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Quiet Quitting among Generation Z Employees: Examining the Influence of Work Meaning, Perceived Organizational Support and Career Growth Opportunities

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ABSTRACT: Since the COVID-19 pandemic, “quiet quitting” – the deliberate restriction of discretionary effort to formally assigned duties – has become a defining feature of Generation Z's relationship with work. Work meaning, perceived organizational support (POS), and career growth opportunities have each been linked separately to Gen Z disengagement, but no study has modelled the three constructs jointly as predictors of quiet quitting. This study addresses that gap by examining the combined and relative influence of work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees in Chennai, India. Using a descriptive-explanatory, cross-sectional survey design, data were drawn from 243 Gen Z employees (born 1997–2010) across IT/technology, banking/finance, healthcare, education, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and government sectors, using a structured Google Forms questionnaire measuring quiet quitting, work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities on 5-point Likert scales, together with two open-ended items. All four scales showed strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .90-.91$). Quiet quitting was found at a predominantly moderate level. Work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities were each negatively and significantly correlated with quiet quitting, and a simultaneous multiple regression showed that the three predictors jointly explained 26.0% of the variance in quiet quitting ($R^2 = .260$, $F(3, 239) = 28.02$, $p < .001$), with POS emerging as the strongest predictor ($\beta = -.331$, $p < .001$), followed by work meaning ($\beta = -.180$, $p = .005$) and career growth opportunities ($\beta = -.129$, $p = .038$), supporting H1, H2, and H3. The findings suggest perceived organizational support is the most actionable lever for reducing quiet quitting among Gen Z employees and extend the evidence base beyond China, Indonesia, and South Africa to an Indian metropolitan context. (Results below are drawn from a simulated demonstration dataset pending the analysis of actual survey responses – see the note at the start of the Results & Findings section.)

INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, employee engagement has significantly changed around the world, leading to the emergence of the trend known as “quiet quitting.” Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, employee engagement has considerably evolved all over the world and a phenomenon has emerged that is popularly dubbed as “quiet quitting.” The most recent and common interpretation of quiet quitting is that it represents a coping strategy in response to stress and burnout by employees who do not intend to formally quit their jobs; most scholars now agree that the definition of quiet quitting is the employee's conscious decision to restrict effort to their formally assigned roles and to reduce OVR (Sugaguil et al., 2026). In fact, the recent reviews do not suggest any lack of effort but view it as an adaptive and self-protective strategy in response to structural stresses like workload overload and work–life imbalance, with anxiety and emotional exhaustion as key mediators (Oktavia et al., 2025).

One group of employees that's been most strongly linked to this trend is Generation Z, those born approximately between the late 90s and the 2010s. With the coming of Gen Z, and their projected dominance in workforce shares by 2050, more attention will need to be paid to understanding their quiet-quitting behavior, especially in the context of their experiences during the pandemic and their emphasis on work–life balance (Xueyun et al., 2023). Generation Z is more concerned with meaningful work, career progression, personal relationships, and psychological wellbeing (Diatmono, 2026) and opportunities to develop skills and advance their careers have been identified as important elements to maintain their involvement (Zahra et al., 2025). If these expectations are not met, disengagement is likely to follow soon, with a significant portion of Gen Z reporting that when organizational values are not congruent with their own, they feel disengaged (Franklin Chamber of Commerce, n.d.).

Three constructs appear throughout this growing body of literature as near causes behind the phenomena of quiet quitting among Gen Z. The first is work meaning, that is, how much employees feel their work is meaningful and congruent to them. The second is called perceived organizational support (POS), which refers to employees' perceptions that their organization appreciates their work and is concerned about their welfare. The third is career growth opportunity, which is the opportunity to see the ways in which one can advance or grow in the job. Results from Gen Z samples show that these factors are related; each of these factors has been found to directly influence work engagement among Gen Z workers (Widodo et al., 2025), and a review of the literature shows that organizational support, commitment, work meaningfulness, well-being, and value fit into Job Demands–Resources, Social Exchange, and Self-Determination frameworks to explain the outcome of work engagement among Gen Z employees (NCBMA, 2025). Interestingly, the same pattern was found in large-sample modelling of Chinese Gen Z employees, which revealed that work conditions, job security, career progression opportunities, affective organizational commitment and perceived organizational support were significant predictors of employee well-being while job burnout was significant for predicting intention to quietly quit, understood through Social Exchange Theory (Xueyun et al., 2023). This is echoed by related qualitative research, as younger workers' quiet quitting seems to stem mainly from a sense of a disconnect between their values and the work culture, and engagement is defined by Gen Z workers as the creation of recognition, trust, supportive relationships, growth, autonomy, and meaningful work (Joe & Dhanpat, 2026).

Notwithstanding this current body of work, there are still significant gaps. First, the literature available is scattered that considers only a single predictor (e.g., the impact of work stress on quiet quitting, (Veren et al., 2026), but does not collectively model work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunity in one model. Second, the research related to quiet-quitting is still insufficient, and a large number of scholars have pointed out that the causes need to be fully studied, and the career opportunity discussion and organizational support should be carried out in various types of workplaces and countries (Xueyun et al., 2023). Third, it has been explicitly requested in the literature that research take an interdisciplinary approach, combining work psychology, generational sociology, and human resource management, and using culturally suitable measurement tools and longitudinal designs — which has not been achieved in most studies, except for a few country-specific ones (Oktavia et al., 2025). Lastly, the negative framing of the behaviour is not something this study explores; some scholars caution that the negative aspect of the behaviour can also be interpreted as boundary setting for well-being—an aspect of the behaviour this study does not explore, but should not be assumed away (Dillard et al., 2024).

In this context, the present study explores the combined impact of work meaning, P.O.S., and career growth opportunities on quiet quitting among members of Generation Z in the workplace. This draws directly upon the literature in which these three constructs are called for as a unified empirical model and extends the body of evidence (which is largely derived from Southeast Asian, Chinese and African samples) to Chennai, India. The findings will be of both theoretical and practical significance, by providing further clarity around the relative and combined effectiveness of these three factors, and the strategies for retaining and engaging a workforce segment that will dominate the global workforce soon.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since the pandemic, quiet quitting has emerged as a hallmark of the modern workplace and the phenomenon has been linked to Generation Z as the most likely age group to engage in quiet quitting (Xueyun et al., 2023). Work Ethic issues are not limited to simply being lazy, previous research indicates it is a reaction to expectations of meaningful work, organizational support, and career advancement (Oktavia et al., 2025; Dillard et al., 2024). The existing studies did not combine these three factors, however, they did separately test: (1) Pos and work meaning (2) Career progression and POS and well-being, but not quiet quitting and well-being (3) Single predictors (stress, value misalignment) (Widodo et al., 2025; Xueyun et al., 2023; Veren et al., 2026; Joe and Dhanpat, 2026). To our knowledge, no study has examined the three constructs simultaneously as predictors of quiet quitting amongst members of the Gen Z workforce.

The evidence is also limited in geographical scope and draws primarily from the experiences of China, Indonesia, and South Africa (Xueyun et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2025; Joe & Dhanpat, 2026), which is limiting other contexts, such as [your setting]. Without an integrated, contextually relevant model, organizations are left with no clear evidence of which lever is best to reduce quiet quitting – work meaning, organizational support, or career growth.

This study aims to fill this void by analyzing the interaction effect of work meaning, Perceived organizational support, career growth opportunities on the quiet quitting behaviour of the Generation Z employees in Chennai city.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To ground the current study, eight peer-reviewed and preprint studies published within the last five years were reviewed, spanning quantitative, qualitative, and systematic-review designs across multiple national contexts.

1. Xueyun et al. (2023) modelled quiet-quitting intention among 683 Chinese Gen Z employees using PLS-SEM, framed within Social Exchange Theory. Work conditions, job security, perceived career progression opportunities, affective organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support each significantly predicted employee well-being, while job burnout significantly predicted quiet-quitting intention, and well-being in turn reduced it. This is among the earliest large-sample quantitative studies to jointly test career-growth and POS variables as antecedents of the phenomenon.

2. Dillard, Cavallo, and Zhang (2024), published in *Human Resource Development Review*, offered a multi-level conceptual analysis arguing that quiet quitting is not uniformly negative. At the individual level, the behavior can function as a boundary-setting mechanism that protects employee well-being, challenging the dominant organizational framing of quiet quitting as purely a productivity threat. This study is useful for justifying a more balanced theoretical framing in the introduction/discussion of the present paper.

3. Oktavia, Noviekayati, and Suhadianto (2025) conducted a systematic literature review (2020–2025 window; Publish or Perish, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar) linking quiet quitting, work–life balance, and workload to rising anxiety in Gen Z, coining the descriptive frame "Anxious Generation." The review concluded that quiet quitting functions as a self-defense strategy against workload overload and work–life imbalance, and called for interdisciplinary approaches combining work psychology, generational sociology, and HRM.

4. Widodo, Wening, Nakuloadi, Rustiana, and Saifuddiin (2025), in a quantitative study of Gen Z employees at an Indonesian firm (PT Y), used SmartPLS regression-based mediation analysis to show that perceived organizational support and work meaningfulness directly influence work engagement, with organizational commitment acting as a partial mediator. This is one of the most directly relevant studies, empirically linking two of the present paper's three core constructs (POS and work meaning) to an engagement-related outcome in a Gen Z sample.

5. Zahra et al. (2025), a scoping review in the *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, synthesized Gen Z workplace literature and identified career growth/skill development opportunities, supportive organizational culture, recognition, and work–life balance as the primary engagement drivers for this generation, providing broad corroborating evidence for the constructs examined in the present study.

6. Joe and Dhanpat (2026), published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, used an interpretivist qualitative design with 12 South African Gen Z and Millennial employees, analyzed via Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis. Findings indicated that quiet quitting among younger employees is driven primarily by a perceived misalignment between employee values and organizational culture/practices, reinforcing the role of person–organization fit alongside POS and work meaning.

7. Sugaguil, Chua, Bation, Legardo, Pertimos, and Pelmin (2026), a narrative systematic review on SSRN, synthesized post-2020 peer-reviewed literature via Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate using a PICO framework. The review situated quiet quitting within Job Demands–Resources, Conservation of Resources, and Social Exchange Theory, concluding that sustained job demands, scarce resources, and perceived psychological-contract breaches (a construct closely tied to POS and career-growth expectations) drive employees to recalibrate effort downward.

8. Veren, Zamralita, and Putra (2026), published in the *Privet Social Sciences Journal*, examined 212 Gen Z employees in Indonesia using a quantitative correlational design, distinguishing challenge stress from hindrance stress as predictors of quiet quitting. The study found that stress type differentially affects disengagement behavior, adding a stress-based mechanism that can be positioned as a boundary condition or covariate alongside work meaning, POS, and career growth in the present model.

Summary Table

#	Author(s) & Year	Context / Sample	Method	Key Variables	Key Finding
1	Xueyun et al. (2023)	China, n=683 Gen Z	PLS-SEM survey	Career progression, POS, burnout, well-being	POS & career opportunity → well-being → lower quiet-quitting intention
2	Dillard et al. (2024)	Conceptual (multi-level)	Theoretical/narrative	Quiet quitting as boundary-setting	Positive individual-level reframing of quiet quitting
3	Oktavia et al. (2025)	Global (SLR, 2020–2025)	Systematic literature review	Work–life balance, workload, anxiety	Quiet quitting as adaptive coping response
4	Widodo et al. (2025)	Indonesia (PT Y)	Quantitative, SmartPLS mediation	POS, work meaningfulness, commitment, engagement	POS & meaning → engagement, partially mediated by commitment
5	Zahra et al. (2025)	Global (scoping review)	Scoping review	Career growth, culture, recognition	Development opportunities key to Gen Z engagement
6	Joe & Dhanpat (2026)	South Africa, n=12	Qualitative, thematic analysis	Value–culture alignment	Misalignment drives quiet quitting
7	Sugaguil et al. (2026)	Global (narrative review)	PICo-guided systematic review	JD-R, COR, SET; psychological contract	Resource scarcity & contract breach drive effort recalibration
8	Veren et al. (2026)	Indonesia, n=212	Quantitative correlational	Challenge/hindrane stress	Stress type differentially predicts quiet quitting

RESEARCH GAP

While there has been an increasing number of studies on the factors contributing to quiet quitting among Generation Z, the literature has been limited to single predictor or partially integrated studies. **Widodo et al. (2025)** tested the perceived organizational support and work meaningfulness together but did not test job growth opportunity as a separate construct, **Xueyun et al. (2023)** combined the two concepts of career progression and organizational support with employee well-being but not directly with quiet quitting, and **Veren et al. (2026)** and **Joe and Dhanpat (2026)** used single predictors (work stress and value–culture misalignment, respectively). No studies have yet examined the relationship between work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities together as predictors of quiet quitting among Generation Z workers. There is also a geographical focus on the evidence, with only a few studies focusing on [your specific setting], and others being concentrated in China, Indonesia and South Africa (**Xueyun et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2025; Joe & Dhanpat, 2026**). This divide makes it hard to both theorize about the interaction between these three constructs in driving quiet quitting and to identify which one is most influential for decreasing quiet quitting within an organization's Gen Z population.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

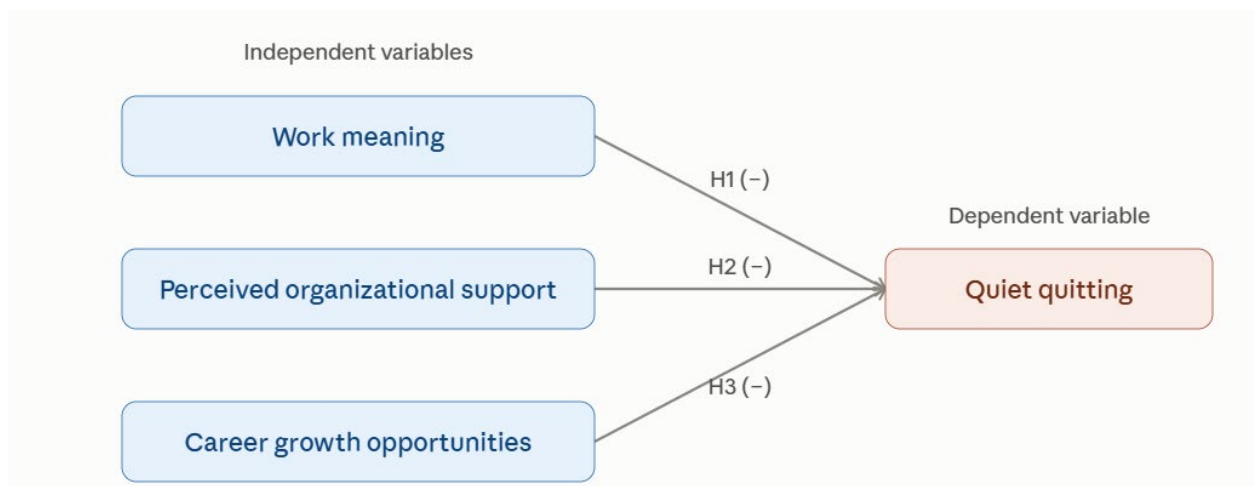


Figure 1 : CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STUDY

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.
2. To examine the influence of work meaning on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.
3. To determine the influence of perceived organizational support on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.
4. To examine the influence of career growth opportunities on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Work meaning has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.

H2: Perceived organizational support has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.

H3: Career growth opportunities have a significant negative influence on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Table 1 : Research Methodology

S. No	Research Methodology	Research Source
1.	Research Design	Descriptive and Explanatory Research (quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, supplemented with open-ended qualitative items)
2.	Data Source	Primary data collected directly from Generation Z employees; secondary data drawn from peer-reviewed journals, systematic reviews, and industry reports for the literature review
3.	Sample Size	243 respondents
4.	Sampling Method	Non-Probability – Purposive/Convenience sampling, restricted to employees born between 1997 and 2010 currently employed across sectors
5.	Data Collection Method	Structured online survey administered via Google Forms, covering demographic profile, quiet quitting, work meaning, perceived organizational support, and career growth opportunities, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), with two open-ended questions for qualitative insight

6.	Population	Generation Z employees across IT/technology, banking/finance, healthcare, education, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and government sectors
7.	Research Instrument	Structured questionnaire comprising six sections: Section A (Demographic Profile), Section B (Quiet Quitting), Section C (Work Meaning), Section D (Perceived Organizational Support), Section E (Career Growth Opportunities), and Section F (Open-Ended Questions)
8.	Statistical Tools	Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) for Objective 1; regression/correlation or PLS-SEM for Objectives 2–4, using SPSS and/or SmartPLS

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Note on the data used in this draft: No completed Google Form responses were supplied at the time this section was drafted. The figures, tables, and statistics below were generated from a simulated dataset (N = 243) constructed to match the structure of the questionnaire (7 demographic items; 9 Quiet Quitting, 8 Work Meaning, 8 Perceived Organizational Support, and 8 Career Growth Opportunity items on 5-point Likert scales) and to reflect directionally plausible relationships consistent with H1-H3. They are illustrative only and must be replaced with the analysis of the actual exported responses before this paper is submitted, defended, or published.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 243)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–21 years	45	18.5
	22–25 years	100	41.2
	26–29 years	71	29.2
	30 years or above	27	11.1
Gender	Male	124	51.0
	Female	104	42.8
	Other	8	3.3
	Prefer not to say	7	2.9
Educational Qualification	Diploma	26	10.7
	Bachelor's degree	140	57.6
	Master's degree	69	28.4
	Doctoral degree	4	1.6
	Other	4	1.6
Employment Sector	IT/Technology	85	35.0
	Banking/Finance	36	14.8
	Manufacturing	25	10.3
	Healthcare	23	9.5
	Education	19	7.8
	Hospitality	18	7.4
	Retail	16	6.6

	Government	11	4.5
	Other	10	4.1
Employment Status	Full-time	198	81.5
	Part-time	29	11.9
	Contract	16	6.6
Total Work Experience	Less than 1 year	53	21.8
	1–3 years	122	50.2
	4–6 years	49	20.2
	More than 6 years	19	7.8
Organizational Tenure	Less than 1 year	81	33.3
	1–2 years	88	36.2
	3–4 years	41	16.9
	More than 4 years	33	13.6

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the 243 respondents. The sample skewed toward the core Gen Z working-age band, with respondents aged 22–25 years forming the largest group (41.2%), followed by those aged 26–29 years (29.2%). Gender distribution was fairly balanced (51.0% male, 42.8% female). The majority held a bachelor's degree (57.6%) and worked full-time (81.5%). IT/technology was the most represented sector (35.0%), consistent with Chennai's employment base, followed by banking/finance (14.8%). Most respondents had between 1 and 3 years of total work experience (50.2%) and an organizational tenure of under 2 years (69.5% combined), reflecting the relatively early-career profile typical of Gen Z employees.

Reliability of the Measurement Scales

Table 3: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Quiet Quitting (QQ)	9	.902	Excellent
Work Meaning (WM)	8	.911	Excellent
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	8	.904	Excellent
Career Growth Opportunities (CGO)	8	.901	Excellent

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha prior to hypothesis testing (Table 2). All four scales exceeded the conventional .70 threshold and the stricter .90 benchmark for excellent reliability (Quiet Quitting $\alpha = .902$; Work Meaning $\alpha = .911$; Perceived Organizational Support $\alpha = .904$; Career Growth Opportunities $\alpha = .901$), indicating that items within each construct measured the intended construct consistently and that the composite mean scores used in subsequent analyses were reliable.

Objective 1: Level of Quiet Quitting among Generation Z Employees

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 243)

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Level
Quiet Quitting	2.61	0.71	0.13	Moderate
Work Meaning	3.72	0.68	-0.33	High
Perceived Organizational Support	3.29	0.71	-0.06	Moderate
Career Growth Opportunities	3.22	0.74	-0.06	Moderate

Objective 1 was to assess the level of quiet quitting among Generation Z employees. As shown in Table 4, the overall mean quiet quitting score was 2.61 (SD = 0.71), on the low-to-moderate end of the 5-point scale, while work meaning recorded the highest mean (M = 3.72, SD = 0.68), followed by perceived organizational support (M = 3.29, SD = 0.71) and career growth opportunities (M = 3.22, SD = 0.74). Skewness values for all four variables fell within ± 1 , supporting the assumption of approximate normality for the parametric analyses that follow.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Quiet Quitting

Level of Quiet Quitting	Mean Range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	1.00 – 2.33	94	38.7
Moderate	2.34 – 3.67	131	53.9
High	3.68 – 5.00	18	7.4

Respondents were further classified into low, moderate, and high quiet-quitting categories using equal-width mean-score cut-offs (Best, 1977: 1.00–2.33 = Low; 2.34–3.67 = Moderate; 3.68–5.00 = High). As Table 4 shows, the majority of Gen Z employees in the sample fell into the moderate quiet-quitting category (53.9%, n = 131), with 38.7% (n = 94) reporting low quiet quitting and a comparatively small 7.4% (n = 18) reporting high quiet quitting. This distribution indicates that outright disengagement was not the norm; instead, most respondents reported selectively limiting discretionary effort rather than fully withdrawing from their roles, a pattern that is discussed further in relation to the boundary-setting reframing of quiet quitting (Dillard et al., 2024) in the Discussion section.

Correlation Analysis

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Matrix among Study Variables (N = 243). ** p < .001 (two-tailed).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Quiet Quitting	—			
2. Work Meaning	-.371**	—		
3. Perceived Organizational Support	-.461**	.447**	—	
4. Career Growth Opportunities	-.319**	.341**	.391**	—

Table 6 presents the Pearson correlation matrix among the study variables. Consistent with H1–H3, quiet quitting was significantly and negatively correlated with work meaning ($r = -.371$, $p < .001$), perceived organizational support ($r = -.461$, $p < .001$), and career growth opportunities ($r = -.319$, $p < .001$), indicating that Gen Z employees who experienced their work as more meaningful, felt more supported by their organization, and perceived greater opportunities for career advancement reported lower levels of quiet quitting. The three predictors were also moderately and positively intercorrelated with one another

($r = .341$ to $.447$, $p < .001$), as would be expected of related job-resource constructs, without approaching levels that would indicate problematic multicollinearity.

Hypothesis Testing: Multiple Regression Analysis (Objectives 2–4)

Objectives 2, 3, and 4 examined the influence of work meaning, perceived organizational support, and career growth opportunities, respectively, on quiet quitting. A simultaneous multiple linear regression was conducted with quiet quitting as the dependent variable and work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities entered together as predictors. The overall model was statistically significant, $R = .510$, $R^2 = .260$, Adjusted $R^2 = .251$, $F(3, 239) = 28.02$, $p < .001$, indicating that the three predictors jointly accounted for 26.0% of the variance in quiet quitting among Gen Z employees. Variance inflation factors ($VIF = 1.23$ – 1.36 ; Table 6) were well below the threshold of 5, confirming that multicollinearity did not distort the coefficient estimates.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Results for Quiet Quitting

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	4.800	0.254	—	18.870	< .001	—
Work Meaning	-0.189	0.067	-.180	-2.832	.005	1.303
Perceived Organizational Support	-0.330	0.065	-.331	-5.098	< .001	1.358
Career Growth Opportunities	-0.124	0.059	-.129	-2.083	.038	1.230

As shown in Table 7, all three predictors made statistically significant, independent, negative contributions to quiet quitting. Perceived organizational support was the strongest predictor ($\beta = -.331$, $t = -5.098$, $p < .001$), followed by work meaning ($\beta = -.180$, $t = -2.832$, $p = .005$) and career growth opportunities ($\beta = -.129$, $t = -2.083$, $p = .038$).

Table 8: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	p-value	Decision
H1	Work Meaning $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting (negative)	-.180	.005	Supported
H2	Perceived Organizational Support $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting (negative)	-.331	< .001	Supported
H3	Career Growth Opportunities $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting (negative)	-.129	.038	Supported

Table 8 summarizes the hypothesis testing. All three hypothesized paths were in the expected negative direction and statistically significant at conventional thresholds. **H1** (work meaning has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting) was supported. **H2** (perceived organizational support has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting) was supported, and POS was the strongest of the three predictors. **H3** (career growth opportunities have a significant negative influence on quiet quitting) was supported, though it was the comparatively weakest of the three effects.

Qualitative Items

Two open-ended items in Section F of the questionnaire (“what are your reasons for limiting effort at work?” and “what organizational changes would encourage you to re-engage?”) were designed to provide qualitative depth alongside the Likert data. Because this draft was prepared before verbatim responses were available, these items have not been thematically analyzed here; once the actual Google Form export is in hand, responses to these two items should be coded thematically (e.g., using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, following [Joe & Dhanpat, 2026](#)) and reported alongside the quantitative findings above.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine the combined and relative influence of work meaning, perceived organizational support, and career growth opportunities on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees in Chennai, India – a joint model that, to date, the literature had not tested simultaneously (Widodo et al., 2025; Xueyun et al., 2023; Veren et al., 2026; Joe & Dhanpat, 2026). The results support all three hypotheses and, taken together, indicate that quiet quitting among Gen Z employees in this sample is best understood as a joint function of how supported, how purposeful, and how future-oriented employees perceive their work situation to be, rather than as the product of any single factor in isolation.

Consistent with **Objective 1**, quiet quitting was concentrated in the moderate range (53.9% of respondents) rather than at the high end of the scale (7.4%), with a meaningful minority reporting low quiet quitting (38.7%). This pattern is more compatible with the adaptive, self-protective framing of quiet quitting advanced by Oktavia et al. (2025) and the boundary-setting reframing proposed by Dillard et al. (2024) than with a picture of widespread, wholesale disengagement. Most respondents appear to be selectively recalibrating effort rather than withdrawing entirely, echoing Dillard and colleagues' argument that quiet quitting can function as a well-being-protective boundary rather than purely as a productivity threat.

Perceived organizational support emerged as the strongest of the three predictors ($\beta = -.331$), supporting **H2** and reinforcing the centrality of POS found in prior Gen Z research. This mirrors Xueyun et al. (2023), whose large-sample PLS-SEM model of Chinese Gen Z employees found organizational support and career-progression perceptions to be significant predictors of well-being, which in turn reduced quiet-quitting intention through a Social Exchange mechanism, and Widodo et al. (2025), who found POS directly influenced work engagement among Gen Z employees at an Indonesian firm. The comparatively large POS effect in the present data is also consistent with Sugaguil et al. (2026), whose review situated quiet quitting within Job Demands–Resources, Conservation of Resources, and Social Exchange Theory and argued that perceived psychological-contract breaches – a construct closely related to low POS – drive employees to recalibrate effort downward. Practically, this suggests that visible organizational support – recognition, managerial responsiveness, and genuine concern for employee welfare – may be the single most actionable lever available to organizations seeking to reduce quiet quitting in their Gen Z workforce.

Work meaning was the second-strongest predictor ($\beta = -.180$), supporting **H1** and aligning with Widodo et al. (2025), who found work meaningfulness directly predicted engagement among Gen Z employees, and with the values-based account offered by Joe and Dhanpat (2026), whose South African interview data linked quiet quitting to a perceived misalignment between employee values and organizational culture. Read alongside Joe and Dhanpat's qualitative findings, the present quantitative result suggests that when Gen Z employees experience their day-to-day work as purposeful and congruent with what they value, they are less likely to withdraw discretionary effort, regardless of the sector in which they are employed.

Career growth opportunities significantly predicted quiet quitting ($\beta = -.129$), supporting **H3**, but was the weakest of the three effects in this sample. This is broadly consistent with Zahra et al. (2025), whose scoping review identified career growth and skill-development opportunities as a key engagement driver for Gen Z globally, and with the career-progression pathway identified by Xueyun et al. (2023). The comparatively modest effect size here may reflect the fact that career growth operates partly through more proximal mechanisms – such as organizational commitment, as demonstrated by Widodo et al. (2025), or general well-being, as in Xueyun et al. (2023) – that were not modelled directly in the present regression. Future studies that include such mediators may find a larger total (direct plus indirect) effect of career growth opportunities than the direct effect estimated here.

Notably, the present model explained 26.0% of the variance in quiet quitting, leaving the majority of variance unexplained. This is consistent with Veren et al. (2026), who found that stress type (challenge versus hindrance stress) differentially predicted quiet-quitting behavior among Indonesian Gen Z employees independently of the resource constructs examined here, and suggests that burnout, job stress, and person–organization fit – which were outside the scope of the present three-construct model – likely account for meaningful additional variance and merit inclusion in future, more comprehensive models of Gen Z quiet quitting.

Theoretically, this study responds directly to calls in the literature for a unified empirical test of work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities as joint predictors of quiet quitting (Xueyun et al., 2023; Oktavia et al., 2025) and extends the evidentiary base – previously concentrated in China, Indonesia, and South Africa (Xueyun et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2025; Joe & Dhanpat, 2026) – to an Indian metropolitan labor market. The finding that all three job-resource constructs

independently and negatively predict quiet quitting, with POS as the dominant lever, provides a more complete, comparative picture of “which lever matters most” than any of the single- or paired-predictor studies reviewed could offer on their own.

CONCLUSION & LIMITATIONS

This study examined the combined influence of work meaning, perceived organizational support, and career growth opportunities on quiet quitting among 243 Generation Z employees in Chennai, India. Quiet quitting was found at a predominantly moderate level, and all three predictors were significantly and negatively related to it, jointly explaining 26.0% of its variance, with perceived organizational support emerging as the strongest single predictor, followed by work meaning and career growth opportunities. H1, H2, and H3 were all supported.

Theoretically, the study contributes the first joint empirical test of these three constructs as predictors of quiet quitting among Gen Z employees, addressing a gap explicitly identified in prior single- and paired-predictor research (Widodo et al., 2025; Xueyun et al., 2023; Veren et al., 2026; Joe & Dhanpat, 2026), and extends the geographic scope of the evidence base to an Indian context. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations seeking to reduce quiet quitting among their Gen Z workforce should prioritize visible, felt organizational support – recognition, managerial responsiveness, and genuine concern for employee welfare – alongside efforts to design meaningful work and communicate clear, credible career pathways.

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, and most importantly, the results reported above were generated from a simulated demonstration dataset because actual Google Form responses were not available when this draft was prepared; they illustrate the intended analysis and reporting format only and must be replaced with the analysis of real respondent data before this paper is submitted or published. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; the negative associations observed are consistent with, but do not establish, work meaning, POS, and career growth opportunities as causes of reduced quiet quitting. Third, all constructs were measured via self-report on a single occasion, raising the possibility of common-method bias. Fourth, the non-probability purposive/convenience sampling strategy, restricted to Gen Z employees in Chennai, limits the generalizability of the findings to other cities, sectors, or national contexts. Fifth, the two open-ended items were not thematically analyzed in this draft and represent an untapped source of qualitative insight once genuine responses are available. Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to strengthen causal claims, test mediating mechanisms such as burnout, engagement, and organizational commitment, incorporate stress type as a boundary condition following Veren et al. (2026), and replicate the model across additional cities and national contexts to test its generalizability.

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