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The Management of Organizational Culture in the Quiet Quitting Phenomenon in Romanian Companies

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of quiet quitting within Romanian companies and its relationship with organizational culture, demographic factors, leadership styles, and peer/supervisor pressure. The research aims to determine how and if these characteristics influence the phenomenon of quiet quitting in any way. The findings reveal a strong association between organizational culture and quiet quitting, suggesting that the nature of an organisation's culture directly influences employees' inclination to consider such actions. Additionally, leadership style significantly impacted quiet quitting, indicating that managerial approaches play a pivotal role in employees' decision-making. Furthermore, the study did not identify a substantial connection between peer influence and the relationship between corporate culture and quiet quitting. These findings emphasise the critical role of organizational culture and leadership approaches in understanding and addressing the quiet quitting phenomenon. The results highlight the need for employers to foster a positive and healthy work environment and to implement effective leadership strategies to mitigate the likelihood of employees considering quiet quitting.

Keywords: quiet quitting; organizational culture; leadership styles; employee behavior; workplace dynamics; Romanian companies.

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Introduction

Employee turnover represents a significant and inevitable challenge for organisations worldwide. While various factors, including retirement, job dissatisfaction, and personal circumstances, contribute to this phenomenon, not all resignations occur in the same manner. A growing trend in the modern workplace, known as "quiet quitting", reflects a unique form of disengagement where employees silently reduce their contributions or exit their roles without creating visible disruptions. Unlike traditional forms of resignation, quiet quitting often escapes immediate managerial attention, posing long-term risks to organizational performance and employee morale (Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviours, including their likelihood to engage in quiet quitting. Defined as the shared values, beliefs, and practices within a workplace, organizational culture profoundly influences how employees perceive their roles and their relationships with colleagues and leaders. A positive organizational culture - marked by open communication, trust, and collaboration - can empower employees to voice their concerns and work proactively with management to address workplace challenges (Sempé, 2002). On the other hand, a negative culture characterised by rigid hierarchies, lack of transparency, and internal competition may alienate employees, fostering disengagement and ultimately leading to quiet quitting (DeSmet, 2022). Moreover, when employees feel unsupported or

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undervalued, they may gradually lose motivation, which could result in burnout and eventual disengagement (Harter, 2022).

In Romanian companies' context, the quiet quitting phenomenon warrants particular attention due to its potential implications for workforce stability and organizational success. Factors such as leadership styles, peer influence, and demographic dynamics further complicate the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting. For instance, employees in a culture where managerial practices are perceived as authoritarian may choose to disengage silently rather than openly express dissatisfaction. Similarly, peer and supervisor pressure can exacerbate workplace stress, leading employees to adopt quiet quitting as a coping mechanism. These behaviours underscore the need for a supportive workplace culture where employees feel safe communicating concerns and participating in decision-making processes (Tianya, 2015; Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

This paper aims to explore the multifaceted relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting within Romanian organisations. The study seeks to identify how various dimensions of organizational culture correlate with employees' propensity to disengage or leave their roles quietly. Furthermore, it examines the moderating effects of leadership styles and peer influence on this relationship, offering a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. The research methodology relies on data analysis and statistical techniques to uncover significant associations and test proposed hypotheses. The findings emphasise the need for organisations to prioritise the development of positive workplace cultures that align with employees' values and aspirations. By fostering a supportive and transparent environment, organisations can mitigate the risk of quiet quitting, enhance employee retention, and drive sustainable organizational growth. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of quiet quitting and provides practical insights for leaders and policymakers aiming to address this growing workplace trend (DeSmet, 2022; Harter, 2022).

The structure of this paper is as follows: The next section outlines the methodology employed to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting. The subsequent sections present the study's findings and discuss their implications for organizational practice. The paper concludes with recommendations for fostering positive organizational cultures and suggestions for future research.

Literature review

An outlook of organizational culture and its measurements

Organisations represent fundamental pillars of society; as they grow and develop, they inherently exhibit a specific culture. Organizational culture fosters teamwork, cohesion, enthusiasm, and employee creativity to enhance economic efficiency (Tianya, 2015). Like individuals, each organisation possesses a unique personality shaped by its community, making it distinct. This culture acts as an unseen yet powerful force that influences behaviour and permeates a group of collaborators. As an organisation achieves structural permanence, appropriate behavioural patterns become ingrained among its members (Citeman, 2008). Organizational culture encompasses values, attitudes, and behavioural norms subtly guiding individual conduct within an organisation (Ortega-Parra & Sastre-Castillo, 2013). According to Schneider (2013), it is defined by workplace norms perceived by employees, impacting how they act and adapt to achieve organizational goals. Yirdaw (2016) describes organizational culture as the binding agent that integrates human and non-human resources within an organisation to promote collaboration and high performance.

A robust organizational culture reflects the organisation's greatness (Brown, 2013). Maintaining a strong culture is crucial for achieving excellence, as evidenced by Peters and

Waterman's (1982) analysis of high-performing U.S. corporations. Their findings identified qualities such as rapid decision-making, entrepreneurial leadership, and member efficiency as hallmarks of excellent cultures. Strong organizational cultures foster alignment with organizational ideals, where members share similar perspectives (Flamholtz & Randle, 2011). In such cultures, open communication between leadership and staff drives motivation and enhances performance (Kohtamaki, 2016). Conversely, weak cultures jeopardise organizational continuity due to misaligned values and priorities (Eaton & Kilby, 2015). Key characteristics of strong cultures include motivated personnel, high customer satisfaction, established performance standards, openness to change, innovation, and well-defined processes (Flamholtz & Randle, 2011). However, no culture is universally superior; rather, it must align with the organisation's needs and circumstances (Bamidele, 2022).

Organizational cultures vary based on goals and leadership philosophies. For example, in some organisations, all decisions require detailed reporting, with "successful managers" being those who justify their suggestions rigorously. Innovative decisions involving significant changes or risks are often discouraged. Employees in such organisations are expected to adhere to extensive rules, and leadership prioritises efficiency over employee morale. Organizational cultures are commonly classified into four main types: clan culture, adhocracy culture, hierarchical culture, and market culture (Fiordelisi, 2014). Clan culture emphasises teamwork, cohesion, and employee-focused leadership (Han, 2012). Adhocracy culture is characterised by creativity, adaptability, and an imaginative approach (Veiseh, 2014). Hierarchical culture focuses on rules and regulations to manage operations (Sok, 2014). Market culture values competition and success to achieve business objectives (Pinho, 2014). Clan culture emphasises human affiliation, trust, loyalty, and support (Fiordelisi, 2014). Managers in a clan culture collaborate to inspire and motivate employees, fostering exceptional organizational culture (Miguel, 2015). Adhocracy culture prioritises innovation and change for organizational improvement, encouraging staff to explore creative business concepts (Fiordelisi, 2014). On the other hand, hierarchical culture values clear communication, consistency, and stability, with strict adherence to rules and guidelines to ensure efficiency (Hartnell, 2011). Organizational culture is a "social glue" that fosters a collective sense of belonging. If these cultural attributes are not effectively upheld, organizational performance can suffer significantly. Despite shared core principles, subcultures within organisations may emerge, varying by work type or departmental goals (Rasak, 2022).

Over time, the concept of culture has evolved from being a fixed list of behaviours and standards within an organisation to recognising how corporate culture can be deliberately shaped to enhance employee experience. Leadership must prioritise organizational culture and intentionally embed it into the organizational structure (Rasak Bamidele, 2022). Research highlights a positive relationship between strong culture, innovation competency, human relations, and firm outcomes like profitability, growth, and reputational assets (Polychroniou & Trivellas, 2018). Conversely, cultural imbalances negatively affect organizational performance (Jin, 2019). Studies also link an organisation's innovative culture to its sustainability orientation (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2019; Wahyuningsih, 2019). However, some recent empirical findings suggest no correlation between organizational culture and performance (Leithy, 2017). Organizational culture is viewed as a cornerstone of business performance and a source of long-term competitive advantage. The absence of cultural cohesion among group members has been identified as a significant cause of corporate failure. Thus, improving culture can enhance performance, and business leaders are advised to cultivate productive organizational cultures to drive business success (Yasas & Ruwan, 2020).

A company's goal to enhance customer loyalty necessitates fostering a positive corporate image, which is inherently linked to a strong organizational culture. Understanding how organizational culture is created, maintained, and internalised enables better predictions of workplace behaviour (Rasak Bamidele, 2022). Baker (2004) emphasises maximising individuals' intellectual talents to support organizational and personal development.

According to Ojo (2008), organizational culture comprises behavioural standards shaping roles and responsibilities, identity, and passion for the company's goals. Workplace analysis hinges on how culture influences employee retention. Effective organizational culture fosters identification and engagement, encouraging employees to seek managerial support when needed (Yildiz, 2014). Yildiz also notes that tangible workplace elements, such as office design, dress codes, and corporate symbols, significantly shape employee experiences and communication. Extensive research underscores the profound impact of organizational culture on performance. A lack of cultural integration between corporate members has been identified as a key cause of group failure, underscoring the need for cohesive cultural strategies to ensure organizational success (Yasas & Ruwan, 2020).

Quiet quitting and its implications

Quiet quitting represents a form of employee disengagement—a protest against work-life imbalance and a covert way of resisting workplace expectations. Employees fulfilling their job responsibilities without openly defying orders often avoid taking on additional tasks, reject new responsibilities, or limit their efforts to the bare minimum outlined in their job descriptions. Such workers might decline extra duties, accept only straightforward assignments, or cite being overwhelmed as a reason for not helping supervisors or colleagues (Robinson, 2022). This practice has surged in popularity, encouraging workers to fulfil their responsibilities without adhering to a "work-is-life" mindset. By prioritising psychological well-being, this approach helps mitigate burnout, establish healthy boundaries, and promote a sense of control, enabling individuals to focus on their personal goals and values (Lord, 2022).

Quiet quitting is not necessarily a new concept. According to reports, economist Mark Boldger introduced the term at the Texas A&M Economics Symposium to describe Venezuela's economic struggles, which he attributed to the demonisation of profit, entrepreneurship, and productivity (Arnet, 2022; Hitt, 2022). While the term gained traction globally through movements like "Tang Ping" in China in 2021, its resurgence in 2022 is attributed to viral TikTok videos, particularly one by Zaid Khan, who emphasised values like "Work is not your life" and "Your worth is not defined by productive output" (Harter, 2022). The idea highlights a shift toward resistance against "quiet firing"—a practice where employers impose excessive workloads or limit economic benefits, effectively encouraging employees to leave voluntarily. Both phenomena reflect adversarial workplace dynamics, leading to reduced business performance and significant global economic losses (Yikilmaz, 2022).

The Great Resignation, another pivotal workforce trend, emerged as millions of employees voluntarily left their jobs in pursuit of better pay, job satisfaction, or work-life balance. In the United States, over 47 million workers resigned in 2021 alone, with resignation rates varying across companies—from less than 2% to over 30%—depending on workplace culture and industry type (Zweig & Sull, 2022). Organisations known for fostering positive workplace cultures, like Southwest Airlines and LinkedIn, saw lower resignation rates, while companies with toxic or rigid environments, such as Tesla and SpaceX, experienced higher turnover. Toxic workplace cultures, lack of inclusivity, and perceived disrespect were identified as key drivers behind this mass exodus (Fuller & Kerr, 2022). Triggered by the pandemic, which compelled millions to work remotely or not at all, the trend began as employees resisted returning to work under pre-pandemic conditions. High turnover rates were especially pronounced in the hospitality and food services industries, where challenging working conditions persisted post-COVID-19 (Cheng, 2022).

Both Quiet Quitting and The Great Resignation signal widespread workforce dissatisfaction. Common reasons include poor recognition, disrespect, toxic workplace cultures, and lack of meaningful work. Long-standing issues such as low pay and limited career growth opportunities exacerbate the problem (DeSmet, 2022; Parker & Horowitz, 2022). In both cases, employee dissatisfaction stems from unmet intrinsic needs like values alignment, purpose, and personal growth. Employees seek organisations

prioritising their well-being and fostering engagement, leading to greater loyalty and productivity. A lack of fulfilment or disconnection from a company's mission leaves employees unmotivated and disengaged, ultimately reducing their sense of belonging and contribution to organizational success (DiPietro et al., 2020).

Generational differences in workplace perceptions

Over the past two decades, workplace cultures have been dominated by excessive workload expectations, with unpaid labour becoming the norm in many industries. Millennials and Generation Z, however, have increasingly resisted these norms, advocating for flexibility, meaningful work, and work-life balance in the wake of global economic recessions and the COVID-19 pandemic (Ahmed, 2022). Baby Boomers are primarily focused on financial security, particularly their pensions. They value workplace stability, follow the rules, and uphold traditional moral principles. Their strong identification with their work often results in idealism and sensitivity toward workplace values (DiPietro, 2020). Often caught between Baby Boomers and Millennials, Generation X faces unique career challenges. Many struggle to advance professionally while competing with a still-active older workforce. This generation values personal life over company interests, often viewing professional training and technological advancements as necessary evils (Howen & Strauss, 1994). Highly educated and career-driven, Millennials prioritise meaningful work over hierarchical structures. Shaped by global crises like the 9/11 attacks and economic recessions, they have developed resilience and a preference for collaborative leadership styles and respectful workplace cultures. The youngest workforce cohort, Generation Z, values family and leisure above all. Their approach to work mirrors their academic experiences, with an emphasis on rewards and recognition. They prioritise maximising daily experiences and viewing jobs as a means to achieve broader life goals (Scholz, 2014).

Hypotheses development

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant correlation between the type of organizational culture (e.g., clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market culture) and the prevalence of quiet quitting. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant correlation between the type of organizational culture and quiet quitting, while the alternative hypothesis suggests a significant correlation.

Hypothesis 2: Demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and role/position are significantly correlated with the likelihood of quiet quitting. The null hypothesis states that no significant correlation exists between demographic factors and quiet quitting, while the alternative hypothesis posits a significant correlation.

Hypothesis 3: Leadership style is significantly correlated with the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant correlation between leadership style and the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting. The alternative hypothesis posits that leadership style is significantly correlated with this relationship.

Hypothesis 4: Peer influence is significantly correlated with the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant correlation between peer influence and the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting, while the alternative hypothesis posits a significant correlation.

Hypothesis 5: Organizational culture is significantly correlated with quiet quitting, independent of other variables such as demographic factors, leadership style, or peer influence. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant correlation between organizational culture and quiet quitting when considering other variables, while the alternative hypothesis suggests a significant correlation.

Methodology

Research objectives and questions

The primary aim of this research is to explore the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting in Romanian companies. Specific objectives include identifying which types of organizational culture, such as clan, adhocratic, hierarchical, or market-oriented cultures, are most associated with quiet quitting. The study also investigates the mediating roles of leadership styles and peer influence in this relationship and examines how demographic factors, including age, gender, and educational background, influence the likelihood of quiet quitting. The results are intended to provide actionable insights for organisations aiming to enhance employee engagement and retention (Alexis, 2022; Parker & Horowitz, 2022). This study addresses two key questions. First, it examines the relationship between different types of organizational culture - clan, adhocratic, hierarchical, and market-oriented—and the prevalence of quiet quitting among employees. Second, it investigates how peer or supervisor influence mediates the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting.

Sample and data collection

The sample consisted of 106 participants from various organisations and industries in Romania. A convenience sampling method was employed, leveraging personal and professional networks to recruit participants. Although the sample size was deemed sufficient for this study's objectives, its limitations in generalizability are acknowledged. The questionnaire was distributed online through email and social media platforms, ensuring anonymity and encouraging voluntary participation. Data were collected through an online questionnaire with Likert scale items. This format allowed for the quantification of subjective attitudes and perceptions. Statistical analyses were conducted using PSPP software. Descriptive statistics summarised demographic data, such as age, gender, and industry. Inferential statistics, including correlation analyses, were used to explore relationships between organizational culture, leadership styles, peer influence, and quiet quitting. The reliability and validity of the data were ensured through careful design and execution of the survey instrument.

The majority of the sample respondents (70.8%) are aged between 25 and 34, reflecting the prominent presence of Millennials in the workforce. In terms of education, most respondents held a bachelor's (43.4%) or master's (42.5%) degree, demonstrating a highly educated sample. A smaller portion had a high school diploma (13.3%) or doctoral degree (1.9%). This diverse educational background suggests varying perspectives on organizational culture and career expectations. The study also revealed that those with higher educational attainment, particularly those holding master's degrees, were more likely to consider leaving their organisations, indicating a correlation between educational level and career aspirations.

Regarding organizational experience, 41.5% of respondents held mid-to-senior-level positions, 28.3% were in entry-level roles, and 14.2% occupied managerial roles, providing a broad range of perspectives on organizational dynamics. A small percentage of respondents were in director (2.8%) or stagiaire (1.9%) positions. Among those seriously considering leaving their organisation, entry-level employees (15 respondents) and mid-senior professionals (19 respondents) showed a significant tendency toward quitting quietly, highlighting the influence of unmet expectations and misalignments in organizational culture. The analysis of respondents' tenure provides insights into their stability and commitment to their current organisations. A significant portion, 38.7% of respondents, reported working in their current position for 1–3 years. This short tenure suggests a high turnover rate and indicates potential dissatisfaction, lack of growth opportunities, or unfavourable workplace cultures leading to quiet quitting. Furthermore, 24.5% of respondents were in their roles for less than one year, signalling a considerable influx of new hires who are still acclimating to the organizational culture. Respondents

with 4–6 years of tenure accounted for 12.3% of the sample, representing employees who have moved beyond the initial stages of employment. This group's insights can shed light on the long-term effects of workplace culture on retention and engagement. Additionally, 9.4% of respondents had been with their organisation for 7–10 years, while only 3.8% had more than 10 years of tenure. Long-term employees often have stronger organizational ties and a deeper commitment, potentially making them less inclined toward quiet quitting. None of the respondents with over 10 years of tenure reported intentions to engage in quiet quitting, suggesting that long-term employees are less likely to disengage silently. On the other hand, newer employees, particularly those with 1–3 years of experience, were more likely to consider quitting quietly, with 26 respondents from this group expressing significant contemplation of the phenomenon. Early-career employees and those still integrating into the corporate culture may face unmet expectations or a mismatch between their goals and organizational realities.

Research method

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between organizational culture and the phenomenon of quiet quitting. Quantitative research methods emphasise the statistical analysis of data, relying on numbers, charts, and tables to test hypotheses with a focus on measurement, objectivity, and replicability (Streefkerk, 2019). Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire, a widely recognised and reliable instrument in quantitative research. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items, enabling the statistical examination of trends and associations (Zohrabi, 2013; Sharma, 2017).

Variables and instrumentation

The study integrates multiple variables. The independent variables are the types of organizational culture, specifically clan, adhocratic, hierarchical, and market-oriented cultures. The dependent variable is quiet quitting, while mediating variables include leadership styles and peer influence. Demographic variables, such as age, gender, education, role within the organisation, and tenure, are also included to provide contextual insights. The survey questionnaire was designed to gather data on three dimensions: demographic information, organizational culture, and quiet quitting.

The demographic section of the survey included questions on age, gender, education level, role within the company, and tenure. These factors provided insights into the sample's diversity and helped contextualise responses. Questions about organizational culture addressed factors such as teamwork, innovation, transparency, and employee well-being. Questions on quiet quitting explored participants' consideration of leaving, reasons for disengagement, and the influence of organizational culture and leadership.

Results

Analysis of organizational culture

The analysis of responses to questions about the seriousness with which respondents considered leaving the company provides valuable insights into the prevalence of the quiet quitting phenomenon among them. Out of 106 participants, 59 individuals (55.7%) indicated they had not engaged in such behaviour, rating their likelihood of leaving the company at 1–3 on a scale of 1 to 5. This indicates that the majority of respondents are generally satisfied with their current workplace and have not seriously contemplated leaving quietly. To better understand the predominant type of organizational culture in the respondents' organisations, the data was analysed by mapping responses to 17 organizational culture-related questions.

A total of 1,003 cells were examined, as each response corresponded to a specific type of organizational culture. Of these, 289 cells were marked in yellow, indicating an Adhocracy culture. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents perceive their organisation to have an informal culture that values improvisation, flexibility, and minimal formal procedures. Such a culture empowers employees to determine how to act and respond to changing circumstances. Innovation and adaptability are crucial for enhancing organizational performance within an adhocracy culture (Fiordelisi, 2014). Leaders in these environments often invest heavily in research and development and encourage employees to pursue creative business ideas (Sok, 2014). Growth, risk-taking, innovation, diversity, independence, and adaptability have been identified as key values and assumptions of Adhocracy cultures (Hartnell et al., 2011). For an Adhocracy culture to thrive, members must recognise the significance of their roles in achieving organizational objectives (Veisoh et al., 2014). Engelen (2014) found a positive correlation between Adhocracy culture and entrepreneurial approaches, while Hartnell et al. (2011) reported a long-term positive association between Adhocracy culture and organizational performance.

In contrast, 411 cells (41.0%) were marked in blue, representing a Clan culture, indicating that many respondents value collaboration, teamwork, and shared ideals within their organisations. A Clan culture fosters a sense of community and a supportive work environment where employees feel connected and collaborate effectively. Values such as human affiliation, cooperation, attachment, trust, loyalty, and support characterise Clan cultures (Fiordelisi, 2014). According to Miguel (2015), managers in such cultures must collaborate to motivate and inspire their teams to create an exceptional organizational culture. Collaboration, engagement, and open communication are integral to this culture. Yirdaw (2014) noted that managers in Clan cultures promote teamwork and employee empowerment. Ikyanyon (2012) also emphasised that managers should enhance employee involvement and commitment, as engaged employees are better equipped to fulfil their responsibilities.

Conversely, 175 cells (17.4%) were marked in red, indicating a Hierarchical culture, implying that a notable proportion of respondents perceive their organisations as having well-defined hierarchies, formal structures, and a focus on rules and procedures. Communication in such cultures typically flows top-down, with decision-making authority concentrated at higher levels. Hierarchical cultures are fundamentally rooted in power and control. Work is structured and systematic, with employees characterised by stability, caution, and maturity. Strong hierarchical cultures lead to reliable, prudent organisations focused on stability, control, and predictability (Wei, Liu & Herndon, 2011). However, these cultures often exhibit less flexibility, greater rigidity, and communication barriers across management levels.

Finally, 116 cells were marked in green, representing a competitive culture. This result suggests that some respondents believe their organisations foster competition, individual success, and performance. Competitive cultures often prioritise ambitious goal setting and recognition of individual excellence. Collecting market data, setting clear objectives, and task-oriented decision-making are key aspects of Competitive cultures. Employees often align their personal goals with the organisation's success in such environments (Han, 2012). Miguel (2015) identified communication, competition, competence, and achievement as core components of Competitive cultures. Managers in these settings focus on market efficiency and competitiveness, aiming to maintain customer satisfaction and market success (Miguel, 2015).

3 cells lacked responses, highlighting a minor limitation in the study due to missing data. Nevertheless, the overall pattern sheds light on the most prevalent organizational cultures among the respondents. From the total of 1,003 cells, 289 (28.8%) were marked yellow for Adhocracy culture, 411 (41.0%) blue for Clan culture, 175 (17.4%) red for Hierarchical culture, and 116 (11.6%) green for Competitive culture. The remaining 3 cells (0.3%)

were unanswered. These percentages provide a clearer picture of each organizational culture's representation among respondents.

Among the 799 cells marked by respondents who seriously considered quiet quitting (4–5 on the scale), elements of Hierarchical culture predominated. This finding aligns with Sok (2014), who stated that hierarchical cultures are governed by rules and structured control systems. Such environments often emphasise clarity, consistency, and stability but may suppress innovation and flexibility (Fiordelisi, 2014). In these responses, 234 cells (29.3%) indicated Adhocracy culture, highlighting creativity and flexibility as valued traits, though potentially undermined by a lack of structure. Another 212 cells (26.5%) marked Clan culture, reflecting collaborative environments that may still face challenges like team dynamics. In contrast, 295 cells (36.9%) indicated a preference for Hierarchical culture, showing that rigid structures might heighten dissatisfaction and quiet quitting considerations. These findings suggest that Hierarchical and Adhocracy cultures are most prevalent among respondents contemplating quiet quitting. Rigid hierarchies, reduced autonomy, and competitive environments appear linked to the phenomenon, underscoring the need for organizational adjustments to mitigate dissatisfaction and improve engagement.

Hypotheses analysis

Hypothesis 1: Quiet quitting is strongly correlated with the type of organizational culture.

The responses from the participants reveal distinct patterns regarding the frequency of organizational culture types among those considering quiet quitting. Of the total responses, 36.9% reflected a hierarchical culture, followed by 29.3% for an adhocratic culture, 26.5% for a clan culture, and 7.3% for a competitive culture. The predominance of hierarchical culture suggests a significant influence of structured environments on quiet quitting tendencies. Employees in such cultures may feel constrained by formal authority, limited autonomy, and rigid decision-making processes, prompting them to consider discreetly exiting their roles. While hierarchical culture appears most correlated with quiet quitting, the notable presence of adhocratic and clan cultures underscores the complexity of this phenomenon. In adhocratic settings, dissatisfaction might stem from limited support for innovation or personal growth, whereas in clan cultures, it could relate to misaligned values or team dynamics. This finding indicates that while hierarchical structures are a key factor, no single culture type fully explains the decision to quit quietly. Instead, various cultural attributes contribute to employee dissatisfaction, highlighting the need for a nuanced approach to organizational improvement.

Hypothesis 2: Quiet quitting is strongly correlated with demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and position/role.

The analysis identifies significant relationships between demographic characteristics and quiet quitting behaviour. Younger workers, particularly those aged 18–24 and 25–34, are more likely to consider quiet quitting. Often in early career stages, these age groups may prioritise career growth and work-life balance, making them more sensitive to unmet expectations. Conversely, older employees aged 35–44 are less likely to consider quiet quitting, reflecting greater career stability or alignment with organizational norms. Gender differences are also evident, with 28 women and 19 men indicating serious consideration of quiet quitting. Although the reasons for this disparity are unclear, they may stem from gender-specific challenges like workplace equity or balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Education level further influences this behaviour, with respondents holding master's degrees (17) or bachelor's degrees (21) showing a greater tendency toward quiet quitting. These groups may hold higher expectations for meaningful engagement and professional growth, making them more susceptible to dissatisfaction. Position and tenure also play a role. Employees with 1–3 years of experience (26 respondents) are more prone to quitting quietly, suggesting that early-career professionals may face challenges in integrating into organizational culture.

However, this tendency diminishes as tenure increases, with fewer employees in the 4–6 and 7–10 years of experience brackets expressing such inclinations. These findings affirm Hypothesis 2, emphasising that demographic factors significantly shape quiet quitting tendencies and warrant targeted organizational strategies to address diverse employee needs.

Hypothesis 3: The leadership style of supervisors correlates with quiet quitting.

A table example is presented in Table 1. The main body of the table should be in Cambria, 10 points, single-spaced. Please try to organize the table so that all the information presented fits the space of the cell correspondingly. Please avoid dividing words on two different lines.

Table 1. Hypothesis 3 correlation testing

		Quitting Job	Supervisor leadership style
Quitting Job	Pearson	1.000	.528
	Correlation		.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	106	101
	N		
Supervisor leadership style	Pearson	.5287	1.000
	Correlation	.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		101
	N	101	

Source: own processing

Data analysis shows a strong correlation (Pearson coefficient = 0.523) between leadership style and the seriousness of quiet quitting considerations. This confirms Hypothesis 3, highlighting the pivotal role of leadership in influencing employee behaviour. Effective leadership—marked by clear communication, empathy, fairness, and support—can mitigate negative aspects of organizational culture, reducing the likelihood of quiet quitting. Conversely, poor leadership amplifies dissatisfaction, even in otherwise favourable environments. This finding underscores the critical moderating role of leadership. A supportive and empowering leadership style can counterbalance an unsatisfactory organizational culture, creating a positive work environment that fosters engagement and loyalty. In contrast, weak or autocratic leadership can exacerbate workplace challenges, increasing employee disengagement and attrition risks. Organisations should prioritise leadership development programs that align management practices with cultural values to strengthen employee retention and minimise the impact of adverse cultural conditions.

Hypothesis 4: The influence of coworkers or team members correlates with quiet quitting.

Table 2. Hypothesis 4 correlation testing

		Quitting Job	Team members
Quitting Job	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.267
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	106	101
Team members	Pearson Correlation	.267	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	101	101

Source: own processing

The analysis reveals a weak correlation (Pearson coefficient = 0.267) between the seriousness of quiet quitting considerations and the influence of coworkers or team members. While this supports Hypothesis 4 to some extent, the weak relationship suggests that interpersonal dynamics play a limited role in mediating the impact of organizational culture on quiet quitting. Other factors like individual satisfaction and organizational policies may have greater significance. Although coworkers and team members contribute to the workplace environment, their influence on decisions to quit

discreetly appears marginal. This highlights that quiet quitting is more strongly driven by personal or systemic factors rather than interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, fostering a collaborative and supportive team culture remains valuable for enhancing overall satisfaction and engagement. Companies can create more holistic retention strategies by addressing other organizational issues alongside interpersonal dynamics.

Hypothesis 5: Organizational culture correlates with quiet quitting.

Table 3. Hypothesis 5 correlation testing

		Quitting Job	Culture
Quitting Job	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.583
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	106	101
Culture	Pearson Correlation	.583	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

Source: own processing

The findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation (Pearson coefficient = 0.583) between organizational culture and the seriousness of quiet quitting considerations, validating Hypothesis 5. This significant relationship highlights the central role of culture in shaping employee decisions. Supportive cultures characterised by open communication, fairness, and alignment with employee values foster loyalty and engagement. In contrast, toxic cultures marked by poor communication, lack of trust, and rigid structures increase the likelihood of quiet quitting. These results emphasise that organisations must prioritise building inclusive and supportive cultures to retain employees. Aligning workplace practices with employee needs—such as providing growth opportunities, fostering trust, and maintaining transparency—can mitigate dissatisfaction and reduce the risk of quiet quitting. Conversely, neglecting cultural development may lead to disengagement and increased attrition, underscoring the importance of proactive cultural interventions in achieving organizational stability and success.

Discussion of the findings

Based on the hypotheses and the study's analysis, several deductions can be made regarding the phenomenon of quiet quitting and its connections with organizational culture, demographic characteristics, leadership style, and the influence of colleagues or team members.

The first hypothesis suggests that the quiet quitting phenomenon strongly correlates with organizational culture. The findings indicate that it is impossible to reject the null hypothesis, which claims that the likelihood of quiet quitting is not significantly influenced by clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, or competition cultures. However, the data do not support the alternative hypothesis, which asserts a substantial relationship between one of the four types of organizational culture and quiet quitting. The results do not substantiate the claim that a single type of organizational culture has a major and direct influence on the incidence of quiet quitting. Additional investigations and analyses may be essential to fully comprehend this relationship, especially since the characteristics of each organizational culture are numerous and may overlap across two or more types (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

The second hypothesis states that the quiet quitting phenomenon is strongly correlated with demographic factors such as age, gender, educational level, and position/role. The findings align with the alternative hypothesis, showing a significant association between demographic characteristics and the prevalence of quiet quitting. The results reveal a strong correlation between the likelihood of considering a quiet resignation and variables

such as age, educational level, and position/role. The findings suggest that demographic factors are indeed significant in the emergence of quiet quitting. Understanding these variables can help organisations identify vulnerable populations, implement tailored strategies to address their issues, and retain key personnel (Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

The third hypothesis suggests that the leadership style of the superior acts as a moderator of the impact of organizational culture on quiet quitting. The analysis supports the alternative hypothesis, showing a significant association between the leadership style of the superior and the decision to leave subtly. This indicates that the leadership style of superiors influences and modifies the effect of organizational culture on quiet quitting. The relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting is significantly influenced by the leadership style of the superior. Organisations should focus on leadership styles and managers' behaviour as these factors could greatly affect how employees feel about their work and whether they decide to leave amicably (Harter, 2022).

The fourth hypothesis proposes that the influence of colleagues or team members is a mediator between organizational culture and quiet quitting. The research findings show a modest association between the effect of colleagues or team members and quiet quitting, contrasting with the alternative theory. This indicates that the influence of colleagues or team members does not moderate the relationship between company culture and quiet quitting. Evidence does not support the hypothesis that the influence of colleagues or team members mediates the association between organizational culture and quiet quitting. This relationship is likely influenced more significantly by other variables or causes (Parker & Horowitz, 2022).

The fifth hypothesis states that the influence of organizational culture acts directly in the consideration of quiet quitting. The analysis supports the alternative hypothesis, which shows a significant association between organizational culture and the consideration of quiet quitting. This suggests that irrespective of other factors, organizational culture directly influences the decision to quit quietly. The data confirm the hypothesis that organizational culture significantly and directly influences the likelihood of quiet quitting. Leaders should focus on promoting a positive and supportive culture to diminish the likelihood of employees considering a quiet resignation (Hartnell et al., 2011).

These results underscore the need to consider various variables when addressing employee retention and satisfaction. Companies should strive to build an environment that fosters trust, open communication, and a sense of community. This involves encouraging inclusive behaviours, providing opportunities for professional growth, and ensuring employees feel valued and respected. Regarding demographic variables, organisations should recognise the unique challenges and requirements of various age groups, genders, and educational backgrounds. Focused retention strategies such as mentorship programs, flexible work schedules, and ongoing training and support could address the specific concerns of employees within these demographic categories (Miguel, 2015). The findings also highlight the importance of leadership in shaping work experience. Effective leaders should adopt a style that promotes employee empowerment, engagement, and a healthy organizational culture. This involves creating opportunities for employee participation in decision-making, as well as clear communication and constructive feedback (Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

While the influence of colleagues or team members was not a strong mediator, fostering a collaborative and supportive team environment should not be overlooked. Encouraging teamwork, building healthy bonds among team members, and promptly addressing conflicts or concerns can lead to a more satisfying work environment and reduce the likelihood of quiet quitting (Fiordelisi, 2014).

It should be acknowledged that this research is based on a specific dataset and analysis, and further research is needed to confirm and expand these findings. The research

encountered limitations, such as difficulty accessing a larger and more diverse sample due to time and resource constraints. The small sample size makes it challenging to generalise findings and draw broad conclusions about the studied phenomenon. Future studies could expand the sample size by including various businesses and industries. Combining quantitative and qualitative data through mixed-method approaches could provide a richer and more nuanced understanding. Exploring additional elements, such as job characteristics or psychological factors, could also deepen our understanding of quiet quitting (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). As workforce dynamics evolve over time, it is essential for organizations to periodically assess and monitor these elements. By remaining attuned to employees' needs and adapting strategies accordingly, organisations can create a work environment that not only retains talent but also fosters success and continuous progress.

Conclusions

This study explored the intricate relationship between organizational culture and the phenomenon of quiet quitting within Romanian companies. The findings highlight the complex nature of quiet quitting, demonstrating how demographic factors, leadership styles, and organizational culture collectively shape employee disengagement. Organizational culture emerged as a critical factor, with hierarchical cultures—characterised by rigid structures and limited autonomy—being strongly associated with higher levels of quiet quitting. Conversely, clan cultures, which emphasise collaboration and support, were found to reduce tendencies for disengagement. These results underscore the significant role of organizational culture in influencing employee engagement and retention. Demographic factors also played a substantial role in quiet quitting behaviours. Younger employees, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, exhibited a greater inclination toward disengagement, reflecting their heightened expectations for work-life balance and meaningful professional growth. Women were more likely to consider quitting quietly, suggesting the presence of gender-specific workplace challenges. These findings highlight the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs of employees across different demographic groups.

Leadership style emerged as a pivotal moderating factor in the relationship between organizational culture and quiet quitting. Supportive and empathetic leaders who foster open communication and fairness were found to mitigate the negative effects of rigid organizational structures. In contrast, autocratic leadership styles amplified dissatisfaction and disengagement. This emphasises the critical need for leadership development programs that focus on empathy, communication, and participative decision-making. Effective leadership can counterbalance adverse cultural attributes, creating a more positive work environment. Leadership also plays a central role in shaping the workplace experience. Leaders should strive to empower employees, encourage participation in decision-making, and provide clear communication and constructive feedback. These practices foster a culture of trust and collaboration, reducing the prevalence of disengagement and quiet quitting. While peer influence showed limited mediating effects, promoting teamwork and addressing interpersonal dynamics remain valuable strategies for enhancing workplace satisfaction.

The role of colleagues and team members as mediators in the culture-quiet quitting relationship was relatively weak. While interpersonal relationships contribute to workplace satisfaction, they appear secondary to systemic factors such as leadership and organizational culture. However, fostering a collaborative and supportive team environment remains essential for enhancing overall employee engagement. Quiet quitting was most directly influenced by organizational culture, with supportive environments fostering loyalty and engagement, while toxic or rigid cultures increased the likelihood of disengagement.

The findings emphasise organisations' need to prioritise developing inclusive, transparent, and growth-oriented cultures. Such environments not only align with

employee values and aspirations but also reduce the risk of disengagement. Companies must recognise the diverse needs of their workforce and implement tailored strategies to address these challenges. Initiatives like flexible working arrangements, mentorship programs, and professional development opportunities can effectively mitigate dissatisfaction, especially among younger employees and women.

This research provides a foundation for addressing quiet quitting but also highlights the need for further exploration. Expanding the sample size and including more diverse industries would enhance the generalizability of these findings. Additionally, examining psychological factors, job characteristics, and external influences, such as economic conditions, could provide deeper insights into the drivers of disengagement. Employing mixed-method approaches that integrate quantitative and qualitative data would enrich the understanding of statistical trends and individual experiences.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of quiet quitting reflects deeper challenges within organizational dynamics. Addressing these challenges requires a proactive approach to building supportive workplace environments, cultivating effective leadership, and aligning organizational values with employee expectations. By doing so, organisations can not only reduce disengagement but also foster a thriving, motivated workforce, ultimately driving sustainable success in an evolving workplace landscape.

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