



Mapping the Evolution of Quiet Quitting Research: A Five-Year Bibliometric and Topic Modeling Analysis

ABSTRACT

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Quiet quitting has emerged as a significant phenomenon in modern workplace dynamics, reflecting employee disengagement and dissatisfaction with organizational structures. This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of quiet quitting research over the past five years, utilizing data from the Scopus database and Orange Data Mining for analysis. The findings reveal key themes such as employee engagement, organizational culture, burnout, leadership, and workplace dynamics. The surge in publications related to remote and hybrid work during the period of the pandemic reflects a paradigm shift in academic literature towards the normalization of such work practices. Identifies five key thematic clusters, finding that Quiet Quitting and Organizational Structures and Employee Engagement and Workplace Analysis to be key themes. The insights underscore the need for a multidimensional approach, with implications for how organizations can foster more engaged workplaces by emphasizing supportive policies, kind and engaged leadership, and fairness in task allocation to mitigate the risk of quiet quitting. This study contributes to the literature through a new examination of research patterns to a qualitative research topic that utilized empirical methods drawing on a data-driven investigation highlighting pathways for which both researchers/academics and practitioners might consider exploring going forward.

Keywords: Employee Engagement; Organizational Culture; Quiet Quitting; Workplace Analysis

| Submitted July 04 2025 | Reviewed November 20 2025 | Revised February 04 2026 | Accepted February 15 2026
| DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18860/mec-j.v10i1.32318>

INTRODUCTION

Quiet quitting is emerging as an important area of research in the work environment that reflects a smooth shift in employee roles and organizational commitment. This phenomenon is characterized by employees who adhere well to their duties and avoid taking on additional responsibilities (Sitorus & Rachmawati, 2024). This signifies a further contribution of organizational culture and values, which often stem from issues such as burnout, dissatisfaction, or changing workplace expectations (Gabelaia & Bagociunaite,

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2024). Studies conducted by Johnson (2023) and Mahand & Caldwell (2023), highlight quiet quitting is not just a passive act of employees, but a response to organizational and societal pressures, including a lack of work- life balance and employee contributions that are not appreciated by the company.

The term quiet quitting has gained popularity especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it exacerbates workplace stress and prompts a reassessment of career priorities. Quiet quitting knowing makes significant contributions to the work and psychological empowerment, burnout that correlated with employee well-being (Lu et al., 2023). For example Mahand & Caldwell (2023) noted a spike in quiet quitting behavior as remote working intervenes with personal life and working life. This context makes quiet quitting an issue that must be addressed by organizations that want to maintain the productivity and well- being of their employees.

In addition to its practical implications, quiet quitting challenges previous paradigms of employee loyalty and engagement. It reflects a growing trend where employees then seek a balance between personal perceptions and the goals espoused by the organization. Kachhap & Singh (2024) suggested quiet quitting is often correlated with dissatisfaction with organizational rules and perceived unfairness in workload distribution. These findings suggest that addressing structural issues in the workplace can mitigate this phenomenon.

Generational shifts in workplace expectations also influence the rise of quiet quitting. Research by Pevec (2024) emphasizes that Millennials and Gen Z prioritize flexibility, mental health, and goal-oriented work over traditional indicators of career success. Particularly, Gen Z demonstrates a more pragmatic orientation toward work and is strongly attracted to flexible arrangements and balanced work–life integration (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). From an organizational standpoint, this transformation poses a substantial challenge in designing effective employee engagement strategies, thereby reinforcing the importance of adaptive leadership and transparent communication (Xueyun et al., 2023). Nevertheless, while prior studies predominantly examine quiet quitting through behavioral, psychological, and generational lenses, the literature remains fragmented and lacks a systematic synthesis of its intellectual landscape. More importantly, limited attention has been given to mapping the field's thematic progression and knowledge structure using bibliometric and topic modeling approaches. This absence of integrative analysis restricts a longitudinal understanding of how the discourse has evolved and where scholarly attention is converging, revealing a critical research gap that the present study aims to address.

Given the rapid emergence of quiet quitting as a contemporary organizational phenomenon, a systematic and large-scale synthesis of its scholarly development remains critically needed. Existing studies predominantly frame quiet quitting through conceptual reflections or micro-level empirical analyses, leaving the macro-level intellectual architecture of the field largely unexplored. Consequently, the absence of

computational knowledge mapping limits the discipline's ability to understand how research streams converge, evolve, and generate cumulative insights. This study moves beyond traditional descriptive reviews by employing a computational bibliometric approach to reconstruct the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of quiet quitting research. Such an approach is increasingly essential in rapidly expanding research domains, where manual synthesis struggles to capture hidden semantic relationships across large publication datasets.

The methodological novelty of this article lies in integrating Orange Data Mining with Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) modeling to enable transparent, reproducible, and scalable knowledge discovery. Orange is a machine learning and data mining suite designed for interactive data analysis and component-based assembly of analytical workflows, allowing researchers to construct clear and reusable data mining procedures (Taylor & Du Preez, 2023). Meanwhile, LDA has emerged as an important algorithm in big data analysis because it identifies groups of topics within textual corpora and assumes that each document represents a mixture of topics composed of related words (Hagg et al., 2022). Its growing popularity across research domains highlights its capability to uncover latent thematic structures that are often undetectable through conventional review techniques (Fuchs, 2023). The integration of bibliometric analysis with topic modeling is particularly valuable for detecting research trajectories, semantic patterns, and intellectual organization within large bodies of literature, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of scholarly dynamics and emerging knowledge clusters (Llinás et al., 2025).

Theoretically, this study advances the literature by transforming a fragmented and trend-driven discourse into a structured intellectual framework that clarifies the conceptual positioning of quiet quitting within broader debates on employee engagement, shifting work values, and organizational adaptation. By identifying underexplored themes and mapping their developmental pathways, this research supports cumulative theory building rather than isolated empirical interpretation. Ultimately, the study reframes quiet quitting not merely as a viral workplace narrative but as an evolving scholarly domain with identifiable theoretical trajectories.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A comparison of past research shows that the concept of quiet quitting is not uniformly understood across studies. Some early research, like that of Kachhap & Singh (2024) suggests that quiet quitting is mainly a psychological response to unmet basic employee needs. This perspective frames quiet quitting under Self-Determination Theory, highlighting the importance of internal factors, such as autonomy and competence, as key triggers for reduced work engagement.

On the other hand, other studies focus on different aspects. A study by Lee et al. (2023) emphasizes that quiet quitting is more affected by external conditions in the

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organization, particularly work culture and social climate. Their findings indicate that organizations with a collaborative culture can reduce signs of quiet quitting, while highly hierarchical or bureaucratic organizations tend to prompt passive withdrawal from employees. This shifts the analysis from individual psychological factors to structural dynamics within the organization.

At the same time, (Johnson, 2023) adds another layer of understanding by emphasizing the importance of leadership style and communication quality. Unlike the previous studies, Johnson found that the quality of the relationship between superiors and subordinates directly affects employees' choices to engage actively or just meet minimum job requirements. This shows that quiet quitting is influenced not only by psychological needs or organizational culture but also by everyday interpersonal interactions.

These various research findings make it clear that quiet quitting is a multidimensional phenomenon. Most studies agree that its causes are complex and interconnected, including psychological, structural, and relational factors. This comparison across studies deepens our understanding of quiet quitting as a phenomenon that requires an integrative approach, considering both individual and organizational dynamics.

Analysis of prior research outcomes highlights both similar and contrasting observations. These investigations underscore the vital effect of work-related exhaustion in triggering conduct described as 'quiet quitting', especially within the Generation Z workforce, who often encounter workplace pressure and perceive limited chances for professional progress. (Stankovic & Slavkovic, 2025) established that a noteworthy portion of Chinese individuals displayed a considerable connection between job-related exhaustion and the act of quietly quitting, while other research efforts have linked this behavior to social exchange theory, where the interplay between employees and their employing bodies shape drive and detachment. Nevertheless, variations based on gender and age have also surfaced, revealing that the mental and communal aspects of one's work environment exert differing influences on the phenomenon of quietly quitting across diverse population segments. The inverse link between quietly quitting and the psychological and cultural quality of one's job is more pronounced among women, whereas differing age brackets exhibit unique reaction tendencies.

METHODOLOGY

Data Understanding. The dataset for this study was drawn from Scopus journal data, focusing on publications from 2018 to 2024. The search criteria included the keyword "quiet quitting" in the title, abstract, and keywords, resulting in a dataset of 49 entries, including journal articles, conference papers, and reviews. Each entry contained detailed metadata, such as author name, document title, abstract, publication year, source title, document type, and citation metrics.

This dataset covers a five-year period and captures the temporal evolution of academic interest in the phenomenon of quiet quitting. Citation metrics, such as the number of “Cited by,” provide insight into the academic impact of each document. In addition, the dataset includes unique identifiers such as DOIs and direct links as document verification. Sparse fields, such as “Open Access” and “Art. No.,” have been excluded or supplemented with alternative methods during analysis.

To ensure its utility for bibliometric analysis, the dataset was carefully examined for completeness and relevance. Data cleaning involved removing duplicates, normalizing inconsistent entries, and structuring the dataset for analysis. This dataset forms the foundation for subsequent analyses, including trend identification, topic modeling, and keyword extraction, conducted using Orange Data.

Data Preparation. Data cleaning and normalization were performed to remove duplicates and irrelevant entries. Fields unrelated to the analysis, such as publisher details and unrelated keywords, were excluded. The dataset was then structured for analysis, including division into training and testing subsets for network modeling.

Modeling. Orange Data Mining, an open-source data analysis tool, was employed to conduct bibliometric analysis. The process began with descriptive analysis to identify publication volume, growth trends, and geographical distribution. Following this, network construction was performed to create co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence networks, which helped explore collaboration and thematic structures. Orange Data Mining is open-source software designed for visual data analysis. Its drag-and-drop interface allows users to build analysis workflows without writing code directly (Sonk & Tunger, 2024). The software integrates with Python libraries, such as scikit-learn, and includes modules for text processing, topic clustering, and network visualization. These features make Orange Data Mining a practical choice for exploring large amounts of bibliometric data.

The process began with descriptive analysis to identify publication volume, growth trends, and geographical distribution. Following this, network construction was performed to create co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence networks, which helped explore collaboration and thematic structures. Seven different supervised learning methods were applied to check the reliability of the thematic clustering resulting from the topic modeling process. These methods included logistic regression, decision trees, random forests, and support vector machines. Each model was trained to predict the topic cluster to which a document belongs based on patterns in the data (Romero et al., 2024). Several metrics were used to evaluate how well these models performed, such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. This process helps determine if the themes identified in the previous stage are distinct and consistently assigned, thus adding a layer of confidence to the overall analysis (Hezam et al., 2025).

Topic modeling (figure 3) using Latent Dirichlet empathy in building a sense of belonging allocation (LDA) sheds light on the among employees. Lastly, the fifth topic, thematic landscape of the dataset by identifying five key topics, each representing a different area of focus.

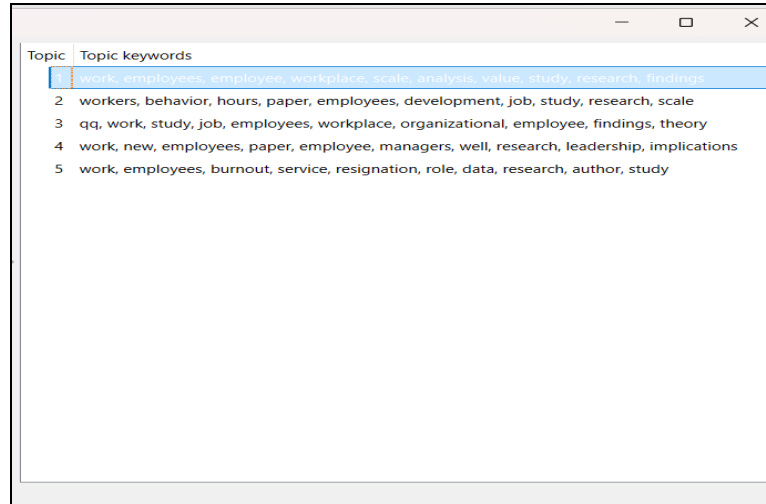


Figure 3. Topic Modelling
Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

A topic coherence score of 0.2663 indicates a moderate level of separation between themes generated through latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) modelling. In this model (figure 4), coherence values range from 0 to 1. Values between 0.2 and 0.3 — as observed in this study — indicate that the topics formed are distinct yet share some conceptual overlap. Additionally, the scatter diagram shows the distribution and volume of publications over the last five years. It shows an increase in publications since 2019, with a significant surge beginning in 2020 and peaking in 2023. This confirms that research on quiet quitting continues to increase year on year.

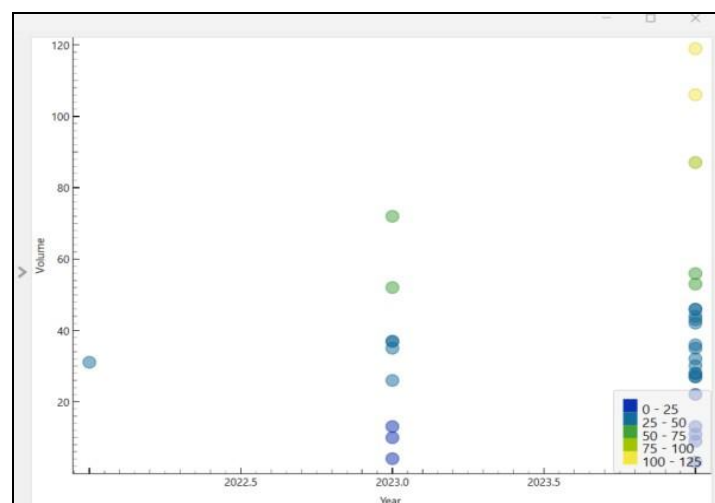


Figure 4. Scatter Plot
Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

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The box plot (Figure 5) analysis provides further insight into the distribution of topic relevance across the dataset, with Topic 3 (“Quiet Quitting and Organizational Structure”) emerging as the most prominent theme, as evidenced by its highest median probability. This suggests that the structural dimensions of quiet quitting are consistently discussed in the literature. The narrower interquartile range for Topic 3 suggests that research on this theme is more focused and less varied, reflecting concentrated efforts to explore and address organizational factors that contribute to low employee engagement.

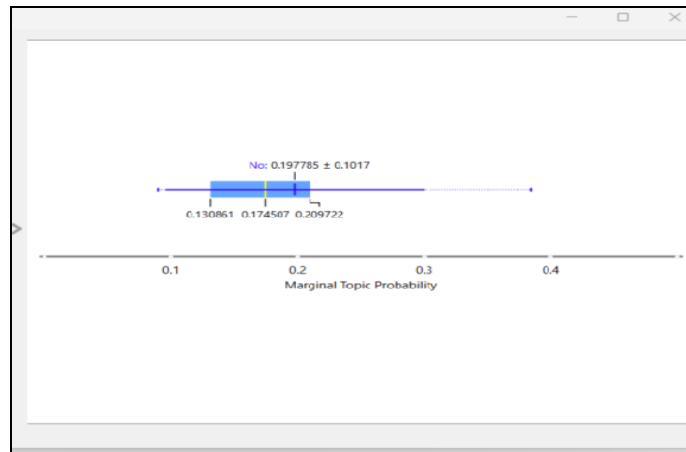


Figure 5. Box Plot

Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

The bar plot (figure 6) further reinforces the significance of Topic 3, which recorded the highest average probability among all topics. It was followed by Topic 1 (“Employee Engagement and Workplace Analytics”), which also received substantial attention, emphasizing the important role of engagement strategies in preventing quiet quitting. Overall, the findings highlight structural and operational factors as important areas for academic research and practical interventions. By prioritizing research and policy in these areas, organizations can better identify the complexities of modern workforce dynamics and build a culture of engagement and productivity.

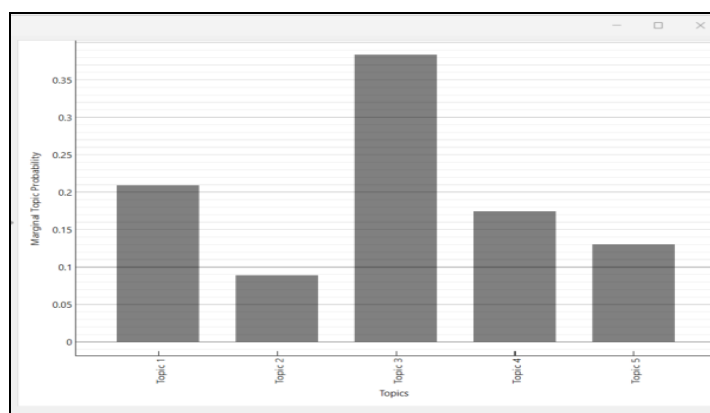


Figure 6. Bar Plot

Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

DISCUSSION

The word cloud visualization highlights the terms that appear most frequently in the dataset, providing an overview of the central themes in research on quiet quitting over the past five years. Words such as 'work', 'employees', 'studies', 'QQ' and 'workplace' appear as dominant terms, indicating that the literature mainly focuses on workplace dynamics, employee behavior and organizational structures. The presence of terms such as 'fatigue', 'findings', and 'implications' confirms the academic focus on the psychological impact of low engagement and the practical consequences organizations must address. This reveals the interdisciplinary nature of quiet quitting studies, connecting occupational psychology, organizational behavior, and human resource management.

In line with the findings from the visualization, the LDA topic modelling analysis identified five main clusters of topics that reflect various areas of research focus. The first topic, 'Employee Engagement and Workplace Analysis', explores the relationship between organizational policies, employee interactions and the creation of a productive and satisfying work environment. The second topic, 'Behavioral Aspects and Development', examines behavioral changes associated with quiet quitting, including the psychological and sociocultural factors that influence it. The third topic, 'Quiet Resignation and Organizational Structure', emphasizes the influence of organizational factors, such as hierarchical leadership styles, lack of recognition and unbalanced workloads, as triggers for disengagement. The fourth topic, 'Leadership and Managerial Role', emphasizes the important role of adaptive leadership styles and open communication in preventing quiet quitting. The fifth topic, 'Burnout and Resignation', emphasizes the long-term effects of low engagement, including increased fatigue, decreased well-being, and the risk of actual resignation.

With a coherence score of 0.2663, the topic model has a sufficiently stable structure to identify different themes in studies on quiet quitting, despite there being some overlap between topics. This suggests that the phenomenon is complex and multidimensional, meaning that the boundaries between themes are bound to be somewhat blurred. This finding aligns with the perspective of Stevens et al. (2012), who argue that coherence values in the moderate range can be utilized for reliable thematic exploration.

Furthermore, the upward trend in publications indicates growing academic interest in quiet quitting pre-dating the pandemic. However, the sharp increase in publications between 2020 and 2023 indicates that major shifts in work patterns, including the transition to remote and hybrid working, have been a powerful catalyst for scientific attention to this phenomenon. This aligns with the findings of Arzuaga et al. (2023), who state that changes to work structures and the blurring of the boundaries between personal and professional life during the pandemic created conditions that gave rise to, and reinforced, the symptoms of quiet quitting. The growing body of research suggests that there is a growing academic and organizational interest in understanding the

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impact of disengagement in the modern workplace, particularly in relation to challenges to employee well-being, changing work expectations and the need for organizations to adapt their human resource management strategies.

Overall, this analysis shows that quiet quitting is a complex phenomenon resulting from the interaction of individual psychological factors, work behavior, organizational dynamics and leadership. Quiet quitting is known as a self-defense strategy against being exploited at work (hustle culture). Poor manager-employee relations, exhaustion, and wage unhappiness are common causes of this phenomena, and the research on quiet quitting suggests that the current working world has to change its paradigm from infinite productivity to labor sustainability. Therefore, organizations need to develop a holistic approach that includes improving leadership quality, managing workloads, recognizing employee contributions and supporting mental health, in order to mitigate the ongoing emergence of quiet quitting. The government may be prompted by this phenomena to improve or examine laws pertaining to fair work standards and the right to disconnect.

CONCLUSIONS

The bibliometric analysis of research on quiet quitting over the past five years sheds light on a significant trend, and research dynamics within academia. Results from word cloud and topic modeling indicate that quiet quitting as a phenomenon is rooted in employee engagement, workplace culture, organizational structure, and behavioral dynamics. Themes such as “work,” “employee,” “burnout,” and “organizational structure” emphasize the intersection of psychological, operational, and structural factors that influence low engagement. Exploration of these offers a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of quiet quitting for organizations.

Samnani & Robertson (2025) defined quiet quitting as “opting out of the tasks beyond one’s assigned duties and or becoming less psychologically invested at work”. This definition is rather general and allows for a great deal of conceptual room to detect silent quitting through lower psychological investment or discretionary activities. Serenko (2024) highlights its cognitive aspects by characterizing it as “a mindset in which employees deliberately limit all work activities to those of a formal or informal job description... set up boundaries...in a manner that merely maintains their current employment status and prioritizes their well-being”. The bibliometric analysis examination of studies on quiet quitting highlights the possibility of continuously scanning publishing (and even patent) databases to find exciting new advancements in developing scientific and technological domains (Cauthen et al., 2022).

Analysis through scatter diagrams and bar charts reveals a significant increase in research activity, especially since 2020, triggered by social and cultural shifts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The growing number of publications reflects high academic interest in addressing the complexity of modern workplace challenges, including employee well-

being, leadership dynamics and work-life balance. Topics such as “Quiet Quitting and Organizational Structure” and “Employee Engagement and Workplace Analytics” emphasize the need for organizations to align workplace policies with evolving employee expectations. By focusing on adaptive leadership, open communication, and fair workload distribution, organizations can create an environment that supports sustained engagement and reduces quiet quitting.

It can thus be concluded that this study highlights the interdisciplinary nature of research on quiet quitting, linking psychology, organizational behavior, and human resource management. This research provides a framework for understanding the key factors and implications of this phenomenon, while identifying actionable insights to address low employee engagement.

Limitations and recommendations

This study offers a thorough summary of research trends from the past five years; however, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. The analysis is based only on publications indexed in one database, so there may be important studies from other sources that aren't included. Second, the bibliometric approach doesn't look closely at the quality of the content of articles; instead, it looks at publication patterns and how concepts are related to each other. Third, topic mapping uses titles, abstracts, and keywords, so different researchers may use different words or not use them at all, which can change how the mapping is done. This analysis also does not directly assess the causal relationship among the identified factors.

Future research could specifically focus on longitudinal studies to track how factors such as changes in organizational culture, implementation of adaptive leadership, and fair workload distribution policies affect levels of employee engagement and prevalence of quiet quitting over time. Additionally, exploration in diverse organizational contexts for example, comparing the non-profit sector with technology companies, or remote with on-site work environments will enrich our understanding of the nuances of quiet quitting and help develop more targeted and effective intervention strategies to improve workplace dynamics and overall employee satisfaction.

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