

## **Quiet Quitting in Public Institutions: A Descriptive Content Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

The study discussed quiet quitting (QQ) in the context of the public institutions. In this context, it has been investigated that the definition of QQ in the public institutions, individual and organizational factors contributing to QQ, the importance of managers in QQ, the consequences of Quiet Quitting Behavior (QQB), and the effects of the pandemic. The data were obtained through in-depth interviews conducted with 13 voluntary participants working in public institutions. Maxqda Program was used for analysing the data. According to the results, it was concluded that QQB can be more prevalent among individuals with longer tenure and older age in public institutions. In public institutions, QQ was expressed through the concepts of "System Problem and Desperation", "Attitude", "To be Offended" and "Passive Aggression-Emotional Dissatisfaction". The most intense emotions felt by those experiencing the QQ process were devalued, unhappiness, and desperation. The primary organizational reasons for QQB were found to be lack of motivation and recognition.

**Keywords:** Quiet Quitting, Quiet Quitting In Public, Reasons of Quiet Quitting.

**JEL Classification:** M12, M51, M52, M54

### **1. Introduction**

The fields of organizational behavior and human resources management are producing studies on understanding employee behaviors and the most effective management of human resources, which are strategically important. The concept of Quiet Quitting (QQ), which has gained popularity recently is considered an important research area for organizational behavior and human resource management. QQ means, doing what is specified in one's job description, no more, no less (Johnson, 2023). QQers can be called "actively disengaged workers"

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(Harter, 2022). They prefer to work as much as specified in their job descriptions instead of placing their work at the center of their lives and prefer to spare time for their lives outside the organization (Ellis & Yang, 2022).

QQers prefer to exhibit low performance instead of quitting their jobs (Tong, 2022). The phenomenon of quiet quitting leads to a decrease in employees' organizational commitment (Harter, 2022), motivation losses due to unfair workloads, increased inter-employee conflicts, failure in teamwork, hindered skill development, and reduced flexibility (Tong, 2022). This situation results in both increased unit costs for organizations and lower profit margins for economic systems on a global scale (Johnson, 2023; Tong, 2022; Yıkılmaz, 2022).

According to the findings of the research conducted by Gallup, 50 % of the employees in America are experiencing the QQ process (Harter, 2022). The results of the research conducted by Youthall (2022) by collecting data from 1002 employees in Turkey also show that 24 % of young people are currently in the process of QQ and 46.7 % of them have a tendency to QQ. QQ which is related to concepts such as lack of motivation, inability to work in a team setting, underdevelopment of skills, and perceived injustice of having different workloads, can lead to macro-level problems eventually (Tong, 2022).

Although quiet quitting manifests as employees' unwillingness to go the extra mile, it is often a result of organizations' failure to establish meaningful relationships with their employees (Zenger and Folkman, 2022). Properly managing these processes places significant responsibilities on managers and leaders to empower, engage, and inspire employees (Clifton and Harter, 2019). Therefore, in managing the process of quiet quitting, human resource management and organizational behavior expertise play crucial roles for institutions.

It was observed during the review of the QQ literature that the interest in the subject has shown a significant increase in the last 2 years. While some studies examined QQ in the context of managerial theories (Arar et al., 2023; Aydın & Azizoğlu, 2022; Hamouche et al., 2023), some of them defined the concept, importance, and reasons for QQ (Mahand, Caldwell, 2023; Hiltunen, 2023; Johnson, 2023), some of them associated QQ with pandemic and great resignation (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Harter, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to examine the QQ process in the context of the public institutions. In this context, the possible individual and organizational reasons for QQ, the emotional aspect of the QQ process, the possible conditions and reasons that increase QQB in public institutions, and suggestions on how to manage QQ are presented in the study. It is expected that the findings obtained from the research will be beneficial by raising awareness on the subject and filling a significant gap in the literature by highlighting the reasons why QQ may exist not only in the private institutions but also in public institutions.

A qualitative research method was used in this study. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the essence and nature of the current situation, including its causes, characteristics, and descriptions (Berg & Lune, 2019). Particularly in cases where there is no existing theoretical framework or established basis for the research, qualitative studies are highly valuable for defining the subject (Yıldırım, 1999). The research data were collected through in-depth interviews with the voluntary participation of office employees working in public institutions. The data, obtained from interviews with 13 participants that took approximately 390 minutes, were analyzed using Maxqda software.

The conceptual framework of the study encompasses the concept of QQ and its underlying reasons, and previous researches conducted on the topic. In the methodology section, the data collection method and process, the study group, and the analysis of the data are explained. The findings section presents the analysis results obtained in line with the research objectives, along with visual representations of these results. The conclusion of this research provides insights and recommendations regarding the process of QQ in public institutions.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. The Concept of Quiet Quitting**

QQ is related to employees performing their job requirements without putting extra effort into their work. In this way, employees establish work boundaries and can focus more on their personal lives (Kobal & Batı, 2022). In other words, QQ is a reaction given by those who do not want to miss out on the meaning of life against the culture of hustle and burnout (Kont, 2022). Within the QQ process, the employee does not actually resign from his/her job, but only performs the defined tasks within the defined working hours and does not prefer to make any sacrifice for more (Youthall, 2022).

The concept of QQ, which originated in the United States, was first introduced at the "Texas A&M Economics Symposium" in 2009 (Aykan, 2022). However, it is thought that social media and Generation Z have important effects on the popularization of the concept (Aykan, 2022). Zaid Khan, a TikTok user, expressed the idea that "Your work is not your life! Your value cannot be defined by what you produce," that gained significant popularity with over 17 million views (Yıkılmaz, 2022). Some mottoes for the concept of QQ, which is a very new concept in the academic literature, are presented in Table 1.

As it is still a very new concept, there are debates about what QQ really is. One of these debates is whether QQ is an old concept that has gained popularity with a new trend (Kobal & Batı, 2022). According to this view, QQ is related to issues such as lack of organizational commitment, burnout, low motivation, neglecting work responsibilities, and so on, which are not new phenomena (Scott, 2022; Aydın & Azizoglu, 2022; Afrahi et al., 2022). QQ is considered as a new form of reduced employee commitment (Telford, 2022). According to this perspective, QQ is a reflection of disappointment caused by factors such as reduced

organizational commitment, burnout, low motivation, and other related circumstances (Detert, 2023).

**Tablo 1.** Quiet Quitting Motto's

	<b>References</b>
Workcareer is not the goal but rather tools for living.	Mysoft, 2023
Don't go beyond five, don't exceed six.	Özer, 2022
Life is not worth missing out on.	Mysoft, 2023
Work as much as your salary.	Aykan, 2022
Work enough not to get fired.	Aykan, 2022
As much bread, so much meatball./ You get what you pay for.	Özkent, 2022
First the soul, then the beloved.	Canan, 2022
Don't quit your job, but quit the idea of doing more.	Zaid Khan, Zaidleppelin, TikTok
“Working to live” instead of “living to work”.	Yıkılmaz, 2022

Another perspective on QQ suggests that it differs from concepts such as reduced organizational commitment, low motivation, and burnout. According to Scott (2022), QQ can be a way to treat burnout. In this regard, employees experiencing this process may take various actions, such as not responding to emails or phone calls outside of working hours, declining new projects, or refusing to perform tasks that are not part of their job description. According to Aydın and Azizoğlu (2022), QQ is an attitude of employees who want to readjust their work-life balance and maintain their well-being. According to this view, the pandemic process had an impact on this attitude of employees (Aydın & Azizoğlu, 2022). Furthermore, in Youthall's (2022) research report on QQ, it is stated that employees actually enjoy their jobs but are bothered by irregularities and unfairness in the work process.

## **2.2. Reasons for Quiet Quitting**

There are many factors that contribute to QQ. Among these factors, the most notable ones include the lack of clarity in expectations from employees, insufficient learning and development opportunities, employees not feeling valued, lack of recognition for employees' contributions, reduced commitment to the organization's mission and goals, and increased distance between managers and subordinates (Harter, 2022; Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

Although a scientific correlation has not been established, it is possible to encounter academic and popular discourses that associate the COVID-19 pandemic with the process of QQ and express the pandemic as the cause of QQ (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Harter, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the traditional concepts of "workplace" and "working hours" into a paradigm of "from anywhere" and "at any time," leading to a disruption in work-life balance, increased workloads for employees, and, in some cases, exhaustion (Esen, 2022). According to the perspective that links the pandemic with QQ, these adverse conditions

experienced during the pandemic have reduced employees' motivation and commitment, consequently leading them to engage in QQ (Harter, 2022). However, another viewpoint suggests that employee dissatisfaction, high turnover rates, low job engagement, inadequate compensation, long working hours, and other similar issues existed in the pre-pandemic period. In this regard, the pandemic may have acted as an accelerator of change rather than the root cause of these problems (Formica & Sfodera, 2022).

According to another perspective that associates the pandemic with QQ, during the pandemic process, people saw that they could easily lose what they had, started to question the meaning of life, and realized that it was meaningless for career achievements to come before private life (Özer, 2022). In other words, with the pandemic process, the loss of loved ones, the feeling of loneliness, the restriction of freedom, and the anxiety of getting sick led individuals to spend more time on more meaningful things (Li & Wang, 2020; De Jong et al., 2020).

Another factor that can be considered among the reasons for QQ is bad management or bad managers. Zenger and Folkman (2022) express that bad bosses, rather than employee incompetence, are the primary cause of QQ, supporting the notion that "quiet quitting is about bad bosses, not bad employees." Their findings highlight that ineffective and unsupportive leadership leads to disengagement and QQ. Mahan and Caldwell (2023) further emphasize the importance of management and leadership styles in QQ and suggest that managers should strive to earn employee trust, inspire commitment, and foster a culture that encourages high performance. Yıldız and Özmenekşe's research underscores the impact of unsuccessful managerial practices on QQB. It is also stated that creating a supportive work environment, including implementing policies such as flexible working hours, can be effective for managing QQB (Zhang & Rodrigue, 2023).

It is expected that QQ has some negative consequences for the individual, the organization, and society eventually. From an individual perspective, the lack of job satisfaction due to QQ behavior may cause him/her to lose his/her job eventually and make it difficult to find positive references for new jobs (Fidelity, 2022). Decreased individual motivation, weakened organizational commitment, reduced productivity, decreased communication with colleagues, and an increase in complaints from colleagues are also significant indicators of QQ (Telford, 2022). However, these individual indicators can also have organizational implications. An employee who shows QQ behavior may negatively affect his/her colleagues. This may result in contagious workplace laziness and underperforming teamwork (Dur & Zoutenbier, 2015). As a result, the productivity and efficiency of the organization will be negatively affected. In the long term, QQB can lead to the institutionalization of low productivity as an organizational culture, resulting in an unhealthy work environment, and consequently, it can have a detrimental impact on the social system (Zhang & Rodrigue, 2023).

### **2.3. Research on Quiet Quitting**

Hamouche et al. (2023) examined the concept of QQ in the field of tourism and hospitality from the perspective of human resource management and organizational behavior. According to the findings, QQ has garnered more attention post-pandemic and among the younger generation. Furthermore, it was found that multiple theories and concepts such as organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, social exchange, equity theory, and organizational justice were associated with QQ.

Arar and others (2023) have drawn a theoretical framework of QQ grounding on Social Exchange Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory and Theory of Generations. They classified antecedents of the QQ as managerial/organizational factors and employee-based factors. Also, it determined that the possible outcomes of QQ and presented the ways to handle it.

Zhang and Rodrigue (2023) conducted a study to investigate the effects of having taken maternity leave on QQ in the post-pandemic period. The research findings revealed that employees who had taken maternity leave were less likely to exhibit QQB returning their return to work after childbirth. Furthermore, it was found that the supportive attitudes of managers, such as flexible working hours for child care, significantly reduced the tendency of mothers to engage in QQ. Lastly, significant differences in QQB among working mothers were observed based on age and race.

Aydın and Azizoglu (2022) examined the concept of QQ in relation to the post-Covid-19 period and discussed the topic within the framework of self-determination theory. Within this scope, the researchers put forth three propositions. These propositions suggest that employees who have unmet "competence needs", "relatedness needs", and "autonomy needs" due to remote work are more prone to the process of QQ.

Youthall (2022) collected data on the QQ from 1012 participants. In this study, 14% of the participants stated that they were unaware of the concept of QQ, 15 % mentioned that they were not prone to this process, 24 % reported being currently in this process, and 46.6 % expressed their inclination toward the QQ process. The participants identified the factors that led them to engage in the QQ as follows: "closed career paths", "work-life imbalance", "low salary", and "unclear job descriptions". They also mentioned the changes that could lead to the termination of QQ, which included "regulation of fringe benefits and salary policies", "arrangements that contribute to work-life balance", "opportunity to create one's own work model", and "recognition of changing motivation".

Formica and Sfodera (2022) examined the concept of QQ within the framework of the tourism industry. The concept of QQ was associated with the notions of "big resignation" and the pandemic period. Factors leading to QQ were

identified, and recommendations were provided regarding the consideration of employees' needs and values to prevent QQ.

Yıkılmaz (2022) conducted a study exploring the definition, development, and potential impacts of QQ through a qualitative research approach. The study examined the concept of QQ from the perspectives of both management and employees. The findings highlighted that QQ is an important issue in terms of the global economy, job performance, and long-term meaning in the lives of employees.

Yıldız and Özmenekşe (2022) contributed to the literature by examining studies on the concept of QQ. According to the findings of their study, it was stated that the pandemic, ineffective managerial practices, and financial issues stemming from economic crises were influential factors in QQ. Furthermore, it was emphasized that QQ not only affects individuals but also has negative implications for organizations, highlighting the necessity of taking measures to address this issue.

### **3. Method**

This study explores the perception of the concept of QQ in the public sector, the potential individual and organizational reasons behind QQ, the emotional aspects of the QQ process, potential situations and factors that may increase the occurrence of QQ, and offers recommendations for managing QQ. The aim of the research is to draw attention to QQB in public institutions and to provide useful insights for those interested in studying the subject.

In this study, a qualitative research method was used. Qualitative research adopts an approach that investigates and understands social phenomena within their context (Yıldırım, 1999). Particularly, it is a very convenient research method for collecting data that are not suitable to be expressed in numbers to explain a phenomenon in its own environment, in its own limitations and depth (Kurtuluş, 2010; Yıldırım, 1999). To collect more detailed data, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. The purpose of in-depth interviews is to bring forth expert opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions related to the topic, in order to gain a better understanding of the subject and the industry (Kurtuluş, 2010). Furthermore, in-depth interviews are considered as a flexible and robust research technique that allows for discussion between the researcher and the participant (Karasar, 1995).

There are some limitations and constraints of this research. This study was conducted with 13 volunteer office workers in the public institutions. Due to both the nature of social sciences and the number of participants, obtained research findings are not suitable for generalization. Another limitation of the research is the inclusion of the participants in the research. The prospect of audio recording made some participants uncomfortable, so some of candidates refused to participate the research.

### 3.1. Research Group

In qualitative research, the population consists of human communities, social groups, or various events and phenomena that encompass the actual objects and phenomena the researcher examines and investigates (Baltacı, 2018). In this context, the population of the research consists of office personnel working in public institutions in İzmir province who are believed to have experiences or observations related to the process of QQ. In qualitative research, the quality of the sample is more important than the number of selected samples. In other words, instead of large groups, it is necessary to determine a sample that can provide detailed data (Neuman & Robson, 2014; Coyne, 1997). In this regard, in qualitative research, the concept of saturation is important in determining an appropriate sample size. The repetition of data indicates that saturation has been reached in the research, and at this point, it is more appropriate to elaborate on the data by adding new questions rather than diversifying the data (Silverman, 2016).

The research group was formed using nonprobability (purposive) and snowball sampling methods. In nonprobability sampling, the researcher determines the sample that is believed to represent the population (Neuman & Robson, 2014). Purposive sampling facilitates the detailed examination of rich information-containing cases (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Snowball sampling, on the other hand, is another method used to access units that are difficult to reach in the population (Patton, 2005), where the interviewed participant recommends other individuals who may be relevant to the topic, along with the gaining of trust. Information about the participants are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Information About The Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Education	Working Year	Sector
P1	Male	38	Bachelor's Degree	17	Local Government
P2	Female	49	Bachelor's Degree	25	Education
P3	Female	25	Associate Degree	5	Education
P4	Female	51	Bachelor's Degree	27	Education
P5	Male	56	Associate Degree	25	Education
P6	Male	36	Postgraduate Degree	10	Public Security
P7	Female	50	Associate Degree	26	Health
P8	Female	46	Associate Degree	23	Health
P9	Female	48	Postgraduate Degree	25	Research-Development
P10	Male	36	Bachelor's Degree	10	Education
P11	Female	41	Bachelor's Degree	18	Local Government
P12	Female	45	Bachelor's Degree	26	Health
P13	Male	27	Bachelor's Degree	3	Health

The number of participants in the study was limited to 13 due to data repetition. To increase the ability of the selected homogeneous group to represent the population, special efforts were made to ensure that the participants had a heterogeneous structure in areas such as gender, age, seniority, and sector. The



participants are employed in public institutions operating in the fields of education, local government services, public security, and health.

### **3.2. Data Collection**

The data were collected through face-to face interviews and a semi-structured questionnaire in May and June 2023. All participants declared that they voluntarily participated in the research. During the interviews, the subject was discussed in different details in line with the contributions and experiences of the participants. In this context, the interviews were conducted for durations ranging from 21 minutes to 35 minutes. The interviews were recorded using two different recording devices for cross-checking. The themes and categories questioned in the semi-structured questionnaire are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Research Themes and Categories

Themes	Categories
Defining Quiet Quitting	Passive–aggression
	To be Offended
	Lifestyle
	Attitude
	System Problem
Reasons for Quiet Quitting	Desperation
	Individual Reasons Organizational Reasons
The Emotional Side of Quiet Quitting	Exhaustion
	Desperation
	Unhappiness
	Anxiety
	Become Comfortable
Precautions to Prevent Quiet Quitting	The Lack of Value
	Organizational Structure
	Management Approach
	Communication Style Individual Precautions
Reasons Related to Public Institutions Causing Quiet Quitting	The Lack of Performance Evaluation System
	The Lack of Reward and Punishment System
	Equal Pay
	Job Security
	The Lack of Merit

### **3.3. Analyzing the Data**

The data obtained from face-to-face interviews with participants were transcribed from recording devices into a Word document. Maxqda 20.0 software was used for data analysis. Data for each participant were saved in separate files and embedded in the Maxqda program. Subsequently, the responses to the questions were read one by one, and codes were assigned.

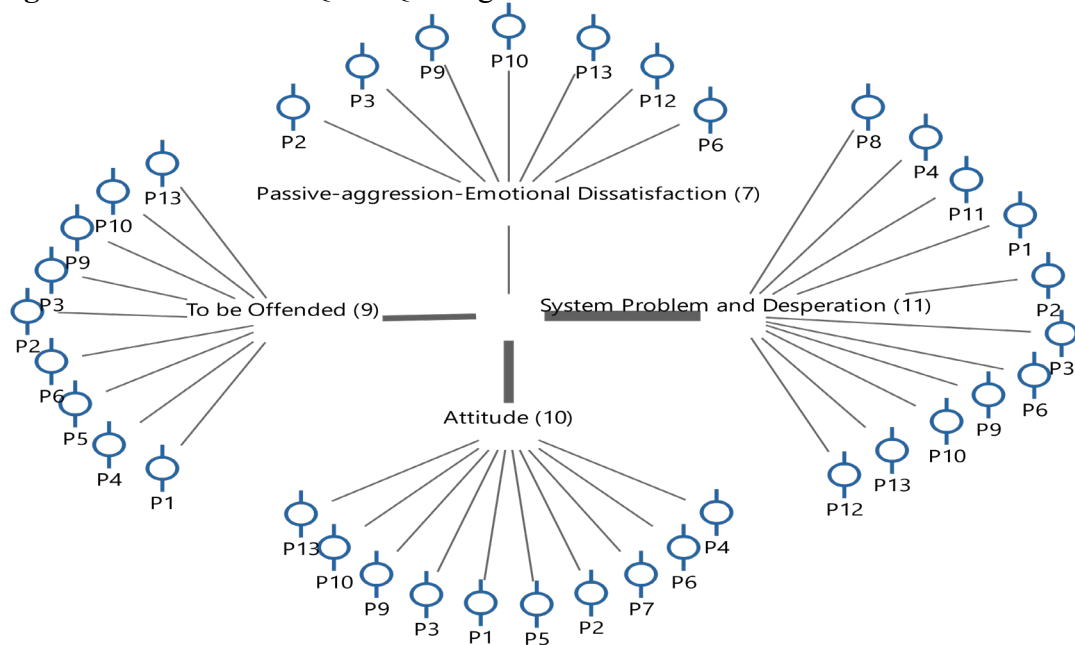
After the codes were created, the data files were read one by one and the codes were matched with the participants' statements. To enhance the coding

reliability of the study, the data were also coded by another researcher who conducted scientific QQ research. “Inter-coder agreement” analysis was conducted using the Maxqda software, and the agreement rate was determined to be 91%. Based on the similarity rate of the codings exceeding 70%, it was decided that the coding was reliable (Yalçın et al., 2015).

#### 4. Results

In line with the purpose of the study, the participants' views on QQ was questioned. The findings obtained are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Definition of Quiet Quitting



The participants found it appropriate to express QQ as "System Problem and Desperation" (11 participants), "Attitude" (10 participants), "To be Offended" (9 participants), "Passive Aggression-Emotional Dissatisfaction" (7 participants). At the same time, the participants stated that these can not be separated from each other with clear lines and that most of the time the QQ process encompasses all of these concepts. Some participants believed that these concepts reflect the stages of the QQ process. Participant 3, who holds this viewpoint, expressed their opinions as follows: "...at first, you keep doing your job, but you do not receive any recognition. This leads to frustration. Then you continue doing your work, but nothing changes. This time, start resenting the work you do. After a while, you think to yourself, 'I'm doing my job properly, but I can not find any recognition, and I don not receive the necessary support from the managers,' so you start displaying an attitude internally. Some people notice it, while others do not. By displaying this attitude, you find some relief. Then, this situation starts to become appealing, and you think, 'I will only do what is in my job description.' If your colleagues give you a call before or after working hours, you do not answer the phone because you consider it as your

personal time... You start embracing this situation. It makes you comfortable. Over time, you adapt to this situation in your colleagues. Later on, you think, 'I wish I had done this earlier'. Participant 9 described the process of QQ as "... initially, the individual reacts to something they want to change. If it does not change, they may exhibit a behavior of withdrawal. Then, they might display passive aggression..."

Participant 6, who expressed QQ as "System Problem and Desperation", stated that "...the overall condition of the system triggers this. The system is not highlight the performance of the employee, and certain salaries are given to certain positions and titles. Since we can not change the system, a sense of desperation arises...". Participant 8 defined the aspect of desperation in the QQ by stating, "...desperation is my primary concern. You can neither leave nor stay. You can not leave because you should work and earn money. You can not stay because you can not change the people, the management, or the system". Participant 11's views on this matter are as follows: "...the management system bothers me. Sometimes, while doing my job, I can be subjected to insulting accusations. I have experienced such a situation before and wanted to file a complaint against the person who insulted me. I called the legal affair department of the institution for support. However, they said it was my personal issue. Even in such a situation, the institution leaves us alone, providing no support at all. You feel isolated... They assigned the drivers of the organisation's vehicles to other places. They want us to drive the organisation's vehicles. But when we have an accident with the vehicle, they do not provide any support".

Participant 7, who indicated that QQ is about "Attitude," expressed their views as follows: "It is about attitude, in my opinion. You are displaying an attitude toward the system. You are overwhelmed with workload, but only you know about it. You exhibit this attitude so that the managers can see the burden you carry. Maybe with this attitude, eventually, another employee will join me, tasks will be divided, and the workload will lighten, or so I hope."

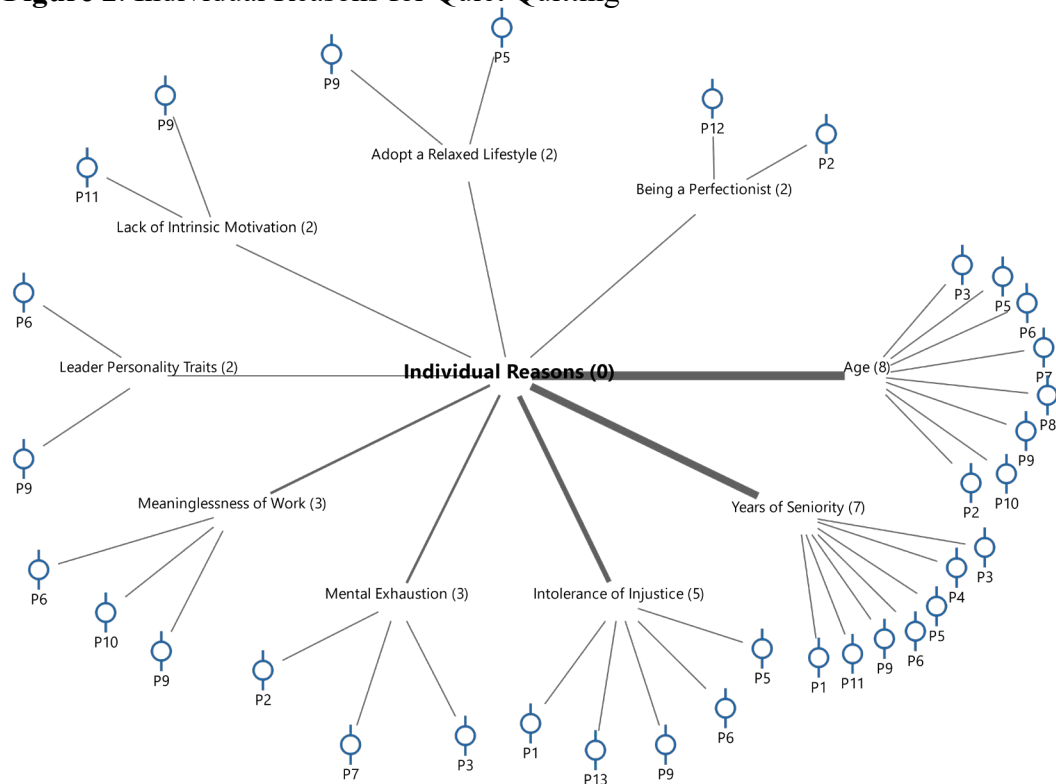
Participant 1, who identified "To be Offended" as the aspect of QQ, summarized their experience as follows: "...In my industry, people are mostly offended systematically. Initially, people are not like this. Over time, people realize that self-sacrifice does not work, and then they gradually start to resent. This is not something that happens all at once. In 5-10 years, the situations that employees are exposed to push people to sulk...". Participant 4 described resentment behavior as "you choose resentment behavior when the attitude of the manager makes you feel very worthless". According to Participant 5, QQ is a resentment behaviour. He expressed this situation with the following words. "...In my case, it is a bit of resentment. This is because of the lack of recognition and appreciation for the work. People do not want to do more when they are not appreciated. After all, you do not receive recognition..."

Participant 13, who defined QQ as "Passive Aggression - Emotional Dissatisfaction", expressed QQ as follows: "...Before these processes, my goal about the job was that things would get better, I would do my job right so that it would benefit people. But now my current thought is that I am doing this job, I am

earning money, let the day be full, let the time pass, let me go home...". Participant 6 stated, "...passive aggression - emotional dissatisfaction contains action because it involves not doing what the employee can do. In my opinion, passive aggression more effectively reflects QQ at its core..."

The participants were asked about their opinions on the reasons that led them to QQ. The findings regarding the obtained data are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** Individual Reasons for Quiet Quitting



Based on the obtained findings, it is determined that the individual reasons that push employees to QQ are "Age", "Years of Seniority", "Intolerance of Injustice", "Mental Exhaustion", "Meaningless of Work", "Leader Personality Traits", "Lack of Intrinsic Motivation", "Adopted a Relaxed Lifestyle", "Being a Perfectionist", respectively.

The variable most frequently associated with the individual reasons for the QQ process was age. However, there were different opinions regarding the impact of age on QQ. Some participants expressed their belief that QQ behavior would be less among younger individuals. Participant 7, who had this opinion, stated that "... When you are young, you are more career focused. You want to be loved and respected more. As you get older, you want to have fewer problems. For example, something I could tolerate when I was young, I may not be able to tolerate now. After a certain age, people want to spend more time at home than work. They want to spend social time with their family, spouse, friends, children...". On the other hand, Participant 9, who also believes that QQ behavior is less likely among

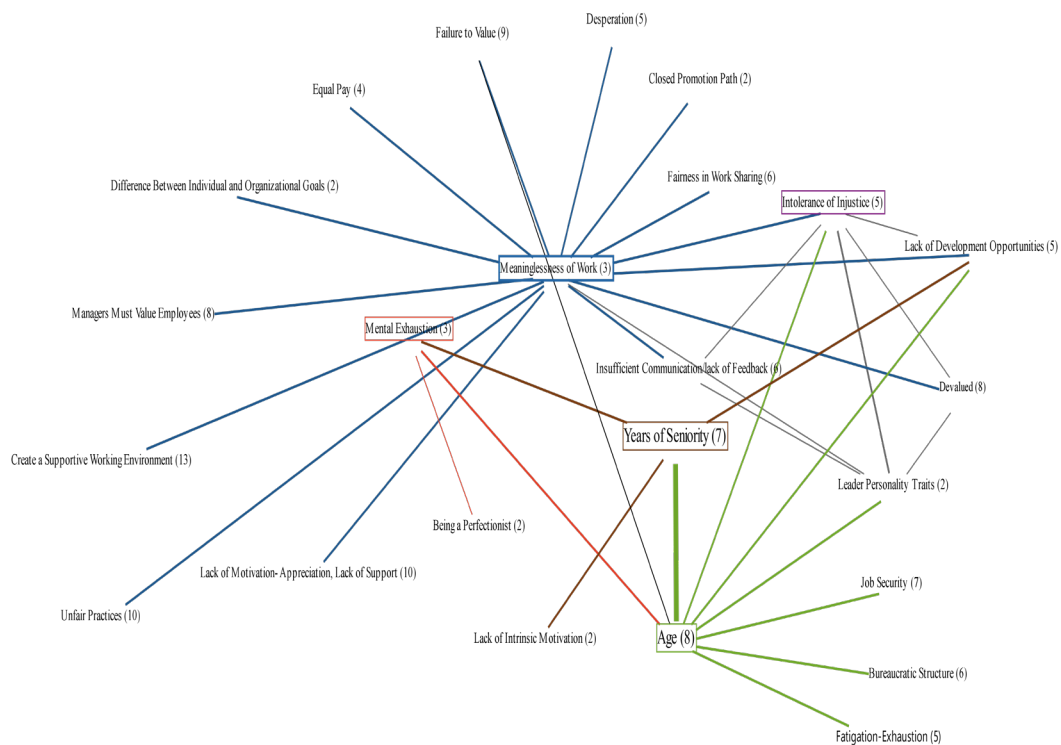
younger individuals, explained their reasoning as follows: "Individuals in the first five years of their working life are more proactive and swift in finding new places where they would be happier, instead of staying in an unsatisfactory environment. They are more familiar with job search platforms. They are braver. They are also less hesitant to change jobs. However, this courage diminishes with age. As age increases, familial responsibilities also increase. It is not desired for an individual to step out of their comfort zone. They become more cautious. They worry about how they will find another job if they leave their current one. Concerns intensify with age. The adaptability to change weakens."

On the other hand, some participants stated that they observed that their young colleagues had lower struggle power and that young people were more prone to the QQ process. The statements of some participants regarding these views are as follows "I can see this in our new colleagues. This situation is also related to generation. Those born in 1997, 1998 have completely different motivations, work hours, and perspectives compared to us (P2)". "...young individuals are more inclined toward QQ. There are significant differences between us and people in their 20s. Our generation had higher responsibilities; we entered the workforce at a young age, started earning money, and faced difficulties. However, young people can be more flexible in terms of working hours. They also have a more relaxed attitude and can say 'I don't care' more easily (P8)."

"Seniority" was the second variable most frequently associated with the individual reasons for QQ. The general opinion of the participants is that as seniority increases, QQ also increases. The participants stated that with the increase in seniority, employees tend to continue to stay in their current job even if they are unhappy for reasons such as fatigue, burnout, mental exhaustion, desperation, economic concerns, family responsibilities, weakened adaptability to change, and finding it easier to continue in the current conditions because of proximity to retirement. Some of the participant statements regarding this topic are as follows: "...The first 5 years are a period of learning the job, the struggle for existence, and adaptation. I believe there will QQ during that period. Think of it as a normal distribution curve. It starts as a horizontal process, and after 5 years, it may become more vertical towards mid-career, around 10 years, this tendency increases even more. When a certain threshold is exceeded, the acceptance process begins. For example, the problems that are on my agenda are not in older individuals... Maybe they are unhappy. But it reflects less on their job performance... (P6)". The initial motivation, determination, energy, and youthful passion for work can lead you to compromise yourself. You put in more effort because you think about what you can contribute to your work and how you can be more useful when you first start. But as time goes on, you start to lose your energy. The tasks you perform become monotonous after a while, it is always the same process, no development. Then the work you do starts to feel meaningless" (P10). Participant 7 also expressed that as the years of seniority increase, employees tend to focus more on their own physical health, stating, "Seniority has a significant impact on this matter. When people get worn out, they start to pay more attention to their own bodies and health..."

In order to better understand the individual reasons for QQ, code co-occurrence model (code proximity) analysis was applied to the data. The findings obtained are presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Co-occurrence Network of Individual Reasons



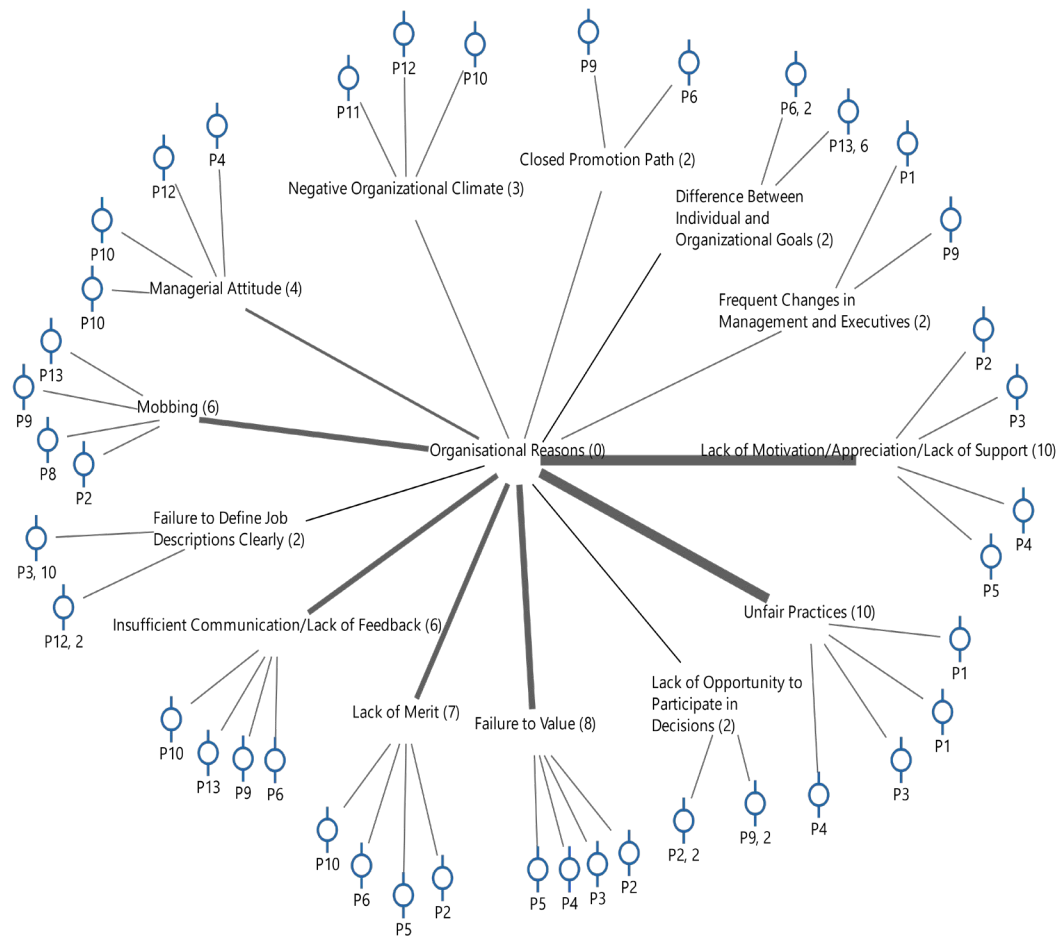
According to the findings, the issues most frequently associated with "Years of Seniority" are "Age", "Lack of Intrinsic Motivation", "Mental Exhaustion", "Lack of Development Opportunities". It is seen that the code "Inability to Tolerate Injustice" is associated with "Having Leader Personality Traits", "Being Devalued", "Inadequate Communication - Lack of Feedback". In the QQ process, it is seen that the code "Having Leader Personality Characteristic" is associated with issues such as "Intolerance of Injustice", "Inadequate Communication-Lack of Feedback", "Devaluation". This finding is related to Participant 9's statement: "...If the decisions of the employee with leader personality trait are not taken, the employee may feel that his/her work is not valued. The employee's sense of justice may be damaged. In this case, the employee may think that the manager does not value him/her very much and may become silent...".

The code "Intolerance to Injustice" is associated with "Having a Leader Personality Trait," "Feeling Devalued," and "Insufficient Communication - Lack of Feedback." In the process of QQ, the code "Having a Leader Personality Trait" is seen to be related to topics such as "Intolerance to Injustice," "Insufficient Communication - Lack of Feedback," and "Feeling Devalued." This finding is also reflected in the statement of Participant 9: "...If an employee with leadership traits

feels that their decisions are not being considered and that their work is not valued, they may develop a sense of injustice. This can damage the employee's sense of fairness. In this situation, the employee may become silent, thinking that the manager does not value them enough..."

Participants were asked about their opinions on the organizational reasons for QQ. The findings related to the obtained data are presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.** Organizational Reasons for Quiet Quitting



The most frequently recurring responses regarding the organizational reasons for QQ, based on the obtained findings, were as follows, in descending order: "Lack of Motivation/Appreciation-Lack of Support" (n=10), "Unfair Practices" (n=10), "Failure to Value" (n=8), "Lack of Merit" (n=7), "Insufficient Communication-Lack of Feedback" (n=6), "Mobbing" (n=6), "Managerial Attitude" (n=4), "Negative Organizational Climate" (n=3), "Closed Promotion Path" (n=2), "Frequent Changes in Management Staff and Managers" (n=2), "Difference between Individual and Organizational Goals" (n=2), "Lack of Opportunity Participate in Decisions" (n=2).

Participant 2 expressed their views on the organizational reasons for QQ as follows: "I believe the main reason for QQ is the loss of motivation. I think they make individuals feel devalued. I believe that employees' opinions are not

considered regarding work. And I think that objectivity is lacking in many aspects”. Regarding the frequently recurring organizational reason for unfair practices, Participant 12's statement is as follows: "...a document will be written. I try to write it without any mistakes so that it will not come back for corrections. I look at my colleague and they effortlessly write the document. I ask, 'How did you write it so quickly?' They say, 'I'll write and send it, let the editor make corrections. It doesn't concern me. The more work, the more reward.' Because the other side does not differentiate between those who do and those who do not, all the tasks end up with those who do a better job. Nothing is done to those who do not do their work properly. Those who do get assigned to even more work."

"Lack of Merit' is among the most mentioned organizational reasons for QQ. Participant 11 stated, 'Incompetent managers can also contribute to QQ. You work in this profession for years, learn the laws and procedures, but suddenly someone from outside who knows nothing about the job can be appointed as a manager or vice president...' Participant 1, on the other hand, described how these processes led them to the QQ process with the following words: 'In the institution where I work, I had four different managers in the last four years. During this time, there were managers who knew nothing about the job and experienced manager. So, knowing or not knowing the job didn't make a difference... If I am a staff member with 15 years of experience, why I was not considered for a managerial position? It means that we do not deserve leadership here; they do not value us. Then, there is no point in doing this job with this expertise. Less qualified individuals can easily do the job I am doing. I felt uncomfortable due to these upper management problems. I felt worthless.'"

To determine the association between the organizational reasons of "Unfair Practices" and "Lack of Motivation/Appreciation- Lack of Support", which are the most frequently recurring factors leading to QQ, a co-occurrence model analysis (code proximity) was conducted. The findings obtained are presented in Figure 5.

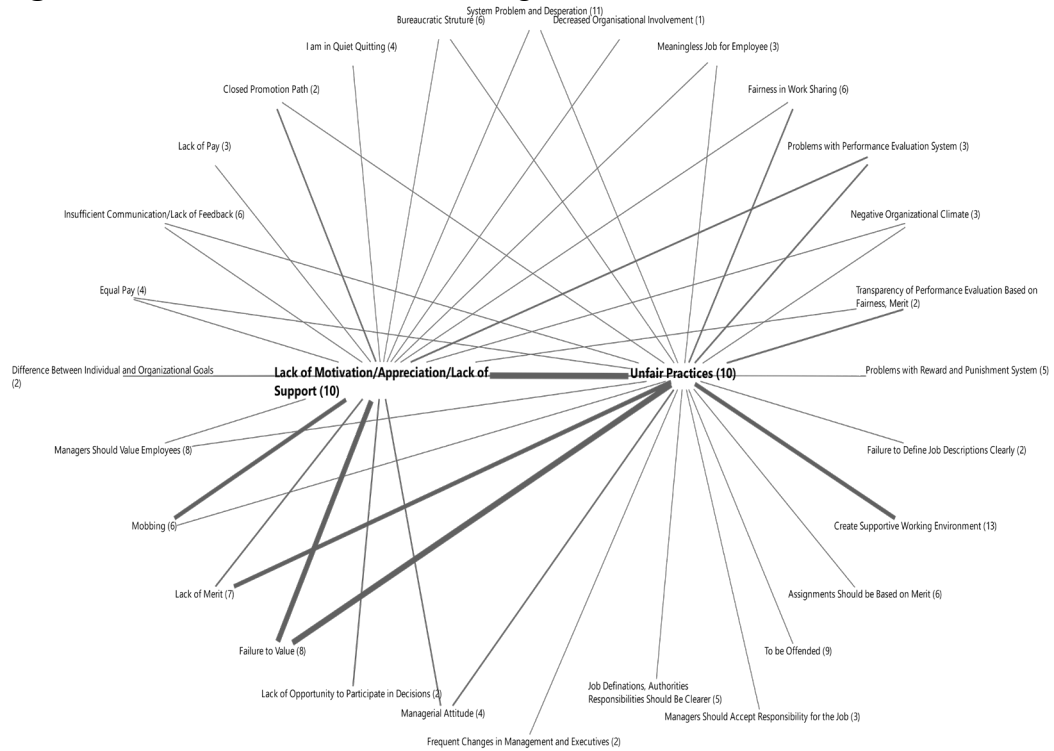
According to the results, the code "Unfair Practices" is most frequently associated with the codes "Failure to Value", "Lack of Merit", "Create Supportive Working Environment", "Managerial Attitude", "Fairness in Work Sharing". The code "Lack of Motivation-Appreciation/Lack of Support" is most frequently associated with the codes "Devaluation", "Mobbing", "Lack of Merit", "Closed Promotion Path", "Problems with Performance Evaluation System".

The participants were asked about the feelings experienced or that could be experienced by employees going through the QQ process. The findings related to participant opinions are presented in Figure 6.

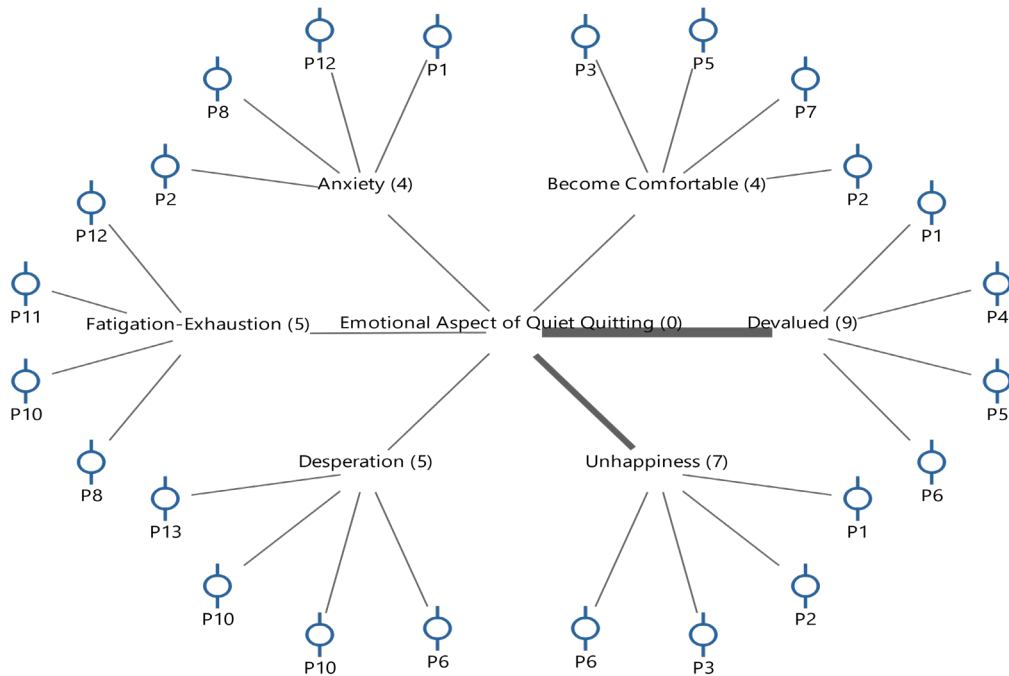
According to the findings presented in Figure 6, the most intense emotion experienced by employees in the process of QQ is "Devaluated". Following that, feelings such as "Unhappiness", "Desperation", "Fatigue-Exhaustion", "Anxiety", and "Become Comfortable" were identified as possible experiences.



**Figure 5. Co-occurrence Network of Organizational Reasons**



**Figure 6. Emotional Aspect of Quiet Quitting**



Many participants expressed that these emotions were intertwined. Participant 12 conveyed their sense of devaluation and desperation by stating, "...I explain my superiors what should be done. However, they do not even listen to the issues that do not suit them. They disregard the person in front of them and expect us to implement their decisions. After a while, I realized that I had no choice but to stop exhausting myself and try to go with the flow." Participant 13 summarized their emotional state during the QQ process with the following words: "Personally, I predominantly feel devalued, unhappiness, depression, and insomnia. I started using antidepressant medication during this process. I put in effort to reach this position, to be able to do this job. But working in this environment gives a sense of helplessness. You feel like all that effort has gone to waste."

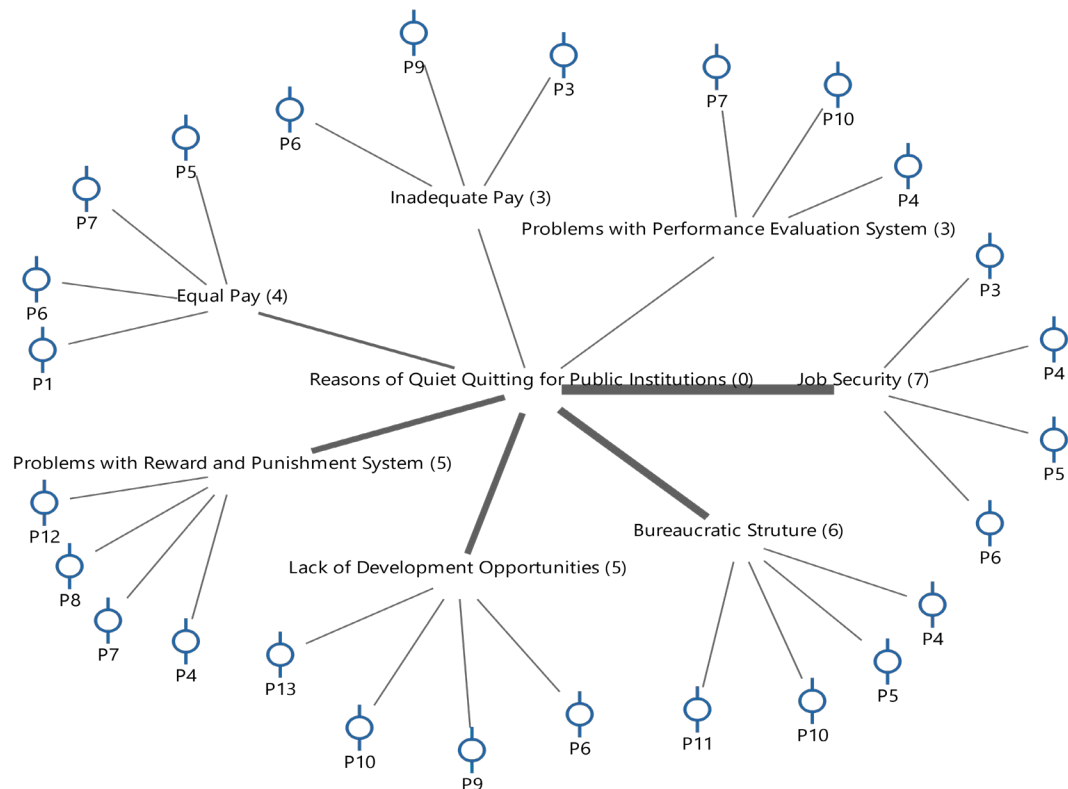
During the interviews the participants were asked about their opinions on the effect of working in public organisations on the QQ process. While the number of participants, who stated that working in public institutions would increase the QQ process, was 8 (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P12), the number of participants, who stated that working in the private sector would increase the QQ process, was 2 (P11, P13). Participants 2 and 9 stated that, it does not matter that QQ, if you are working in the public or private sector. More than where you are working QQ is about that one's work discipline and working principles. Participant 2 expressed his views on the subject as follows: "...I also worked in the private sector, where things work more systematically and regularly, brainstorming is done. But here (in public institutions) you are alone at every stage. When you do something wrong, you bear all the responsibility, and when you do something good, it is shown as if it was done by the managers and you are not appreciated". Participant 9 stated that the QQ process can be more easily recognized in the private sector by saying, "...In small companies in the private sector, if you are in the process of QQ, you will be noticed quickly." Participant 10, on the other hand, stated that he had no private sector experience on this issue and said that he could not make a clear inference on this issue.

The participants who believed that there would be more QQ in public institutions expressed their views based on reasons such as job security, equal pay, the difficulty of bringing about change, lack of rewards for extra work, and lack of promotion opportunities. Participant 6 stated, "...I think unhappiness becomes more widespread in public institutions. I do not think public institutions are attractive. It is a passive-aggressive structure where helplessness and unhappiness take the forefront..." indicating that public institutions are more suitable for QQ. Participant 7 explained this situation by saying, "...there is job security in the public institutions. People think that they do not need to work harder. They think, why should I do more work when I will receive the same salary anyway?... In the private sector, I have a job description, and there is no such thing as doing more than that. If you can not do it, they can say that there are many other people who can do the same job for the same salary and they can let you go. But in the public institutions, there are so many hidden unemployed people. They will not even notice your QQ..." describing the situation.

Participant 11, who expressed that the QQ process could be more prevalent in the private sector, stated the following: "I believe that there is more exploitation in the private sector. The private sector is a sector that seeks to maximize benefits by providing minimums. Due to more exhaustion and weariness in people in the private sector, I think it could be more common in the private sector."

During the interviews, participants were asked about the reasons for QQ for public institutions. The findings related to the obtained data are presented in Figure 7.

**Figures 7.** Reasons for Quiet Quitting for Public Institutions



The findings from Figure 7 indicate that the variables "Bureaucratic Structure", "Lack of Development Opportunities", "Problems with Reward and Punishment System", "Equal Pay", "Inadequate Pay", and "Problems with Performance Evaluation System" are associated with the QQ process in public institutions.

Participant 6 expressed the impact of bureaucratic structure on the QQ process with the following statement: "The vertical nature of the organizational structure can increase the QQ process. In places where vertical communication is intense, individuals may fail to communicate their concerns to the management. The rigidity of the organizational structure affects QQ." Participant 11, on the other hand, evaluated the bureaucratic structure in the context of processes that hinder the functioning of the system. Participant 11 stated: "These are systemic problems. They need to be resolved from the beginning. When nothing changes

from the top, you do NO feel motivated to take the action. For example, there is a flaw in our work process. We submitted a petition to the management regarding this issue. However, to resolve this flaw, the equipment needs to be repaired, and the repair cost exceeds the budget. As a result, we have been forced to work overtime for 7 months to prevent any issues related to this flaw. We are still waiting for a solution."

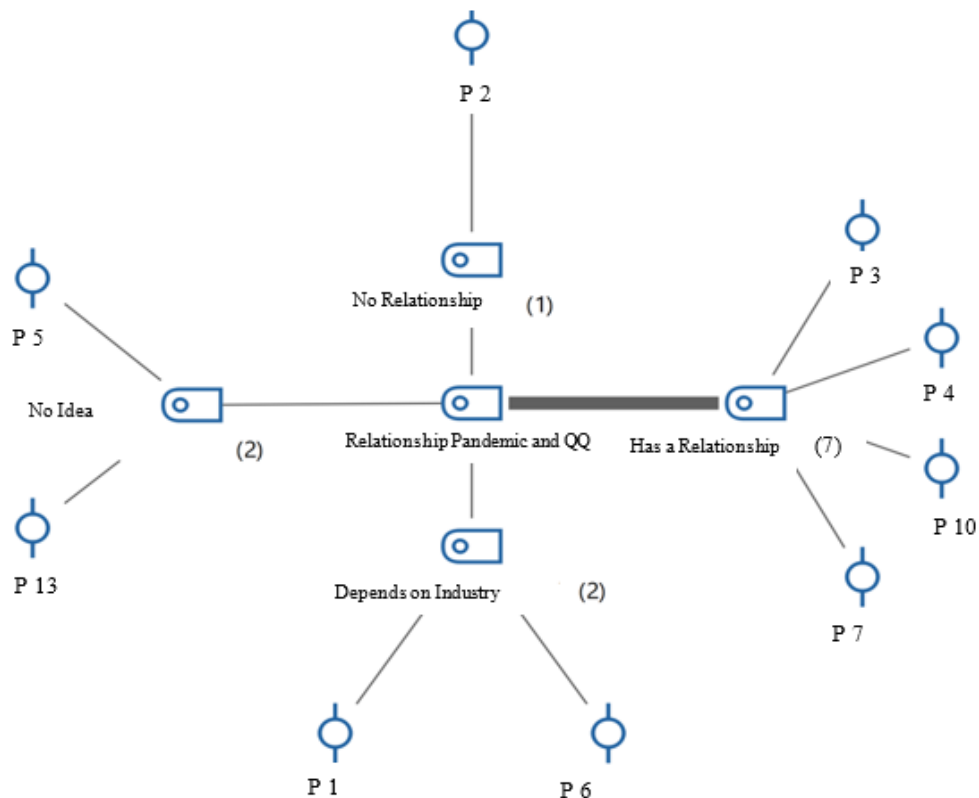
Participant 10 expressed the unique bureaucratic structure of public institutions and the lack of development opportunities with the following statement: "You use the same programs for years. You can not add anything to them. You are not allowed to introduce anything new. Such structure exists. No matter how much effort you put into improvement, you always encounter obstacles that block you, and you get stuck in that monotonous cycle. And you can not develop yourself. Eventually, you shut down... The workday starts at 8:30 and ends at 5:30. These are the programs you should use. These are the documents you should write. Everything is fixed... It completely dulls you. After a while, you lose all your enthusiasm. Because you can not improve. You start to believe that you are useless after a while..."

Participant 6 summarized the unique structure of public institutions, job security, equal pay, and lack of development opportunities within the framework of bureaucratic structure. Participant 6 expressed the following thoughts: "QQ is more prevalent in the public institutions. In the public institutions, unless you commit a serious offense, they can not dismiss you. Your salary is already guaranteed. This means that an individual can sustain their presence in the public institutions for 30 years without doing anything to improve themselves, which is the case for about 90 % of employees. However, in the private sector, when a person behaves passively aggressively or fails to fulfill their responsibilities, the system eliminates them. They can not advance, and may experience more mobbing or even face the termination. It is not in line with the nature of the private sector."

Some studies in the literature have questioned the relationship between pandemic and QQ. In this context, the participants were asked about their opinions on the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on the QQ process in the public institutions.

Two participants, P1 and P6, mentioned that the impact of the pandemic on QQ could vary depending on the industry. On the other hand, participants P5 and P13 expressed uncertainty about the effects of the pandemic on QQ. Seven participants, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, and P12, believed that the pandemic had an influence on QQ. P3 highlighted the effects of the pandemic in creating a more comfortable working environment for employees with the following statement: "I think during the pandemic, people realized the comfort of working from home. There was a conventional work routine, and when this routine changed during the pandemic, people also saw the comfort aspect of it. When they saw it, they said, 'Why should I bother?' It's more comfortable to work like this." Similarly, K4, who shares a similar perspective, expressed the situation as follows: "After the

Figure 8. Pandemic and QQ Relationship



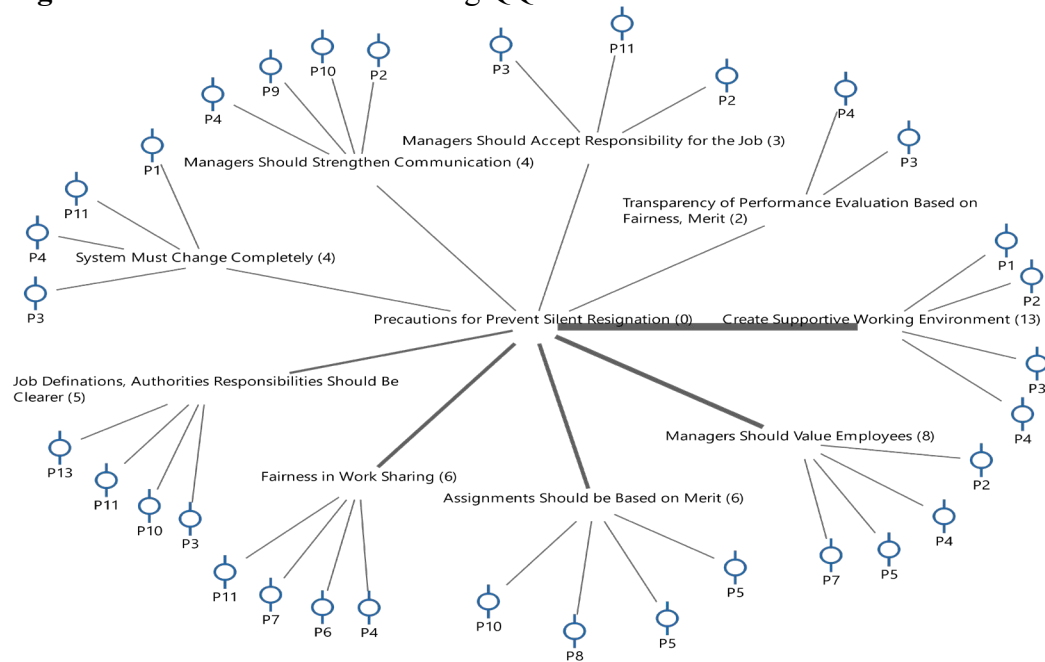
pandemic, I started questioning why I came to the workplace. Our work does not require us to be here. These tasks can also be done from home. So why do we rush here at 8:30 in the morning? It is an unpleasant environment. The social aspect has weakened significantly. In that sense, I do not feel productive." Participant 8 expressed that the pandemic period increased feelings of weariness and fatigue, stating, "There was already a sense of weariness and fatigue before the pandemic, but during the pandemic, healthcare workers like us became greatly exhausted." Participant 9 expressed that the pandemic led employees to detach from the organizational culture and become more withdrawn, stating, "...we all distanced ourselves from the organizational culture. We became detached from the social structure. When we felt lonely, we did not want to exert extra effort for work...". Participant 10 shared a similar viewpoint, describing the situation as, "Communication among people has been severed... Our work motivation has decreased...".

Participant 2 expressed the view that the pandemic did not have an impact on QQ, stating that the negative effects experienced during the pandemic could persist in daily routines. P2's statements were as follows: "...the pandemic may have left psychological effects, but this situation can continue. Imagine you're on vacation, at the beach, and suddenly your phone rings... You're at home cooking, and your phone rings... You're having breakfast with your family, and your phone

can ring. I have experience that firsthand. It can also happen in the public institutions ."

The findings regarding the participants' opinions on the precautions to prevent the QQ process are presented in Figure 9.

**Figure 9.** Precautions for Preventing QQ



The data obtained from the statements of the participants and the findings presented in Figure 9 show that many precautions can be taken to prevent the QQ process. Among these precautions, the most frequently repeated statements are "Create Supportive Working Environment", "Managers Should Value Employees", "Assignments Should Be Based on Merit", "Fairness in Work Sharing".

The participants were asked whether they had experienced the QQ process. Four participants (K1, K2, K6, K12) stated that they are currently going through the QQ process, while two participants (K3, K11) mentioned that they are partially experiencing it. Four participants (K4, K7, K8, K9) expressed that they had previously gone through the QQ process and have overcome it. Another finding related to this topic suggests that the QQ process can be terminated through the support of managers and effective practices. Some participants who have experienced or are currently experiencing this process (K7, K9) have struggled to bypass it by changing their department or unit. However, some participants (K2, K8, K12) feel completely helpless during this process and have expressed that they have lost hope in changing the system, stating that they will retire when they deserve it. Some participants (K6, K13) mentioned that they are considering resigning from their positions and actively seeking new opportunities in a different field or organization.

**Table 3.** Examples of Participant Statements on Preventing Quiet Quitting

Create a Supportive Working Environment	"If employees lack the necessary knowledge and skills for performing their job, they should be provided with the necessary training to acquire that knowledge. Sometimes, personal issues may affect employees' performances at work... During such periods when an employee may struggle to adapt, it is important to show flexibility and provide support for employees to address their problems." (Participant 11)
Managers Should Value Employee	"I believe the most influential individuals are the managers. Motivating employees is something they have control over and it is highly important. When a manager takes one step toward you, you are willing to take three steps toward the manager. You no longer pay attention to the working hours or the intensity of your job when you have someone who appreciates you, as it brings you joy." (Participant 4)
Assignments Should be Based on Merit	"If merit is not valued among public servants, if hardworking individuals can not progress while less diligent individuals assume managerial roles, people tend to give up on working harder. They no longer desire to contribute beyond preserving their own health and standards." (Participant 5)
Fairness in Work Sharing	"Work should be distributed fairly. Instead of assigning tasks to those who are already doing them, it should be given to those who work less." (Participant 3)
Job Definitions, Authorities Responsibilities Should Be Clearer	"After the pandemic, there was a significant decrease in staff numbers. This increased the workload of employees and forced them to perform tasks outside their assigned responsibilities. In my opinion, everyone should have clear job descriptions. Employees should focus only on the tasks outlined in their job descriptions. Alternatively, the workload related to job descriptions should be reduced. This can be done by managers." (Participant 13)
Managers Should Strengthen Communication	"Managers should ensure that their employees feel valued. They should adopt a more inclusive leadership style, boost motivation, and foster a sense of team spirit. Building strong relationships and friendships among colleagues is crucial. If there are situations such as rotations, the management should share the reasons and decisions with the employees in a transparently manner. The way it is communicated is of utmost importance. During this process, the feeling of being valued by the organization is significant. Trusting the manager is also essential. Sincerity and a participatory management approach are crucial." (Participant 9)
System Must Change Completely	"There is a systemic problem. For instance, there are certain rules imposed by the system that are very difficult to implement or even if they are implemented in one region, they will not be effective... However there is no comprehensive study conducted in İzmir or nationwide in Turkey. It should exist, but the system is not compatible with it... The functioning of the system should be altered." (Participant 11)
Managers Should Accept Responsibility for the Job	"Generally, managers try to evade their responsibilities. I believe that the manager's solution-oriented approach is crucial in this process. The role of the manager is significant. It is important for them to act with fairness, motivate employees when necessary, and not leave them alone." (Participant 3)
Transparency of Performance Evaluation Based on Fairness, Merit	"... I received a low score in my 'communication' performance. However, we do not know based on what criteria or who evaluated us. It is not objective. What makes me a poor communicator? Can not I speak? Can not I respond effectively? Can not I use communication tools? When they gave my colleague who does the same job a performance rating of 5 and me a 3, it is natural for someone to feel upset. Performance evaluation criteria should be clearer." (Participant 3)

## 5. Conclusion

In this research, which examines the process and reasons of QQ in the context of public institutions, the descriptive analysis technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The data were obtained from the administrative staff employed in public institutions working in the fields of health, education, security, and local government services. The data collected from 13 participants who voluntarily participated in the research were analyzed using the Maxqda Program.

According to the findings obtained from the research, it has been determined that QQ revolves around the concepts of “System Problem and Desperation”, “Attitude”, “To be Offended”, and “Passive Aggression-Emotional Dissatisfaction”. Among these concepts, the most frequently recurring one is “System Problem and Desperation”. Employees' perception that they can not change systemic problems in public institutions on their own leads to a sense of desperation, followed by a loss of motivation. Unfair practices, meritlessness, and a negative work environment also cause employees to stop making efforts to solve problems or improve the situation, leading to withdrawal, seclusion, and resentment. The mismatch between employees' goals and organizational goals, the lack of opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making, and managers' non-inclusive and non-egalitarian attitudes all contribute to employees becoming alienated from the organization and their work. Because of all these factors, employees enter the process of QQ.

In the literature, the behavior of QQ is associated with burnout. According to this view, employees experience burnout in response to unrealistic work demands, excessive workload, emotional exhaustion, cynicism (depersonalization), reduced sense of personal accomplishment, high levels of work stress, lack of organizational support, and non-recognition for their efforts (Khan et al., 2022; ResumeBuilder, 2022; Hamouche & Koritos, 2023). However, based on the conducted interviews, especially in the context of public institutions, QQ is believed to be more related to feelings of desperation, devalued, and unhappiness rather than burnout. During the interviews, participants mentioned the excessive number of personnel and hidden unemployment, rather than job intensity or excessive work stress.

In the research, it was investigated whether individual characteristics would impact on QQ. According to the findings, it was concluded that individual characteristics could be a factor in QQ. The individual characteristics that drive employees toward QQ were identified as “Age”, “Years of Service”, “Intolerance of Injustice”, “Mental Exhaustion”, “Perceived Meaninglessness of Work”, “Leader Personality Trait”, “Lack of Intrinsic Motivation”, “Embracing a Comfortable Lifestyle”, and “Perfectionism”.



From the findings obtained, it was concluded that younger individuals and those with less seniority years were less likely to experience the QQ process or they could overcome this process more easily. The dynamism and courage of younger individuals, as well as their readiness for job search processes, along with their career-oriented focus and efforts to learn and prove themselves in the early years of their profession, play a significant role in this process. It is concluded that the QQ process will be experienced more intensely in those with more age and seniority. With the increase in age and years of seniority, mental fatigue and boredom increase in individuals, the excitement of change decreases, a more monotonous process is entered on the career path, and individuals do not prefer to leave their comfort zones, influenced by familial factors as well. Because of result of these factors, individuals tend to accept the existing conditions but reduce their efforts in work-related matters due to perceived unfair practices, establishing their own standards and, seeking justice that the system does not provide to them.

Contrary to the research findings, the relevant literature suggests that QQ behavior is more prevalent among younger individuals. In the report by Youthall (2022), it is claimed that the younger generation, specifically Generation Z, who are eager to self-improve and resist stagnation, are the initiators of the QQ movement. According to this perspective, Generation Z desiring recognition, expresses their reaction by abandoning organizational commitment. Although QQ is associated with both the Millennial Generation (Ellis & Yang, 2022) and the younger Generation Z (Schroth, 2019), it is also a perspective shared by many older dissatisfied employees, who are discontent with their jobs, managers, and the system (Damron, 2018). Therefore, it is considered important for the research findings to enrich the literature and provide a different perspective to existing studies. Due to their courage, dynamism, and greater mastery of job search processes, younger individuals are more likely to pursue careers in different fields. Consequently, the assumption that QQ behavior will be less common among younger people is accepted.

During the interviews with the participants, it was concluded that employees who possess leadership qualities, have a strong sense of justice, are perfectionists, and aspire to add value to their work and self-improvement are more likely to exhibit QQ behavior when they are not in suitable work environments. In this regard, employees with low intrinsic motivation and a preference for minimal effort exhibit similar tendencies toward QQB. It has been known for decades that there is a correlation between professional development and organizational commitment (Kelly, 2022). Similarly, Mahand and Caldwell (2023) point out that a lack of commitment to career development can be a cause of silent quitting. Therefore, providing employees with opportunities for self-improvement is crucial in preventing QQ behavior.

The organizational factors that can contribute to QQ have been identified as lack of motivation/support, unfair practices, failure to value, incompetence, insufficient communication/lack of feedback, bullying, managerial attitude, negative organizational climate, closed promotion path, and frequent changes in management and executives. The findings of the study align with existing literature.

According to Dawson (2022), Formica & Sfodera (2022), the reasons for QQB can include lack of growth/opportunities and appreciation, being stuck in a career plateau, burnout, poor pay, work-life imbalance, low intrinsic motivation, and unmanageable workload.

It has been determined that organizational factors that can lead to QQ are shaped around the following issues: lack of motivation/appreciation-lack of support, unfair practices, failure to value, lack of merit, insufficient communication-lack of feedback, mobbing, managerial attitude, negative organizational climate, closed promotion opportunities, and frequent changes in management and executives. The findings of this research are similar to those reported in the literature. According to Dawson (2022), Formica & Sfodera (2022), the reasons for QQ behavior include lack of growth/opportunities and appreciation, being stuck in a career plateau, burnout, poor pay, work-life imbalance, low intrinsic motivation, and unmanageable workload. Furthermore, in their study, Mahand & Caldwell (2023) stated that failure to value employees and increasing employee disconnection are factors that lead to silent quitting. Hiltunen (2023), identified factors that cause QQ as lack of motivation, lack of flexibility, lack of faith toward the employer, lack of respect toward employees, ineffective or unreliable bosses, and lack of professional growth.

Another result obtained from the research is that the most intense emotion experienced by individuals in the process of QQ is the feeling of devaluation. Other emotions accompanying the feeling of devaluation include unhappiness, desperation, fatigue-exhaustion, anxiety, and comfort.

When examining the literature on QQ, it is observed that studies are generally focused on the private sector. In this research, in order to contribute to the relevant literature, the process of QQ in public institutions has been questioned. In this context, most participants believe that compared to the private sector, public institutions have a more conducive structure for QQ. The factors believed to make public institutions more suitable for QQ are identified as "Job Security", "Bureaucratic Structure", "Lack of Development Opportunities", "Problems with Reward and Punishment System", "Equal Pay", "Inadequate Pay", and "Problems with Performance Evaluation System".

Organizational structures consist of two groups: hard elements (such as systems, policies, rules, hierarchical relationships, etc.) and soft elements (organizational climate, leadership style, communication style, informal relationships, etc.) (Arslan et al., 2020). Employees are aware that issues related to public institutions such as salary, hierarchical structure, and systemic problems require macro-level solutions, and they have a higher tolerance for these issues. In other words, the factors that push employees toward QQ are directly related to the soft structures of the organization, including leadership, organizational climate, work environment, communication style, merit, fairness, and equality. Mahand and Caldwell (2003) also emphasized the impact of management style and leadership

on QQ in their research. They suggested that leaders, managers, and supervisors should earn employee trust, inspire commitment, and create a culture that motivates high performance for managing QQB. Zenger and Folkman (2022) expressed this situation as "Quiet quitting is about bad bosses, not bad employees."

At this point, important responsibilities fall upon managers regarding QQ behavior. First, it is crucial for managers to make their employees feel valued. Managers should create a supportive work environment, appreciate employees' contributions, conduct performance evaluations transparently based on fair criteria, ensure meritocracy, implement a reward and punishment system, define job descriptions, authorities, and responsibilities, and maintain open communication channels with a constructive communication style. In Hiltunen's (2023) study on QQ, factors that motivate employees and steer them away from QQ were expressed as better management, more flexibility, colleagues, higher compensation, career development, and positive feedback.

Based on the results obtained from discussions regarding the impact of the pandemic on QQ, it has been concluded that the pandemic indirectly affects QQ. In the public institutions, the pandemic has increased awareness of flexible work practices and led employees to question the concept of working hours, creating an expectation that the current arrangement can change. Another effect of the pandemic on QQ is observed in sectors such as healthcare, where some employees had to work more due to their colleagues being on official leave, leading to unfair practices and a heightened sense of exhaustion and burnout. Another effect of the pandemic on public institutions employees is related to the sense of asociality, lack of communication, and lack of motivation resulting from distancing from the organization. The findings align with the relevant literature. According to Formica & Sfodera (2022), during the pandemic, many employees spent most of their time at home, either working remotely or not working at all. The pandemic made employees realize the comfort of remote work. According to Aydın & Azizoglu (2022), social distancing restrictions and stay-at-home orders during the pandemic hindered face-to-face relationships, leading employees to feel lonely, isolated, and unmotivated. All these factors contributed to QQ.

During the interviews, it was observed that individuals who have experienced or are currently experiencing the process of QQ, upon realizing their inability to cope with the situation, start seeking changes in their unit, department, job, or organization. In this process, resigning and finding employment in a different organizations are also among the options. Early retirement is also seen as another option sought by employees in the QQ process, as they are unhappy, anxious, and seeking relief from the exhaustion caused by the situation. If the employee does not have any of these alternatives or if obligations such as financial needs outweigh other considerations, the employee continues to work in their current job in a more "silent" manner. Similar thoughts have been expressed by Scheyett and Tong (2022) as well. According to them, those who believe they have better options will pursue those options, but for those who do not feel they have alternative job opportunities and are therefore compelled to remain employed, QQ

becomes a new alternative. Hetler and Kerner (2022) also state that QQ leads employees to seek new positions or job opportunities.

The term "quiet" refers to an employee who performs limited tasks without trying to progress in their career, without concerns about personal development, adding value to the work, or creating benefits for the organization. Quitting, on the other hand, is a concept related to an employee who has lost their motivation, enthusiasm, and goals, and feels worthless, unhappy, anxious, weary, helpless, and perhaps somewhat relieved, only adhering to regular working hours. In this context, QQ refers to an employee who has lost their motivation, enthusiasm, and goals, feels worthless, unhappy, anxious, weary, helpless, and perhaps somewhat relieved, and performs the required amount of work without generating additional value.

Researchers who are interested in this topic are recommended to conduct studies investigating QQ processes in different sectors. Additionally, to establish the scientific relationships between QQ and variables such as productivity, organizational commitment and personality traits, there is a clear need for the development of a measurement tool for the concept of QQ.

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