

Exploring the Impact of Quiet Quitting on Academic Standards, Student Satisfaction, and Research Output: A Human Resource Perspective Using Job Demand-Resource Theory

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Abstract

In human resource management, the term "quiet quitting" refers to employees who stop working beyond their job description, instead putting in just the minimum effort at work. The present study aimed to investigate the impact of quiet quitting, operationalized as discontinuation and as far slow disengagement of faculty, on three main outcomes: academic standards, satisfaction among students and research output. Research has shown that students thrive in supportive environments where they receive encouragement and individualized attention from faculty. When faculty members adopt a quiet quitting mentality, students may perceive a lack of commitment and support, leading to feelings of alienation and dissatisfaction. This disconnect can have serious implications for retention rates, as students are more likely to withdraw from their studies when they do not feel valued or motivated by their instructors. Nexus to the consequences, this study adopted Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory as a theoretical lens faculty members' Psychosocial demands of the job, and Capabilities job resources can indeed have sweeping influence on their engagement and therefore output in those areas. From this theoretical framework derived the research objectives and hypotheses that provide a systematic way of exploring the complex interactions among these factors. The literature reviews also showed that there is a large void within higher education concerning faculty engagement, specifically in relation to the quiet quitting phenomena. This study addressed the significant concern of decreasing faculty engagement and its effect on educational performance. This research might help educational leaders to develop strategies for increasing faculty motivation and commitment, by shedding light on these problems. In doing so, the proposed framework paves the way for further investigations. The quantitative study may have conducted in public sector universities then could establish the relationships as proposed in this study. These findings will further development a richer understanding of faculty engagement processes and their work with academic outcomes, providing institutions with guidance about how to help create a more engaged and motivated academic workforce.

Keywords: *Quiet Quitting, Academic Standards, Student Satisfaction, Research Output, Job Demand- Resource Theory*

Background of the study

Higher education is a complex and rapidly changing sector, subject to multiple forces which affect academic standards, student satisfaction and research output. Of even greater importance is the presence of these three key factors which are minimum indicators of institutional excellence and systemic educational quality. Faculty communities of course, this demonstrates why it is so critical to understand the dynamics at play if we are to promote not only an environment of academic excellence but a positive student experience. Reducing the academic standards; is a major issue in most universities globally. As faculty engagement declines, so frequently does the rigor and quality of instructional and academic advising talent. Regarding teaching, research has also shown that students perform less well when teachers fulfill their roles in a less involved way (Agarwal et al., 2024). The dedication of the teaching staff correlates with the quality of education provided and a loss in this dedication leads to lack of intellectual motivation/yield for students, which in turn affect their academic performance and prospects (Atalay & Dağıstan, 2024). Apart from the fall in educational values, lower student satisfaction is a huge problem for institutes. If students see their instructors as disengaged, they will feel undervalued and have no motivation. Many studies have documented the centrality of faculty-student relationships to student satisfaction and retention (Harris, 2025). Lack of faculty engagement can make a student feel disconnected which results leads to lower satisfaction with their educational experience. This of course can lead to low student retention for students who feel they are not supported, and such difficult situations may result in students dropping out from preparations (Anand, Doll, & Ray, 2024). Also important is the effect on productivity. Academic research is vital to the promotion of knowledge and innovation in institutions. Lack of motivation, on the other hand, would not only result in the reduced research productivity but also publication and collaboration (Galanis et al., 2023). In short, faculty output is an important indicator of faculty engagement; when faculty are not engaged in research they may avoid pursuing opportunities or being active contributors to their, usually scholarly area. Reduced activity in research can ultimately affect the standing of a university as well as its competitiveness for grants and resources (Harris, 2025). In these rankings, institutions that do now work hard to cultivate a strong research culture will suffer and be at risk of losing competitiveness. Therefore, the link between drop in academic standards, reduced student satisfaction and research output is a nexus to the faculty disengagements. When faculty become less engaged, the educational experience of students declines with negative consequences for both student and institution alike. The problem of the quiet exit when employees quietly “quit” remains extensive, even in a recently published study (Bennett et al., 2025). This is closely related to lower academic integrity, lower student satisfaction levels and poorer research that collectively affect the quality of higher education institutions. With less faculty engagement, the educational quality suffers and a negative student and institution impact outcome results. Quiet quitting, such as employees merely fulfilling the minimum requirements of their job, has been an emerging issue within several industries including higher education (Albrecht et al., 2022). Commonly born from burnout, unacknowledged work, or falling out of “hustle culture”, this kind of behavior presents challenging issues for the education industry as a whole — especially in countries like Pakistan where they already have struggles to face regarding their educational system (Khan & Khan, 2023). This background study is included to identify the notion of quiet quitting within academic stars in public universities of Pakistan (faculty) and its anticipated effects on academic standards, student satisfaction, and research output. Quiet quitting, where employees perform only the minimum required by their job description, is being noticed in a range of fields including higher education (Albrecht et al., 2022). However, it is highly disruptive for the functionality of academic institutions and greatly challenges of a phenomenon that can be debilitating in countries like Pakistan which are struggling with an already sluggish education system (Khan & Khan, 2023).

This was quickly branded “quiet quitting” on social media, employees who refuse to do any more than their job description (Gonzalez 2022). Some argue it is essentially creating barriers to the work, others see it as a method of disengaging which in turn has an effect on overall organizational performance (Khan, 2023). Among academics, quiet quitting could present as a decision for professors to scale back academic research, making themselves scarce for students, and adhering only to specs in their contracts with little to go above and beyond. In contrast to the above, however, these are also engaged faculty who love to teach, research and also want their organization to prosper (Sharma & Sharma, 2022). There are multiple reasons why this is the ascendant form of faculty quiet quitting. Such exhaustion is largely wrought from heavy workloads, administrative burdens and pressure to publish articles and project work that are asserted as the leading causes of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In addition, the absence of recognition, generally poor or very low prospects for career progression and the perception that work–life balance was circumstances far worse only conspire to deepen a severe problem (Smith et al., 2021). In addition, educational systems handicapped by their own systemic issues (e.g., overly rigorous syllabi, limited resources, little autonomy) can quash creativity and motivation and drive towards disengagement (Khan & Khan, 2023). Another potential impact of how coworkers perceive quiet quitters is its effect on individual behavior, which can create a reinforcement loop. (Katz et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

Such "quiet quitting" has become a major issue in the higher education arena with wide-ranging challenges to academic standards, student satisfaction, and research output from the disappearance of staff who are no longer around. This occurs when instructors begin to perform only their assigned duties and to disengage from the rest of the educational process which leads us to a very significant debate: what should college institutions look like, in the future! Those quiet departures suggest a more widespread problem of discouragement among faculty, and point to problems that need immediate addressing. The most obvious problem with quiet quitting is the way in which it brings down academic quality. Faculty contribution is very essential to sustain the quality of education, but if teachers deny from their duties the teaching and academic advising will lose its strength and effectiveness (Agarwal, Kaur & Budhwar, 2024). The consequences of this disengagement are significant, because students look to their professors for direction, encouragement, and intellectual challenge. Quiet quitting by faculty can lead to less individualized feedback and advisement, resulting in a decreased level of student learning outcomes and readiness for future obstacles. This is parallel with diminishing academic level and essential of student resentment. Evidence-based research has demonstrated that students are able to achieve and sustain high levels of academic success when they receive timely support on a one-on-one basis from dedicated faculty (Anand, Doll, & Ray, 2024). If a similarly disengaged, quietly quitting attitude is adopted by some faculty members, students may feel disappointed and loose from the sails of support in their academic journey. Where student and instructor are not in communicative forums that can gravely affect the retention rate; students become vulnerable to drop-out from courses when they see no human touch of respect, lenience, and motivation around them or coming forth from their instructors (Harris, 2025). The connection of the two, with faculty engagement being a predictor of student satisfaction in part illuminates just how critical it is to not only have educators that are connected to students but also valued among them. In addition, quiet subversion presents a unique dilemma for job productivity at colleges. Thus, disengaged faculty are less likely to pursue research and scholarship in an innovative manner or to distill knowledge from the research that they do engage in (Galanis et al., 2023). These drops in research activity adversely impact not just the career of an individual faculty member but also contribute to the general esteem and

competitiveness of the institution. At a time when institutions are otherwise desperate to appear productive as sign posts of their very existence, quiet quitting inhibits academic contributions so that those institutions who quietly quit themselves lose out on critical research dollars and resources. Faculty attrition can be terrible at public universities in Pakistan, which are already challenged by underfunding, politicized hiring and promotion policies (Hussain 2021), and if the quitting is quiet and occurs behind closed doors, the consequences can be very far reaching. Disengagement among faculty can result in diminished instruction, research and academic advising. Unsurprisingly, only by engaging with staff can student satisfaction be achieved. Faculty who are less available, less supportive, and less enthusiastic may cause students to feel undervalued and disconnected from their educational experience (Smith et al., 2021). This could cause reduced student retention rates and subsequently negative effects to student satisfaction, as well as leave a lesser chance of students recommending the university to others. Research suggests that positive, supportive faculty-student interactions can help create a more engaging college experience and enhance student learning and development (Gonzalez, 2022). Not only does an absence of faculty participation in research reduce output and innovation. Faculty that are not engaged will be less likely to engage in research projects, less likely to publish, and work with others on a project. It will also restrict a university from securing funding, provide the least contribution to the global knowledge and research reputation (Hussain, 2021).

Objectives of the Study

This paper examines the effects of quiet quitting in higher education, looking at three main areas: academic standards; student experience; and research productivity.

1. To explore how faculty disengagement (defined as quiet quits) in the areas of teaching, curriculum development, and academic advising impacts on educational quality.
2. To examine what the consequences of a drop-off engagement rates on the wider didactic experience and preparation of pupils for higher-level education.
3. To provide further insight into the relationship between faculty engagement and student satisfaction.
4. To better understand the impact of quiet quitting on higher education faculty research productivity and collaboration.
5. To develop a model for further investigation.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is relevant in the sense that it can visually present the quiet quitter problem at higher education will become a burning issue and prompts utilizing faculty engagement for saving academic institutions.

Academic Quality: This study provides insight on to how disengagement among faculty members can contribute to a lowering of the overall level of teaching and its associated student learning outcomes. Recognizing these issues should be of interest to educational leaders wishing to assert and sustain strict standards of academic excellence and quality control.

Student Retention and Satisfaction: The results of this study will help shed more light on the connection between faculty engagement and student satisfaction. With insight into the impact of disengaged faculty on student experiences, the report can help institutions pinpoint effective strategies to create an environment that is more conducive to learning, thereby ultimately increasing student retention and success.

Contributions to Research Productivity: Beyond the implications for institutional reputation, this investigation of academic quiet quitting is particularly important because research output has a strong bearing on individual advancement. This study calls attention to the fact that faculty disengagement is not confined only to its academic teaching component, and underscores that vibrant innovation and scholarly contributions rest on engaged faculty who are participants in their institutions rather than inmates.

Policy and Practice Applications: The findings from this research inform policy and best practices within their academic institutions. Understanding the contributing factors behind quiet quitting could help educational leaders to put in place interventions that will ultimately lead to greater faculty engagement, well-being and culture change for staff at university departments.

Contribution to the Literature: This study adds to the literature examining workplace engagement and employee behavior in higher education. Recognizing quiet quitting in the research gives us a deeper understanding of current day struggles faced by academic orgs and offers valuable takeaways to both scholars and practitioners.

Review of Literature

The practice of "quit quieting" (Stephens, 2010) has come about as a central theme around employee engagement, namely within higher education. We explore how quiet quitting might affect three key factors in higher education: erosion of academic standards, lower levels of student satisfaction and reductions in research. Taken together, all of these elements show the trend towards quiet quitting in academic institutions and hone attention to a sea change in faculty readiness and behavior. For example, Klotz and Bolino (2022) broadly conceptualize quiet quitting as employees performing the minimum of their formal job duties but not engaging in extra-role behaviors. The trend took hold in part because of new meaning younger workers are setting for their priorities post-pandemic and under the evolving confluence of workplace dynamics (Pearce, 2022). The term became popular in journalistic discourse as well as on social media, where the common thread in much of its use related to work-life balance and self-preservation (Kidhail 2022). Thus, quiet quitting has been understood both as a reaction to burnout and a mechanism for setting firm boundaries at work. These effects of quiet quitting go far beyond the actions of any one person, shifting our focus to the overall operation of academic institutions. There are some evidence that disengaged faculty can lead to decreased quality in the educational opportunities, however we should follow up with these before claiming its detriment to both the students and the reputation of higher education. In this review we shall investigate how these themes relate to each other using the prism of a lowering of academic standards, lower levels of student satisfaction and the effect on research productivity.

Decline in Academic Standards

Academic standards and faculty are closely related. Agarwal, Kaur and Budhwar (2024) opine that committed faculty are more likely to deliver quality instruction, contribute actively in curriculum design and development of the programs as well as counselling and mentoring students. But quiet quitting can result in faculty stepping back from these tasks, causing a significant reduction in academic rigor. Quiet quitting is seen as symptomatic of a broader disengagement from the educational mission (Atalay and Dağıstan, 2024), with faculty members no longer necessarily even caring to do activities that make for better learning processes. There is evidence that instructional quality is a critical predictor of student success. These behaviours include providing poorer feedback, creating less helping learning climates (Anand, Doll, & Ray, 2024) and being neglectful of being academic advisors. This decreased engagement can severely stress students' sense of

support, commitment and connection with their academics. Furthermore, the right sort of psychological conditions conducive of academic excellence can simply not be met when academics opt out. Writing in 2025, Harris makes the point that faculty buy-in is also crucial to ensuring academic excellence. Faculty members who feel unappreciated get less excited about their work, which robs quality from one of challenging universities through a downward spiral. This is especially problematic in an environment where academic institutions are being required more and more to justify their worth by student outcomes or rankings.

Decreased Student Satisfaction

The effects of quiet defection are many and significant for outcomes such as student satisfaction. If faculty members pull back to, their roles students tend to report more a lack of support and motivation, this in turn has negative impacts on educational experiences (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Cycling through faculty too frequently results in cynical feelings of disenfranchisement, exclusion & low commitment as part of one's academic journey by the students (Galanis et al., 2023). Echoing this point, Klotz and Bolino (2022) note that faculty engagement plays a critical role in student satisfaction. If the setting is a positive one, it is because its faculty are engaged, mentor and encourage their students, and give personal feedback. That students are more or less left alone in their academic struggles is what results when faculty have little love for good teaching just as when doing the bare minimum is all that really matters, they leave it at that. This can also result in lower retention rates and morale from students, as more learners will disassociate from their educational experience (Harris, 2025). Seventy percent coming out of college in 2020 planned to land a six-figure job in Silicon Valley; it did not take long for them to realize that acting your wage was a bad idea, limiting their own definitions of what success looks like and student satisfaction. So on one end, through our disengagement faculty members satisfy their job descriptions and on the other side students bear the consequences of relationships that have morphed into transactions. The correlation between faculty enthusiasm and student satisfaction highlights a need for dedicated and enthusiastic teaching force (Agarwal et al., 2024).

Impact on Research Output

Quiet quitting also has a huge effect on research input into academic institutions. Harris (2025) highlights that faculty disengagement from academic work results in fewer new research initiatives, lesser inter-collegial work and contributions to academic thought. Such a decline not only hurts individual faculty but also harms the reputation and competitive edge of an institution in the academic marketplace (Anand et al., 2024). These consequences of disengagement become even more worrisome for scholarly productivity in an age where such productivity is a crucial metric of institutional success. Agarwal, Kaur, & Budhwar (2024) argue that lack of enthusiasm in research at academic institutions blunts innovation and limits the contribution possibilities to be made by them. Their quiet quitting can result in reduced publications, presentations, and collaborative work conducted by the faculty, ultimately decreasing the institution's reputation in the academic world (Bolino et al., 2004). Studies also show that how engaged faculty are is linked to research funding and resources. If faculty are less committed they can have serious problems with respect to provision of grants and for coupling of their research studies (Atalay & Dağıstan, 2024). This triggers an adverse cycle where decreased research output, in turn, results in still lower faculty involvement and hence institutional investing into research.

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory as Underpinning

The job demands–resources (JD-R) model of Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001) is a key explanatory framework for understanding determinants of the well-being and work performance of employees.

Key Components of JD-R

Psychosocial demands of the job: These refer to the physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of work that require sustained physical and/or psychological (the interplay between body and mind) effort or skills and are associated with certain physiological or psychological costs. 26 Exhaustion, burnout and health problems are negative consequences of job demands. This includes excessive workloads, time pressure, and long hours of work and emotional demands as well as role ambiguity. Capable job resources: they are the physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that help to achieve work goals, reduce job demands and associated physiological and psychological costs and stimulate learning, development and personal growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Resources on the job could also serve as a buffer against the negative effects of excessive demands and support motivation, engagement and commitment to the organization. These include autonomy, social support, performance feedback and opportunities for development.

Theory in Practice:

With respect to this study, the JD-R Theory will certainly serve as a very reliable tool in assessing the detrimental effects of quiet quitting on faculty, academic standards, student satisfaction and research output in Pakistani public universities.

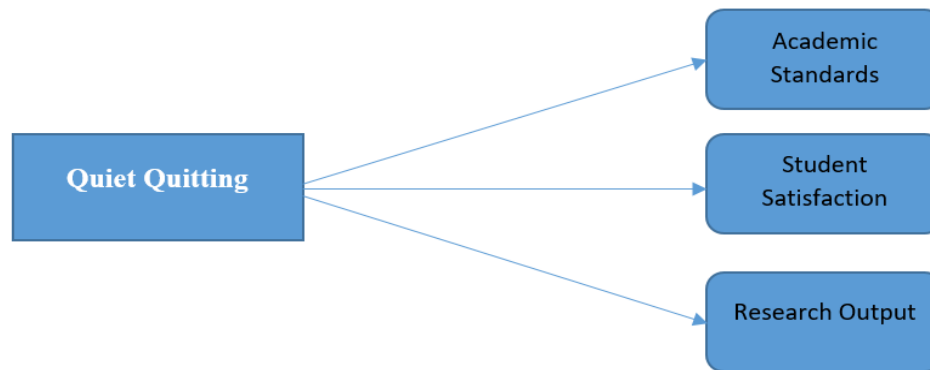
Quiet Quitting as Imbalance: Quiet quitting reflected at the extreme end of workplace imbalance, with faculty members who only do what absolutely MUST be done literally pick up paychecks for “working” but doing nothing else. Excessive job demands such as high workloads, increasing pressure to publish or a lack of recognition are associated with increased levels of mental health issues. If these demands are not met, such as supportive leadership and a strong work-life balance it could lead to faculty disengagement, which exposes the university to reduced effort from their end.

Failure of Academic Standards: A quiet quit by a faculty member results in decreased engagement translates to lower quality education. According to the health impairment process, high job demands without sufficient resources should result in exhaustion and burnout. They may not plan lessons as carefully, make themselves less available to students or be hesitant to try new methods of teaching. This, in turn, might result in academic standards falling and the quality of education offered by the institution suffering.

Impact on Student Satisfaction: The JD-R theory is that the motivation process identifies role resources to promote student engagement and motivation. Student satisfaction could be impacted when faculty members quietly quit, leading faculty members to not feel engaged. Less motivated and supportive faculty can offer poorer feedback and may seem less interested in the students' academic advancement this will result in a decrease in student satisfaction and more importantly, create a poor image of the university.

Impact on Research Output: Often research productivity is a function of the motivation and engagement of faculty. Silent quitting can lead to a decrease in both the volume and quality of research production. Faculty who are stretched, burnt-out, and scrambling to keep up with the scientific opportunities in their field may be less motivated to tackle a new research project, mentor students in these projects, or seek this funding. This can potentially have long-lasting implications on the university's brand and ability to truly make an imprint on academia.

Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses Development

H1: Quiet quitting declines academic standards in terms of lowering teacher quality among faculty working in Pakistani public universities.

H2: Quiet quitting reduces student satisfaction, leading respectively to a diminished student experience and consequently reduced engagement.

H3: Quiet quitting reduces faculty research output, as measured by extracted publications and collaborations.

Conclusion of the study

This study proposed a novel concept and presentable model that effects of quiet quitting (independent variable) on three important dependent variables, namely academic standards, student satisfaction and research output. The research substantiated that by applying Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory as a theoretical lens faculty members' Psychosocial demands of the job, and capabilities of job resources that can indeed have extensive influence on their engagement and therefore output in those areas. This framework facilitated the development of specific aims and hypotheses around these variables. The study highlighted the urgent requirement for institutions to acknowledge how attrition factors into measurements of disengagement, which can compromise academic standards and the quality of the student experience as well as their reputation. The statement of the problem identified declining faculty participation as a pressing concern and highlighted its impact on educational aptitudes. This paper not only clarifies these difficulties, providing further investigation of related factors but also provides policy recommendations for higher education administrators vested in motivating and retaining faculty. From a forward looking perspective, it lays the foundation for further research. Explicit testing of relationships proposed as part of this conceptual framework could take a form of quantitative study within public sector universities. An examination of these questions would advance knowledge about the relationships between faculty participation and academic effects, which in flip might inform institutional efforts to promote greater motive and engagement within the instructional team of workers.

Implications of the Study

Implications for Job Design and Management Practices: Information from this study could directly influence the design of faculty positions and management practices in higher education. Colleges and universities that understand motivational reasons for quiet quitting can thus create positions that are more likely to engage, motivate and satisfy faculty members proactively. This involves setting solid expectations, providing space for growth and development, and creating a safe work environment.

Improved Academic Rigor and Student Success: Understanding how at-risk faculty influence quality and effectiveness of educational programs helps in the creation of targeted solutions for greater impact. By enhancing teaching quality, promoting student support and improving educational experiences for students these strategies work to improve student retention rates and increased academic success.

Creating a Culture of Positivity at Work: The study provides advice for improving faculty engagement, urging schools to focus on the underlying causes and build that positive work culture. Interventions that support faculty well-being coupled with recognizing their contribution & promoting work-life balance can result in a more engaged and committed faculty.

Future Directions

Empirical Testing: Future research, especially by PhD scholars, should conduct empirical testing of the JD-R model to investigate how quiet quitting influences academic standards, student satisfaction and research output across different educational contexts.

Scale Development: The development of a more comprehensive scale that captures all constructs in this study such as quiet quitting, academic standards, student satisfaction and research output. These are crucial for future studies to have stronger study findings.

Mediation and Moderation Mechanisms: Subsequent research should examine the mediation, and moderation mechanisms to understand under what conditions this moderated effect of quiet quitting on their consequences occurs. For example, one might explore whether various organizational support or leadership styles can moderate the relationship between low intensity quitting and academic standards as well as student satisfaction.

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