

Exploratory Study of the Phenomenon Quiet Quitting: Manager's Perspective in a Digital Company

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Abstract

Objective: This research aims to explore the phenomenon of "quiet quitting" in digital companies from managers' perspectives. It investigates the causes, behaviors, and impacts of quiet quitting and examines managerial strategies to mitigate this issue and its implications for employee engagement and organizational performance.

Design/Methods/Approach: This qualitative exploratory study employed semi-structured interviews with managers from some digital companies. Participants were selected using the purposive and snowball sampling methods. Data were collected from September to November 2024 and analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model.

Findings: The findings reveal that quiet quitting is primarily triggered by insufficient recognition, poor communication, excessive workloads, and misalignment between employees' values and organizational culture. Quiet quitting behaviors include minimal task completion, withdrawal from team activities, and reduced initiative. Effective leadership through transparent communication and recognition was found to mitigate this issue. Organizational strategies, such as flexible work arrangements, fair compensation, and career development opportunities, also effectively reduced the need to quit. However, this phenomenon negatively impacts team productivity, morale, and organizational reputation.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the literature by providing insights into quiet quitting within the country's cultural and economic context. Unlike Western-centric studies, it incorporates local values such as collectivism and hierarchical structures, offering a culturally sensitive understanding of this phenomenon in the digital sector.

Practical/Policy Implications: Managers who seek ways to improve employee engagement are advised to foster open communication, recognize employee contributions, and ensure fair workloads. Flexible work arrangements and opportunities for career development can enhance employee engagement and retention. Policymakers and HR practitioners should develop culturally adaptive strategies to address quiet quitting while promoting employee well-being.

Keywords: Quiet quitting; Work engagement; Managerial strategies; Digital company

JEL Classification: L2



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1. Introduction

After the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic began to subside, around the end of 2021, significant changes in the dynamics of the labor market brought new challenges for leaders and managers around the world. This critical phenomenon is called "The Great Resignation," which is when several employees take action to resign even though there is no replacement job. In the UK, in May 2021, university unions signed a series of decisions, such as a manifesto to organize work without going on strike (Gallup, 2022). The situation began to receive a lot of attention in various media in 2022, and many articles said that there was a concept of quiet quitting as a new phenomenon (Bakotic, 2023).

The "quiet quitting" phenomenon is a condition where employees choose to do their jobs according to the minimum requirements, without any extra initiative or effort. Gallup's report (2022) reported that the proportion of quiet quitting employees in the US workforce is at least 50%. In the second quarter of 2022, the ratio of engaged and actively disengaged employees was 1.8 to 1. Of the total, 32% were engaged, while 18% were actively disengaged. According to Gallup's latest research results in 2023 in the State of The Global Workplace, the results of a survey of employees in Southeast Asia showed that employees who were engaged in their workplace were only 26%, quiet quitting 68%, and loud quitting (actively disengaged) 6%. The Gallup report also highlighted that 26% of Southeast Asian employees experienced a lot of stress in their jobs, and 51% were actively looking for other employment and observing opportunities, but not actively looking.

This quiet quitting phenomenon shows a limited level of employee engagement regarding completing assigned tasks while ignoring additional responsibilities outside the parameters of their job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). With this change, employees no longer put their work at the center of their lives; they want to build a work-life balance by prioritizing their personal lives. It is worth noting that quiet quitting will radically change the work-life balance (Arnet, 2022). The adverse impact of the pandemic requires employers to develop new initiatives to protect their companies while ensuring their well-being.

A study conducted by Formica and Sfodera (2022) identified the post-COVID-19 impact: employees began to realize the importance of work-life balance and individual well-being; this change in focus could explain why employees showed a lower tendency toward work-related problems. Wu and Wei (2024), in their study on quiet quitting in the US hospitality industry, studied quiet quitting as a workplace deviation for employees and tried to find out the role of role ambiguity and conflict on quiet quitting behavior.

On the other hand, employees have sought alternative solutions, such as renegotiating salaries and other financial benefits and ensuring flexible working conditions and hours (Ulutürk, 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, people shifted from working in a "work from home" culture with extended hours in the office to "working from home," which has the potential to blur the boundaries of regular working hours (Atalay & Dagistan, 2023). This condition is in line with the findings of a study conducted in Serbia, Moczydłowska (2023) identified several factors contributing to quiet quitting, including psychological, social, economic, and managerial influences. These factors include transformations in individual value systems, increased individualistic orientations, and shifts in social norms prioritizing personal well-being over traditional work ethics.

It can be concluded that the pandemic made people think about work-life balance and reset some of their priorities, which is one of the reasons why employees are quitting more than ever (Twenge, 2023). Then, due to this life-changing period, the popularity of quitting skyrocketed in a short time, where people worldwide experienced the same thing and started sharing their thoughts about this phenomenon on social media. For example, Zaid Leppelin's TikTok upload depicting the act of quitting has been viewed more than 3.5 million times. This also means that practitioners mainly introduced quitting, not academics (Atalay & Dagistan, 2023; Gras et al., 2020). This is reinforced by the influence of the global trend of quiet quitting; social media plays a significant role in spreading knowledge about the concept on a worldwide scale in a short time. Finally, the labor market must cope with issues such as an aging population, which causes employees' bargaining power to increase (Gallup, 2022).

To understand the ins and outs of the phenomenon of Quiet Quitting in this study, Researchers use two fundamental theories, namely the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Job Demands-Job Resources (JD-R) models. Previous researchers have widely used both theories to study various organizational relationships, including the relationship between employers and employees, employees and coworkers, and the relationship between employees and the organization itself (Harden et al., 2018; Rai, 2013; Tsen et al., 2022). These theories are expected to provide a conceptual framework that helps researchers understand and interpret the experiences of individuals. In the context of quiet quitting, theories such as SET and the JD-R model can be used to explain the dynamics of the relationship between employees and organizations. SET, for example, highlights how the reciprocal relationship between employees and leaders and workload affect their levels of engagement and job satisfaction.

Based on this, this study explores how managers in digital companies understand and manage the phenomenon of quiet quitting and its implications for talent management in their organizations. In this context, managers must create a supportive work environment and provide fair recognition and rewards to increase employee engagement (Serenko, 2023). These findings are highly relevant to companies in various contexts, including digital companies, where similar challenges may arise due to changes in the post-pandemic labor market dynamics. This study seeks to increase knowledge about quiet quitting and develop strategies to address the potential negative impacts of the quiet quitting phenomenon.

Despite growing attention to quiet quitting, significant gaps remain in the literature. First, most studies have focused on Western contexts, leaving a void in understanding how this phenomenon manifests in other regions. Second, existing research often overlooks the interplay between organizational strategies and employee responses, particularly in high-growth sectors like the digital economy. Third, while Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model have been applied to similar workplace behaviors, their relevance to quiet quitting, especially in dynamic industries, remains underexplored. These gaps highlight the need to examine quiet quitting in diverse settings to inform effective management practices.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. Theoretically, it advances the application of SET and the JD-R model by contextualizing them within the quiet quitting framework, offering new insights into employee-organization dynamics. It also addresses the regional gap by focusing on a high-growth sector in an emerging market, providing a comparative perspective to existing Western-centric studies. Practically, the findings will equip managers with strategies to mitigate quiet quitting, fostering higher engagement and retention. This study aims to enrich academic discourse and organizational practices in a post-pandemic world by bridging these gaps.

The following section summarizes the literature review, development of the hypotheses, research methods, data collection, results, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The social exchange theory (SET), formulated by Homans, Blau, and Emerson in 1958–1959, has been used to explain employee behavior in the workplace and its connection with social capital research, particularly networks, norms, and trust (Karen, 2015). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) explained that understanding subordinates in the workplace adds to the persuasive nature of the theory. Moreover, Jiwen et al. (2019) state that the idea of social exchange is that relationships between employees and the organization are exchanged, which can influence the organization's performance. SET is a theoretical framework that describes how employee perceptions of job scope and rewards interact (Kahya, 2007). When an individual considers that the cost outweighs the benefit, the activity is avoided. If people do not value continuing or connecting with work or are skeptical because they do not receive any reward, the balance changes toward expecting a lower value for any social deal (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

A previous study revealed that employee well-being may contribute to favorable behavioral outcomes such as lower employee turnover intention (Karen, 2015). Based on SET, the current study hypothesizes that the effect of working conditions, job security, perceived career development opportunities, affective organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support on Generation Z's quiet quitting intention is mediated by job burnout and employee well-being. As a result, this study creates a methodology for predicting quiet quitting intention among China's Generation Z. When individual expectations are not met, the individual will lose motivation. This illustrates how job dissatisfaction caused by motivational factors (Herzberg et al., 1959) can decrease motivation and trigger quiet quitting behavior (Vroom, 1964). This agrees with the theory of organizational justice (Adams, 1965), which states that employees will be more motivated if they feel they are treated fairly and valued according to their contributions. Correspondingly, individuals who experience a loss of motivation will experience decreased performance. When individual performance/efforts in the organization do not match their expectations, individuals tend to experience a loss of motivation and underachievement (Tayfun et al., 2023).

2.2 Job Demands–Resource (JD-R) Model

The job demands-job resources theory was first introduced by Bakker and Damerouti in 2001. This theory explains that every job has risks, namely the risk of job demands (demand factors) and the risk of resources to complete the job (resource factors). Job demands and job resources are two factors that influence organizational achievement and employee well-being (related to burnout and work engagement) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Job demands refer to aspects of work that require physical, emotional, or mental effort and can cause fatigue or stress for employees. Aspects of work, such as social support, job control, and development opportunities, are referred to as job resources. Job resources can help employees cope with job demands and encourage growth, learning, and achievement.

In the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, Bakker et al. (2005) explained that the interaction between job demands and resources plays a central role. If they increase, job demands, such as workload, cognitive needs, and emotional demands, can result in psychological distress, job burnout, and psychosomatic employee complaints. However, this relationship is not one-way; it is dynamic and influenced by various factors. One significant factor is the existence of job resources such as skill variety, performance feedback, and recovery opportunities, which serve as a buffer against the negative impacts of demanding work conditions.

Jobs that have low job demands with high resources are assumed to produce good work, but this does not apply to workers who experience depression/mental health issues (Ots et al., 2022). Depression is characterized by symptoms of decreased concentration and feelings of sadness that can have a negative impact on daily life (American Psychiatric

Association & Association, 2013). When workers feel high job demands, such as a large workload, they tend to experience frustration and depression. Job demands can also eliminate cognitive strength and have a negative impact on well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2018). The demands of a job also cause employees or workers to continue to force themselves to go to work even though they are not physically or mentally healthy, which is called presenteeism (Aysun & Bayram, 2017).

2.3 Work Engagement

Work Engagement or job involvement is a concept that describes a psychological state of work that is beneficial and satisfying, characterized by elements of enthusiasm, commitment, and involvement (Baker & Damerouti, 2008). Employees with high levels of involvement in their work show enthusiasm, consider their tasks meaningful, and maintain concentrated attention on their work activities. Employees genuinely involved in their work radiate vitality, passion, and unwavering commitment to their job responsibilities. Individuals with high levels of involvement are often associated with increased productivity, more substantial commitment, and greater job satisfaction, culminating in beneficial outcomes for both personnel and the organization (Baker & Damerouti, 2008).

Both Employee Engagement and Work Engagement theories have relevance in explaining the phenomenon of quiet quitting; however, a more comprehensive approach is to use Work Engagement. Research shows that Work Engagement is closely related to positive outcomes, such as higher productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Factors influencing Work Engagement include job resources (autonomy, feedback, and social support), personal resources (self-efficacy and optimism), and challenging job characteristics.

Within the quiet quitting framework, employees who exhibit quiet quitting behavior may demonstrate a disinterest in helping coworkers, reduced involvement in their designated roles, and a tendency to perform only the minimum requirements of their positions. Based on research conducted by Anand, Doll & Ray (2023), a negative correlation between quiet quitting and work engagement was identified. Employees who are disengaged and exhibit quiet quitting behavior are less engaged in their work and exhibit low dedication to the organization, potentially leading to decreased work engagement.

2.4. Quiet Quitting

Quiet quitting is closely related to the concept of work engagement, which can be further defined from various perspectives. Gallup (2022) also defines quiet quitting as employees who do minimal work and are psychologically detached from their work. Lu et al. (2023) defined quiet quitting as employees who do basic work to fulfill responsibilities and never go beyond the limits. Öztürk et al. (2023) added that quiet quitting is an employee's attitude of giving minimal effort and reducing responsibility for their work.

Serenko (2023) sees quiet quitting as a limitation of employee work effort to prioritize their well-being over organizational goals. Galanis et al. (2023) defined quiet quitting as employees who do not officially quit their jobs but misbehave at work by not going beyond the fundamental limits of their obligations. According to Wang et al. (2023), they conceptualized quiet quitting as an employee's intention to reduce or stop their work involvement by asking for sick leave, reducing workload, or quitting their jobs. Employees do quiet quitting as an alternative to maintain their well-being (Bakotic, 2023). In line with this, Mahand and Caldwell (2023) revealed that one of the failures of companies that can create quiet quitting is the lack of focus on employee well-being. It can be said that employee well-being is a factor that influences the occurrence of quiet quitting.

Employee well-being includes an employee's mental, physical, and emotional health. Companies that neglected employee well-being had employees reporting conditions of depression, sadness, anxiety, and fatigue. This reason makes quiet quitting an alternative for employees to prioritize their health and well-being, especially when the company does not appreciate their performance (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023).

Beyond reduced productivity, quiet quitting further affects the quality of work, where lower quality work is closely related to the reputation and strategic goals of the organization, especially regarding client/customer satisfaction (Yıldız, 2023). Furthermore, as articulated by Öztürk et al. (2023), several additional consequences of quiet quitting have been identified. Initially, employees who engage in quiet quitting fail to contribute productively to the organization. This behavioral disposition culminates in the loss of competitive advantage for the company. Second, individuals who engage in quiet quitting perceive their job demands as excessive, leading them to adopt a passive attitude. Such passivity in the workplace imposes additional burdens on coworkers, which can lead to feelings of work overload among peers, which then negatively impacts their work performance. Third, employees who quit quietly exhibit a high focus on maintaining their current state, resulting in a reduced likelihood of participating in learning opportunities and organizational development initiatives.

2.5 The Relationship between The Aspects of Grand Theory and Quiet Quitting

According to Mahand and Caldwell (2023), one of the company's failures that provides opportunities for quiet quitting is the company's lack of focus on employee well-being. Employee well-being is defined as an individual's state that includes mental, physical, and overall health and the experience of satisfaction at and out of work (Nielsen et al.,

2017). This assumption is supported by previous studies that found employee well-being to have a significant negative relationship with quiet quitting (Lu et al., 2023). This means that employees with high levels of employee well-being have low levels of quiet quitting, and vice versa. Based on this study, the relationship between employee well-being and quiet quitting was not strong enough and was in the moderate category (Lu et al., 2023). It is interesting to conduct further research because employee well-being is closely related to policymakers, namely managers, and how they perceive the phenomenon of quiet quitting based on work experiences in their respective organizations.

The interaction between these theories provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of quiet quitting in Indonesia. Social Exchange Theory explains that employees will feel forced to limit their commitment if the organization does not offer rewards based on employee efforts. The Job Demand-Resource Model states that an imbalance between high job demands and low resources can trigger quiet quitting behavior as a self-protection mechanism. Meanwhile, motivation theory emphasizes the importance of fulfilling employees' basic needs to prevent disengagement behavior.

3. Method

3.1 Research Environment

In today's era of globalization, digitalization in the business world is not a new phenomenon. Due to the transition from the industrial era to the digital era, businesses participating in the current period of growth are more likely to use technology to improve their company's productivity (Araujo, 2016). Although digitalization has long been a trend in business, there is still no consensus on what is meant by a digital company or a company with a digital foundation (Xu, 2014). According to Henning (1998), a digital business is an organization that uses digital technology as the starting point of their business and is involved in digitalization in daily transactions, product manufacturing, and other business-related activities.

Digital technology in all aspects makes the organization more competitive, economically efficient, and able to adapt to other competitors in the business market (Araujo, 2016). Many companies today have begun to see the power of digital sources to create new technological capabilities and form new strategies for their products and services (Bharadwaj, Sawy, Pavlou, & Venkatraman, 2013). Judging from its demands, digital-based companies are closely related to innovative work behavior. Rapidly developing digital technology requires employees in digital-based companies to continue to create new ideas that can excel in business competition.

In Indonesia's collectivist culture, the interaction between social values and work expectations can influence employees' decisions to quit to balance social demands with personal needs. Local culture can impact the occurrence of quiet quitting in the workplace. Still, Montoya et al.'s (2023) research on managers in the Dominican Republic shows that the quiet quitting phenomenon is more influenced by global and universal factors related to current working conditions. Thus, this study further explores the phenomenon of quiet quitting from the managers' perspective in the Indonesian workplace. This study is expected to provide new insights on responding to challenges related to employee engagement and well-being in this modern era, especially for digital companies.

Because this research wants to explore a new phenomenon in one country, we need to understand it further in the local cultural context. In this case, we want to know the work culture in Indonesia. Historical, social, and colonial influences in Indonesia shape leadership practices, making them different from Western models. Understanding these influences is essential to understanding the complexity of leadership in Indonesia. According to Irawanto et al. (2011), leadership in Indonesia is characterized by collectivism, where group harmony and relationships are prioritized. This contrasts with Western leadership, which often emphasizes individualism, tends to be expressive, and pursues personal achievement. In collectivist cultures, leaders are expected to foster community and shared responsibility among followers.

Meanwhile, according to Sahelian and Jawas (2021), there is a tendency toward an authoritarian management style, where conformity and order are preferred in Indonesia. This reflects a cultural tendency toward hierarchical structures, in contrast to Western organizations' more egalitarian approach. This agrees with the previous opinion of Irawanto et al (2011), which shows a high-power distance, meaning that hierarchical structures are respected and maintained. This contrasts with many Western cultures, where flatter organizational structures and open communication are more common.

3.2 Data Collection

Research design can be likened to a foundation in research. In this context, research design is a procedure needed to obtain information to answer research problems (Malhotra, 2010). In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method. Qualitative research can be used in several fields of study, such as theory development, theory testing, validation creation, and disclosure of new phenomena that emerge based on currently obtained data (Creswell, 2018).

The qualitative approach will derive assumptions from the emphasis on the process, with the involvement of researchers in fieldwork to make researchers interact with people, settings, locations, or record behavior in natural settings (Creswell, 2018). In qualitative research, researchers act as the main instrument of research (Yin, 2010). Therefore, what and how researchers report research results are the results of the thoughts and meanings put into

them (Yin, 2010). Researchers interpret the observed data through qualitative methods through reflection and personal experience (Cypress, 2017).

Using qualitative methods, this study is expected to obtain various variations of subjective experiences and meanings (Malhotra, 2010) from the lives of managers in digital companies who are participants. Variations in meaning will deepen and enrich the study results to provide more understanding. This deeper understanding will then increase the opportunities for practitioners to develop policies with practical applications for employees, especially in digital companies in Indonesia. The selection of samples (participants) in qualitative research must provide information related to the focus of the research and increase the understanding of the phenomena being studied. In this study, two non-probability sampling approaches were used to select participants, namely, snowball sampling and purposive sampling techniques.

A combination of purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling was used to understand the existing context with the available access. The author knows several managers who work in digital companies in Indonesia. The snowball sampling method uses the author's network, who is willing to become a participant, and referrals provided by the participant who is willing to become the next participant.

The author contacted these managers through this network and their willingness to become potential sources. Before conducting the interview, the author provided a participation explanation sheet containing several pieces of information. The information included the urgency of the research, the criteria for research participants, interview procedures, the benefits of the research, and a statement of confidentiality of the participant's profile.

The participants who had read and agreed to the information signed the research participation statement sheet. After signing, the author provided an interview protocol that outlined the research questions. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom for an average duration of 49 minutes. The author used Indonesian in an informal setting. Then, the author transcribed the interview and returned it to the interviewee. This ensured that the information they did not want to reveal could be removed. The study involved 10 participants who were managers in digital companies in Indonesia. At this point, the author stopped collecting data because the data had been saturated with the tenth participant. A recurring pattern was found without any additional information that could be extracted, so the data collection process was stopped.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Data Processing and Analysis

To begin the qualitative data analysis process, the audiovisual recordings of the interviews were transcribed, considering non-verbal cues, such as laughter or head nodding. The author carefully read and checked the interview transcripts repeatedly to find hidden meanings and patterns. After reading and familiarizing themselves with the available data, the authors had an initial inventory of the concepts of interest in the transcripts—this initial list of concepts served as the basis for generating the initial codes. Codes indicate the fundamental elements of the raw data that can be judged to be meaningful to the phenomenon being studied. Codes also indicate features in the interview transcripts that were considered of interest to the author.

After 20 initial codes were identified, the author refocused the analysis at a broader thematic level. This involved organizing the diverse codes into potential themes by considering the relationships between the codes and between the themes. The author also looked for codes that fit into major themes, subthemes, or miscellaneous themes.

After generating eight leading sub-theme candidates with each initial code in the previous phase, the author attempted to review the sub-themes by making improvements. The sub-theme candidates were examined thoroughly to ensure the existing codes supported the formed sub-themes. This process also aims to ensure that the data in one sub-theme has a coherent meaning and that there are apparent differences in meaning between the arranged sub-themes. At the end of the phase, the author has a clearer understanding of the themes that have been formed, the relationships between the themes, and the overall story conveyed by the data.

To obtain a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon, several codes were combined into one, considering that the codes reflect similar meanings and are related. The sub-themes "Leadership Effectiveness" and "Managerial Communication" were combined into codes in the big theme "Leadership Influence". The sub-themes "Organizational Policy and Strategy" and "Management Intervention" were combined into part of the big theme "Organizational Response". In the sub-themes "Employee Quiet Quitting Factors", "Signs of Quiet Quitting", and "Quiet Quitting Experience" were combined into the big theme "Manager Perception". The sub-theme "Productivity and Team Dynamics" is combined in the big theme "The Impact of Quiet Quitting".

Table 1. Final Thematic Map

Big Theme	Sub Themes	Initial Code
Leadership Influence	Leadership effectiveness	Impact of leadership on employee performance The role of leadership style in employee retention
	Managerial communication	Effectiveness of communication in a team Lack of managerial support
Organizational Response	Organizational policies and strategies	Changes in work policies Quiet quitting prevention strategies
	Management intervention	Organizational responses to quiet quitting Management approach to employee welfare
Manager's Perception of the Quiet Quitting Phenomenon	Employee Quiet Quitting Factors	Employee motivation and incentives Job satisfaction and engagement
	Signs of Quiet Quitting	Work-life balance
	Quiet Quitting Experience	Personal experience with quiet quitting
Impact of Quiet Quitting	Productivity and team dynamics	The impact of quiet quitting on productivity Team dynamics and quiet quitting

Source: processed by Author (2024)

4.2 Main Findings

The research reveals three key aspects of quiet quitting in Indonesia's digital companies: behavioral indicators, contributing factors, and managerial strategies. Quiet quitting is observed as employees performing only the minimum requirements of their roles, often accompanied by a lack of initiative and disengagement from organizational goals. Managers identified several contributing factors, including workload imbalances, lack of recognition, and cultural misalignment, which affect employee motivation and engagement.

In response, managers implemented various strategies to mitigate quiet quitting, such as fostering communication, offering flexible work arrangements, and aligning organizational policies with employee values. These findings emphasize the critical role of managerial interventions in addressing disengagement and promoting a productive work environment.

Behavioral Indicators of Quiet Quitting

Participants highlighted that those employees engaging in quiet quitting often exhibited reduced enthusiasm, limited collaboration, and a reluctance to assume additional responsibilities. These behaviors align with the definitions provided by Gallup (2022), where quiet quitting is characterized by psychological detachment and minimal engagement.

Managers reported challenges in identifying such employees due to the covert nature of quiet quitting, further complicating their efforts to address the issue effectively. According to the sources, digital companies are characterized by the emergence of several characteristics, such as the following:

"I saw some staff starting to withdraw from new projects and just focus on their routine work."— Participant 2
 "They actively avoid new projects or tasks that require extra work."— Participant 4

"There are employees who are reluctant to attend team meetings or do not want to be involved in office activities outside working hours...." – Participant 6

"There are employees who prioritize their own workload without helping their teammates." – Participant 3

"Employees who were once enthusiastic suddenly become more withdrawn and do not show the same enthusiasm for their work." – Participant 8

"Interactions become more formal and minimal, such as only speaking when absolutely necessary." – Participant 5

Contributing Factors

From a manager's perspective, quiet quitting is often perceived as a silent protest against inadequate working conditions. Some interviewees identified factors such as lack of appreciation, unfair workload, and a mismatch of values between the employee and the organization as the leading causes of this behavior. This suggests an imbalance in the social relationship between the employee and the organization, as the social exchange theory describes. Employees who feel that the organization is not meeting their expectations tend to limit their commitment as a form of self-protection.

In addition, managers' perceptions of quiet quitting reflect the importance of two-way communication in organizations. Several interviewees mentioned that employees who feel heard and valued are more engaged in their work. This suggests that effective communication helps identify problems early and creates a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Generational differences also emerged as a critical factor. Younger employees, particularly from Generation Z, were more likely to prioritize work-life balance and mental health over career advancement. This generational shift reflects findings by Twenge (2023), which highlight the evolving priorities of the modern workforce in response to pandemic-induced changes.

"Quiet quitting means doing the bare minimum of basic work without putting in any extra effort, but without harming your coworkers or team." – Participant 6

"Many employees quit because they wanted to maintain their mental health and balance between personal life and work." Especially for those who are newly married or already married and have children. – Participant 2

"I understand that some employees may want to focus on their personal lives." So their quiet quitting is a decision that should be respected, as long as the main job is still hit the target" – Participant 9

"Changing life priorities, such as focusing on family, lead some employees to choose to limit their involvement at work." – Participant 10

Managerial Strategies

Managers employed various strategies to address quiet quitting, focusing on communication, autonomy, and alignment with employee needs. Open communication channels were essential for identifying employee concerns and fostering a supportive work environment. Research by Montoya et al. (2023) similarly emphasizes the importance of managerial attentiveness in mitigating disengagement.

Flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid models, were also widely implemented. These arrangements catered to employees' desires for autonomy and work-life balance, reducing the likelihood of disengagement. This aligns with the findings of Atalay and Dagistan (2023), who noted the role of flexible work policies in enhancing employee satisfaction.

Additionally, managers sought to align organizational policies with employee values by recognizing individual contributions and providing growth opportunities. Such practices resonate with Serenko (2023), who highlighted the importance of fair recognition and career development in fostering engagement.

"The lack of two-way communication and feedback from my superiors made me lose motivation to do more than the bare minimum." – Participant 9

"Employees who feel their ideas and contributions are ignored by their superiors tend to lose motivation to actively participate." – Participant 7

"Quiet quitting often occurs because of unclear work expectations between employees and management." Often, top management plans business changes without a clear direction." – Participant 1

"Employees felt burdened when workload increased but compensation did not. We started allocating tasks more fairly." – Participant 2

"We started limiting communication outside work hours to respect employees' personal time." – Participant 5

"We started conducting training programs to improve skills and provide future insights for employees." – Participant 6

5. Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the phenomenon of quiet quitting within digital companies in Indonesia, focusing on its implications for employee engagement and productivity. The findings reveal that quiet quitting is a significant issue, characterized by employees performing only the minimum required tasks without additional effort. This behavior appears to be influenced by various factors, including work-life balance concerns, managerial practices, and the psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlights that a substantial portion of employees in the digital sector exhibit signs of disengagement, which poses challenges for organizational productivity and employee retention.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This research confirms and extends the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) by focusing on the interaction between job demands and resources in the context of quiet quitting. This shows that increased job resources, such as managerial support and recognition, can reduce the negative impact of high job demands. In addition, this study also emphasizes the importance of work engagement in preventing quiet quitting, according to the work engagement model.

This research reveals that the phenomenon of quiet quitting cannot be fully explained by theories developed in the Western cultural context. In the Indonesian context, the cultural values of collectivism and organizational hierarchy, reflected in high power distance (Ulrich & Sutton, 2010), play an essential role in shaping the dynamics of quiet quitting. These findings will enrich the insight that the quiet quitting phenomenon is cross-cultural, but its manifestations differ based on the local context. Therefore, this study expands the scope of the quiet quitting theory by including organizational culture and local values as essential variables.

The findings of this study align with global research on quiet quitting and highlight Indonesia's unique cultural and organizational dynamics. While studies in Western contexts emphasize individualism as a factor in disengagement (Ulrich & Sutton, 2010), this research underscores the influence of collectivist values and hierarchical workplace structures in shaping employee behavior. The cultural emphasis on harmony and respect for authority in Indonesia presents distinct challenges and opportunities for managers, distinguishing the local manifestation of quiet quitting from its global counterparts.

5.2 Practical Implications

This research shows that feeling unappreciated and unfairly treated can increase quiet quitting and impact organizational productivity. Organizations should communicate honestly and openly about working conditions, career development opportunities, and organizational support. By doing so, they can build trust and create a more harmonious and productive work environment.

The findings have significant implications for management and organizational policies. Policymakers or HR practitioners need to realize that, over time, employees' hidden intentions to leave the company can disrupt company performance. Companies are advised to address the root causes of employees quitting quietly. Managers can adopt proactive strategies to foster engagement and retain talent by understanding the factors driving quiet quitting.

For digital companies in Indonesia, addressing cultural nuances and prioritizing employee well-being will be critical for sustaining workforce productivity and innovation in a competitive industry. Effective leadership through transparent communication and recognition was found to mitigate this issue. Organizational strategies, such as flexible work arrangements, fair compensation, and career development opportunities, also effectively reduced the need to quit.

However, this phenomenon negatively impacts team productivity, morale, and organizational reputation. Additionally, the results highlight the complex interplay of organizational demands, cultural values, and managerial practices in influencing quiet quitting. By addressing these factors strategically, organizations can build resilient and motivated teams, contributing to long-term success in the digital era.

5.3 Future Research Agenda

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, limitations are worth noting. The research focused primarily on managers' perspectives, which may not fully capture the experiences of employees themselves. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge certain constraints inherent in this study, particularly that data collection was conducted using convenience sampling, which introduces potential bias and the risk of obtaining a non-representative sample.

Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific cultural context in Indonesia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or industries. Future research should aim to explore quiet quitting from the employees' viewpoints to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Longitudinal studies could also provide insights into how quiet quitting behaviors evolve and how organizational interventions can effectively address them (Montoya et al., 2023).

Furthermore, comparative studies across different cultural contexts could enrich the literature on quiet quitting and its implications for global workforce dynamics. In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on employee engagement by shedding light on quiet quitting within Indonesia's digital sector. By addressing

the identified gaps and implementing the recommendations provided, organizations can create a more engaged workforce that aligns with contemporary work expectations and enhances overall productivity (Serenko, 2023).

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Author Contribution

Author 1: conceptualization, writing the original draft, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, and methodology. Author 2: review and editing, writing the original draft, investigation, data curation, and visualization.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted without commercial or financial relationships, which could be understood as a potential conflict of interest.

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