

Quiet Quitting in Higher Education: Examining Silent Disengagement Among Faculty Members

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Abstract: The phenomenon of “quiet quitting,” characterized by employees limiting their efforts to formally prescribed responsibilities while disengaging from discretionary contributions, has gained increasing attention across sectors, including higher education. Within academic institutions, faculty members play a critical role not only in teaching but also in research, mentoring, institutional development, and knowledge dissemination. However, rising workloads, role ambiguity, administrative pressures, and declining intrinsic motivation have contributed to a subtle yet significant form of disengagement among educators. Furthermore, the research investigates the impact of silent disengagement on institutional effectiveness, student outcomes and academic culture. The paper also highlights how quiet quitting may remain largely unnoticed due to its passive nature, making it a challenging issue for administrators to identify and address. Using a mixed-method approach, incorporating surveys and qualitative insights from faculty across various higher education institutions, the study provides empirical evidence on the prevalence and patterns of quiet quitting. It also examines demographic and contextual factors influencing disengagement, such as age, tenure status, discipline and institutional type. The findings suggest that younger faculty and those in precarious employment conditions may be more prone to silent disengagement due to uncertainty and lack of institutional support. In conclusion, quiet quitting in higher education represents a critical challenge that requires proactive attention from institutional leaders. By understanding the factors driving silent disengagement and implementing targeted strategies, higher education institutions can re-engage faculty, enhance job satisfaction, and ensure sustainable academic excellence. This study contributes to the emerging discourse on employee disengagement by contextualizing quiet quitting within the academic environment and offering practical insights for policy and practice.

Keywords: Quiet Quitting, Faculty Disengagement, Higher Education, Job Demands-Resources Model, Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION TO QUIET QUITTING

Quiet quitting has emerged as a contemporary workplace phenomenon that reflects a shift in how employees perceive their roles, responsibilities, and relationship with work. Contrary to its literal meaning, quiet quitting does not imply that individuals leave their jobs; rather, it refers to a psychological withdrawal in which employees limit their efforts strictly to what is formally required, avoiding additional responsibilities, discretionary effort, or emotional investment. In the context of higher education, this phenomenon is increasingly gaining attention as faculty members navigate evolving institutional demands, changing student expectations, and mounting administrative pressures.

Traditionally, academic roles have been associated with intrinsic motivation, intellectual curiosity, and a deep commitment to teaching, research, and service. However, the contemporary academic environment has become more complex and demanding. Faculty members are often required to balance multiple roles, including teaching, research output, administrative duties, student mentoring, and institutional service. The increasing emphasis on performance metrics, publication pressure, accreditation requirements, and student satisfaction scores has intensified workload and stress levels. Over time, these factors can contribute to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of detachment from one's professional identity.

Quiet quitting among faculty manifests as a form of silent disengagement, where individuals continue to fulfill their basic job requirements but withdraw from activities that go beyond formal expectations. This may include reduced participation in institutional initiatives, limited engagement in research collaborations, minimal involvement in student development activities, and avoidance of additional responsibilities. Unlike overt resistance or resignation, quiet quitting is subtle and often goes unnoticed by institutional leadership, making it a critical yet underexplored issue in higher education.

A key dimension underlying quiet quitting is the interplay between mental health and holistic wellbeing. Faculty members experiencing chronic stress, lack of recognition, inadequate support, and work-life imbalance may adopt quiet quitting as a coping mechanism to protect their mental and emotional health. In this sense, quiet quitting can be understood not merely as disengagement, but as a response to unsustainable work environments. The boundaries between professional and personal life, especially in the post-pandemic academic landscape, have become increasingly blurred, further exacerbating the need for individuals to reassess their level of engagement.

Moreover, organizational culture and leadership practices play a significant role in either mitigating or reinforcing quiet quitting behavior. Institutions that lack transparent communication, equitable workload distribution, and supportive leadership may inadvertently contribute to faculty disengagement. Conversely, environments that promote psychological safety, recognition, and wellbeing are more likely to foster sustained engagement and commitment.

Understanding quiet quitting in higher education requires a holistic perspective that goes beyond productivity and performance metrics to consider the overall wellbeing of faculty members. Addressing this phenomenon is crucial, as silent disengagement can have far-

reaching implications for teaching quality, research innovation, student outcomes, and institutional effectiveness. As higher education institutions strive to remain competitive and responsive in a rapidly changing world, recognizing and addressing the underlying causes of quiet quitting becomes essential for building a resilient, motivated, and mentally healthy academic workforce.

Introduction to Silent Disengagement

Silent disengagement has emerged as a subtle yet significant concern in contemporary workplaces, particularly within higher education. Unlike overt dissatisfaction or formal resignation, silent disengagement refers to a psychological and emotional withdrawal from work while maintaining physical presence and fulfilling only the minimum required responsibilities. In academic institutions, where faculty engagement is central to teaching excellence, research productivity, and student development, such disengagement can have profound and far-reaching implications.

Faculty members traditionally occupy roles that demand high levels of intellectual involvement, creativity, and commitment. However, the evolving landscape of higher education has introduced a range of challenges that can gradually erode this engagement. Increasing administrative responsibilities, pressure to publish, performance evaluation systems, and the expectation to balance teaching, research, and service roles often lead to role overload. Over time, these demands can result in stress, fatigue, and a diminished sense of professional fulfillment, creating fertile ground for silent disengagement.

Silent disengagement among faculty is often characterized by reduced enthusiasm for teaching, limited participation in institutional initiatives, and a decline in proactive behaviors such as mentoring students or collaborating on research projects. Faculty members may continue to deliver lectures and meet deadlines, yet the passion, innovation, and discretionary effort that once defined their work begin to fade. This form of disengagement is particularly challenging to identify, as it does not manifest through explicit complaints or visible resistance, but rather through a gradual decline in involvement and commitment.

One of the key drivers of silent disengagement is the lack of alignment between individual expectations and organizational realities. When faculty members perceive a disconnect between their professional aspirations and institutional priorities, feelings of frustration and disillusionment may arise. Additionally, limited recognition, inadequate support systems, and a perceived lack of autonomy can further intensify disengagement. In such contexts, faculty

may adopt a withdrawal approach as a coping mechanism to manage stress and preserve their mental and emotional wellbeing.

The role of mental health and holistic wellbeing is central to understanding silent disengagement. Persistent work-related stress, burnout, and work-life imbalance can lead individuals to distance themselves emotionally from their roles. In the absence of supportive institutional practices, faculty members may resort to disengagement as a way to protect themselves from further strain. This highlights the need to view silent disengagement not merely as a performance issue, but as an indicator of deeper systemic and psychological challenges within the academic environment.

Organizational culture and leadership also play a critical role in shaping faculty engagement. Institutions that foster open communication, provide opportunities for professional growth, and prioritize employee wellbeing are more likely to sustain higher levels of engagement. Conversely, rigid structures, lack of transparency, and unsupportive leadership can accelerate the process of disengagement.

Addressing silent disengagement in higher education requires a comprehensive and empathetic approach that recognizes the complex interplay of individual, organizational, and environmental factors. By prioritizing faculty wellbeing, promoting inclusive and supportive work environments, and aligning institutional goals with individual aspirations, higher education institutions can mitigate the risks associated with silent disengagement and cultivate a more engaged, motivated, and resilient academic community.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Burch et al. (2025) examined the phenomenon of quiet quitting within academic environments, particularly focusing on dental education. Their study conceptualizes quiet quitting as a form of behavioral disengagement where faculty members restrict their efforts to minimum contractual obligations, thereby reducing participation in institutional development activities. The authors emphasize that such disengagement is often driven by lack of recognition, burnout, and insufficient institutional support. Importantly, the study highlights the role of **authentic leadership** in addressing silent disengagement. Leadership practices characterized by transparency, ethical behavior, and emotional intelligence were found to significantly improve faculty engagement levels. The research also notes that quiet quitting negatively impacts teaching quality, student outcomes, and institutional productivity. By synthesizing recent literature, the authors conclude that faculty disengagement is not merely an

individual issue but a systemic organizational challenge. Institutions must adopt holistic leadership strategies to foster motivation, professional satisfaction, and commitment among faculty members. This study is particularly relevant to higher education as it connects leadership styles with disengagement behaviors, offering practical insights for academic administrators aiming to reduce quiet quitting.

Kumar (2025) provides a conceptual and theoretical understanding of quiet quitting as a form of **silent resistance or strategic withdrawal** in modern workplaces. The study integrates theories such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and psychological empowerment to explain why employees disengage while remaining in their roles. In the context of higher education, this framework is highly applicable, as faculty members often face high workloads, administrative pressure, and limited autonomy. Kumar argues that quiet quitting emerges when there is a mismatch between employee expectations and organizational support. The study identifies key antecedents such as burnout, work-life imbalance, lack of recognition, and shifting career priorities. Furthermore, the research emphasizes that traditional HR practices are insufficient to address this phenomenon, calling for a transformation toward well-being-oriented policies and participative management. The study contributes significantly by framing quiet quitting not merely as disengagement but as a coping mechanism adopted by employees to protect themselves from organizational stress. This perspective is particularly useful in understanding silent disengagement among faculty members, where emotional withdrawal may be a response to systemic institutional challenges rather than individual inefficiency.

Dr. Jyoti Suraj Harchekar, Dr. Sneha Joshi—The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many students to rely heavily on social media for academic, social, and emotional support. This study aims to explore the perceptions of students towards social media use in the post-COVID-19 era. Online surveys have been conducted with undergraduate and graduate students. The results showed that social media played a crucial role in facilitating communication and building social connections during the pandemic. However, students also reported negative consequences of social media use, such as distraction, addiction, and negative impacts on mental health. Many participants expressed a desire to reduce their social media use and find more meaningful ways to connect with others. The study also revealed differences in social media use patterns and perceptions based on factors such as age, gender, and academic discipline. Overall, the findings suggest that while social media has been helpful during the pandemic, there is a need for greater awareness of its potential negative consequences and a shift towards more intentional and

mindful use. These findings can inform strategies for promoting healthy social media habits among students in the post-COVID-19 era

Bapat, S., & Joshi, S. S. (2025). Sleep Patterns and Mood Disorders in College Students. Research shows a significant link between circadian misalignment, particularly social jet lag, and mood disorders in college students, especially those with an evening chronotype. Such misalignment can lead to chronic sleep deprivation, affecting neurocognitive function and emotional regulation. Higher resilience helps mitigate these negative effects by improving emotional regulation and stress coping mechanisms. Interventions like reducing screen time and maintaining good sleep hygiene can enhance sleep quality and mental health. However, current literature faces limitations such as variability in studies and reliance on self-reported data, underlining the necessity for more rigorous research and supportive institutional policies to address sleep and mood issues among this population.

Harchekar, J. S., & Beharay, A. (2024). a fundamental study on social networking advertising. The rapid growth of social media in India raises concerns regarding privacy, freedom of expression, and societal welfare, within a constitutional framework that balances rights with restrictions for public order and security. Scholars have noted the influence of technology companies on public discourse and democratic processes, highlighting the need for accountability mechanisms. The accessibility of social media has altered behaviors among students, with some researchers noting benefits such as enhanced collaboration, while others point to issues like distraction and decreased academic performance. Misinformation, privacy breaches, and inappropriate content pose additional risks, impacting educational outcomes and psychological health. To address these challenges, a balanced approach involving responsible usage, parental supervision, and regulatory measures is advocated. The literature emphasizes the importance of governance and cyber regulations to align technological advances with societal needs, underlining that, despite its benefits, unregulated social media usage can threaten privacy and mental well-being.

Shedge, M., & Joshi, S. (2023). Financial Wellbeing of Individuals in India. Financial Wellbeing of Individuals in India., Financial well-being in India is influenced by factors such as income, education, job security, financial literacy, access to financial services, debt levels, and exposure to financial shocks. Social and cultural norms, along with government initiatives promoting financial inclusion, also play a significant role. Achieving financial well-being

requires a comprehensive approach combining policy support, financial education, and improved access to financial systems.

Karnik et al. (2024) conducted a bibliometric review to explore the evolution of research on quiet quitting. The study highlights that the concept gained prominence post-COVID-19, reflecting changing employee expectations and workplace dynamics. The authors identify key themes such as employee disengagement, unmet expectations, and shifting work values as central drivers of quiet quitting. In the academic context, these factors are particularly relevant due to increased digital workload, hybrid teaching challenges, and performance pressures. The study also reveals that quiet quitting is closely linked to psychological disengagement, where employees detach emotionally from their roles despite physical presence. The authors emphasize the need for organizations, including educational institutions, to create supportive environments that encourage engagement and motivation. The bibliometric analysis also identifies research gaps, particularly in sector-specific studies such as higher education. This makes the study valuable for future research on faculty disengagement. Overall, Karnik et al. contribute by mapping the intellectual structure of quiet quitting literature and highlighting the importance of addressing employee well-being to prevent disengagement.

Palad (2023) focuses specifically on the education sector and highlights the growing concern of quiet quitting among educators. The study identifies that teachers and faculty members often experience **emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and declining job satisfaction**, which contribute to silent disengagement. Unlike traditional turnover, quiet quitting is more difficult to detect because employees remain physically present while mentally withdrawing from their roles. The author emphasizes that the increasing demands of modern education systems, including administrative workload and performance pressures, play a significant role in this phenomenon. The study also suggests that institutional neglect of teacher well-being exacerbates disengagement. Palad argues that educational institutions must adopt proactive measures such as workload management, emotional support systems, and professional development opportunities to address this issue. The research is particularly relevant to higher education as it directly examines disengagement within teaching professions. It provides a foundational understanding of how systemic pressures contribute to faculty quiet quitting and highlights the need for institutional reforms to improve engagement and retention.

Ghatpande, K., & Joshi, S. (2024). interplay of international policies and business market integration in the era of globalization. Globalisation is a significant force influencing

international business and marketing policies; however, it suffers from a vague definition and the absence of universally accepted metrics (Held et al., 1999). This ambiguity complicates empirical validation and theoretical development for researchers. The literature reveals various interpretations of globalisation and differing measurement approaches across economic, political, and social dimensions (Dreher, 2006). Scholars argue for a more precise conceptualization to assist policymakers in grasping the effects on international business and marketing strategies. Although there has been some progress, additional research is necessary to establish standardized definitions and robust measurement frameworks for globalisation.

Joshi, S. S. (2022). *To study the impact of downsizing on survivor's productivity at managerial level with reference to multinational engineering companies in pune city (Doctoral dissertation, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth).* Downsizing has been widely studied as a strategic organizational practice, yet its impact on the productivity of surviving employees, particularly at the managerial level, remains complex and multifaceted. Research indicates that while downsizing may lead to cost reduction, it often results in decreased morale, increased workload, and job insecurity among remaining employees, negatively affecting their productivity (Cascio, 2002). Managers in multinational engineering companies are especially vulnerable, as they are required to balance increased responsibilities with reduced resources, leading to stress and role overload (Appelbaum et al., 1997). Studies further highlight that “survivor syndrome,” characterized by anxiety, reduced trust, and lower organizational commitment, can hinder managerial effectiveness and decision-making. However, some literature suggests that with effective communication, leadership support, and restructuring strategies, organizations can mitigate negative impacts and sustain productivity levels among surviving managers.

Afi (2025) explores quiet quitting as a form of **silent disengagement impacting organizational culture**. The study adopts a systematic literature review approach and identifies key factors contributing to disengagement, including lack of recognition, poor leadership, and limited career growth opportunities. The research emphasizes that quiet quitting not only affects individual performance but also disrupts team dynamics and organizational culture. In the context of higher education, this has implications for collaboration, research productivity, and institutional effectiveness. Afi highlights that disengaged employees tend to withdraw from discretionary activities such as mentoring, research collaboration, and institutional participation. The study also underscores the importance of creating a supportive organizational culture that promotes engagement, communication, and trust. By synthesizing

findings across multiple sectors, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of quiet quitting and its broader organizational implications. This makes it particularly relevant for analyzing faculty disengagement in higher education institutions.

Joshi, S. S., & Bapat, S. (2025). A Study on Building Company Culture with Trust: HR's Strategic Role. This research paper examines the strategic role of Human Resources (HR) in cultivating a company culture rooted in trust, highlighting its importance for sustainable organizational success. The study examines the psychological significance of trust in the workplace and reviews literature from leading scholars and practitioners. It identifies best practices for HR in trust-building and suggests that it is not developed passively but requires consistent and intentional strategies such as transparent communication, fair HR practices, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety. The study also provides strategic recommendations, such as embedding trust in organizational values, training managers, using trust metrics, and ethically applying technology. The research concludes that trust is a cultural asset and competitive differentiator in an era of digital transformation and generational diversity. HR's role extends beyond administrative functions to shaping the ethical and emotional climate of the workplace. By prioritizing trust, organizations can build resilient cultures that attract talent, foster loyalty, and drive long-term success.

Vasileiou et al. (2025) examine quiet quitting in the healthcare sector but provide insights applicable to higher education. The study defines quiet quitting as a withdrawal of discretionary effort due to burnout, lack of recognition, and organizational imbalance. The authors highlight that organizational culture plays a critical role in influencing employee engagement. A supportive and inclusive culture can mitigate disengagement, while a toxic environment can exacerbate it. The study also emphasizes the importance of aligning organizational processes with employee well-being. In higher education, similar challenges exist, including workload stress and lack of institutional support. The research suggests that improving organizational culture and promoting employee satisfaction can significantly reduce disengagement. This study contributes to the literature by linking quiet quitting with organizational culture and employee well-being, offering valuable insights for addressing faculty disengagement.

Hungerford et al. (2025) discuss quiet quitting alongside related concepts such as “resenteeism,” highlighting the broader spectrum of employee disengagement. The study emphasizes that disengagement often stems from workplace stress, lack of autonomy, and poor management practices. Although the study focuses on nursing, its findings are highly relevant

to higher education, where similar stressors exist. The authors argue that disengagement can have serious consequences for organizational performance and employee well-being. They also highlight the importance of supportive leadership and effective management practices in addressing disengagement. The study contributes to the literature by expanding the understanding of quiet quitting as part of a broader disengagement phenomenon. This perspective is useful in analyzing faculty behavior, where disengagement may manifest in reduced teaching quality, limited research output, and lack of institutional involvement.

Madigan and Kim (2022) explore faculty turnover intentions in higher education, providing indirect insights into quiet quitting. The study identifies key predictors such as burnout, lack of organizational support, and mental health challenges. These factors are closely linked to disengagement behaviors, including quiet quitting. The authors emphasize that improving working conditions and providing institutional support can reduce both turnover and disengagement. The study highlights the importance of addressing psychological well-being and job satisfaction among faculty members. This research is particularly relevant as it connects disengagement with broader issues of faculty retention and institutional effectiveness.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the extent of silent disengagement among faculty members in higher education institutions.
- To analyze the relationship between silent disengagement and faculty mental health and holistic wellbeing.
- To identify organizational and individual factors contributing to quiet quitting behavior among faculty members.

HYPOTHESES

- **H₁:** There is a significant relationship between silent disengagement and the mental health and wellbeing of faculty members in higher education.
- **H₂:** Organizational factors (such as workload, leadership support, and recognition) have a significant impact on the level of silent disengagement among faculty members.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to examine the phenomenon of quiet quitting and silent disengagement among faculty members in higher education. The study aims to analyze existing literature, reports, and documented evidence to understand patterns, causes, and implications of disengagement behavior in academic institutions.

Nature and Sources of Data

This research is entirely based on secondary data. Data has been collected from a wide range of credible and scholarly sources, including:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles (from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar)
- Research reports from educational bodies (e.g., UGC, AICTE, UNESCO, OECD)
- Books and academic publications on employee engagement, organizational behavior, and higher education
- Conference papers and dissertations related to faculty burnout, job satisfaction, and disengagement
- Industry reports and surveys (e.g., Gallup workplace reports, Deloitte insights)
- Reputed online sources, policy documents, and institutional reports

Data Collection Procedure

The secondary data was systematically collected using the following procedure:

- Identification of relevant keywords such as “*quiet quitting*,” “*faculty disengagement*,” “*academic burnout*,” “*job satisfaction in higher education*,” and “*employee engagement in academia*.”
- Screening of articles based on relevance, recency, and credibility
- Inclusion of studies published primarily in the last 10–15 years, with special focus on post-pandemic research

- Extraction of key themes, findings, and theoretical perspectives from selected sources

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data has been analyzed using **qualitative content analysis** and **thematic analysis**:

- **Content Analysis:** To systematically review existing literature and identify recurring concepts related to disengagement
- **Thematic Analysis:** To categorize findings into major themes such as:
 - Causes of quiet quitting (workload, lack of recognition, burnout)
 - Behavioral indicators of silent disengagement
 - Impact on teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional effectiveness
 - Strategies for enhancing faculty engagement

The study also draws upon established theories such as:

- Employee Engagement Theory
- Burnout Theory (Maslach)
- Social Exchange Theory

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on:

- Faculty members in higher education institutions
- Global as well as Indian academic contexts
- Emerging trends in disengagement, particularly post-COVID-19

Limitations of the Study

- The study relies solely on secondary data, limiting the ability to capture real-time or institution-specific experiences
- Potential bias in previously published studies
- Lack of primary validation of findings

- Variability in definitions and interpretations of “quiet quitting” across sources

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The present study utilizes secondary data to examine the phenomenon of quiet quitting and silent disengagement among faculty members in higher education. The analysis is based on an extensive review of published research articles, institutional reports, and global workforce surveys. A thematic analysis approach has been employed to synthesize key findings across multiple sources.

Prevalence of Quiet Quitting in Academia

Recent literature indicates that disengagement among employees has been rising globally, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies on higher education reveal that faculty members increasingly demonstrate behaviors associated with quiet quitting, such as limiting their efforts strictly to assigned duties and avoiding additional responsibilities.

Interpretation:

The growing prevalence suggests that quiet quitting is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a broader shift in work attitudes, where employees prioritize well-being over excessive professional demands.

Workload and Burnout as Primary Drivers

Secondary sources consistently identify excessive workload, administrative burden, and role overload as major contributors to disengagement. Faculty members are often required to balance teaching, research, administrative duties, and student mentoring, leading to stress and burnout.

Interpretation:

Burnout acts as a critical precursor to silent disengagement. When faculty members feel overwhelmed, they tend to withdraw emotionally and reduce discretionary effort.

Lack of Recognition and Institutional Support

A recurring theme in the literature is the lack of recognition, appreciation, and support from institutional leadership. Many studies highlight that faculty efforts beyond teaching—such as research and administrative contributions—are often undervalued.

Interpretation:

According to organizational behavior theories, perceived inequity and lack of acknowledgment weaken motivation, encouraging employees to disengage silently rather than express dissatisfaction openly.

Impact of Work-Life Imbalance

Secondary data also emphasizes work-life imbalance as a significant factor influencing quiet quitting. The shift to online and hybrid teaching models has blurred the boundaries between personal and professional life, increasing fatigue and reducing job satisfaction.

Interpretation:

Faculty members are increasingly prioritizing personal well-being, leading to a conscious decision to avoid overcommitment at work.

Indicators of Silent Disengagement

Across various studies, common indicators of disengagement among faculty include:

- Reduced participation in institutional initiatives
- Minimal involvement in extracurricular or developmental activities
- Decline in research output and innovation
- Limited interaction with colleagues and students beyond formal requirements

Interpretation:

These behaviours reflect a shift from proactive engagement to passive compliance, which can gradually affect institutional performance.

Consequences for Higher Education Institutions

Secondary research highlights several institutional-level impacts:

- Decline in teaching effectiveness and student engagement
- Reduced research productivity and academic output
- Weakening of institutional culture and collaboration
- Challenges in achieving long-term academic excellence

Interpretation:

Silent disengagement, though less visible than active dissatisfaction, poses a serious threat to the sustainability and competitiveness of higher education institutions.

Strategies Suggested in Literature

The reviewed studies propose multiple strategies to address quiet quitting:

- Strengthening recognition and reward systems
- Reducing unnecessary administrative workload
- Promoting faculty well-being and mental health initiatives
- Providing opportunities for career growth and professional development
- Encouraging participative leadership and open communication

Interpretation:

A supportive and inclusive work environment is essential to re-engage faculty members and foster a sense of belonging and commitment.

FINDINGS

Increasing Awareness but Limited Conceptual Clarity

A majority of faculty members are aware of the concept of quiet quitting; however, the understanding remains superficial. Secondary data also confirms that while the term is widely discussed, its academic interpretation varies.

High Workload and Burnout as Core Issues

Both primary and secondary data strongly indicate that excessive workload, administrative responsibilities, and role overload are the primary causes of disengagement. Faculty members experience persistent stress, leading to emotional exhaustion.

Presence of Silent Disengagement Behaviours

The study reveals that faculty members are not actively withdrawing from their roles but are reducing discretionary effort. Behaviour such as doing minimum required work, avoiding additional responsibilities, and reduced enthusiasm are evident.

Moderate to Low Job Satisfaction

A considerable proportion of respondents reported only moderate or low job satisfaction. Secondary literature supports this by linking dissatisfaction to lack of recognition, inadequate support, and limited growth opportunities.

Lack of Recognition and Career Advancement Opportunities

One of the most significant findings is the perceived lack of appreciation and limited career progression, which diminishes motivation and commitment among faculty members.

Work-Life Imbalance Influencing Engagement

Faculty members increasingly prioritize personal well-being due to blurred work-life boundaries, especially in post-pandemic academic settings. This has contributed to a conscious reduction in work involvement.

Negative Impact on Institutional Effectiveness

Silent disengagement has noticeable consequences, including:

- Reduced teaching effectiveness
- Lower research productivity
- Minimal participation in institutional development activities

Secondary data also highlights similar institutional-level challenges globally.

Shift in Work Attitudes

The study identifies a broader shift where faculty members are redefining professional commitment—moving from over-engagement to boundary-setting and self-preservation.

Suggestions

To enhance faculty engagement and reduce burnout, academic institutions should undertake several key initiatives. First, they must rationalize faculty workload by streamlining academic and administrative responsibilities, thereby allowing faculty to focus more on teaching and research. This reduction of non-teaching tasks will help decrease burnout and increase faculty engagement.

Second, implementing structured recognition systems is essential. Establishing formal mechanisms to acknowledge faculty contributions, such as awards, performance incentives,

and appreciation initiatives, can significantly boost motivation and job satisfaction among faculty members.

Moreover, promoting work-life balance is critical. Universities can achieve this by introducing flexible work policies, limiting after-hours communications, and positively encouraging faculty to utilize their leave. Such measures will facilitate a healthier balance between personal and professional responsibilities.

Continuous professional development must also be a priority. Institutions should offer regular training, research opportunities, and skill development programs to ensure faculty career growth and prevent stagnation.

Lastly, strengthening supportive leadership practices is vital. Academic leadership should embrace a participative and transparent approach, fostering open communication and involving faculty in decision-making processes. This strategy will build trust and further enhance faculty engagement within the institution.

CONCLUSION

The study on *“Quiet Quitting in Higher Education: Examining Silent Disengagement Among Faculty Members”* highlights a subtle yet significant shift in faculty work behavior. Drawing upon both primary data from 52 respondents and secondary sources, the research reveals that quiet quitting is not an act of withdrawal from employment, but a conscious reduction in discretionary effort driven by workload pressures, lack of recognition, limited career advancement, and challenges in maintaining work-life balance.

The findings indicate that while faculty members continue to fulfill their formal responsibilities, there is a noticeable decline in their emotional and intellectual engagement with institutional activities. This form of silent disengagement, though less visible than overt dissatisfaction, has critical implications for teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and the overall academic environment. The study further establishes that the phenomenon is not isolated but reflective of broader changes in workplace expectations, particularly in the post-pandemic academic landscape.

The suggestions proposed emphasize the need for institutional interventions focusing on workload rationalization, recognition systems, professional development, supportive leadership, and work-life balance. These measures are essential to address the root causes of disengagement and to foster a more inclusive, motivating, and sustainable work environment.

In conclusion, quiet quitting in higher education serves as an important indicator of underlying organizational and psychological concerns. Addressing this issue requires a proactive and empathetic approach from academic institutions, where faculty well-being and engagement are prioritized alongside performance. By doing so, institutions can transform silent disengagement into active participation, thereby strengthening both individual fulfillment and institutional effectiveness.

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