review of Quiet Quitting and Its Impact on Employee Productivity and Organizational Culture." The table includes key details such as article identity, theoretical framework, research methods, and main findings. This summary provides a clear overview of the study's foundation, methodology, and insights, highlighting its contribution to understanding the quiet quitting phenomenon and its implications for employee productivity and organizational culture. Table 1 below lists the relevant literature found by the researcher based on the material collected.

No	Article Identity	Theory	Research Methods	Results
1	The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting Paradigm Shifts: An overview of current situation and future research directions (Formica & Sfodera, 2022)	Needs Theory: Based on (Van den Broeck et al., 2010)focusing on autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Grand Theory: A humanistic approach	This qualitative study collects data through literature reviews and interviews with hospitality employees and managers experiencing quiet quitting. Analysis includes descriptive and thematic methods	Quiet Quitting occurs when employees do the bare minimum due to lack of appreciation, reducing productivity. The Great Resignation refers to a surge in resignations, especially in hospitality, driven by low wages and limited growth. Quiet quitting often leads to resignation, both rooted in job dissatisfaction. The impact includes lower productivity, higher recruitment costs, and workforce shortages. Solutions include better wages, job security, and

No	Article Identity	Theory	Research Methods	Results
		viewing humans as whole beings with essential emotional, cognitive, and professional needs for well-being.	to identify patterns and key themes.	meaningful work. In hospitality, prioritizing employee well-being is key to reducing turnover and recruitment challenges.
2	The human capital management perspective on quiet quitting: recommendations for employees, managers, and national policymakers (Serenko, 2024)	Social exchange theory is relevant to "quiet quitting," explaining that employee contribution depends on their perception of the fairness of the compensation received.	This study analyzed 672 relevant comments from Zaid Khan's TikTok (@zaideppelin), using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022 data and a literature review. Content analysis was applied to 2000 random comments, selecting 672 for insights on quiet quitting.	Quiet Quitting occurs when employees only perform tasks according to job descriptions, avoid additional tasks, and prioritize work-life balance. This phenomenon is caused by low motivation due to lack of incentives, burnout that impacts mental health, and dissatisfaction with management or work culture. The impact can be negative, such as being perceived as unproductive, missing out on promotions, or risking dismissal. However, there are positives, such as reduced stress, improved well-being, and in some cases, maintained productivity. To address this, employees need to improve efficiency and manage burnout, managers need to ensure fair compensation, and policymakers need to support work-life balance and mental health.
3	Quiet quitting during COVID-19: the role of psychological empowerment (Lu et al., 2023)	Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) explains the reciprocal relationship between lecturers and institutions, supported by burnout and well-being models.	This quantitative study uses a cross-sectional approach with 698 Chinese university lecturers, selected through convenience sampling. Data was collected via a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using PLS-SEM.	Work overload increased burnout and decreased well-being, while pay-for-performance, commitment, and working conditions reduced burnout and increased well-being. Career opportunities had no impact. Burnout increased quiet quitting intention, while well-being decreased it. Psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between burnout, well-being, and quiet quitting.
4	Modeling Quiet Quitting Intention Among Academics: Mediating Effect of Work Addiction	Basic Theory: Social Exchange Theory (SET), (Cropanzano, 2005) which	This quantitative survey studied 629 academics from Chinese higher education	Leadership, empowerment, fair rewards, motivation, and engagement positively impact workaholism and job satisfaction, which in turn reduce intention to quit.

No	Article Identity	Theory	Research Methods	Results
	and Satisfaction (Xueyun et al., 2025)	highlights the reciprocal relationship between individuals and organizations in the context of psychological and economic interactions.	institutions, selected through convenience sampling. Data was analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS software.	
5	Quiet quitting among healthcare professionals in hospital environments: A concept analysis and scoping review protocol (Kang et al., 2023)	Grand Theory & Supporting Theories: Based on conceptual theory and Walker & Avant's concept analysis, with foundations in work, work-life balance, and organizational culture.	This conceptual study combines concept analysis and a scoping review on hospital healthcare workers, including nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and technicians. Using secondary data, it follows the JBI framework and PRISMA-ScR, with literature sourced from PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, and others.	Quiet quitting in healthcare arises from workload, low pay, poor work-life balance, and unsupportive environments, reducing efficiency, safety, and teamwork. Solutions include improving conditions, work-life balance, and collaboration to enhance worker well-being and hospital services.
6	Impact of Workplace Bullying on Quiet Quitting in Nurses: The Mediating Effect of Coping Strategies (Galanis et al., 2024)	Main Theories: (Lazarus, 1984) stress and coping theory, along with organizational and work behavior theories on work stress and employee adaptation.	This quantitative cross-sectional study of 665 Greek nurses uses convenience sampling and measures workplace bullying (NAQ-R), quiet quitting (QQS), and coping strategies (COPE Brief). Data is analyzed via Pearson correlation, multivariate regression, and mediation analysis (PROCESS Macro).	Workplace bullying increases silent quitting ($\beta = 0.010$, $p < 0.001$). Positive coping reduces this effect, while negative coping amplifies it. 77.3% of respondents identified as silent quitters.

No	Article Identity	Theory	Research Methods	Results
7	Quiet Quitting: A Significant Risk for Global Healthcare (Boy & Sürmeli, 2023)	Work-Life Balance Theory explores work-life boundaries, Organizational Culture Theory assesses toxic culture's impact, and Human Resource Theory stresses well-being for productivity.	This conceptual study uses a literature review to analyze the smoking cessation phenomenon among health workers. Based on secondary data from reports and previous research, it applies descriptive and critical analysis to understand the issue.	Many young health workers, especially Gen Z, adopt quiet quitting as a protest against toxic culture, pay inequity, and pandemic-related stress. This lowers work engagement and healthcare quality. Solutions include improving organizational culture and policies to support worker well-being.
8	Quiet quitting: relationship with other concepts and implications for tourism and hospitality (Hamouche et al., 2023)	OCB, Social Exchange, Psychological Contract, Organizational Justice, Conflict, Equity, Two-Factor, JD-R, and Conservation of Resources.	Conceptual (critical reflection) based on literature review; analyzed using gray literature and academic research to explore quiet quitting.	Quiet quitting, more common among younger employees post-COVID-19, mirrors work-to-rule and acting one's wage. It stems from work withdrawal, cynicism, and silence. The study offers strategies for hospitality and tourism managers to mitigate this issue.
9	The New Trend: Why Indonesian Digital Start-Up Employees are Opting for Quiet Quitting? (Suhendar et al., 2023)	Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Quiet Quitting Concept.	This quantitative study examines 269 employees from Indonesian digital start-ups across sectors like transportation, fintech, and e-commerce. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 was used for data analysis.	Job Satisfaction (JS) and Organizational Commitment (OC) significantly influence Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Quiet Quitting (QQ), with OCB mediating the impact of OC on QQ but not JS. To mitigate QQ, HR strategies should focus on competitive compensation, performance-based bonuses, a positive work culture, and employee development opportunities.
10	Innovation Support Reduces Quiet Quitting and Improves Innovative Behav-	Innovation Support, Quiet Quitting, Innovative Behavior, and In-	This quantitative cross-sectional study examines 328 nurses in Greece (mean age: 42.3 years,	The study finds that innovation support negatively correlates with quiet quitting, while managerial and cultural support enhance innovative behavior, including idea generation, search, communication, and implementation. Managerial support also

No	Article Identity	Theory	Research Methods	Results
	ior and Innovation Outputs among Nurses in Greece, (Moisoglou et al., 2024)	novation Outputs Framework.	89.9% female) using convenience sampling. Multivariable analysis was conducted with ISI, QQS, IBI, and IO Scale.	improves innovation outputs. Organizations should foster an innovative work environment to boost nurses' passion, motivation, and productivity.
11	Workload Increases Nurses' Quiet Quitting, Turnover Intention, and Job Burnout: Evidence from Greece (Galanis et al., 2025)	Workload Theory, Quiet Quitting (QQ) Concept, Job Burnout and Turnover Intention Frameworks	This cross-sectional study on Greek nurses uses the NASA Task Load Index, QQS, SIBM, and a six-point Likert scale to analyze workload, burnout, and turnover intention.	High workload is significantly linked to increased quiet quitting, turnover intention, and job burnout among nurses, with 74.3% identified as quiet quitters and 50.2% reporting high turnover intention. Statistical analysis confirms that workload escalation exacerbates these issues. To enhance nurse well-being, productivity, and patient care, healthcare organizations should adopt workload reduction strategies.
12	Organizational Commitment: The Role of Organizational Happiness and Quiet Quitting Advances in Tourism, (Dominique-Ferreira et al., 2024)	Organizational Commitment Theory (Allen & Meyer, 1990), Organizational Happiness Framework (Campaniço, 2012), and Quiet Quitting Scale (Anand et al., 2023).	This quantitative study uses Allen & Meyer's (1990) Organizational Commitment Scale, Campaniço's (2012) Organizational Happiness Scale, and Anand et al.'s (2023) Quiet Quitting Scale, with data collected via a structured five-point Likert questionnaire.	The findings indicate that higher organizational happiness increases organizational commitment while reducing quiet quitting. A positive work environment enhances employee well-being, leading to greater engagement and lower absenteeism. Managerially, fostering employee happiness can improve talent retention, productivity, and job satisfaction. Socially, addressing quiet quitting supports better work-life balance, mental health, and overall workforce well-being.

Quiet quitting occurs when employees simply perform as assigned without extra effort, triggered by lack of appreciation, unfair compensation, burnout, and poor work culture (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Serenko, 2024). This phenomenon impacts productivity, turnover, and mental well-being, especially in sectors such as hospitality, healthcare, academia, and digital startups (Kang et al., 2023; Suhendar et al., 2023). Some studies suggest that psychological empowerment, innovation, and organizational commitment can reduce quiet quitting, while high workload, bullying, and toxic work environment exacerbate it (Galanis et al., 2025; Lu et al., 2023; Moisoglou et al., 2024). Suggested solutions include improving employee well-being, proper compensation, work-life balance policies, as well as managerial support and a positive organizational culture (Boy & Sürmeli, 2023; Dominique-Ferreira et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION. The phenomenon of quiet quitting has become a major concern in the world of work, especially in the context of employee productivity and organizational culture. Based on the literature review, quiet quitting occurs when employees only perform tasks according to their job description without showing further engagement. This phenomenon is triggered by various factors, including lack of appreciation, dissatisfaction with the compensation system, high workload, and an organizational culture that does not support employee well-being. A study conducted by Formica & Sfodera (2022) linked quiet quitting to The Great Resignation, where job dissatisfaction drove a surge in resignations, especially in the hospitality industry. They highlighted that individual and organizational values must be aligned for employees to remain engaged in their work. Meanwhile, Serenko (2024) used thesocial exchange theory approach to show that perceptions of fairness in compensation strongly influence the level of quiet quitting. The study found that employees who feel unappreciated tend to work only the minimum required.

In the academic context, research by Lu et al. (2023) and Xueyun et al. (2025) showed that work overload and burnout are the main factors for the increase in quiet quitting intention among university lecturers in China. Both emphasized that well-being plays an important role in mitigating this phenomenon. Meanwhile, in the hospital setting, studies by Kang et al. (2023) and Boy & Sürmeli (2023) found that poor working conditions, pandemic-induced stress, and toxic organizational culture have increased the tendency of quiet quitting among health workers. This has a negative impact on work efficiency, patient safety, and quality of health services. In addition, a study by Galanis et al. (2025) which focused on nurses in Greece found that workplace bullying increases the rate of quiet quitting, but positive coping strategies can reduce this impact. Another study by Moisoglou et al. (2024) shows that support for innovation in the workplace can reduce quiet quitting while increasing innovative behavior and employee productivity. In the digital startup sector in Indonesia, Suhendar et al. (2023) highlighted that job satisfaction and organizational commitment play an important role in reducing quiet quitting rates, with effective HR strategies such as competitive compensation and positive work culture.

Taken together, these findings suggest that quitting silently reduces productivity, weakens employee morale, and disrupts work ethic. Key preventive factors include fair compensation, supportive leadership, and a culture that prioritizes employee well-being. To effectively address this issue, organizations should implement policies that focus on reducing excessive workload, ensuring fair compensation, providing career development opportunities, and fostering a healthy work culture. In addition, organizational commitment is needed to build a good organizational culture to reduce quiet quitting. According to Sofiana et al. (2025) Increasing organizational commitment through career development programs and rewards is key to improving task performance, to balance workload. By prioritizing these elements, organizations can increase employee engagement, improve long-term organizational performance, and create a more positive and sustainable work environment.

3. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Quiet quitting arises due to a lack of appreciation, unfair compensation, burnout, and a toxic work culture, negatively impacting productivity, retention, and employee well-being. High workloads and poor leadership further contribute to disengagement, making it crucial for organizations to address these challenges proactively. Strengthening organizational commitment, fostering innovation, and enhancing managerial support are key strategies for mitigating quiet quitting. To reduce disengagement and improve employee engagement, organizations should implement targeted strategies such as fair pay structures, balanced workloads, leadership training, and clear career development pathways. Future research should explore industry-specific interventions, such as hybrid work models in the tech sector, resilience programs in healthcare, and incentive-based engagement strategies in manufacturing. Additionally, further studies should examine the long-term impact of different leadership styles (e.g., transformational vs. servant leadership) and HR policies on sustaining employee engagement.

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