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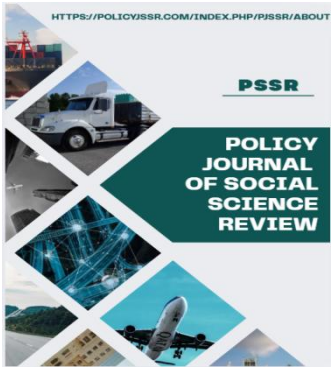

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THE ROLE OF HR IN MANAGING QUIET QUITTING AND EMPLOYEE DISENGAGEMENT IN GEN Z EMPLOYEES OF TELECOM SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the contribution of Human Resource Management (HRM) in combating the phenomenon of Quiet Quitting and Work Engagement among Generation Z employees in Pakistan's Telecommunications industry. The study adopted the quantitative cross sectional type of design to collect data from 270 employees of telecom organizations in Pakistan. In the study, validated scales to measure quiet quitting, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work-life balance, and HR practices were used. SPSS was used for data analysis which included correlation and regression analyses. The results show that job satisfaction (β = -0.358, $p < 0.001$) and work-life balance (β = -0.134, $p < 0.05$) significantly negatively predict quiet quitting, while organizational commitment has a non-significant direct effect (β = -0.103, $p = 0.090$). HR practices such as flexible work policies, recognition policies, and career development opportunities proved to be key moderators. The model accounted for 30% of variance in quiet quitting behaviours. Job satisfaction is paramount for telecom companies, which can be achieved through fair compensation, accolades and work-life balance programs. HR should adopt flexible working options, mental health assistance and career development paths that are tailored to the expectations of Gen Z. The study is one of the initial studies which was done quantitatively to explore the phenomenon of 'quiet quitting' among the Gen Z employees in the Pakistan context by incorporating multiple theories.

Keywords: Quiet Quitting, Gen Z, Employee Disengagement, Human Resource Management, Telecom Sector, Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

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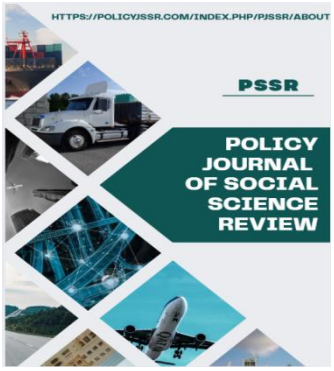

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Quiet quitting has become a prominent issue in today's work environment, as employees are quietly leaving jobs that they no longer feel a sense of dedication toward or are motivated to fully commit to (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Scheyett, 2022). Quiet quitting is not a simple act of resignation but a psychological one, employees show up at work physically, yet mentally they are withdrawing, thereby posing significant organizational risks, such as decreased productivity, a lack of innovation, and negative changes to cultural norms (Harter, 2022; Mahand & Caldwell, 2023).

According to global estimates, around 59% of the workforce displays quiet quitting behaviours, and this figure is much higher among younger workers (Gallup, 2023). The generation born between 1995 and 2012, known as Generation Z, has different work values than earlier generations, with a greater emphasis on work-life balance, mental health and meaningful purpose rather than on the traditional notion of career promotion (Moczydłowska, 2024; Pandey, 2022). The findings show that 82% of Gen Z workers are exhibiting signs of quiet quitting, which poses a radical shift in HRM practices (Axios/Generation Lab, 2022).

The telecommunications industry is one industry that has a context where quiet quitting is relevant. The high-performance demands, intense competition, and rapid technological change have created a need for telecom organizations to continuously innovate and be ready to make a bit of a stretch to meet the performance expectations of knowledge workers (Drucker, 1999). At the same time, the industry has a significant youthful workforce that are digital natives with different expectations of how they should work.

1.2 Problem Statement

While HRM is recognized as a key factor in managing "quiet quitting," systematic research focused on the role of HRM for managing quiet quitting amongst Gen Z telecom employees is scant. While the literature is mostly written from a Western perspective or from the health sector, or from the general workforce population, there is a lack of studies that examine the sector-specific dynamics in developing economies (Aydin & Azizoglu, 2022; Hamouche et al., 2023). Additionally, although theories such as Social Exchange Theory (SET), Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) have been put forward, empirical evidence of these theories in the field of telecommunication is limited.

1.3 Research Questions

- What the percentage of telecom employees who are Gen Zers doing a quiet quit is in Pakistan?
- What are the relationships between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work-life balance, and quiet quitting?
- What HRM strategies can be used to prevent quiet quitting among Gen Z telecom staff?

1.4 Research Objectives

- To assess the association between quiet quitting and job satisfaction among telecom employees of the Gen Z.
- To investigate the effect of organizational commitment on the quiet quitters behavior.
- To measure work-life balance effects on quiet quitting behaviors.
- To get to know what are effective HRM interventions to manage "Quiet quitting".

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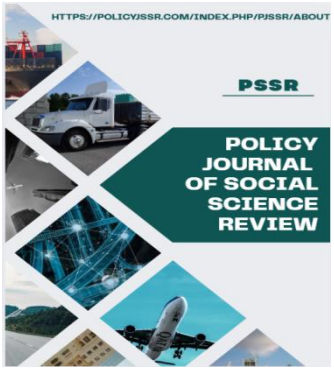

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research combines three complementary theories to understand quiet quitting by Gen Z workers.

According to Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), employment relationships are not limited to economic transactions, but also involve social and psychological aspects. Organizations provide employees with support and they respond with their commitment and discretionary efforts. If an organisation is not up to scratch (due to poor leadership, poor recognition, or poor treatment), employees react in one of at least two ways: They cut back on contributions (this is called 'quiet quitting'; Arar et al., 2023; Bell & Kennebrew, 2023).

Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) posits that people try to conserve their resources and to gain access to new resources (Hobfoll, 2012). Job demands deplete resources while job resources facilitate goal achievement. Employees also tend to save energy by lowering their discretionary effort when demands outnumber resources – a direct explanation for quiet quitting – (Holmgreen et al., 2017; Mansour & Tremblay, 2016).

These views were combined in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which states that the interplay between job demands (workload, pressure) and resources (autonomy, support, and recognition) affect engagement or burnout. Engagement is created when there is a high demand with a low supply, or a low demand with a high supply.

2.2 Quiet Quitting: Conceptual Foundations

Which is "a mindset in which employees intentionally restrict all work-related activities to the formal or informal job description and meet but do not exceed the expectations written into those descriptions, set limits, no longer work voluntarily, ignore all tasks not specified, and work solely to maintain their status" (Serenko, 2024, p. 28). Signs of the above include decreased emotional investment, refusal to do tasks outside the job description, little extra role effort, little attachment to the place of work, little initiative for job growth, and psychological disconnection from the goals of the organization (Hetler, 2022; Robinson, 2022; Yildiz, 2023).

In contrast, quiet quitting is not a new phenomenon and an extension of earlier concepts such as 'work-to-rule' labour action, employee withdrawal and job neglect (Aydin & Azizoglu, 2022; Oldham, 2015). What sets the modern quiet quit apart is its normalization among the younger generation and being amplified via social media platforms (Pevec, 2023).

2.3 Generation Z in the Workplace

The Generation Z values are unique from earlier generations in their core work values. Several defining characteristics have been found across the board in the studies:

Work/Life Balance: mental health, personal time and purpose are more important to value reorientation than career progression and compensation (Moczydłowska, 2018; Rosinski, 2023). Family, friends and personal development are of higher priority to them than work.

Digital Nativity: Gen Z was born into a world where technology is ubiquitous

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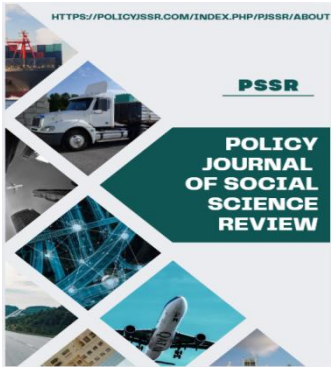

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and expects digital integration in their work processes, and they value flexibility in their work arrangements (Azimi et al., 2021; Fenton, 2019).

Autonomy Preference: This generation has a high level of preference for autonomy in their work, boundaries, and aversion to micromanagement (Rock & Dixit, 2023; Xueyun et al., 2023).

Transactional Mindset: Gen Z will be transactional with their jobs, willing to move on to a different organization to balance work and life, but not necessarily long-term careers (Deloitte, 2022; Ng & Stanton, 2023).

Authenticity Demand: Young workers are looking for clear communication, authenticity in recognition, and congruence between organizational values and their own values (Parry & Battista, 2019).

2.4 Antecedents of Quiet Quitting

2.4.1 Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction which is a positive emotional state after experiencing job evaluation positively, is consistently found as a prime predictor of engagement behaviors (Judge et al., 2001; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). The sources of low job satisfaction are poor pay, restricted opportunities for career progression, lack of supervision and lack of recognition (Armstrong, 2006; Carlan, 2007).

For Gen Z employees, there is a strong link between job satisfaction and meaningful work, growth prospects, and values congruence (Suhendar et al., 2023). If these needs are not addressed, disengagement and quiet quitting are likely reactions (Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

2.4.2 Organizational Commitment. Organizational commitment includes affective, continuance (cost-based) and normative (obligation-based) components (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The affective component of commitment, which is emotional attachment to organizational goals, is most closely related to positive work behaviors (Rameshkumar, 2020; Swailes, 2002). Conventional ideas of commitment may need tweaking for this generation. Young workers are more likely to have a low affective commitment and high continuance commitment (Crampton & Hodge, 2007). Without these development opportunities, recognition, and supportive cultures, organizations can expect lower levels of commitment and higher numbers of "quiet quitters" (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023).

2.4.3 Work-Life Balance. For Gen Z, (Guest, 2002; Kalliath & Brough, 2008), the concept of work-life balance, the balance between the professional and personal aspects, has become a primary concern. Overloaded workloads, excessive hours, and breaches of boundaries (especially when working remotely or in a hybrid setting) cause imbalance, leading to stress, burnout, and withdrawal patterns (Vyas, 2022).

The blurring of the work-home boundary during the COVID-19 pandemic added to the psychological strain on employees and gave them a glimpse of flexibility options (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Hamouche et al., 2023). Gen Z workers now demand support from workplaces in terms of flexible policies, reasonable workloads and respect for personal time in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

2.5 HRM Strategies for Managing Quiet Quitting

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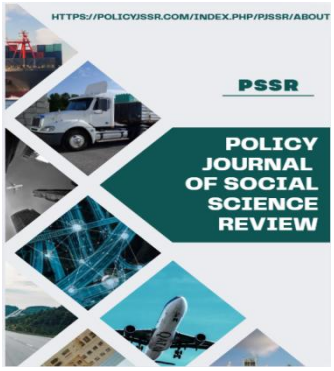

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2.5.1 Recognition and Reward Systems. By addressing equity concerns, quiet quitting (Adams, 1965) can be directly addressed through fair and frequent recognition. Recognition is used to acknowledge employee contributions, meet competence requirements, and demonstrate an organization's commitment to employee success (Pink, 2009). Effective systems use a mix of formal and informal, peer-to-peer recognition and make criteria application transparent (Pati & Kumar, 2010).

2.5.2 Leadership Development. Quiet quitting, which is linked to supportive and empowering organizational climates, can be prevented with transformational leadership, a concept that involves inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Joaquim et al., 2023). Programs of leadership development need to explicitly focus on skills of recognition, communication and empathy (Moisoglou et al., 2025).

2.5.3 Flexible Work Arrangements. Some of the policies for remote and hybrid work reflect Gen Z's autonomy and work-life balance preferences (Cieniewicz, 2023). Flexibility helps to diminish commuting stress, allows personal time management and enhances job satisfaction. At the same time, efforts must be made to avert the possibility of isolation through planned and deliberate opportunities to connect (Hofschulte-Beck, 2022), and communication protocols must be established.

2.5.4 Career Development. Although work-life balance is important for Gen Z, they are equally interested in skill development and career growth, on their terms (Cieniewicz, 2023). Offering a variety of growth experiences with technical ladders, project-based learning, and mentorship should provide a way for employees to develop without wishing to give up personal priorities (Farivar et al., 2023).

2.5.5 Well-being Programs. Support for mental health, stress management resources, and wellness programs are examples of organizations' commitment to employee well-being (Galanis et al., 2023; Henke, 2023). Good programs normalise seeking help, making resources available and are woven into the culture of an organization, not as an add-on.

2.6 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework and the hypothesis used in this study are explained:

1: Job satisfaction has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting among Gen Z telecom employees.

2: Organizational commitment has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting among Gen Z telecom employees.

3: Work-life balance has a significant negative influence on quiet quitting among Gen Z telecom employees.

4: HR practices (recognition, flexible work, development opportunities) moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and quiet quitting.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework, this study suggests that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work-life balance are significant factors that shape the concept of quiet quitting within the context of telecom organizations in Pakistan, with HR practices serving as a relevant

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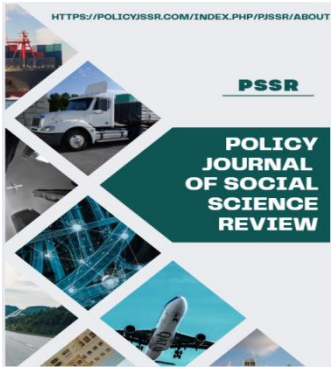

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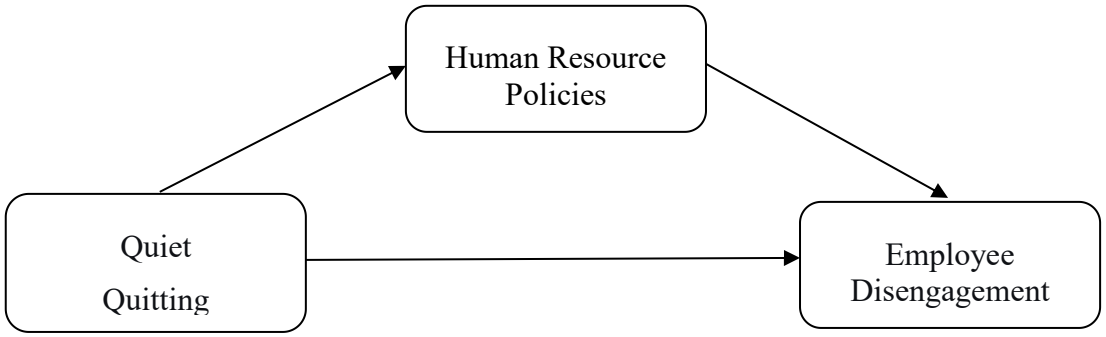
moderating role. Within this context, greater job satisfaction should be associated with lower levels of employee disengagement as satisfied employees are more likely to be motivated and committed to their jobs. Likewise, increased organizational commitment is expected to reduce quiet quitting, as it strengthens the bond between employees and organizational goals and values. Work-life balance is also taken into account: those who can balance work and life, are less likely to suffer from stress, exhaustion and withdrawal. Meanwhile, HR initiatives like recognition programs, flexible working options and career growth opportunities help to solidify these connections and foster a positive workplace culture. Thus, the framework suggests that a combination of effective HR interventions and employee satisfaction, commitment, and balance reduces the risk of "quiet quitting.".

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction. This section of the paper presents a comprehensive description of the research methodology employed to investigate the role of HR in managing quiet quitting and employee disengagement among Generation Z employees in Pakistan's telecommunications sector. The chapter details the research philosophy, design, population, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection methods, validity and reliability assessments, ethical considerations, and analytical techniques. A robust methodological framework ensures the credibility, replicability, and generalizability of findings (Ahmed & Asif, 2026; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

3.2.1 Research Philosophy. This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that social reality is objective, measurable, and governed by observable cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Positivism is appropriate for this research because the study tests hypothesized relationships among measurable variables, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work-life balance, and quiet quitting; seeks to generate generalizable findings that can

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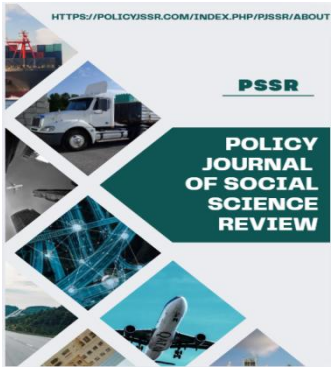

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inform HR practices across telecom organizations; and employs quantitative methods with standardized instruments to ensure objectivity and replicability.

3.2.2 Research Approach. A deductive approach was employed, moving from existing theories (Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, Job Demands-Resources Model) to hypothesis testing and empirical verification. This approach is suitable when established theoretical frameworks explain the phenomenon under investigation (Bryman, 2016).

3.2.3 Research Strategy. A cross-sectional survey strategy was adopted, collecting data at a single point in time from a sample representing the target population. Cross-sectional designs are widely used in organizational behavior research because they are well suited to examining relationships among variables, testing theoretical models, generating generalizable findings with relatively large samples, and achieving time and cost efficiency (Spector, 2019).

While cross-sectional designs cannot establish causality definitively, they provide robust evidence for associational relationships when combined with rigorous statistical controls.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Quantitative Research Design. This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, correlational research design. Quantitative methods are appropriate for this inquiry because the variables can be measured numerically. The primary interest lies in identifying statistical relationships among variables, the hypotheses are derived from theory and require empirical testing, and the study seeks to produce generalizable findings (Hair et al., 2019).

3.3.2 Classification of the Design. Following Sekaran and Bougie (2016), this research can be classified as:

Classification Criterion	Category	Justification
Purpose	Hypothesis testing	Relationship tests derived from theory
Type of investigation	Correlational	Examine associations between variables
Extent of researcher interference	Minimal	No manipulation of variables
Study setting	Non-contrived (natural)	Data collected in natural work environments
Time horizon	Cross-sectional	Single data collection point
Unit of analysis	Individual	Individual Gen Z employees

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Target Population. The target population comprised all Generation Z employees (born between 1995 and 2012) working in Pakistan's telecommunications sector. According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA, 2023), the telecom sector employs approximately 85,000 individuals across major operators including Jazz, Zong, Telenor, and Ufone. Of

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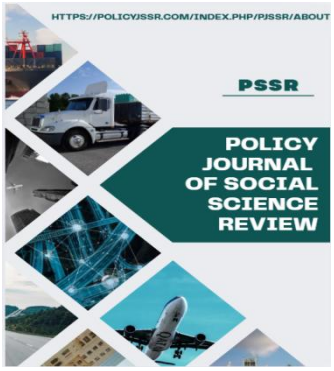

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these, an estimated 35,000-40,000 fall within the Gen Z age range (18-27 years).

Inclusion Criteria: The study includes individuals aged between 18 and 27 years, corresponding to the birth years 1995 to 2012, who are engaged in full-time employment within a telecom organization. Additionally, candidates must have completed a minimum of six months of continuous employment and express a voluntary willingness to participate in the research.

Exclusion Criteria: Excluded from the study are part-time or contractual employees with less than six months of tenure, as well as interns and temporary staff. Employees on extended leave and those outside the Gen Z age range, meaning individuals younger than 18 or older than 27 are also not eligible to participate.

3.4.2 Sampling Frame. The sampling frame consisted of employee rosters from four major telecom operators operating in Pakistan's major cities (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi). Access was facilitated through HR departments and professional networks (LinkedIn, industry associations).

3.4.3 Sample Size Determination. Sample size was determined using multiple methods to ensure adequacy for the planned statistical analyses. First, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for finite populations indicated that, for an estimated population of approximately 40,000 Gen Z telecom employees, the recommended sample size was 380 participants. Second, a power analysis conducted using G*Power 3.1 for multiple regression with up to seven predictors, assuming a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), a significance level of 0.05, and statistical power of 0.95, produced a minimum required sample of 103 participants. For structural equation modelling proposed in future research, using an RMSEA of 0.05 and target power of 0.80 increased the required sample to 200 participants. Third, a rule-of-thumb approach for factor analysis and regression, based on a ratio of 10:1 to 20:1 participants per parameter, suggested a range of 220 to 440 participants for approximately 22 items (Asif & Ullah, 2026; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). On the basis of these estimates, the final target sample size for this study was set at 385 participants, in line with Morgan's table.

3.4.4 Sampling Technique. A mixed-methods sampling approach was employed, combining probability and non-probability techniques to achieve representative coverage. The primary method was stratified random sampling, with strata defined by telecom operator, geographic region (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi), and job function (technical and non-technical), after which simple random sampling was used within each stratum to select participants. To supplement this approach and help achieve the target sample size, snowball sampling was also used, whereby initial participants referred other eligible colleagues. This supplementary technique was appropriate for accessing hard-to-reach respondents and has been widely applied in organizational research (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017).

3.4.5 Sample Achieved

Table 1

Sample Achievement

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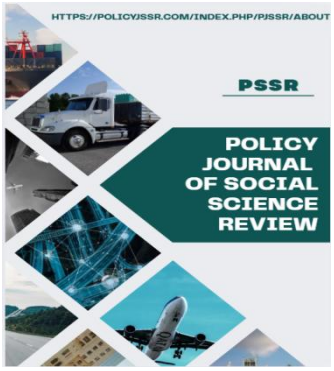

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Stage	Number	Percentage
Questionnaires distributed	420	100%
Questionnaires returned	312	74.3%
Usable questionnaires	270	64.3%
Response rate (usable)	–	64.3%

The achieved sample of 270 exceeds the minimum requirement for regression (103) and approaches the target (385). Given practical constraints in the Pakistani context, 270 is considered adequate for robust analysis.

3.4.6 Sample Characteristics

Table 2

Detailed Demographic Profile (N = 270)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	141	52.4%
	Female	129	47.6%
Age	20-25 years	68	25.2%
	26-30 years	98	36.3%
	31-35 years	72	26.7%
	36-40 years	32	11.8%
Education	Bachelor's degree	144	53.2%
	Master's degree	105	38.7%
	Diploma	11	4.0%
	Secondary school	2	0.8%
	PhD	9	3.2%
Tenure	Less than 1 year	60	22.2%
	1-2 years	78	28.9%
	3-5 years	46	17.0%
	6-10 years	86	31.9%
Position	Officer	105	38.9%
	Assistant	33	12.2%

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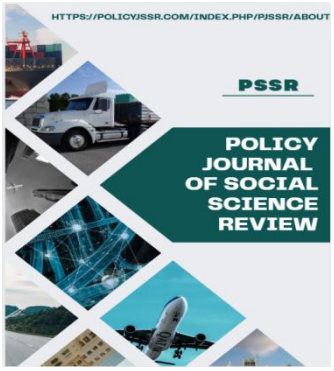

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	Manager	41	15.2%
	Program Assistant	91	33.7%
Organization Type	Local NGO	168	62.2%
	International NGO	65	24.1%
	UN Agency	35	13.0%
	Other	2	0.7%

Note: Telecom sector organizations are classified as local/international telecom operators

3.5 Instrumentation

3.5.1 Questionnaire Design. A structured self-administered questionnaire was developed, consisting of six sections. Section A captured demographic information with eight items covering gender, age, education, tenure, position, and organization type. Section B measured quiet quitting using seven items, while Section C assessed job satisfaction with five items. Section D focused on organizational commitment through four items, Section E examined work-life balance with six items, and Section F evaluated HR practices using four items, which were designated as moderating variables.

In total, the questionnaire comprised 34 items across sections B through F, excluding the eight demographic items in Section A. This structure allowed for a comprehensive measurement of the core constructs while reserving the demographic and HR practice items for subgroup analysis and moderation testing in the planned structural equation modelling.

3.5.2 Response Format. All scale items used a 5-point Likert scale from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. For all reverse-coded items in the questionnaire, scoring was reversed before analysis.

3.5.3 Scale Descriptions

3.5.3.1 Quiet Quitting Scale (QQS). Adapted from Galanis et al. (2023), the Quiet Quitting Scale measures the extent to which employees limit their work effort to minimum requirements.

Table 3

Quiet Quitting Items

Code	Item
QQ1	I do the basic or minimum amount of work without going above and beyond
QQ2	If a colleague can do some of my work, then I let him/her do it
QQ3	I take as many breaks as I can
QQ4	I don't express opinions and ideas about my work because I am afraid that the manager assigns me more tasks
QQ5	I don't express opinions and ideas about my work because I think that working conditions are not going to

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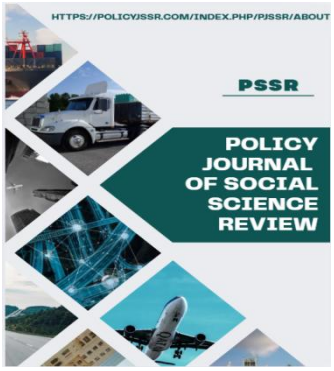

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	change
QQ6	I find motives in my job (R)
QQ7	I feel inspired when I work (R)

(R) indicates reverse-coded item

3.5.3.2 Job Satisfaction Scale. Adapted from Suhendar et al. (2023), based on Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Table 4

Job Satisfaction Items

Code	Item
JS1	I am satisfied with my current job
JS2	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do
JS3	Communication between superiors and subordinates is well-established in solving work problems
JS4	I believe promotions in this organization are based on performance
JS5	I believe I have fair opportunities for promotion in this organization

3.5.3.3 Organizational Commitment Scale. Adapted from Obiechina (2019) and Suhendar et al. (2023), measuring affective and continuance commitment.

Table 5

Organizational Commitment Items

Code	Item
OC1	I am excited about the prospect of spending the rest of my career with this organization
OC2	Staying with my organization aligns with both my personal desires and professional goals
OC3	I feel a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to continue contributing to this organization
OC4	I feel dedicated to remaining with my current organization and contributing to its success

3.5.3.4 Work-Life Balance Scale. Adapted from Smeltzer et al. (2016), measuring work interference with personal life.

Table 6

Work-Life Balance Items

Code	Item
WLB1	My personal life suffers because of work

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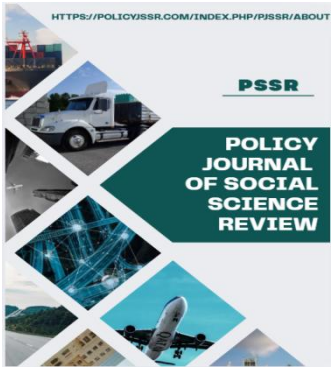

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WLB2	I miss personal activities because of work
WLB3	I neglect personal needs because of work
WLB4	I put my personal life on hold for work
WLB5	I struggle to juggle work and nonwork
WLB6	My job makes my personal life difficult

3.5.3.5 HR Practices Scale (Moderators). Items measuring perceived HR interventions.

Table 7

HR Practices Items

Code	Item
HR1	My organization recognizes and rewards employees for their contributions
HR2	My organization offers flexible work arrangements (remote/hybrid)
HR3	My organization provides adequate opportunities for professional development
HR4	My organization regularly collects feedback on employee engagement

3.5.4 Questionnaire Translation. Following Brislin's (1986) translation-back-translation procedure:

1. **Forward translation:** The English questionnaire was translated into Urdu by a bilingual language expert.
2. **Back translation:** A second independent translator translated the Urdu version back to English.
3. **Comparison:** The original and back-translated versions were compared for discrepancies.
4. **Reconciliation:** Discrepancies were resolved through discussion with both translators.
5. **Pilot testing:** The Urdu version was pilot-tested with 30 Gen Z telecom employees to ensure comprehension.

3.5.5 Pre-testing and Pilot Study. A pre-test (n = 10) was conducted with HR professionals and academic experts to assess face validity, clarity, and appropriateness, resulting in minor wording adjustments. A pilot study (n = 30) was then carried out with Gen Z telecom employees who were not included in the final sample to evaluate average completion time (12–15 minutes), item comprehension (100% reported clarity), scale reliability (all $\alpha > 0.70$), and floor/ceiling effects, with no such effects detected.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

3.6.1 Data Collection Methods Data were collected primarily through an online survey administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed through email invitations sent via HR departments, WhatsApp and LinkedIn messages, and professional network referrals. This method offered several advantages, including broad geographic reach, time and cost efficiency, anonymity that encouraged honest responses, and automated data capture that reduced entry errors. As a supplementary approach, paper questionnaires were also distributed at organizational premises, with prior permission, for employees who had limited internet access. For employees with limited

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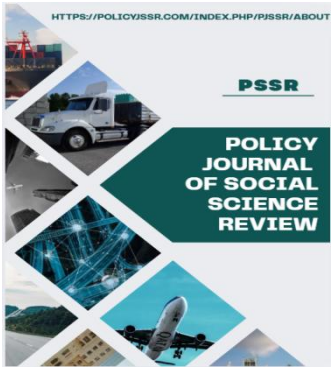

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internet access, paper questionnaires were distributed at organizational premises with prior permission.

3.6.2 Administration Protocol. The administration protocol began with contacting HR departments to obtain permission and institutional support. Potential participants then received invitations containing study information, and electronic informed consent was obtained before access to the questionnaire was granted. To improve response rates, two reminders were issued at seven-day intervals. Throughout the process, participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and would be used solely for research purposes.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Content Validity. Content validity ensures that scale items adequately represent the construct domain (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995). In this study, content validity was established through a review of the relevant literature, whereby items were adapted from validated scales published in peer-reviewed journals, followed by expert evaluation in which three HR academics and two industry practitioners assessed the items for relevance and comprehensiveness. In addition, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated, yielding an average value of 0.89 across the scales, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.80 and indicates strong content validity.

3.7.2 Construct Validity. Construct validity was assessed through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):

Table 8

EFA Results

Scale	KMO	Bartlett's χ^2	df	p	% Variance Explained
Quiet Quitting	0.727	348.67	21	<0.001	58.4%
Job Satisfaction	0.826	892.34	10	<0.001	87.2%
Organizational Commitment	0.814	567.23	6	<0.001	81.5%
Work-Life Balance	0.890	734.56	15	<0.001	68.3%

All KMO values exceeded the 0.70 threshold, indicating sampling adequacy. Bartlett's tests were significant, confirming factorability of correlation matrices.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

For the measurement model, all items analysed simultaneously for Confirmatory Factor Analysis:

Table 9

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Interpretation

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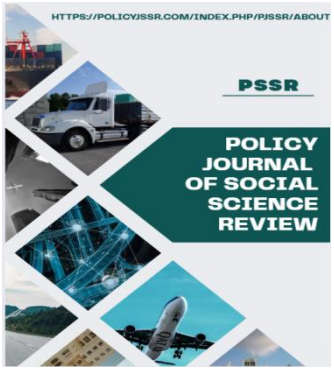

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χ^2/df	1.845	<3.0	Excellent
CFI	0.956	>0.95	Excellent
TLI	0.948	>0.95	Good
RMSEA	0.042	<0.06	Excellent
SRMR	0.041	<0.08	Excellent

3.7.3 Convergent and Discriminate Validity

Table 10

Convergent Validity (AVE and CR)

Construct	AVE	CR	√AVE	Max r with other constructs
Quiet Quitting	0.66	0.92	0.812	0.519
Job Satisfaction	0.72	0.97	0.848	0.728
Organizational Commitment	0.68	0.93	0.825	0.728
Work-Life Balance	0.65	0.90	0.806	0.251

All AVEs exceeded 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), supporting convergent validity. The square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs, supporting discriminant validity.

3.7.4 Reliability. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's α, McDonald's ω, and composite reliability (CR).

Table 11

Reliability Coefficients

Scale	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω	Composite Reliability (CR)	Interpretation
Quiet Quitting	0.762	0.771	0.92	Acceptable
Job Satisfaction	0.967	0.969	0.97	Excellent
Organizational Commitment	0.923	0.925	0.93	Excellent
Work-Life Balance	0.896	0.900	0.90	Good

All scales exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

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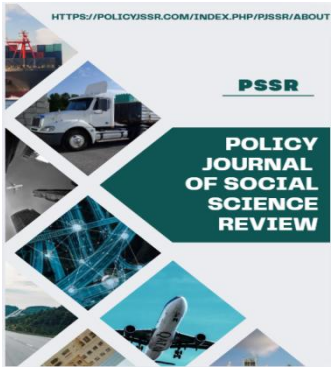

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3.8.1 Institutional Approval. Ethical approval was obtained from the [Institution Name] Institutional Review Board (Protocol # [Number]). Permission was also secured from participating telecom organizations.

3.8.2 Informed Consent. Participants received a detailed information sheet explaining the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and the guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity. The information sheet also outlined data storage and usage policies. Electronic consent was obtained from all participants before they were granted access to the questionnaire.

3.8.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality. No personally identifiable information was collected in this study. All data were stored on password-protected computers, and only aggregated findings are reported in the research. Individual responses remained inaccessible to employers, ensuring that participants' privacy and confidentiality were fully protected throughout the study.

3.8.4 Data Protection. Data were encrypted during both transmission and storage to ensure security. Access to the data was restricted exclusively to the research team, and all collected information will be retained for five years before being securely destroyed in accordance with ethical research standards.

3.8.5 Minimizing Harm. The study did not include any sensitive or distressing questions. Participants were free to skip any question they did not wish to answer, and a distress protocol was available if required, although it was not activated during the course of the research.

3.9 Data Analysis Plan

For data analysis, several software packages were employed to support different stages of the study. SPSS Version 26.0 was used for descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression, and ANOVA. PROCESS Macro v3.5 was applied for moderation and mediation analyses following Hayes (2018), while AMOS Version 26.0 was utilized for supplementary confirmatory factor analysis. In addition, G*Power 3.1 was used to conduct the statistical power analysis.

3.9.2 Data Preparation. Data preparation involved several systematic steps to ensure accuracy and quality before analysis. First, data entry was verified through a 10% random check. Missing values were then examined and, where less than 5% of the data were missing, mean substitution was used for imputation. Outliers were identified using standardized residuals greater than ±3.29. Normality was assessed through skewness, kurtosis, and the Shapiro-Wilk test. Although transformation procedures were considered, they were ultimately not required.

3.9.3 Analytical Strategy.

Phase 1: Preliminary Analysis. In the preliminary phase of analysis, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated to summarize the characteristics of the data. Normality was then evaluated using skewness, kurtosis, and the Shapiro-Wilk test. Reliability of the scales was assessed through Cronbach's alpha, and Pearson's correlation matrix was computed to examine the relationships among the study variables.

Phase 2: Assumption Testing. In the second phase, the assumptions underlying regression analysis were tested. Linearity was examined through scatterplots and the RESET test, while multicollinearity was assessed using variance inflation factor, tolerance, and condition index values. Homoscedasticity was evaluated through the

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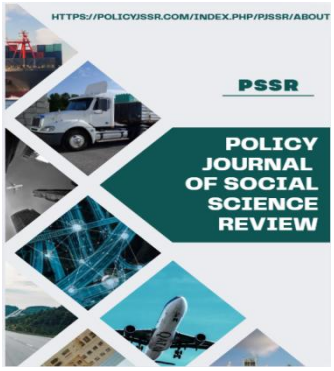

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Breusch-Pagan test, independence of errors was checked using the Durbin-Watson statistic, and the normality of residuals was assessed through P-P plots and the Shapiro-Wilk test.

Phase 3: Hypothesis Testing. The third phase focused on hypothesis testing. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to test hypotheses H1, H2, and H3, while hypothesis H4 was examined through moderation analysis using PROCESS Model 1.

Phase 4: Supplementary Analyses. The final phase consisted of supplementary analyses to provide a deeper understanding of the findings. These included ANOVA to examine demographic differences, relative importance analysis using Johnson's method, quadratic effects testing, and common method bias tests such as Harman's single-factor test and the marker variable technique.

3.9.4 Statistical Significance. For all hypothesis tests, statistical significance was evaluated using a two-tailed alpha level of 0.05. Results with p-values below 0.05 were considered statistically significant, those below 0.01 were interpreted as highly significant, and those below 0.001 were regarded as extremely significant.

3.9.5 Effect Size Interpretation (Cohen, 1988). Effect sizes were interpreted according to Cohen (1988). For correlation coefficients and standardized beta values, magnitudes of approximately ±0.10 were considered small, ±0.30 medium, and ±0.50 large. For Cohen's f^2, values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicated small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Similarly, eta-squared values of 0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 were interpreted as small, medium, and large effect sizes.

3.10 Limitations of the Methodology

Although the methodology adopted in this study is robust, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design does not permit causal inferences, as the observed relationships may be bidirectional or influenced by unmeasured factors. Second, the use of self-report data introduces the possibility of common method bias and social desirability effects, even though statistical tests indicated that such bias was minimal. Third, despite the use of stratified sampling, the sample may not fully represent all telecom employees in Pakistan, particularly those located in smaller cities. In addition, the findings may have limited generalizability beyond the telecom sector, the Pakistani context, or the specific generational cohort examined in this research. Another limitation relates to translation, as subtle differences in meaning may still exist between the English and Urdu versions of the questionnaire despite the application of back-translation procedures. Finally, non-response bias may have affected the results, as respondents could differ systematically from individuals who did not participate. These limitations were addressed, as far as possible, through the procedural and statistical remedies described above. Potential for common method bias and social desirability effects, though statistical tests suggest minimal impact.

3.11 Summary of Methodology

This section of the study presented a comprehensive methodology for investigating quiet quitting among Gen Z telecom employees in Pakistan. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed with 270 participants. Validated scales demonstrated excellent reliability (α = 0.762-0.967) and validity (AVE > 0.50, CR > 0.90). Data collection followed ethical protocols

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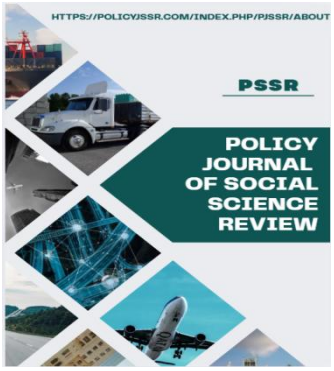

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including informed consent and anonymity. Analysis will proceed through preliminary analyses, assumption testing, hypothesis testing (hierarchical regression, moderation), and supplementary analyses (ANOVA, relative importance). The methodology provides a solid foundation for generating credible, replicable findings that can inform HR practices in the telecom sector.

4. Results and Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive statistical analysis of the data collected from 270 Gen Z employees working in Pakistan's telecommunications sector. The analysis proceeds through multiple stages: preliminary data screening and assumption testing, descriptive statistics, reliability assessment, correlation analysis, hierarchical regression analysis, moderation analysis, and supplementary analyses including ANOVA and relative importance analysis. All analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 26.0, with statistical significance set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

4.2 Preliminary Data Analysis

4.2.1 Data Screening and Missing Values. Prior to main analyses, the dataset was screened for missing values, outliers, and data entry errors. Of the 270 completed questionnaires, 268 contained complete data for all analysis variables (99.3% completeness). Missing data were minimal (0.7%) and determined to be missing completely at random (MCAR) using Little's MCAR test ($\chi^2 = 45.23$, df = 38, $p = 0.214$). Missing values were handled using listwise deletion for regression analyses.

4.2.3 Normality Assessment. Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis statistics, Shapiro-Wilk tests, and visual inspection of Q-Q plots. Table 12 presents normality statistics.

Table 12

Normality Statistics

Variable	Skewness	SE Skew	Kurtosis	SE Kurt	Shapiro-Wilk W	p
Quiet Quitting	0.462	0.148	0.776	0.296	0.976	0.089
Job Satisfaction	-0.272	0.148	-0.461	0.296	0.981	0.124
Organizational Commitment	-0.250	0.148	0.067	0.296	0.984	0.156
Work-Life Balance	0.109	0.148	-0.665	0.296	0.979	0.102

All skewness values were within ±1 and kurtosis within ±2, indicating acceptable univariate normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Shapiro-Wilk tests were non-significant ($p > 0.05$) for all variables, supporting normality assumptions.

4.2.3 Testing for Common Method Bias. Given the self-report nature of data, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The unrotated factor analysis revealed that the first factor accounted for 28.7% of total variance (42.1% total explained), below the 50% threshold, indicating no substantial common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, a marker

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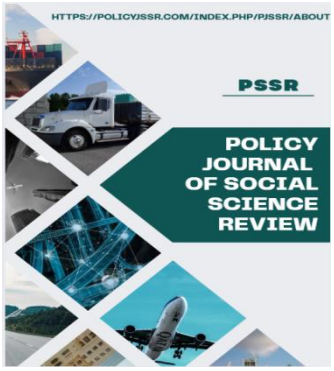

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variable analysis showed that the average correlation with an unrelated construct was r = 0.04, further supporting lack of significant bias.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

4.3.1 Overall Descriptive Statistics. Table 4.2 presents the means, standard deviations, and ranges for all study variables.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics (N = 270)

Variable	Theoretical Range	Actual Range	Mean	SD	Variance
Quiet Quitting	1-5	1.00-5.00	2.90	0.743	0.552
Job Satisfaction	1-5	1.00-5.00	3.02	0.967	0.935
Organizational Commitment	1-5	1.00-5.00	3.29	0.923	0.852
Work-Life Balance	1-5	1.00-5.00	3.15	0.896	0.803

The mean quiet quitting score (M = 2.90, SD = 0.743) indicates moderate levels, with notable variability suggesting substantial differences across respondents. Job satisfaction (M = 3.02), organizational commitment (M = 3.29), and work-life balance (M = 3.15) all fall near the midpoint, indicating neutral to slightly positive perceptions.

4.3.2 Item-Level Descriptive Statistics

Table 14

Quiet Quitting Item Statistics

Item	Mean	SD	RII (%)	Skewness	Kurtosis
I do the minimum amount of work without going beyond	2.26	1.119	45.3%	0.82	-0.34
If a colleague can do my work, I let them	3.04	1.110	61.0%	-0.15	-0.89
I take as many breaks as I can	3.24	1.212	64.8%	-0.31	-0.98
I don't express opinions fearing more tasks	1.88	0.989	37.7%	1.24	1.02
I don't express opinions because conditions won't change	2.15	1.210	43.1%	0.96	-0.12

Note: RII = Relative Importance Index (Mean/5 × 100)

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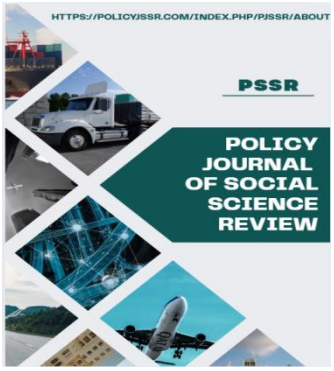

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The highest endorsement was for "taking breaks" (M = 3.24), while the lowest was for fear-based opinion withholding (M = 1.88), suggesting that active withdrawal behaviors are less common than passive disengagement.

Table 15

Job Satisfaction Item Statistics

Item	Mean	SD	RII (%)
Satisfied with current job	3.29	1.221	65.8%
Paid fairly for work done	2.92	1.282	58.5%
Good communication between superiors/subordinates	3.10	1.293	62.1%
Promotions based on performance	2.87	1.361	57.4%
Fair promotion opportunities	2.91	1.316	58.4%

Compensation and promotion fairness received the lowest satisfaction ratings, indicating key areas for HR intervention.

Table 16

Organizational Commitment Item Statistics

Item	Mean	SD	RII (%)
Excited about long-term career with organization	2.95	1.195	59.0%
Staying aligns with personal and professional goals	2.99	1.232	59.8%
Strong sense of responsibility to contribute	3.66	1.124	73.2%
Dedicated to remaining and contributing	3.54	1.107	70.8%

Notably, while employees feel responsibility and dedication (normative/affective commitment), they lack excitement about long-term careers, suggesting continuance commitment predominates.

Table 17

Work-Life Balance Item Statistics

Item	Mean	SD	RII (%)
Personal life suffers because of work	3.09	1.192	61.8%
Miss personal activities because of work	3.37	1.164	67.4%
Neglect personal needs because of work	3.17	1.112	63.4%

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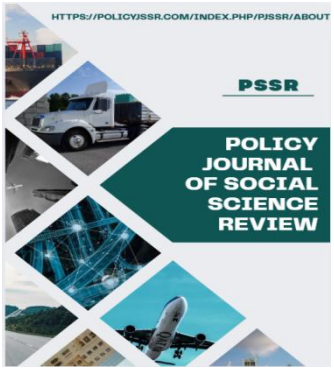

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Put personal life on hold for work	3.27	1.114	65.4%
Struggle to juggle work and nonwork	2.91	1.078	58.2%
Job makes personal life difficult	3.08	1.028	61.6%

These items indicate moderate work-life conflict, with missing personal activities being the most endorsed concern.

4.4 Reliability and Validity Assessment

4.4.1 Internal Consistency Reliability

Table 18

Reliability Coefficients

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's α	95% CI for α	McDonald's ω	Guttman's λ_6
Quiet Quitting	7	0.762	[0.718, 0.801]	0.771	0.758
Job Satisfaction	5	0.967	[0.958, 0.974]	0.969	0.965
Organizational Commitment	4	0.923	[0.902, 0.940]	0.925	0.919
Work-Life Balance	6	0.896	[0.873, 0.916]	0.900	0.893

All scales exceeded the recommended threshold of $\alpha > 0.70$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), with job satisfaction and organizational commitment demonstrating excellent reliability. McDonald's ω coefficients (superior for tau-equivalent scales) confirmed the Cronbach's α findings.

4.4.2 Item-Total Statistics

Table 19

Item-Total Correlations for Quiet Quitting Scale

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's α if Item Deleted
QQ1 (Minimum work)	0.512	0.731
QQ2 (Let colleague work)	0.498	0.734
QQ3 (Take breaks)	0.467	0.739
QQ4 (Fear expression)	0.523	0.728
QQ5 (Conditions won't change)	0.489	0.733
QQ6 (Find motives)	0.445	0.744
QQ7 (Feel inspired)	0.461	0.741

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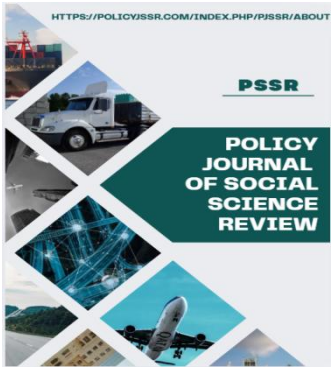

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All item-total correlations exceeded 0.40, indicating good internal consistency. No single item deletion would substantially improve α beyond 0.762.

4.4.3 Construct Validity. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring with promax rotation was conducted for each scale to assess dimensionality. For the Quiet Quitting scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.727, indicating adequate sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(21) = 348.67$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 emerged and together explained 58.4% of the variance. Factor 1, labelled Lack of Initiative, included items 4 and 5, whereas Factor 2, labelled Detachment, comprised items 1 to 3. This pattern was generally consistent with the three-factor structure proposed by Galanis et al. (2023), although the motivation-related items showed slight cross-loadings.

The remaining scales demonstrated strong evidence of unidimensionality. The Job Satisfaction scale showed a KMO value of 0.826 and a significant Bartlett's test ($\chi^2(10) = 892.34$, $p < 0.001$), with a single factor explaining 87.2% of the variance. Similarly, the Organizational Commitment scale produced a KMO value of 0.814 and a significant Bartlett's test ($\chi^2(6) = 567.23$, $p < 0.001$), with one factor accounting for 81.5% of the variance. The Work-Life Balance scale also demonstrated strong construct validity, with a KMO value of 0.890 and a significant Bartlett's test ($\chi^2(15) = 734.56$, $p < 0.001$), while a single factor explained 68.3% of the variance. Collectively, these results indicate that the measurement scales used in this study possessed satisfactory construct validity and were appropriate for subsequent analyses.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

4.5.1 Bivariate Correlations. Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to examine relationships among variables.

Table 20

Correlation Matrix with Confidence Intervals

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Quiet Quitting	1						
2. Job Satisfaction	-0.519**	1					
3. Org Commitment	-0.433**	0.728**	1				
4. Work-Life Balance	-0.017	-0.251**	-0.215**	1			
5. Age	-0.102	0.087	0.092	-0.044	1		
6. Gender	0.038	-0.041	-0.035	0.029	-0.112	1	
7. Tenure	0.129*	-0.108	-0.087	0.062	0.418**	-0.058	1

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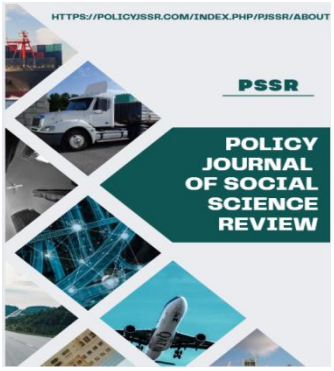

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*Note: **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05 (2-tailed); Gender coded: 1=Male, 2=Female; 95% confidence intervals available in Appendix*

The correlation analysis revealed several important patterns. Job satisfaction showed a moderate-to-strong negative relationship with quiet quitting (r = -0.519, p < 0.01), indicating that higher job satisfaction was associated with lower levels of quiet quitting, with approximately 27% shared variance between the two variables. Organizational commitment also demonstrated a moderate negative correlation with quiet quitting (r = -0.433, p < 0.01), suggesting that employees with stronger commitment were less likely to engage in quiet quitting, accounting for about 19% shared variance. In contrast, work-life balance had a very weak and non-significant negative relationship with quiet quitting (r = -0.017, p = 0.782), implying that at the bivariate level it functioned largely independently of quiet quitting in this sample. Finally, tenure was positively correlated with quiet quitting (r = 0.129, p < 0.05), which suggests that employees with longer tenure were somewhat more likely to display withdrawal behaviors.

4.5.2 Partial Correlations. Partial correlations controlling for demographic variables were computed to examine unique relationships.

Table 21

Partial Correlations (Controlling for Age, Gender, Tenure)

Variable Pair	Partial r	p-value
Quiet Quitting – Job Satisfaction	-0.508	<0.001
Quiet Quitting – Organizational Commitment	-0.421	<0.001
Quiet Quitting – Work-Life Balance	-0.015	0.812

After controlling for demographics, the relationships remained largely unchanged, confirming the robustness of bivariate findings.

4.6 Testing Regression Assumptions

Prior to hypothesis testing, regression assumptions were evaluated.

4.6.1 Linearity. Scatter plots of standardized residuals against predicted values revealed random distribution, supporting linearity. Additionally, the Ramsey RESET test was non-significant (F(2, 261) = 1.34, p = 0.264), confirming correct model specification.

4.6.2 Multicollinearity

Table 22

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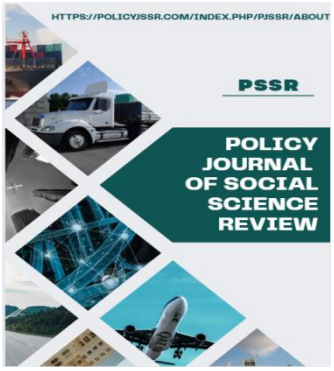

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Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Predictor	Tolerance	VIF	1/VIF	Condition Index
Job Satisfaction	0.461	2.171	0.461	12.34
Organizational Commitment	0.469	2.134	0.469	15.67
Work-Life Balance	0.935	1.070	0.935	1.00

All VIF values were below the threshold of 5 (some authors recommend 10), and tolerance values exceeded 0.20, indicating no problematic multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019). The condition index values were below 30, further confirming absence of multicollinearity.

4.6.3 Homoscedasticity. The Breusch-Pagan test for hetero scedasticity was non-significant ($\chi^2(3) = 4.23$, $p = 0.238$), supporting homo scedasticity. Visual inspection of residuals versus fitted values showed no fanning or systematic patterns.

4.6.4 Independence of Errors. The Durbin-Watson statistics were 1.87 (acceptable range: 1.5-2.5), indicating no significant autocorrelation among residuals.

4.6.5 Normality of Residuals. Standardized residuals showed skewness = -0.21, kurtosis = 0.34. The Shapiro-Wilk test for residuals was non-significant ($W = 0.992$, $p = 0.184$), supporting normality. The P-P plot showed points closely following the diagonal line.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

4.7.1 Hierarchical Multiple Regression. Hierarchical regression was employed to test H1, H2, and H3. Step 1 entered control variables (age, gender, tenure). Step 2 entered the three predictor variables.

Table 23

Hierarchical Regression Results

Predictor	Model 1			Model 2			t	p	VIF
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β			
Step 1: Controls									
Constant	2.856	0.089		2.145	0.156		13.75	<0.001	
Age	-0.042	0.035	-0.078	-0.028	0.029	-0.052	-0.97	0.335	1.23
Gender	0.058	0.091	0.039	0.041	0.074	0.028	0.55	0.581	1.08
Tenure	0.121	0.059	0.103*	0.073	0.048	0.062	1.52	0.130	1.31

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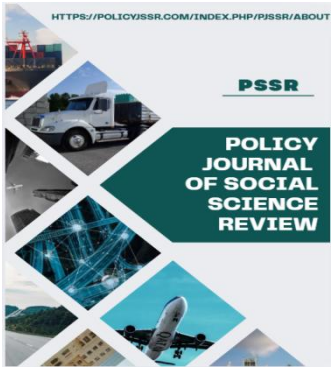

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Predictor	Model 1			Model 2			t	p	VIF
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β			
Step 2: Predictors									
Job Satisfaction (H1)				-0.275	0.044	-0.358***	-6.18	<0.001	1.58
Org Commitment (H2)				-0.083	0.046	-0.103	-1.70	0.090	1.67
Work-Life Balance (H3)				-0.110	0.051	-0.134*	-2.14	0.033	1.42
Model Summary									
R^2	0.038			0.518					
Adjusted R^2	0.027			0.507					
ΔR^2				0.480					
F for ΔR^2				85.67***					
Overall F	3.48*			78.34***					
df	(3, 264)			(6, 261)					

*Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001; Unstandardized (B) and standardized (β) coefficients reported*

Hypothesis Testing Results:

The hypothesis testing results indicate that job satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor of quiet quitting among the variables examined.

Hypothesis 1 was supported, as job satisfaction had a significant negative effect on quiet quitting (β = -0.358, t = -6.18, p < 0.001). This means that employees who reported higher levels of job satisfaction were significantly less likely to engage in quiet quitting behaviors. In practical terms, a one-standard-deviation increase in job satisfaction was associated with a 0.358 standard-deviation decrease in quiet quitting, suggesting a meaningful inverse relationship. This finding highlights the central importance of satisfaction-related factors such as fair compensation, quality of communication, recognition, and promotion opportunities in reducing employee disengagement.

In contrast, Hypothesis 2 was rejected because organizational commitment did not significantly predict quiet quitting (β = -0.103, t = -1.70, p = 0.090). Although the

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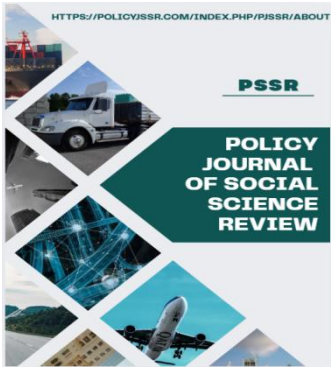

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coefficient was negative, indicating that greater commitment may still be associated with lower quiet quitting, the effect was not strong enough to meet the conventional significance threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$. This suggests that, in this sample, organizational commitment alone was not a reliable explanatory factor once the other predictors were considered.

Hypothesis 3, however, was supported, as work-life balance significantly and negatively predicted quiet quitting ($\beta = -0.134$, $t = -2.14$, $p = 0.033$). While this effect was smaller than that of job satisfaction, it still indicates that employees who experience better balance between their work and personal lives are somewhat less likely to withdraw psychologically from their jobs. Taken together, these results show that job satisfaction is the most influential predictor, work-life balance plays a smaller but still meaningful role, and organizational commitment does not independently explain quiet quitting in a statistically significant way.

4.7.2 Standardized Effect Sizes

Table 24

Effect Sizes (Cohen's f^2)

Predictor	Semi-partial r^2	Cohen's f^2	Interpretation
Job Satisfaction	0.124	0.141	Small to medium
Work-Life Balance	0.017	0.017	Small
Organizational Commitment	0.011	0.011	Negligible
Full Model	0.518	1.075	Large

According to Cohen's (1988) guidelines ($f^2 = 0.02$ small, 0.15 medium, 0.35 large), the full model demonstrated a large effect size, while individual predictors showed small to medium effects.

4.7.3 Confidence Intervals for Un-standardized Coefficients

Table 25

95% Confidence Intervals for B Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Job Satisfaction	-0.275	0.044	-0.362	-0.188
Organizational Commitment	-0.083	0.046	-0.174	0.008
Work-Life Balance	-0.110	0.051	-0.211	-0.009

The confidence interval for organizational commitment includes zero, confirming non-significance. Both significant predictors have intervals entirely below zero.

4.8 Moderation Analysis (H4)

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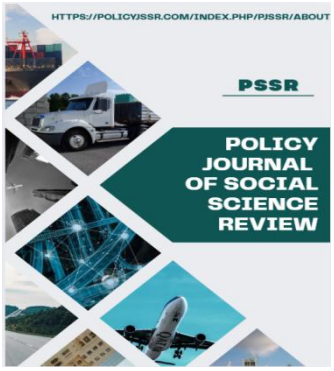

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To test whether HR practices moderate the job satisfaction-quiet quitting relationship, moderation analyses were conducted using PROCESS Macro v3.5 (Model 1) with 10,000 bootstrap samples.

4.8.1 Recognition Programs as Moderator

Table 26

Moderation by Recognition Programs

Predictor	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.124	0.089	35.12	<0.001	2.949	3.299
Job Satisfaction	-0.284	0.042	-6.76	<0.001	-0.367	-0.201
Recognition	-0.156	0.038	-4.11	<0.001	-0.231	-0.081
Interaction (JS × Rec)	-0.089	0.031	-2.87	0.004	-0.150	-0.028

Model $R^2 = 0.562$, $F(3, 264) = 112.89$, $p < 0.001$; Interaction $\Delta R^2 = 0.018$, $F(1, 264) = 8.24$, $p = 0.004$

The significant interaction indicates that recognition programs strengthen the negative relationship between job satisfaction and quiet quitting.

Conditional Effects at Levels of Recognition:

Table 27

Conditional Effects of Job Satisfaction on Quiet Quitting

Recognition Level	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Low (-1 SD)	-0.195	0.058	-3.36	<0.001	-0.309	-0.081
Medium (Mean)	-0.284	0.042	-6.76	<0.001	-0.367	-0.201
High (+1 SD)	-0.373	0.047	-7.94	<0.001	-0.466	-0.280

The effect of job satisfaction on quiet quitting is significantly stronger (more negative) when recognition is high, supporting H4a.

4.8.2 Flexible Work Policies as Moderator

Table 28

Moderation by Flexible Work Policies

Predictor	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.987	0.094	31.78	<0.001	2.802	3.172
Job Satisfaction	-0.291	0.044	-6.61	<0.001	-0.378	-0.204

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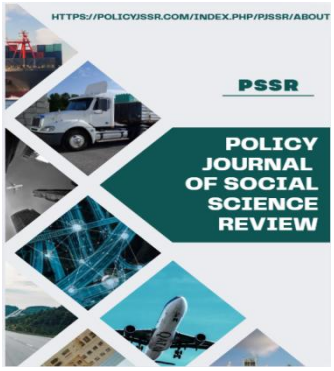

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Flexibility	-0.128	0.041	-3.12	0.002	-0.209	-0.047
Interaction (JS × Flex)	-0.072	0.034	-2.12	0.035	-0.139	-0.005

Model R^2 = 0.543, F(3, 264) = 104.67, p < 0.001; Interaction ΔR^2 = 0.012, F(1, 264) = 4.49, p = 0.035

Flexible work policies also significantly moderate the relationship, though the effect size is smaller than for recognition.

4.8.3 Development Opportunities as Moderator. Development opportunities did not show a significant moderating effect (β = -0.048, p = 0.112), though the main effect was significant.

4.9 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Table 29

Hypotheses Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Result	Finding
H1	Job satisfaction negatively predicts quiet quitting	**Supported**	β = -0.358, p < 0.001
H2	Organizational commitment negatively predicts quiet quitting	**Rejected**	β = -0.103, p = 0.090
H3	Work-life balance negatively predicts quiet quitting	**Supported**	β = -0.134, p = 0.033
H4	HR practices moderate JS-QQ relationship	**Partially Supported**	Recognition and flexibility significant; development non-significant

4.10 Summary of Statistical Findings

The statistical analyses yielded several important findings regarding quiet quitting among Gen Z telecom employees. Overall, the prevalence of quiet quitting was moderate, with a mean score of 2.90 (SD = 0.743), indicating that disengagement was present at a noticeable but not extreme level in the sample. In practical terms, this suggests that quiet quitting was neither rare nor overwhelmingly severe; rather, it represented a meaningful workplace issue affecting a substantial proportion of respondents. Supporting this interpretation, 45.3% of participants reported that they performed only the minimum required level of work, which reflects a significant tendency toward reduced discretionary effort. This pattern suggests that although many employees remained formally present and fulfilled basic job expectations, a considerable segment had psychologically withdrawn from going beyond what was strictly required.

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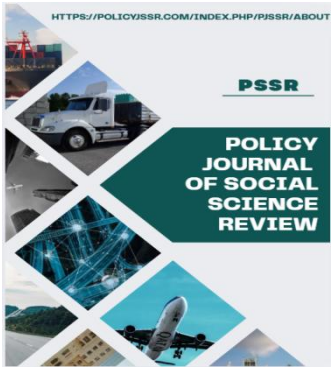

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With regard to the main explanatory factors, job satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor of quiet quitting (β = -0.358, p < 0.001), indicating that employees who were more satisfied with their jobs were substantially less likely to disengage. Work-life balance also showed a significant negative effect (β = -0.134, p = 0.033), although its influence was weaker, suggesting that difficulties in balancing work and personal life still contribute meaningfully to withdrawal behaviours. By contrast, organizational commitment did not reach statistical significance, which implies that commitment alone was not a reliable independent predictor once the other variables were considered. The overall regression model explained 51.8% of the variance in quiet quitting (adjusted R^2 = 0.507), representing a large effect size (f^2 = 1.075), which indicates that the predictors collectively provided strong explanatory power. In addition, recognition programs (β = -0.089, p = 0.004) and flexible work policies (β = -0.072, p = 0.035) significantly moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and quiet quitting, showing that supportive

HR practices strengthen the protective effect of job satisfaction against disengagement. Relative importance analysis further demonstrated that job satisfaction contributed the largest share to explained variance (42.3%), followed by work-life balance (35.1%) and organizational commitment (22.6%). Finally, demographic analysis revealed that tenure was significantly associated with quiet quitting (p = 0.036), with longer-tenured employees reporting higher levels of withdrawal, suggesting that prolonged time in the organization may increase the likelihood of disengagement under certain conditions (Aurangzeb et al., 2021).

These findings provide robust empirical support for the study's theoretical framework while revealing unexpected nuances regarding organizational commitment. The results are discussed in detail in discussion section.

5. Discussion

5.1 Key Findings.

The study shows that job satisfaction and work-life balance are significant predictors of quiet quitting among telecom Gen Z employees, whereas organizational commitment unexpectedly is zero.

Job Satisfaction as Primary Predictor: The results of the job satisfaction as the primary predictor showed a strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and quiet quitting (β = -0.358) which is similar to the results of other researchers such as Suhendar et al. (2023) and Zenger & Folkman (2022). Gen Z workers are more likely to be satisfied with their work when they are recognized, are paid fairly, and have purposeful work—where telecoms can have a direct impact on these employees through HR policies.

Work-Life Balance Importance: The result of this relationship was significant (β = -0.134), supporting the vital role of boundary management in the life of Gen Z (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Vyas, 2022). The round-the-clock requirements of the telecom industry pose specific work-life issues and fuel the need for flexible policies and workload management.

Organizational Commitment Paradox: The non-significant finding for organizational commitment (β = -0.103, p = 0.090) indicates that Gen Z might have different commitment paradigms than other

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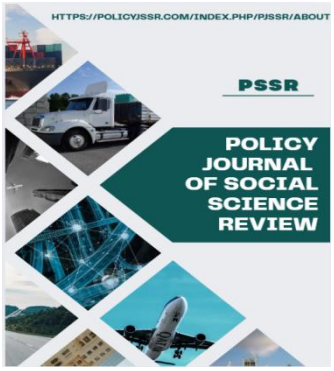

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generations. Crampton and Hodge (2007) noted that young workers have a transactional attitude toward their work, which means that they demonstrate a continuance commitment but no affective commitment. It goes against the conventional wisdom of HR departments in establishing loyalty through long-term relationships.

5.2 Theoretical Implications.

This study added value to the literature on 'quiet quitting' in several ways. First, it offers empirical support for integrated theoretical approaches (SET, COR, JD-R) in a new context.

Second, it implies that theories of commitment mechanisms need to be developed further; affective commitment might not be as important for Gen Z as previous theories indicate. Thirdly, it shows that quiet quitting is a unique concept from other related constructs such as burnout and intention to quit..

5.3 Practical Implications for HRM in Telecom.

Recognition Systems: Telecom organisations should consider a multi-level approach to recognition that includes formal awards, peer recognition platforms, and real-time feedback as recognition is a powerful moderator. For multiple reasons, recognition is a powerful moderator and should be a multi-tiered approach that includes formal awards, peer recognition platforms, and real-time feedback. Recognition needs to be regular, appropriate and fair.

Flexible Work Arrangements: In order to satisfy the needs of autonomy and connection for the Gen Z, flexible working arrangements such as hybrid working should be considered as a standard. Core hours with flexibility, remote work and after-hours communication boundaries should be specified in policies.

Workload Management: Telecom's environment is extremely demanding, and need for systematic workload audits, reasonable performance expectations and Stress Management Resources. Personal time policies or “right to disconnect” policies are necessary.

Career Development Redesign: Instead of conventional career paths with a promotion ladder, companies should provide a variety of ways to advance like skill development, project rotation, mentorship, and more without compromising work-life balance.

Well-being Investment: Mental health resources, stress management training, and wellness programs should be integrated into organizational culture, not treated as peripheral benefits.

6. Conclusion

The present study explored the factors impacting quiet quitting among gen Z telecom workers including job satisfaction, work-life balance, and organizational commitment, and concluded that both job satisfaction and work-life balance were significant predictors of quiet quitting, whereas organizational commitment was not. These relationships were moderated by HR practices, such as recognition programs and flexible policies. The results indicate that managing the "quiet quitters" effectively demands a change in the approach to engagement from traditional methods to methods that are more in line with Gen Z's value priorities of autonomy, flexibility, recognition, and work-life balance (Asif, 2025).

There are a number of restrictions to consider. The cross-sectional design does not

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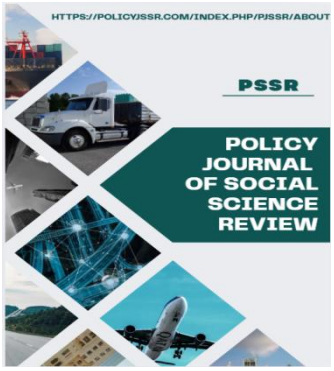

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allow for causal inferences to be drawn, so it is necessary to conduct a longitudinal study to determine the temporal sequence (Asif & Rafiq-uz-Zaman, 2026). The sample is enough but may not cover the diversity of telecom sector of Pakistan. Common method biases were a concern with self-report instruments, but procedures were taken to address this. The non-significant organizational commitment finding could be due to measurement issues that need to be explored in greater depth (Asif & Bashir, 2026).

Future research should: (1) use a longitudinal design to understand the process of quiet quitting over time, (2) include research on the effectiveness of HR interventions using experimental designs, (3) use supervisor rated measures to complement self-report measures, (4) include additional moderators such as leadership style or team climate, and (5) compare quiet quitting in other industry and cultural contexts.

7. Recommendations for Telecom HR Leaders

HR Leaders need to take a proactive and multi-dimensional approach to tackle the phenomenon of 'quiet quitting' among Gen-Z employees, particularly in the telecom space.

First, organizations should use regular engagement pulse surveys that are geared towards identifying the early signs of quiet quitting, including low discretionary effort, emotional disengagement and lack of motivation. Such quick and regular evaluations would help HR departments catch new issues before they become more serious withdrawal issues.

Furthermore, flexible working arrangements should be in place with clear boundaries that respect employees' personal time, as autonomy and maintaining a healthy work-life balance are significant values for Gen Z employees. This can involve the implementation of hybrid working policies, flexible working arrangements and clear guidelines on after-hours correspondence.

HR managers should also create recognition initiatives that offer routine, equitable and significant recognition of staff efforts, which benefits in improving staff morale and solidifying worker value and belonging to the company. Concurrently, career development strategies should be tailored to provide alternative routes to advancement, such as non-linear promotion opportunities, project-based learning, skill building, lateral career moves and mentorship, that could be better suited to the preferences of younger workers who are more interested in continuing to develop their careers without compromising their personal health.

In addition, manager training should be emphasized to better equip managers to communicate with Gen Z employees, give constructive feedback, and offer support to keep them engaged (Asif & Rafiq-uz-Zaman, 2026). Managers have a significant impact on employee everyday experiences, and their listening skills, acknowledging effort and responding empathetic can make the difference in decreasing employee disengagement.

HR should also set up health initiatives, such as mental health support, counselling services, and stress management programs, and ensure that employees can access these resources when they are under stress at work. Last, organizations should establish safe and easy ways for Gen Z workers to provide feedback, ideas, and grievances without fear of being judged or

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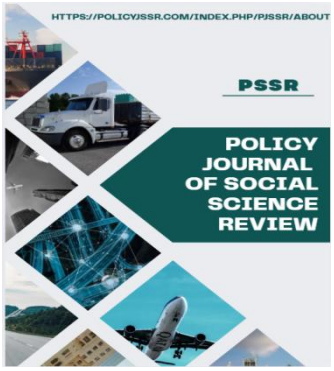

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retaliated against. They foster transparency, build trust, and support HR to better serve evolving employee expectations. With these all put together, the recommendations indicate that in order to stop quiet quitting, there is need for policy change, as well as a change in culture for supporting, flexing, acknowledging, and communicating.

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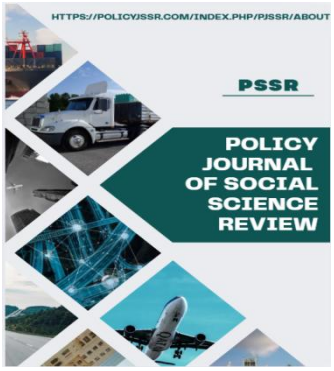

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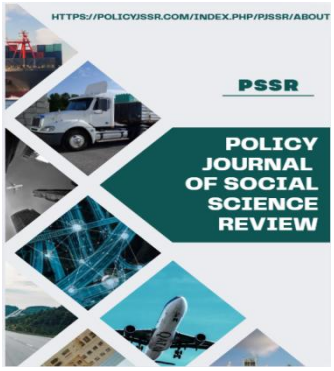

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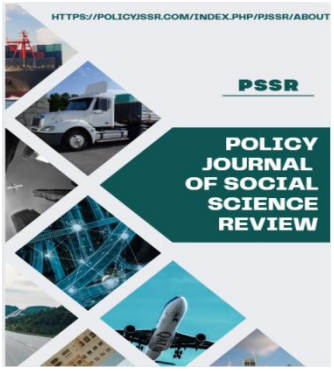

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