Understanding Quiet Quitting: From Demographic Variables to Organizational Drivers

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The aim of this article is to examine whether demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and job tenure determine the occurrence, motives, and forms of quiet quitting.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *The research was conducted with a quantitative CAWI survey from a sample of 515 participants.*

Findings: *The findings indicate that demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and job tenure exert negligible influence on the propensity for quiet quitting, with no significant effect on the quantity or type of actions undertaken. Although gender partially differentiates the motives for disengagement, the most frequently reported reasons and behaviours are consistent across all demographic groups. These results suggest that quiet quitting is primarily shaped by psychological and organizational factors rather than demographic characteristics.*

Practical Implications: *The study indicates that demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and job tenure do not significantly predict quiet quitting behaviours, suggesting that interventions should focus on organizational and psychological determinants. Strengthening leadership competencies, ensuring transparent career development opportunities, and fostering team support appear critical for mitigating disengagement. Additionally, promoting work-life balance and addressing perceptions of inadequate remuneration may help organizations reduce the prevalence of quiet quitting.*

Originality/value: *This article provides original empirical evidence on the limited role of demographic variables in quiet quitting and highlights the predominance of psychological and organizational factors.*

Keywords: *Quiet quitting, employee disengagement, demographic factors.*

JEL codes: *D23, J24, M12, M54.*

Paper type*: Research article.*

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1. Introduction

Quiet quitting is a phenomenon that has sparked intense discussion in the world of work in recent years. It does not refer to spectacular resignations, but rather to a subtle withdrawal - employees perform their duties without the additional engagement that used to be the norm. This silent shift in the boundaries between professional and private life signals deeper changes in work culture.

Quiet quitting refers to employees' deliberate decision to limit their work engagement to the minimum contractual requirements, avoiding voluntary extra tasks or responsibilities, and often exhibiting psychological withdrawal from organizational life. This phenomenon reflects a shift in work attitudes, where individuals consciously manage their work-life boundaries and resist expectations of discretionary effort beyond formal job descriptions (Patel *et al.,* 2025; Harris, 2024; Bordoloi *et al.,* 2025; Galanis *et al.,* 2023).

According to Gallup (2022), half of employees in the USA are quiet quitters. The scale of this phenomenon is so large that it is described as a potentially problematic organizational issue (Patel *et al.,* 2025), which may significantly affect organizations and employees (Talukder and Prieto, 2024), especially in the face of growing work demands.

Quiet quitting is sometimes equated with a kind of 'motivation disease', manifested by a lack of emotional engagement in tasks and relationships, avoidance of taking responsibility, limiting actions strictly to the scope of duties, reduced motivation for development, and a decline in loyalty to the employer (Moczydłowska and Moczydłowska, 2024).

The potential negative consequences resulting from employees' use of quiet quitting and the resulting need to seek ways to counteract quiet quitting prompt further exploration of the phenomenon, its determinants, manifestations, and the employee decisions it leads to.

For this reason, the aim of this article is to examine whether demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and job tenure determine the occurrence, motives, and forms of quiet quitting.

2. Review of the Literature: Quiet Quitting and Its Demographic Determinants

The term 'quiet quitting' was coined by Mark Boldger in 2009; however, it only gained popularity in 2022 thanks to social media (Rossi *et al.,* 2024). Changes in employees' attitudes and the increase in emotional distancing from work are linked to the accelerated pace of work virtualization during the Covid-19 pandemic, which

disrupted traditional social ties as well as processes of organizational identification (Patel *et al.,* 2025).

Serenko (2024) emphasizes that the Covid-19 lockdowns were a time when people reconsidered their priorities and relationships with work, questioning their meaning. Another cause indicated is the intensified job demands, which accelerate processes of employees' emotional exhaustion. Causes are also associated with changing values and expectations of younger generations in the labour market (Patel *et al.,* 2025; Gonsiorowska and Zięba, 2023; Galanis *et al.,* 2023).

The phenomenon of quiet quitting is defined in various ways. However, a review of the literature indicates several key elements common to most of these definitions. Attention is drawn to minimalism displayed at work (Corbin and Flenady, 2024; Samnani and Robertson, 2025), avoidance of additional tasks (Kang *et al.,* 2023; Bernuzzi *et al.,* 2025), psychological withdrawal—mental disengagement from work and the organization (Bordoloi *et al.,* 2025; Kim and Sohn, 2024), lack of initiative and motivation, often as a reaction to burnout or changing values (Galanis *et al.,* 2023), and intentionality—conscious management of work-life boundaries (Harris, 2024).

The last of these elements appears to be the most controversial. Many researchers tend to view quiet quitting as a deliberate action, which is reflected in definitions such as 'conscious limitation of effort' (Harris, 2024), 'a strategic response to lack of recognition' (Corbin and Flenady, 2024), 'protest and strategic withdrawal/avoidance of tasks' (Samnani and Robertson, 2025), and 'coping strategy' (Armstrong, 2024). On the other hand, Harris (2024) points to the possibility of a 'drift' toward quiet quitting without full reflection, while Armstrong and Pfandler (2024) highlight a potential unconscious reaction to overload or burnout.

While the conceptualization of quiet quitting primarily focuses on behavioural and psychological dimensions, the literature also addresses potential demographic determinants of this phenomenon. Among the most frequently examined variables are age, gender, educational attainment, and work experience, with particular emphasis placed on age, as researchers seek to explain the differing levels of disengagement observed among younger and older employees.

Regarding the relationship between age and the occurrence of quiet quitting, analyses indicate that withdrawal at work is particularly evident among Generation Z and Millennials (Patel *et al.,* 2025; Hamilton *et al.,* 2025). The Deloitte (2022) study shows that younger generations are especially focused on achieving work-life balance, which contributes to a decline in work engagement. Pandey (2022) reports that 82% of Generation Z employees are oriented toward work in a manner typical of quiet quitting—focused on minimal performance and meeting only the basic job requirements—stemming from their value hierarchy, in which work is not among their life priorities.

Fifteen percent of this group already apply this strategy. It is less often noted that quiet quitting also occurs among older employees, including those dissatisfied with ineffective and unreliable managers (Mahand and Caldwell, 2023).

An age-related variable significant for the tendency toward quiet quitting is job tenure. Harris (2024) notes that employees with longer tenure exhibit a more nuanced approach, combining adherence to contractual obligations with residual attachment to the organization, whereas those with shorter tenure more often limit their effort to the minimum.

Findings by Olejniczak-Szuster (2025) confirm that shorter tenure fosters withdrawal and a focus on work-life balance, while longer tenure is associated with maintaining traditional norms of loyalty, which reduces the risk of quiet quitting. Similar conclusions are presented by Gone, Naim, and Peethambaran (2025), indicating that job tenure acts as a buffer - the longer it is, the lower the likelihood of quiet quitting, mediated by stronger affective commitment and a sense of investment in one's career.

The literature also points to the significant role of gender in shaping the propensity for quiet quitting, although research findings remain inconclusive. Zhang and Rodrigue (2023) emphasize the increased risk of this phenomenon among women who combine professional duties with motherhood, particularly in countries lacking regulations that support working mothers.

Other analyses, however, indicate a greater decline in the number of hours worked (associated with lower work engagement) among men than among women (Mahand and Caldwell, 2023). Stankovic and Slavkovic (2025) note that for women, quiet quitting is more often linked to the quality of work life, whereas for men, the key factor is social well-being.

Meanwhile, Priya, Jha, and Chaudhary (2025) demonstrate that improving well-being significantly reduces the tendency toward quiet quitting among men, while for women, susceptibility to this phenomenon persists regardless of improvements in well-being.

Another individual determinant significantly associated with quiet quitting is the level of education. Employees with lower education levels are more likely to exhibit withdrawal behaviours, which is linked to a reduced sense of autonomy and greater distance in power relations (Lo, 2025).

Higher education fosters greater awareness of risks related to knowledge loss and motivation to maintain engagement, whereas individuals with lower education levels more often use quiet quitting as a mechanism to protect themselves from stress and overload (Gonsiorowska and Zięba, 2023). Similar conclusions are presented by Gabelaia and Bagociunaite (2024), indicating that employees with lower education levels more frequently limit their effort to the minimum, while those with higher

education are willing to engage in additional activities if they perceive development opportunities. Academic research confirms that a higher level of education is associated with a stronger professional identity, greater intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction, which reduces the tendency toward quiet quitting (Xueyun *et al.,* 2024).

3. Methodology

3.1 The Aim, Research Questions and Methodology

Conducted research aimed at examining the extent to which demographic factors explain the emergence, development, and individual career decisions.

Research questions were as follows: To what extent do age, gender, education, and job tenure determine the propensity for quiet quitting? Do the declared reasons for starting to practice quiet quitting depend on age, gender, education, and job tenure? Do age, gender, education, and job tenure allow for predicting the quantity and type of actions undertaken in the area of quiet quitting?

The research was conducted with a quantitative CAWI survey. The research was funded from the resources of HRM Department of the Faculty of Management at the University of Lodz. Data were collected in the fourth quarter of 2023 by the research agency SW Research (Poland) from a sample of 515 employees. The questionnaire consisted of 9 closed-ended questions with single-choice and multiple-choice options and socio-demographic questions, referring to the current and past practice of quiet quitting, the reasons that led to it, the ways of reducing one's engagement, and the subsequent decisions that were made.

3.2 Participants

The study involved 515 participants. The sample selection was random and based on the availability of participants to the contractor. The study group was diverse in terms of gender, age, education, overall work experience and tenure at the current workplace, as well as the size of the organization in which the respondents are employed.

The study group was balanced in terms of gender, with 51.4% women and 48.6% men. Participants represented a wide range of birth cohorts: 18.8% were born between 1946-1964, 19% between 1965-1975, 21% between 1976-1985, 22% between 1985-1995, and 19% between 1996-2003. Educational levels were also diverse, with 2% having less than secondary education, 50% holding secondary education, and 48% possessing higher education.

Work experience varied considerably: 9% had 1-3 years of total work experience, 25% had 4-10 years, 22% had 11-17 years, 18% had 18-24 years, 12% had 25-31 years, and 14% had more than 32 years. Tenure at the current workplace ranged from less

than one year (11%) to over 32 years (2%), with the largest group (33%) having 4-10 years of tenure.

Respondents were employed in organizations of different sizes: 19% in companies with fewer than 10 employees, 25% in organizations with 10-49 employees, 30% in firms with 50-249 employees, and 26% in organizations with more than 249 employees.

4. Results

The scale of the quiet quitting phenomenon in the studied group was quite large. In the current study, 35% of respondents practice quiet quitting, while 39% admit to having practiced quiet quitting in the past. The conducted analyses show that none of the examined variables (gender, age, education, overall work experience, and tenure at the current workplace) differentiate responses regarding the practice of quiet quitting.

Unlike current quiet quitting behaviour, past quiet quitting is statistically significantly related to respondents' age and work experience. These relationships should be considered weak (for age group, the contingency coefficient was 0.215; for work experience 0.2498). Younger generations more often declare having practiced quiet quitting in the past compared to older generations (Table 1).

Table 1. *Past quiet quitting – respondents' declarations by different age groups*

Year of birth	Past quiet quitting: observed frequencies			
	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
1946-1964	12 (12,37%)	15 (15,46%)	31 (31,96%)	39 (40,21%)
1965-1975	9 (9,18%)	21 (21,43%)	34 (34,69%)	34 (34,69%)
1976-1985	16 (14,68%)	32 (29,36%)	38 (34,86%)	23 (21,10%)
1986-1995	21 (18,75%)	33 (29,46%)	36 (32,14%)	22 (19,64%)
1996-2003	22 (22,22%)	21 (21,21%)	30 (30,30%)	26 (26,26%)

Source: *Author's calculations.*

For overall work experience, the highest percentages of "Yes" and "Rather yes" responses occur in the 4-10 years and 11-17 years groups. In groups with very long tenure (25-31 years, 32 and more), the share of "No" responses increases, suggesting a lower tendency toward quiet quitting among the most experienced employees.

In the group with the shortest tenure (1-3 years), quiet quitting is present but to a moderate extent. Individuals with medium tenure (4-17 years) declare quiet quitting more often, whereas among employees with very long tenure, the absence of quiet

quitting predominates. The moderate value of the coefficient (0.2498) confirms that work experience is a significant, though not decisive, factor (Table 2).

Table 2. *Past quiet quitting – declarations of respondents with varying work experience*

Work experience (in years)	Past quiet quitting: observed frequencies			
	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
1-3	8 (17,78%)	11 (24,44%)	15 (33,33%)	11 (24,44%)
4-10	29 (21,97%)	38 (28,79%)	37 (28,03%)	28 (21,21%)
11-17	16 (14,16%)	36 (31,86%)	40 (35,40%)	21 (18,58%)
18-24	12 (12,63%)	18 (18,95%)	35 (36,84%)	30 (31,58%)
25-31	6 (10,00%)	11 (18,33%)	21 (35,00%)	22 (36,67%
32 i więcej	9 (12,86%	8 (11,43%)	21 (30,00%)	32 (45,71%)

Source: *Author's calculations.*

Past engagement in quiet quitting was more prevalent among younger age cohorts, which typically also exhibit shorter tenure. Consequently, their declarations regarding past quiet quitting refer to relatively recent experiences. Conversely, older individuals with extended work experience reported past quiet quitting less frequently, which may be attributable to greater occupational stability, distinct cultural norms of work in previous decades, and the lower salience of trends such as work-life balance during earlier stages of their careers.

Notably, neither age nor tenure differentiates the current prevalence of quiet quitting. The phenomenon appears to have become widespread across diverse age groups, irrespective of length of service.

Among the reasons for engaging in quiet quitting, the most frequently indicated were inadequate remuneration (56% of respondents practicing quiet quitting), a sense of underappreciation (49%), and emotional exhaustion (nearly 41%). Additionally, one in three respondents reported feelings of injustice at work, physical fatigue, job monotony, lack of promotion prospects, insufficient support from supervisors, and a lack of perceived meaning in their work (Table 3).

Table 3. *Reasons for engaging in quiet quitting – respondents' declarations*

Reason for engaging in quiet quitting	Number of indications	Percentage
Inadequate remuneration	157	56,07%
Feeling underappreciated	138	49,29%
Emotional exhaustion	114	40,71%
Sense of injustice at work	108	38,57%
Physical exhaustion	93	33,21%
Job monotony	90	32,14%
Lack of promotion prospects	85	30,36%

Lack of support from supervisor	83	29,64%
Lack of perceived meaning in work	82	29,29%
Lack or insufficient opportunities for professional development	78	27,86%
Communication problems with supervisor	65	23,21%
Workplace conflicts	59	21,07%
Poor relationship with supervisor	58	20,71%
Lack of interest in performed work	56	20,00%
Poor relationships with coworkers	51	18,21%
Lack of team support	50	17,86%
Lack of opportunity to participate in decision-making	35	12,50%

Source: *Author's calculations.*

The analyses conducted indicate that age, tenure, and educational level do not differentiate the declared reasons for quiet quitting. Statistically significant differences were observed only with respect to gender in three areas: women were significantly more likely to report lack or insufficient opportunities for professional development (34.62% women vs. 19.35% men), physical exhaustion (38.46% women vs. 26.61% men), and lack of team support (22.44% women vs. 12.10% men).

The final aspect examined concerned the forms chosen by respondents to manifest quiet quitting. Their distribution, along with indication frequencies, is presented in Table 4. Every second respondent reported practicing avoiding of assuming additional responsibilities and lack of emotional involvement in task performance, while one in three indicated deliberating reduction in work pace, limited engagement in workplace social interactions, avoiding of undertaking new challenges and performing only the minimum duties required to maintain employment.

Table 4. *Forms of quit quitting according to respondents*

Forms of quiet quitting	Number of indications	Percentage of respondents engaging in quiet quitting
Avoidance of assuming additional responsibilities	150	**53,57%**
Lack of emotional involvement in task performance	146	**52,14%**
Deliberate reduction in work pace	97	34,64%
Limited engagement in workplace social interactions	94	33,57%
Avoidance of undertaking new challenges	94	33,57%
Performing only the minimum duties required to maintain employment	84	30,00%
Avoidance of accountability for major projects	80	28,57%
Decline in the quality of work delivered	75	26,79%

| Increased frequency of absences (e.g., vacation, sick leave) | 48 | 17,14% |
| Excessive thoroughness in task execution as a strategy to prevent assignment of further tasks | 35 | 12,50% |

Source: *Author's calculations.*

Neither the number nor the type of forms of quiet quitting employed do not exhibit statistically significant variation with respect to any of the analysed characteristics; therefore, it is not possible to identify behaviours that are more likely among women or men, individuals of specific age groups, educational levels, or lengths of service.

5.   Discussion and Findings

The analyses conducted allow us to address the research questions posed. With regard to the first question: *To what extent do age, gender, education, and job tenure determine the propensity for quiet quitting?* it can be stated that this extent is minimal and limited exclusively to past behaviour. None of the aforementioned variables significantly determines current engagement in quiet quitting.

The results of this study therefore do not corroborate the findings reported by other researchers (Patel *et al.,* 2025; Hamilton *et al.,* 2025; Harris, 2024; Zhang and Rodrigue, 2023) conducted in different populations and under distinct labour market conditions - both economic and cultural. It appears that these differences are of considerable importance for the lack of variation in the frequency of quiet quitting among Polish respondents.

The prevalence of this phenomenon can be explained by certain social conditions common to many employees, such as an increase in the importance of individualism and a decline in the work ethos in favour of individual well-being, the deficit of organizational leadership and social competences (Moczydłowska, 2024), as well as the widespread expectation of work-life balance among employees (Kuźma, 2024), which has reduced differences between demographic groups.

Economic factors are also relevant, such as the perception of remuneration in some sectors as inadequate for the work performed, or the shortage of workers in the labour market and the tolerance by organizations of low employee engagement, which may contribute to the spread of quiet quitting (Moczydłowska, 2024).

In reference to the second research question: *Do the declared reasons for engaging in quiet quitting depend on age, gender, education, and job tenure?* it should be emphasized that gender appears to be the only factor that partially differentiates the motives for adopting quiet quitting. The most frequently cited reasons are largely consistent across both women and men, as well as among groups distinguished by age, tenure, or educational attainment.

Referring to the reasons indicated significantly more often by women than by men, it should be noted that there are premises explaining this situation. Firstly, lack or insufficient opportunities for professional development – the Hays report *"Women in the Labour Market 2023"* shows that in Poland women perceive barriers to promotion and career development much more frequently than men (Ujazdowski, 2024).

Among these barriers are persistent stereotypes and inequalities in access to managerial positions and remuneration, which limit women's professional advancement (Dziadkiewicz and Banasik, 2025). Physical exhaustion may be particularly burdensome for women due to the still unequal distribution of household responsibilities, which reduces their time for recovery and increases the risk of fatigue (Report SDG 2023).

Furthermore, lack of team support may be perceived by women as a greater problem than by men because women tend to attach more importance to team support and interpersonal relationships (Davcheva and González-Romá, 2023; Post, 2015; Novotney, 2024). On the other hand, women more often experience a lack of support in the work environment, which is associated with their lower representation in power structures and stereotypes related to leadership (Dziadkiewicz and Banasik, 2025).

The answer to the last research question – *Do age, gender, education, and job tenure allow for predicting the quantity and type of actions undertaken in the area of quiet quitting?* – is negative. Respondents indicated various actions they had taken, most frequently emphasizing avoiding assuming additional responsibilities and a lack of emotional involvement in task performance.

However, no statistically significant differences were observed with respect to gender, age, education, or job tenure. Irrespective of these variables, respondents have access to the same mechanisms for reducing their work engagement. These mechanisms appear to be universal, and the propensity to employ them seems to be determined primarily by psychological and organizational factors rather than demographic characteristics.

The findings of this study suggest that interventions aimed at reducing quiet quitting should not be based on demographic segmentation, as age, gender, education, and job tenure do not significantly predict either the propensity for disengagement or the type of actions undertaken. Instead, organizations should focus on psychological and organizational factors that appear to drive this phenomenon, such as perceived lack of meaning in work, insufficient leadership competencies, and deficits in organizational support.

Enhancing managerial skills in communication, motivation, and team integration may mitigate disengagement, as could the implementation of transparent career development pathways and mentoring programs, particularly to address barriers experienced by women.

Furthermore, promoting a culture of collaboration and strengthening team support can improve overall engagement, given the relational expectations identified among female employees. Finally, policies supporting work-life balance and addressing perceptions of inadequate remuneration, combined with efforts to reduce tolerance for low engagement, may help organizations counteract the spread of quiet quitting.

6. Limitations

The research was exclusively quantitative and cross-sectional. The lack of in-depth exploration of this issue through longitudinal studies can be considered a limitation of the research. Due to the non-random sampling method, the presented research findings cannot be generalized to the entire population.

7. Conflicts of Interest

The author declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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