

Implications of quiet quitting in the workplace



Quiet quitting is the concept referring to employees' minimal commitment to their work. It can be demonstrated through employee's unwillingness to go the extra mile. An employee who is a quiet quitter limits his/her activities to the assigned job description. As opposed to quitting their job, quiet quitters reject that their lives should be dominated by work. Employees who feel less valued, underemployed, stuck in dead-end jobs, and paid less than they are worth are often unhappy and are likely to dedicate less effort to their jobs and eventually quiet quit. Even though the young generation (millenniums and Gen Z) are predominantly popular for quiet quitting (Harter, 2022), the older generation also do quiet quit (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). However, due to their characteristics, Gen Z employees remains the pioneers of quiet quitting (Aydin & Azizoglu, 2022).

Quiet quitting bears negative consequences for an organisation as quiet quitters often disengage as they experience low levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. The findings by Gallup (2022) demonstrate that almost half of the US workforce is allegedly quiet quitters. Conceningly, South Africa has been reported to be amongst countries that have lowest scores on socioeconomic fluctuations which contribute to serious mental health concerns (Mental State of the World 2022 report). Therefore, the South African workforce is prone to quiet quitting. This has an adverse impact on the organisational commitment of the workforce and may threaten the survival and competitiveness of an organisation as quiet quitters tend to manifest withdrawal bahaviours and job neglect. It transpires that a close relation exists between quiet quitting and the organisation culture. In companies where a healthy and conducive

organisation culture exists, quiet quitting is likely to be very low.

What causes quiet quitting?

Quiet quitting is often a response by employees who feel, amongst other reasons, that their organisation has inadequate career development opportunities. Therefore, such an employee is likely to feel that he/she has reached a ceiling or a dead-end. For this reason, work has become less interesting and less meaningful as there is no expected career progression. Failure to value employees may also contribute to the challenge as an employee is likely to feel unappreciated and unnoticed. Further, the importance of employee autonomy should not be undermined as employees value independence. Lastly, when trust in the organisation has declined, employees are likely to feel demotivated.

What should organisations do to address quiet quitting?

Concerningly, Hare (2022) observed that many organisations are unwilling, unprepared, and unable to effectively address this phenomenon. This suggests that there is still a need for an organisation to pay attention to the needs of employees in order to curb the notion of quiet quitting. Amongst other approaches, organisations should 1) deliver on promises, 2) prioritize workplace culture, 3) focus on employee well-being, 4) address diversity and inclusion, and 5) create meaningful work opportunities.