

“SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?”

Exploring Quiet Quitting through a Scoping Review

Bernuzzi C.^a, Margheritti S.^b, Petrilli S.^c, Paganin G.^d

Contact: chiara.bernuzzi@unimi.it

^aDepartment of Economics, Management and Quantitative Methods, University of Milan; ^bDepartment of Psychology, University of Milano-Bicocca; ^cLaboratoire Parisien de Psychologie Sociale Université Paris Nanterre; ^dDepartment of Educational Science, University of Bologna

INTRODUCTION

Quiet quitting (QQ), increasingly discussed in the post-pandemic era, describes a **voluntary reduction in work effort without formally resigning**. Triggered by shifting worker priorities after COVID-19, QQ remains poorly defined in the literature, and its effects on individuals and organizations are still underexplored, underscoring the need for clearer conceptualization and further research.



AIMS

To explore the literature on QQ and identify research gaps by addressing two research questions:
(1) **How is QQ defined?**
(2) **What are the antecedents and outcomes of QQ?**

METHODS

A **scoping review** was conducted following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). Scopus, Web of Science, PsychInfo, and Econlit databases were searched in January 2024 (updated in September 2024) using “Quiet Quitting” related terms. Empirical studies, peer-reviewed, written in English, and involving workers aged 18+ were included. The analysis was framed using the *Theory Context Characteristic Method* (TCM) and *Nomological Network* frameworks.

RESULTS

A total of 22 articles were selected, all published between 2022 and 2024, indicating a recent academic interest in QQ.

= Key Findings from the TCM Framework =

Most used theory (9/22 studies): Social Exchange Theory (n=4), JD-R model (n=2)
Countries: Majority of studies from Asia (n=10) and Europe (n=9)

Characteristics: Nurses (n=4), Academics (n=2), Healthcare staff (n=2), IT workers (n=2)
Method: Quantitative (n=20), qualitative (n=1) or mixed (n=1)

= Defining Quiet Quitting =

The review found no universally accepted definition of QQ. However, several recurring themes emerged:

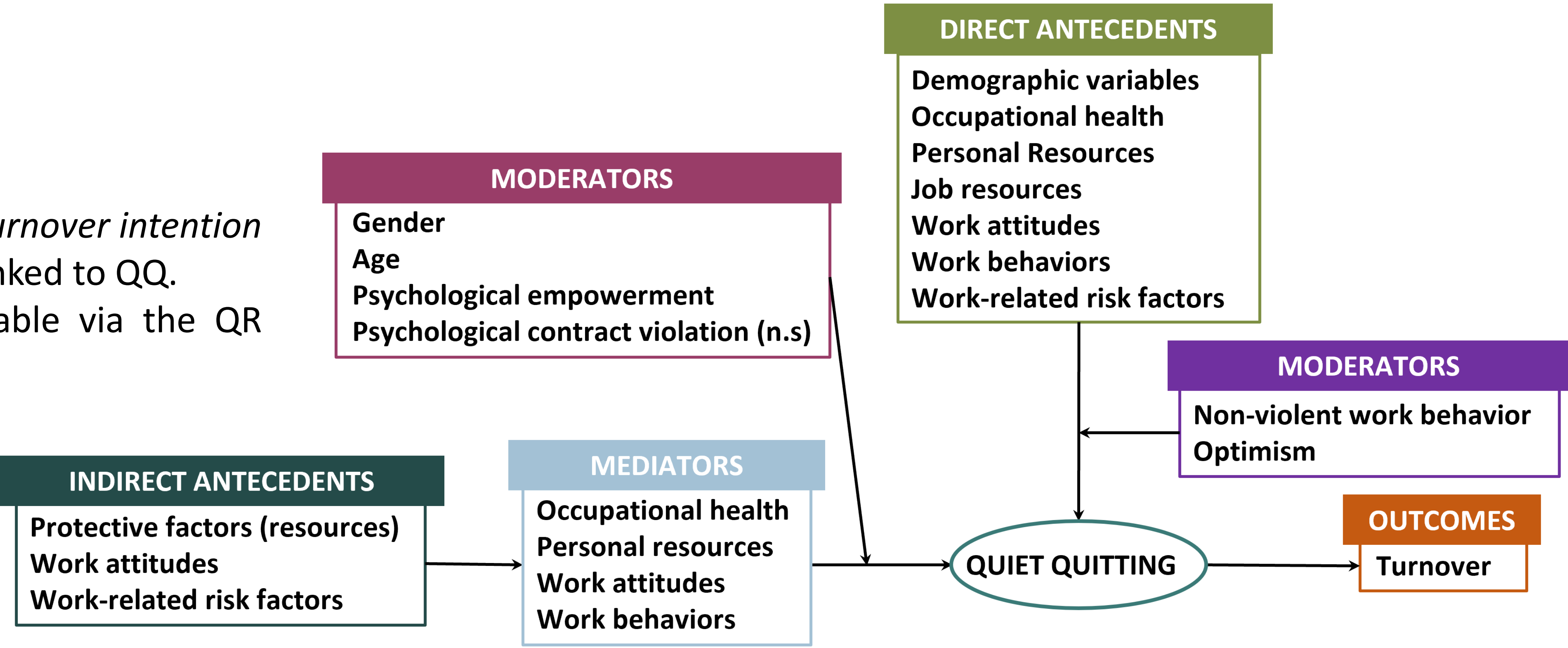
Minimal effort (n=20)	Non-resignation (n=10)	Work-life balance (n=5)	Disengagement (n=4)	Coping mechanism (n=2)
Bare-minimum effort for job retention (Karrani et al., 2024).	QQ does not involve leaving the job (Nimmi et al., 2024).	Desire to prioritize personal over professional life (Xueyun et al., 2023).	Emotional detachment from work (Prentice et al., 2024).	Used to manage work-related stress (Suhendar et al., 2023).

Our Integrated Definition

“Quiet quitting is a work-related tendency where employees do not formally resign but intentionally limit their job engagement to the minimum required duties. While quiet quitting is often linked to a desire to maintain work-life balance, it may also reflect dissatisfaction with work conditions and a resistance to overwork, or a coping mechanism in response to stress and burnout.”

= Nomological network =

The nomological network illustrates that *turnover intention* is, to date, the only outcome empirically linked to QQ. The full model and references are available via the QR code.



CONCLUSIONS

- This scoping review reveals the **fragmented nature of QQ research** and reframes QQ as both a potential problem and a coping strategy.
- Turnover intention emerged as a key outcome, reinforcing the idea that QQ may precede job withdrawal.
- Further research is needed to explore QQ's broader implications for both employees and organizations.
- To reduce QQ, organizations should address its root causes while promoting work-life balance.

Scan for full model & references

