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Gen Z at Work: The Roles of Quiet Quitting, Career Support, and Engagement in Shaping Performance

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Abstract: In response to rising concerns around quiet quitting, particularly among Generation Z, this study explores how behavioral withdrawal and proactive engagement shape employee performance in creative agency environments. This quantitative study investigates the influence of quiet quitting, perceived career support, and work engagement on the performance of Gen Z employees. Data were collected via a structured survey and analyzed using multiple linear regression to 125 respondents to determine the predictive power of each variable. The results clearly demonstrate that while quiet quitting negatively impacts performance, both perceived career support and work engagement play significant and positive roles in enhancing it. Among the three predictors, work engagement emerged as the most influential factor, highlighting the importance of fostering deep psychological connection with work.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance remains a critical pillar of organizational success (Anakpo et al., 2023), particularly in industries where creativity, responsiveness, and innovation are central to value creation (Ferrara et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2022). In creative agencies, employees are not only expected to complete their tasks efficiently, but also to contribute ideas, collaborate dynamically, and deliver high-quality outcomes under tight deadlines. As the workforce composition shifts, organizations are increasingly relying on Generation Z employees who bring fresh perspectives and high adaptability (Katsaros, 2024), but who also hold different expectations about work, growth, and engagement compared to previous generations (Jayathilake et al., 2021).

Ensuring high performance among Gen Z employees poses new challenges. They tend to prioritize personal well-being, career development, and meaningful work over traditional markers of success (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Aggarwal et al., 2022). They are also less likely to tolerate environments that lack transparency, flexibility, or psychological safety (Jayathilake et al., 2021). When such expectations are unmet, organizations may encounter subtle yet impactful forms of disengagement that ultimately reduce performance.

One of the most visible expressions of this disengagement is the phenomenon of quiet quitting. Rather than formally resigning, employees who engage in quiet quitting perform only the tasks explicitly stated in their job descriptions; nothing more, nothing less (Ratnatunga, 2022; Agarwal et al., 2025). While this may appear as compliance on the surface, it often signals a deeper withdrawal from the emotional and cognitive investment

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that drives exceptional performance (Gone et al., 2025; Karrani et al., 2024). In fast-paced, project-driven environments like creative agencies, where going beyond basic duties is often essential, quiet quitting can have serious implications for team dynamics and organizational output.

To address these concerns, it is important to identify organizational factors that can counteract or even prevent quiet quitting. One such factor is perceived career support, which refers to the extent to which employees feel their organization is actively supporting their growth, skill development, and career progression (Chauhan et al., 2022; Song et al., 2024). For Gen Z employees, who are often motivated by future-oriented goals and personal advancement, perceived career support can foster a sense of belonging and commitment (Jackson et al., 2023). When employees believe their aspirations are recognized and supported, they are more likely to remain engaged and deliver strong performance (Udayar et al., 2024).

In addition, the role of work engagement is especially important in understanding performance variations. Work engagement reflects an energetic and fulfilling state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work activities (Koekemoer et al., 2021; Shukla & Shaheen, 2024). Engaged employees tend to go above and beyond their job requirements, willingly contributing extra effort and showing enthusiasm toward their tasks (Kalra et al., 2025; Yao et al., 2022). In many ways, work engagement is the psychological opposite of quiet quitting. While the latter represents passive withdrawal, the former reflects proactive contribution (Huang et al., 2022; Bakker, 2022); both of which have direct implications for employee performance.

Taken together, these three factors—quiet quitting, perceived career support, and work engagement—represent a complex interplay of behavioral, organizational, and psychological influences on employee performance. By examining these relationships in the context of Gen Z employees in creative agencies, this study aims to contribute practical insights for organizations seeking to enhance productivity, strengthen engagement, and prevent silent forms of burnout or withdrawal.

METHODS

This study involved 125 respondents, all of whom were Generation Z employees working in creative agencies based in Bandung. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the inclusion criteria requiring that they had at least two years of work experience. This criterion was applied to ensure that respondents had meaningful exposure to workplace environments, particularly in relation to perceptions of career support and engagement. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Given the target group's digital nativity, online distribution was considered the most efficient and accessible method. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." It included items designed to measure four constructs: quiet quitting, perceived career support, work engagement, and employee performance. While specific scale items were adapted from existing literature, the focus remained on capturing behavioral tendencies, motivational states, and perceived performance outcomes relevant to Gen Z employees in creative industries.

Once the data were collected, the data were analyzed using SPSS. The primary analytical technique used in this study was multiple linear regression, which allowed for examination of the direct effects of quiet quitting, perceived career support, and work engagement on employee performance. Assumptions related to linear regression, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, were tested and met prior to interpretation of results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

Table 1. Test Results of the Fourth Week of Effects

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	75	60%
Male	50	40%
Age		
20-25 years old	82	66%
26-30 years old	43	34%
Education		
Bachelor Degree	97	78
Master Degree	28	22
Work Experience		
2-3 years	80	64%
4+ years	45	36%
Division		
Design	28	23%
Marketing	34	27%
Content	38	30%
Administration	20	16%
Finance	5	4%

Source: Data processed by the Author (2025)

The respondents in this study consisted of 125 Generation Z employees working in various creative agencies across Bandung. In terms of gender distribution, 60% of participants identified as female and 40% as male. Most respondents were between the ages of 26 and 30, which represents the younger segment of the workforce. The majority held a bachelor's degree. All participants had a minimum of two years of work experience, in line with the sampling criteria. Most respondents had been working between two to four years, allowing them sufficient exposure to organizational systems and workplace culture. Respondents represented diverse roles within their agencies, including design, marketing, content development, finance, and administrative functions. All participants were full-time employees based in Bandung, Indonesia.

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Item	Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Performance	EP1	0.627	0.758
	EP2	0.721	
	EP3	0.739	
	EP4	0.734	
Quiet Quitting	QQ1	0.873	0.829
	QQ2	0.731	
	QQ3	0.725	
Perceived Career Support	PCS1	0.695	0.876
	PCS2	0.710	
	PCS3	0.832	
	PCS4	0.735	
	PCS4	0.698	
Work Engagement	WE1	0.694	0.814
	WE2	0.708	
	WE3	0.892	
	WE4	0.671	
	WE5	0.842	
	WE6	0.731	
	WE7	0.857	
	WE8	0.891	
	WE9	0.718	

Source: Data processed by the Author (2025)

The results of the validity test, assessed using item-total correlation values, indicate that all questionnaire items are valid. Each item demonstrated a correlation coefficient greater than 0.60, suggesting a strong relationship between each item and its overall construct. This confirms that the items are suitable for measuring quiet quitting, perceived career support, work engagement, and employee performance.

In addition, the reliability of each variable was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. All variables recorded alpha values exceeding 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency. These results confirm that the instrument used in this study is both valid and reliable for further analysis.

Classical Assumption Test

To ensure the appropriateness of the multiple linear regression model, a series of classical assumption tests were conducted. Normality was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. The results showed a significance value of 0.082, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the data are normally distributed and meet the assumption of normality. Multicollinearity was assessed through Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. All independent variables showed Tolerance values ranging from 0.765 to 0.819 and VIF values between 1.222 and 1.308, which are within acceptable limits. These findings suggest that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables. Heteroscedasticity was tested using the Glejser test. The significance values for all independent variables were found to be above 0.05, ranging from 0.447 to 0.529,

indicating the absence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the data fulfill all classical assumptions, making them suitable for further analysis using multiple linear regression.

Results of Hypothesis Test

Table 3. Test Results of the Fourth Week of Effects

Variable	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Sig. (p)	Conclusion
Constant	2.047	5.762	0.000	Significant
Quiet Quitting	-0.295	-2.814	0.006	Significant
Perceived Career Support	0.318	3.102	0.002	Significant
Work Engagement	0.336	3.265	0.001	Significant

Source: Data processed by the Author (2025)

The model's overall significance is supported by the F-test result of 17.893 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating that the regression model is appropriate for explaining variations in employee performance. Individually, all three variables show significant effects. Quiet quitting has a negative regression coefficient of -0.295, suggesting that higher levels of quiet quitting are associated with lower employee performance. On the other hand, perceived career support (B = 0.318) and work engagement (B = 0.336) both show positive and significant effects on performance, with work engagement being the strongest predictor among the three. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.594, indicating that 59.4% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by quiet quitting, perceived career support, and work engagement. The remaining 40.6% is likely influenced by other factors not included in this model.

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that shape employee performance among Generation Z workers in creative agency settings. All three independent variables, namely quiet quitting, perceived career support, and work engagement, were found to significantly influence employee performance, offering both theoretical and practical implications.

The negative relationship between quiet quitting and employee performance reinforces concerns about the silent withdrawal behaviors emerging in modern workplaces. While employees may continue fulfilling core responsibilities, a reduction in discretionary effort, emotional investment, and initiative can ultimately lower performance quality. It supports previous studies conducted by Gabrielova & Buchko (2021; Aggarwal et al., 2022; Jayathilake et al., 2021) For creative agencies, which depend heavily on collaborative energy, responsiveness, and above-average contributions, this disengagement can be particularly costly. The finding underscores the importance of early detection and proactive intervention to prevent subtle forms of burnout or detachment, especially among younger employees.

Conversely, the results highlight the positive and significant influence of perceived career support on performance. This finding aligns with the notion that Gen Z employees are deeply motivated by future-oriented goals, supporting the previous studies (Ratnatunga, 2022; Agarwal et al., 2025; Gone et al., 2025). When they perceive that their organization invests in their growth and provides clear developmental opportunities, they are more likely to reciprocate with increased effort, loyalty, and output. For creative agencies, offering structured learning pathways, mentorship, and visible career progression can be key strategies for retaining and energizing Gen Z talent.

The most influential predictor of performance in this study was work engagement. This supports the understanding that engagement is not merely the absence of disengagement but a proactive and fulfilling psychological state. Engaged employees display greater vigor, dedication, and absorption in their tasks—all of which directly enhance their performance (Koekemoer et al., 2021; Shukla & Shaheen, 2024; Yao et al., 2022). For Gen Z, engagement may stem from factors such as autonomy, creative freedom, social connection, and task significance, which are naturally embedded in creative agency environments. However, if these elements are missing, even high-potential employees may gradually disengage.

Overall, the results suggest a dual reality within Gen Z work behavior. On one hand, they may quietly quit when they feel unsupported or uninspired. On the other, when they are engaged and see a future within the organization, they perform at high levels. This reinforces the idea that Gen Z employees require not just transactional incentives, but relational and developmental investments from their employers.

The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of how contemporary disengagement behaviors coexist with traditional performance drivers, especially in non-traditional work environments. Organizations that aim to optimize performance among Gen Z workers must recognize the complex psychological landscape they operate in—balancing autonomy and support, structure and freedom, present needs and future aspirations.

CONCLUSION

The results clearly demonstrate that while quiet quitting negatively impacts performance, both perceived career support and work engagement play significant and positive roles in enhancing it. Among the three predictors, work engagement emerged as the most influential factor, highlighting the importance of fostering deep psychological connection with work. The findings emphasize that Gen Z employees are highly responsive to organizational environments that prioritize growth, autonomy, and meaningful engagement. When they feel valued and supported in their career paths, and when they are emotionally invested in their work, they are more likely to contribute at high levels. Conversely, when such conditions are absent, they may remain in their roles but disengage silently, leading to a drop in performance that can be difficult to detect. These results offer several important implications for practice. First, organizations—especially in the creative sector—must actively monitor and address early signs of quiet quitting. This can be done by cultivating open communication, ensuring fair workloads, and checking in regularly on employee well-being. Second, investing in structured career support programs, such as mentoring, coaching, and professional development pathways, can help employees feel more anchored and motivated. Finally, efforts to enhance work engagement—through autonomy, team collaboration, recognition, and task variety—should be embedded in daily managerial practices.

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