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The relationship between work stress and quiet quitting among generation Z employees

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ABSTRACT

Quiet quitting represents a phase of disengagement in which employees continue to work but limit their efforts strictly to job descriptions. When this occurs on a massive scale, it hinders innovation, increases workload for engaged employees, and contributes to stagnant organizational growth. Previous studies have shown that quiet quitting is prevalent among Gen Z and is influenced by work stress. Work stress consists of challenge and hindrance stress, which affect individual performance differently. High levels of stress can also reduce productivity and lead to organizational losses. Therefore, further research is necessary to understand the relationship between these two types of work stress and quiet quitting. This study aims to examine the relationship between challenge stress, hindrance stress, and quiet quitting among Gen Z employees in Indonesia. A quantitative correlational design was used. The sample consisted of 212 Gen Z employees in Indonesia, selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected through an online survey using the Challenge and Hindrance-related Self-Reported Stress Scale by Cavanaugh et al. (1998) and the Quiet Quitting Scale by Galanis et al. (2023). The C-HSS contained 11 items, while the QQS comprised eight items, showing acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.600$). The results indicate that challenge stress is negatively correlated with quiet quitting, whereas hindrance stress is positively correlated. Challenge stress tends to enhance motivation and reduce quiet quitting tendencies, whereas hindrance stress increases withdrawal behaviors. These findings provide insights for organizations to develop strategies for managing Gen Z employees' work-related stress and maintaining their engagement levels.

Keywords: challenge stress; hindrance stress; quiet quitting; gen Z employees

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, technology, and shifting generations have changed the workplace. HR practitioners in Indonesia have noticed these changes (Fajriyanti et al., 2023). The workforce now comprises Gen X (born 1965–1980), Millennials (born 1981–1996), and Gen Z (born 1997–2012). Fajriyanti et al. (2023) reported that Gen Z comprises approximately 40% of Indonesia's workforce across various sectors. As the dominant group, Gen Z affects the organizational performance.

Performance is a crucial aspect that reflects an organization's achievement of its established objectives. In addition to individual potential, performance is influenced by various factors, including employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to an individual's willingness to commit to their work, devote their time, abilities, and energy, and view their job as an integral part of their life. Employees who feel engaged tend to show high commitment, take the initiative, and contribute maximally to the organization (Harter, 2023). Conversely, disengaged employees are not only passive, but also consciously and actively withdraw, exhibiting negative attitudes towards their work and the organization due to feelings of discomfort or dislike.

Quiet quitting is a phase of disengagement (Ochis, 2024). This phenomenon occurs when employees continue to work but limit their efforts to the tasks listed in their job descriptions without making any extra effort (Scheyett, 2022). As stated by Mahand and Caldwell (2023), employees engage in quiet quitting to achieve work-life balance or maintain their physical and mental health in a stressful work environment. Quiet quitters tend not to work overtime, do not attend non-mandatory meetings, are not proactive, and tend to reject the idea that their lives should be dominated by work (Ochis, 2024). The massive spread of quiet quitting can lead to a decline in innovation, an increase in the workload for employees who remain engaged, and the potential for stagnation in organizational growth (Boy & Sürmeli, 2023).

This phenomenon is particularly evident among Gen Z, who have different expectations of the world of work than previous generations. Xueyun et al. (2023) found that Gen Z in China are more likely to engage in quiet quitting, with an average quiet quitting intention of 3.151 (SD = 1.433) on a 7-point Likert scale, which is considered low. Veren et al. (2025) also mentioned that Gen Z employees in Indonesia are more likely to engage in quiet quitting than Millennials, with an average quiet quitting intention of 2.82 (SD = 0.63) on a 5-point Likert scale, which is relatively low. Ramadhi et al. (2024) study used the Smart PLS 4.0 and Structural Equation Model (SEM) approaches with quiet quitting indicators that had high loadings (0.774–0.871) and an AVE of 0.702 with a minimum limit of 0.50, indicating a high level of quiet quitting among Gen Z employees in West Sumatra. This condition is triggered by the characteristics of Gen Z, who tend to get bored easily, are more selective in choosing jobs, and have a moderate level of career adaptability, making them more prone to disengagement.

Based on the findings in the article “Identifying Key Antecedents of Quiet Quitting Among Nurses: A Cross-Profession Meta-Analytic Review,” quiet quitting is influenced by various factors, one of which is work stress (Geng et al., 2025). This is because stress is considered to have an impact on employees' attitudes toward their work (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). According to Makkira et al. (2022), stress is a state of tension that can impact an individual's emotions, mindset, and physical well-being. If not managed properly, stress can cause a person to have difficulty interacting positively with their surroundings. Cavanaugh et al. (1998) divide work stress into two types: challenge stress and hindrance stress.

Challenge stress refers to a work-related demand or situation that, although potentially stressful, has the potential to benefit individuals by producing eustress (Cavanaugh et al., 1998). A study by Calista and Nugrahaningsih (2023) indicates that eustress has a positive and significant impact on work engagement, motivating employees to remain actively engaged and develop in their roles. On the other hand, hindrance stress is a work-related demand or situation that tends to limit or interfere with an individual's work performance, without offering potential benefits, and generates distress (Cavanaugh et al., 1998). A study by Yang et al. (2025) explains that psychological distress can increase the risk of turnover intention from work because it damages their mental well-being and job satisfaction.

According to research by [Budiarti and Sera \(2022\)](#), work stress is a significant issue in the workplace, as it can have a detrimental impact on employees. This statement is reinforced by a survey conducted by Deloitte among 22,000 respondents from 44 countries, spanning from 2020 to 2023, which shows that nearly 46% of Gen Z respondents experience high levels of stress and anxiety at work ([Hamid & Taslim, 2024](#)). Research conducted by [Dudija and Putri \(2025\)](#) also shows that the average percentage of work stress among Gen Z employees in Indonesia reaches 68.8%, which is considered high. Work stress stems from work situations that include unclear roles, interpersonal relationships, limited career development opportunities, inadequate organizational structure, poor lighting conditions, irregular working hours, and excessive workloads.

[Steven and Prasetyo \(2020\)](#) found that work stress affects individual performance due to excessive pressure received, resulting in organizations experiencing decreased productivity and material deficits. The Challenge-Hindrance Model (CHM) suggests that both types of work stress can increase work pressure on employees. Challenge stress motivates employees and encourages positive work outcomes, while hindrance stress demotivates and harms work outcomes. This is because challenge stress evokes a desire to learn, intrinsic motivation, and coping strategies that focus on problem-solving. In contrast, hindrance stress is known to cause burnout, anger, and fatigue ([Ma et al., 2021](#)).

Several studies discuss that work stress is related to quiet quitting behavior. Through research conducted by [Ramadhi et al. \(2024\)](#) with Gen Z employees in West Sumatra as subjects, a positive relationship was found between work stress and quiet quitting behavior, with a t-statistic of 3.402 and a p-value of 0.001. Conversely, findings presented by [Falah and Palupi \(2025\)](#), using lecturers and educational staff at Syekh Nurjati University in Cirebon as subjects, showed a positive relationship between work stress and quiet quitting, with a t-statistic of 0.833 and a p-value of 0.405. Research presented by [Attamimi and Palupi \(2025\)](#), involving nurses at Awal Bros Hospital in Pekanbaru, showed a negative relationship between work stress and quiet quitting, with a t-statistic of -0.164 and a p-value of 0.118.

Previous research has established a relationship between work stress and quiet quitting behavior; however, the strength and direction of this relationship vary across studies. However, there is a lack of research specifically examining how challenge stress and hindrance stress relate to quiet quitting among Gen Z employees in Indonesia. Most existing studies focus only on narrow contexts or regions. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between challenge stress, hindrance stress, and quiet quitting behavior among Gen Z employees in Indonesia. The study's objective is to generate practical insights for organizations to effectively manage work stress among Gen Z and contribute to the academic understanding of how these types of stressors relate to quiet quitting and employee engagement.

2. METHOD

This type of research is quantitative correlational, aiming to identify and clarify the causal relationship between challenge stress and hindrance stress on quiet quitting behavior among Gen Z employees in Indonesia. In this study, the technique employed is convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling. Convenience sampling is the process of collecting data from a research population that is easily accessible to researchers ([Golzar et al., 2022](#)). The criteria include active employees who have worked for at least one year, are part of Gen Z aged 18-28 years, and are willing to provide the required information. Data collection in this study was conducted online through the Google Form platform. Before filling out the questionnaire, all respondents were asked to give their informed consent as a form of willingness to participate in this study. The collection process took place within a certain time frame, and only questionnaires that had been completed and met the criteria were considered valid for analysis. The research tools consisted of a Google Form questionnaire containing the Challenge and Hindrance Self-Reported Stress Scale (CHSS) and the Quiet Quitting Scale (QQS) to measure two types of work stress (challenge stress and hindrance stress) and quiet quitting. Statistical software, handheld devices, and computers were also required to conduct this study.

2.1. Participants

This study involved 212 respondents who were active employees in various industrial sectors in Indonesia with at least one year of work experience. The characteristics of the participants in this study included gender, age, education level, length of employment, work location, employee status, job level, and marital status. The participants in this study were predominantly female, comprising 85.8%, while males accounted for 14.2%. The majority of respondents were in the 22-25 age range (56.6%), had a D4/S1 (bachelor's degree) as their highest level of education (55.2%), and were unmarried (96.7%). In terms of work, most participants were new employees with 1 to 3 years of work experience (92.5%), contract employees (44.3%), staff level (83.0%), and worked in the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (40.6%). The complete details of the participants' characteristics are presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	Category	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	30	14,2%
	Female	182	85,8%
Age	18-21 years old	70	33,3%
	22-25 years old	120	56,6%
	26-28 years old	22	10,4%
Last Education	SMA/SMK	87	41,0%
	D1	1	0,5%
	D3	5	2,4%
	D4/S1	117	55,2%
Tunure	S2	2	0,9%
	1-3 years	196	92,5%
	> 3-5 years	11	5,2%
Domicile	> 5 years	5	2,4%
	Bali	1	0,5%
	Banten	16	7,5%
	Special Region of Aceh	1	0,5%
	Special Region of Yogyakarta	9	4,2%
	DKI Jakarta	86	40,6%
	Jambi	1	0,5%
	West Java	48	22,6%
	Central Java	12	5,7%
	East Java	21	9,9%
Employee Status	West Kalimantan	1	0,5%
	East Kalimantan	1	0,5%
	Riau Islands	3	1,4%
	Lampung	1	0,5%
	Riau	1	0,5%
	South Sulawesi	5	2,4%
	West Sumatra	2	0,9%
	North Sumatra	3	1,4%
	Daily/ <i>Freelance</i>	55	25,9%
	Contract	94	44,3%
Position Level	Permanent	63	29,7%
	Staff	176	83,0%
	Senior Staff	10	4,7%
	Supervisor	9	4,2%
	Assistant Manager	8	3,8%
	Manager	7	3,3%
	Others	2	1,0%
Marital Status	Single	205	96,7%
	Married	6	2,8%
	Divorced	1	2,8%

2.2. Measurement

Two types of work stress, namely challenge stress and hindrance stress, are identified using the Challenge and Hindrance-related Self-Reported Stress Scale (C-HSS), proposed by [Cavanaugh et al. \(1998\)](#). The C-HSS has 11 items, with 6 items measuring challenge stress and 5 items measuring hindrance stress. One of the challenge stress items is “The number of projects and/or assignments I have.” Conversely, one of the hindrance stress items is “The degree to which politics rather than performance affects organizational decisions.” All items on the C-HSS are designed in a positive form.

Respondents completed the questionnaire by rating each statement on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not stressful) to 5 (very stressful), with higher scores indicating increased levels of both challenge stress and hindrance stress. To ensure the reliability of these constructs, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated and yielded values of 0.859 for challenge stress and 0.765 for hindrance stress, both demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency. Although all challenge stress items were phrased positively, certain items were recoded to ensure consistent alignment with the underlying theoretical framework; this step was necessary to accurately reflect the intended construct directionality and to enhance measurement validity.

Quiet quitting behavior was assessed using the Quiet Quitting Scale (QQS), originally developed by [Galanis et al. \(2023\)](#) and subsequently translated into Indonesian by [Veren et al. \(2025\)](#). The QQS comprises nine items, each mapped to one of three theoretically distinct dimensions of quiet quitting: (1) Detachment, which evaluates the degree to which employees experience emotional disengagement from their professional responsibilities; (2) Lack of Motivation, which measures the reduced motivational drive to effectively complete assigned work-related tasks; and (3) Lack of Initiative, which captures the extent to which employees refrain from undertaking tasks that extend beyond their formal job descriptions. This multidimensional structure enables a comprehensive assessment of the various facets of quiet quitting behavior. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the statements provided using a 5-point Likert scale. Some statements used a range from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, to (5) strongly agree. Meanwhile, other statements used a scale ranging from (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often, to (5) always. Higher scores reflect a greater level of quiet quitting.

All items in the QQS are positively worded, eliminating the presence of direct negative statements. However, select items were reverse-scored to enhance construct validity and mitigate response bias ([Galanis et al., 2023](#)). Reliability analysis was conducted for both the overall quiet quitting construct and its dimensions. The Cronbach's Alpha for the total quiet quitting scale was 0.757, while the lack of motivation, detachment, and lack of initiative dimensions yielded coefficients of 0.760, 0.661, and 0.823, respectively. Each of these values meets or exceeds conventional thresholds for internal consistency, with the detachment dimension approaching adequacy. During reliability assessment, the item “How often do you take initiative at work?” within the Lack of Initiative dimension demonstrated a Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) value of 0.246, which falls below the acceptable threshold of 0.3. Consequently, this item was removed to improve the internal consistency of the dimension and the overall scale. The deletion of this item resulted in the reduction of the QQS to eight items, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of subsequent analyses.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Description of Research Variables

The mean score for challenge stress was 2.530 (SD = 0.886), whereas hindrance stress displayed a higher mean of 3.441 (SD = 0.867). Interpreted within the context of the 1–5 Likert scale employed in this study, challenge stress ratings predominantly correspond to a low level of perceived stress, while hindrance stress is most accurately classified within the moderate category. These findings suggest that, on average, participants perceive fewer task-related or growth-promoting stressors compared to stressors perceived as obstacles or barriers. The observed range for both variables, spanning from 1.00 to 5.00, indicates that responses covered the full continuum of possible stress levels, demonstrating variation in the extent to which individuals experience each form of stress. The distinction in average scores implies

that hindrance stress is a more salient factor for the sample and may have greater implications for subsequent workplace outcomes.

The quiet quitting variable yielded a mean score of 2.68 (SD = 0.725), indicating a generally low prevalence within the sample when using the 1-5 Likert scale. Analysis of the constituent dimensions reveals further differentiation: lack of motivation exhibited the lowest mean at 2.22 (SD = 0.850), while detachment and lack of initiative were comparatively higher at 2.89 (SD = 0.870) and 2.70 (SD = 1.187), respectively. Despite this variation, all dimension means remain within the low category, signifying that the manifestation of quiet quitting behaviors and their subcomponents is limited among respondents. The observed score ranges suggest some variability, with the quiet quitting variable overall spanning from 1.00 to 4.50; the lack of motivation dimension also ranges from 1.00 to 4.50, detachment from 1.00 to 4.75, and lack of initiative from 1.00 to 5.00. This pattern indicates that, although the average levels are low, individual responses encompass nearly the full extent of the scale for certain dimensions, highlighting the presence of a minority exhibiting higher levels of quiet quitting behaviors.

3.2. Normality Test

The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, when applied to the unstandardized residuals produces an asymptotic significance (two-tailed) of 0.200. As this p-value surpasses the conventional threshold of 0.05, the data do not provide sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality. Establishing the normality of residuals is a critical prerequisite for the appropriate application of parametric statistical methods, as such methods assume normally distributed errors to yield valid and unbiased parameter estimates. In practical terms, confirming normality enhances the credibility of resulting inferences and ensures that subsequent conclusions drawn from the data analysis are methodologically sound and applicable to real-world scenarios, such as policy recommendations or program evaluations based on these findings.

3.3. Correlation Test

The results of the assumption testing indicate that the data satisfy normality requirements, validating the use of Pearson's correlation analysis. The findings reveal a statistically significant negative correlation between challenge stress and quiet quitting ($r = -0.375, p < 0.001$). This result supports the first hypothesis (H1), suggesting that as employees experience increased levels of challenge stress, stressors perceived as opportunities for growth or achievement, their propensity to engage in quiet quitting diminishes. In practical terms, fostering an environment where challenge stressors are present may reduce disengagement and promote proactive employee behavior. In contrast, hindrance stress demonstrates a significant positive association with quiet quitting ($r = 0.328, p < 0.001$), lending support to the second hypothesis (H2). Specifically, as hindrance stress, which comprises stressors perceived as obstacles to personal growth or job performance, increases, employees are more likely to exhibit quiet quitting behaviors. The consistently low p-values (all $p < 0.05$) confirm the robustness of these associations. These results have direct implications for organizational management, indicating that interventions aimed at reconfiguring stressors from hindrance to challenge may be effective in mitigating quiet quitting and enhancing employee engagement. See [Table 2](#)

Table 2. Pearson’s Correlation Between Work Stress and Quiet Quitting

Variable		Challenge Stress	Hindrance Stress	Quiet Quitting
Challenge Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	-,554**	-,375**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		< ,001	< ,001
Hindrance Stress	Pearson Correlation	-,554**	1	,328**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	< ,001		< ,001
Quiet Quitting	Pearson Correlation	-,375**	,328**	1

	Sig. (1-tailed)	< ,001	< ,001	
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3.4. Additional Data Analysis

The results of the Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way ANOVA revealed several significant and non-significant differences across demographic variables. For gender, Levene’s test revealed non-homogeneous variances for challenge stress (Sig. < 0.001), and the t-test result ($p < 0.001$) indicated a significant difference, with male employees reporting higher levels of challenge stress. For hindrance stress, Levene’s test was homogeneous (Sig. = 0.183), and the t-test ($p = 0.040$) revealed that female employees experienced significantly higher hindrance stress. However, for quiet quitting, Levene’s test (Sig. = 0.158) and the t-test ($p = 0.749$) showed no significant difference between genders.

Based on educational level, the One-Way ANOVA results showed that challenge stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.014; ANOVA Sig. = 0.058), hindrance stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.190; ANOVA Sig. = 0.486), and quiet quitting (Levene’s Sig. = 0.251; ANOVA Sig. = 0.088) did not significantly differ among participants with different education backgrounds. Similarly, based on length of service, challenge stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.473; ANOVA Sig. = 0.687), hindrance stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.847; ANOVA Sig. = 0.513), and quiet quitting (Levene’s Sig. = 0.767; ANOVA Sig. = 0.491) showed no significant differences.

For employee status, challenge stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.090; ANOVA Sig. = 0.772), hindrance stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.032; ANOVA Sig. = 0.223), and quiet quitting (Levene’s Sig. = 0.843; ANOVA Sig. = 0.407) also showed no significant differences. However, job level produced one significant result: although challenge stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.547; ANOVA Sig. = 0.513) and quiet quitting (Levene’s Sig. = 0.490; ANOVA Sig. = 0.302) were not significant, hindrance stress showed a significant difference (Levene’s Sig. = 0.512; ANOVA Sig. = 0.001), with staff-level employees reporting higher hindrance stress than other job levels.

Regarding marital status, the results indicated that challenge stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.281; ANOVA Sig. = 0.030) differed significantly, with divorced employees exhibiting higher challenge stress than married or single employees. However, hindrance stress (Levene’s Sig. = 0.008; ANOVA Sig. = 0.218) and quiet quitting (Levene’s Sig. = 0.830; ANOVA Sig. = 0.692) did not show significant differences across marital groups. Overall, these findings suggest that gender, job level, and marital status are the only demographic variables that significantly impact stress levels, while other demographic factors have no substantial effect on either stress or quiet quitting.

4. DISCUSSION

This study examines the relationship between two distinct forms of work stress, challenge stress and hindrance stress, and the prevalence of quiet quitting behavior among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The primary research question aims to investigate how each type of work stress affects employees' propensity to engage in quiet quitting. The results of hypothesis testing indicate that challenge stress is inversely associated with quiet quitting, whereas hindrance stress exhibits a positive relationship with this behavior. Drawing on the framework established by [Cavanaugh et al. \(1998\)](#), this study further posits that challenge stress and hindrance stress exert differential effects on employee behavioral outcomes.

The first finding indicates that the higher the perceived work stress that employees consider meaningful, the lower their tendency to engage in quiet quitting behavior. This condition is caused by stress that is challenging in nature, which can lead to eustress ([Cavanaugh et al., 1998](#)). This aligns with the Eustress theory proposed by [Selye \(1976\)](#). The term eustress originates from the Greek word eu, meaning “good,” and is used to describe a form of stress that has a positive impact, depending on individual conditions. [Selye \(1976\)](#) defines eustress as a response to demands that are perceived as positive challenges and experienced as satisfying or beneficial, such as adventure, excitement, or opportunities for growth. Challenge stress, which is viewed as a form of eustress, provides positive strength, motivation, and opportunities for growth, thereby encouraging employees to remain actively engaged in their work. The study by [Calista and Nugrahaningsih \(2023\)](#) suggests that eustress has a positive and significant impact on

work engagement, motivating employees to remain engaged and develop in their roles. Thus, challenge stress does not encourage quiet quitting behavior, but rather reduces the tendency of employees to simply work according to their job description or withdraw from their job responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the second finding shows that the higher the level of obstructive stress experienced by employees in their work, the greater their tendency to engage in quiet quitting. This occurs because hindrance produces negative stress or distress (Cavanaugh et al., 1998). This finding is consistent with Selye (1976) Distress theory. The term distress itself comes from the Latin word *dis*, which means 'bad' or 'negative'. Distress is defined as a form of stress based on an individual's condition that can have negative or unpleasant effects. Specifically, distress arises when the demands faced exceed the body's adaptive capacity to manage them effectively, resulting in tension, damage, or adverse consequences. Hindrance stress, such as rigid bureaucracy, role ambiguity, and inter-employee conflict, causes feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction because employees feel they have lost control and opportunities for growth (Cavanaugh et al., 1998). Distress itself can trigger adaptive mechanisms in the form of withdrawal, whereby employees reduce their involvement and motivation in order to maintain their psychological well-being. A study by Yang et al. (2025) states that psychological distress increases the risk of employees wanting to leave their jobs, as it damages their mental well-being and job satisfaction. Employees who experience distress tend to feel dissatisfied with their jobs and are more likely to withdraw from their work. Therefore, quiet quitting behavior is considered a response to work pressure that is inhibiting, in line with Selye's view that distress arises when individuals face demands that are perceived as unable to be effectively overcome.

Based on the results of the difference test for additional data analysis, it was found that several demographic variables had a significant effect on individual work stress, both challenge stress and hindrance stress, but not on quiet quitting. The results of the analysis revealed significant differences in challenge stress and hindrance stress based on gender, whereas quiet quitting did not differ significantly. The level of challenge stress in men was higher than in women. Conversely, the level of hindrance stress in women was higher than in men. These findings indicate that biological and psychological differences between men and women affect how they deal with work pressure, in line with Eagly and Wood's (2012) Social Role theory, which states that the pressure to adjust behavior to gender roles amid work role demands can create different sources of perceived stress for men and women. The absence of significant differences in quiet quitting indicates that disengagement is more influenced by individual and work environment factors than gender. A study by Nidhi et al. (2023) reveals significant differences between male and female employees in the banking sector in three key aspects of work experience, including work stress. Female employees are reported to experience higher levels of work stress than male employees. These findings confirm that female employees face challenges in the work environment, including increased stress, reduced support, and a weakened sense of purpose at work. Meanwhile, the level of final education, length of service, and employee status did not show significant differences in challenge stress, hindrance stress, or quiet quitting.

The results of the difference test also show significant differences in hindrance stress based on job level, but challenge stress and quiet quitting do not differ significantly. Employees in staff positions experienced the highest level of hindrance stress compared to employees in other position levels. Research conducted by Peter et al. (2020) suggests that employees in the health sector holding upper and middle management positions report higher demands, more severe conflicts between work and personal life, and lower role clarity, particularly at the middle management level. Meanwhile, those in lower management positions experience greater physical and emotional demands, exhibit higher levels of stress symptoms, and report greater job dissatisfaction. Healthcare workers without managerial responsibilities report the worst working conditions, both in terms of various stressors, job satisfaction, and health outcomes such as burnout symptoms.

In addition, marital status can affect challenge stress, but not hindrance stress and quiet quitting. The results of the difference test indicate that the level of challenge stress among married employees is higher than that of employees in other marital statuses, which can be explained by the Spillover theory (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). This theory explains the reciprocal effects between work and family,

resulting in similarities between the two domains. According to [Edwards and Rothbard \(2000\)](#), the Spillover theory tends to reflect a positive relationship between work and family constructs, regardless of whether the relationship is beneficial or detrimental. When individuals experience a good mood in the family environment, these feelings can carry over to work and improve employee performance (mood spillover). Similarly, skills honed in family roles can be applied to support performance at work (skills spillover), while effective behavioral styles in the family can also be used in work interactions (behavior spillover).

In line with the study by [Sanz-Vergel and Munoz \(2013\)](#), positive experiences at work (work enjoyment) experienced by an individual can indirectly have a positive impact on the well-being of their partner at home, ultimately creating a positive spillover upward spiral that benefits performance and mood at work. Furthermore, [Greenhaus and Powell \(2006\)](#) extend the Family-to-Work Enrichment theory, suggesting that the family is not only a source of conflict but also a vital source of resources and positive emotions that actively encourage employee success and well-being at work. A successful work-family enrichment process can produce eustress in individuals.

5. CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate a significant relationship between both types of work stress, challenge stress and hindrance stress, and quiet quitting behavior among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Data analysis revealed that challenge stress has a negative correlation with quiet quitting, meaning that when employees face demanding but meaningful tasks, they tend to feel more motivated, accomplished, and engaged, thus reducing the likelihood of quiet quitting. In contrast, hindrance stress has a positive correlation with quiet quitting, suggesting that bureaucratic barriers, unclear roles, and workplace conflicts can increase frustration and emotional fatigue, leading employees to disengage from their work. These results confirm both research hypotheses, emphasizing that minimizing hindrance stress and maintaining optimal levels of challenge stress can help organizations lower quiet quitting tendencies and improve employee engagement.

Overall, the study demonstrates that challenge stress and hindrance stress produce opposite effects on quiet quitting: challenge stress enhances motivation and reduces disengagement, while hindrance stress elevates the risk of withdrawal. Additionally, the findings indicate that perceptions of work stress may vary across demographic factors, but quiet quitting tendencies are more closely associated with psychological and workplace conditions. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on stress and employee disengagement among Gen Z in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of fostering work environments that are challenging yet supportive.

For future research, several theoretical recommendations are proposed. First, researchers should consider a more balanced sample distribution across demographics such as age, gender, and education, and include other generations for comparative analysis of work stress and quiet quitting. Second, it is suggested to incorporate additional variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee well-being, as mediators or moderators, since previous study [Geng et al. \(2025\)](#) has shown that these factors can significantly reduce quiet quitting. Third, future studies could employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to capture the evolving dynamics between stress types and quiet quitting over time, rather than relying solely on cross-sectional data.

Practically, organizations in Indonesia are advised to reduce hindrance stressors such as excessive bureaucracy, interpersonal conflicts, and role ambiguity by simplifying procedures, strengthening communication, and clarifying job responsibilities. The study also found that staff-level employees experience higher hindrance stress than other groups, suggesting a need for targeted stress management in this segment through feedback, participation opportunities, and supportive leadership. Meanwhile, HR teams should design balanced challenges by providing stimulating tasks along with adequate training and development support. On the individual side, Gen Z employees are encouraged to improve their soft skills particularly adaptability and stress management through continuous learning, maintaining work-life balance, and actively seeking feedback to stay engaged and prevent quiet quitting.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University.

Informed Consent Statement

Prior to data collection, participants received a clear explanation of the study's aims and provided their consent to participate. Their involvement was voluntary, and the collected responses were treated confidentially and used only for research purposes.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization, KV, Z, and IP; methodology, KV, Z, and IP; validation, Z, and IP; formal analysis, KV, Z, and IP; resources, KV.; writing – original draft preparation, KV, Z, and IP; writing – review and editing, KV, Z, and IP.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

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