

The Role of Psychological Safety in Moderation of the Influence of Organizational Trust on Quiet Quitting Among Generation Z Employees

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Abstract. *This study aims to examine the moderating role of psychological safety in the relationship between organizational trust and quiet quitting among Generation Z employees. This study is motivated by the changing characteristics of the workforce following the entry of Generation Z into the workplace, which has led to the emergence of the quiet quitting phenomenon, where employees perform only their required job responsibilities without exerting additional effort beyond their assigned duties. Therefore, this study investigates the effect of organizational trust on quiet quitting by considering the moderating role of psychological safety. This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The sample consisted of 230 Generation Z employees selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that organizational trust and psychological safety have a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting. Furthermore, psychological safety strengthens the negative relationship between organizational trust and quiet quitting. These findings highlight the importance of fostering organizational trust and creating a psychologically safe work environment to reduce quiet quitting among Generation Z employees.*

Keywords: *Generation Z Employees; Organizational Trust; Psychological Safety; Quiet Quitting.*

1. Introduction

The current world of work is undergoing significant changes with the entry of Generation Z into the workforce. Changes in workforce characteristics in recent years have encouraged organizations to understand the needs and behaviors of the new generation entering the workforce. Generation Z is a group of individuals born between 1997 and 2012 and has different characteristics compared to previous generations, Generation Z has a high level of concern for mental health (Abdulah et al., 2024). These characteristics are reflected in the Deloitte Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey (2025) which shows that mental health and workplace well-being are among the top priorities for Generation Z. The survey shows that around 47% of Generation Z assess their mental health conditions as being in the moderate to poor category, so organizations are required to create a safe work environment and support employee psychological well-being.

This shift in Generation Z's work orientation has led to the emergence of various new phenomena in the workplace, one of which is quiet quitting. Quiet quitting is a condition where employees simply perform their duties according to their job description without putting in extra effort, emotional involvement, or additional commitment to the organization (Suriyanto, 2025). This phenomenon is a concern because it can reduce organizational productivity and effectiveness.

The phenomenon of quiet quitting needs to be properly understood to avoid misinterpretation. Conceptually, quiet quitting does not constitute a violation of the employment contract, as employees continue to perform their duties according to their job description. However, employees tend to refrain from exerting discretionary effort, initiative, or involvement beyond formal job demands. Furthermore, quiet quitting differs from work-life balance. Work-life balance focuses on the balance between work and personal life, while quiet quitting reflects a decline in work engagement and motivation. Therefore, quiet quitting represents a decline in psychological attachment to work, not simply the implementation of work-life balance or a violation of work obligations.

The Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2026 report shows that employee engagement is declining. Of all workers worldwide, only about 20% feel truly enthusiastic, motivated, and engaged in their work. Meanwhile, about 64% simply work to fulfill assigned tasks without a strong emotional attachment to their work or organization. This condition is often referred to as quiet quitting, which occurs when employees don't stop working but also don't put in more effort than required. Due to this low employee engagement, Gallup estimates that the world is losing around USD 10 trillion in productivity, equivalent to 9% of its workforce. the total value of the global economy. In other words, the phenomenon of quiet quitting not only impacts individuals and companies, but also has a huge global economic impact.

The phenomenon of quiet quitting is becoming increasingly relevant for Generation Z because this group has a different work orientation than previous generations. Generation Z tends to be more concerned with work-life balance, mental health, emotional well-being, and flexibility in their work (Mahardika et al., 2022). Furthermore, Generation Z also has high expectations for a work environment that supports personal development, provides work flexibility, and creates a balance between work and personal life. When organizations fail to meet these expectations, Generation Z employees tend to experience decreased work engagement (disengagement), which can ultimately increase the tendency for quiet quitting behavior.

Various previous studies have identified factors influencing quiet quitting, such as burnout, work-life balance, employee well-being, psychological capital, and leadership. However, research examining organizational trust as a factor influencing quiet quitting is relatively limited. Yet, trust in an organization is a crucial foundation for the employee-organization relationship because it can influence employee attitudes, behaviors, and work commitment. Empirical support regarding the importance of organizational trust in reducing quiet quitting is shown by research by Stefańska et al (2026) which concluded that organizational trust plays a role in reducing. The tendency of quiet quitting in Generation X employees. The study also shows that increasing employee inclusion can build organizational trust, thereby reducing quiet quitting behavior. However, the study was conducted on Generation X in Poland and placed organizational trust as a mediating variable, so there is still an opportunity to be tested on the Generation Z group.

2. Research Methods

The type of research used is explanatory research with an associative nature, aiming to determine the relationship between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2017). This research aims to explain the hypothesis testing and justify or strengthen the hypothesis, with the hope that this will ultimately strengthen the theory used as the foundation. This study examines the role of psychological safety in moderating the influence of organization on quiet quitting.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Respondent Overview

The respondents for this study were 230 Generation Z employees who met the criteria. The survey revealed that all respondents were willing to complete the questionnaire and completed it completely. The following is a breakdown of the study's respondents:

Table Respondent Description

No	Characteristics	Total Sample n = 230	
		Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	Employee Status		
	Contract employees	55	23.91%
	Permanent employees	175	76.09%
2.	Years of service		
	12 years old	70	30.43%
	3 – 5 years	116	50.43%
	>5 years	44	19.14%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

Table presents a description of the research respondents, where, based on employee status, the majority were permanent employees, at 175 (76.09%), with the most frequent having worked for 3-5 years, at 116 (50.43%).

3.2. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

The description of the research data is conducted in this section to describe the respondents' responses to the research variables. The purpose of this analysis is also. The purpose of this study is to provide a general overview of the condition of each variable based on respondents' perceptions. Descriptive analysis in this study was conducted by calculating the average (mean) value of respondents' answers for each indicator and for each research variable. The average value was chosen because it can illustrate the general tendency of respondents' answers to the statements given in the questionnaire. The higher the average value obtained, the higher the level of respondent agreement with the indicator or variable being measured. Conversely, a lower average value indicates a lower level of respondent agreement with the indicator. Thus, the results of the descriptive analysis can provide an initial overview of the level of employee trust in the organization, the level of psychological safety in the work environment, and the tendency for quiet quitting behavior experienced by respondents.

All data in this study were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents who met the research criteria, namely Generation Z employees. Each statement in the questionnaire was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from a score of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to a score of 5 (Strongly Agree). The use of the Likert scale was chosen because it is able to more systematically measure respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and opinions towards the phenomenon being studied, thus facilitating the process of analysis and interpretation of research results.

The variable descriptions are grouped into three categories: low category, with a score of 1.00–2.33; medium category, with a score of 2.34–3.66; and high category, with a score of 3.67–5.00. A complete description of the variables is shown in Table.

Table Description of Research Variables

Indicator		Mean
Organizational Trust		3.17
OT 1	The company is able to achieve the goals and targets that have been set	3.08
OT 2	The company is able to face the changes and challenges that occur	3.21
OT 3	The company cares about the welfare of its employees	3.16
OT 4	The company provides support when I experience difficulties in work.	3.12
OT 5	The company pays attention to the needs and development of its employees.	3.29
OT 6	The company applies rules and policies fairly to all employees.	3.16
OT 7	The company carries out what it has promised to employees	3.09
OT 8	The company is honest, consistent and trustworthy in every policy.	3.25
Psychological Safety		3.28

PS 1	Feel comfortable expressing my opinion to superiors and colleagues, even if my opinion is different	3.27
PS 2	Don't hesitate to ask when there is work or information that I don't understand.	3.30
PS 3	Feel safe to offer new ideas or suggestions to improve your work.	3.21
PS 4	Not afraid to admit the mistakes I made while working	3.38
PS 5	Opinions are valued by both superiors and colleagues.	3.20
PS 6	Feeling accepted and part of the team where I work.	3.32
PS 7	Free to take initiative or try new ways to get the job done better	3.31
Quiet Quitting		3.27
QQ 1	I feel that I have done enough of the work that is my responsibility without needing to do more than that.	3.38
QQ 2	Feel no need to work more than the company asks	3.28
QQ 3	Refusing additional work that is not my responsibility	3.17
QQ 4	Trying to meet the work targets set by the company	3.24
QQ 5	Rarely help coworkers if it's not part of my job	3.27
QQ 6	Choosing not to participate in company activities that are not related to my work	3.25
QQ 7	Feeling no need to put in extra effort to help the company progress	3.25
QQ 8	Choosing to focus on my own work rather than helping coworkers unless asked	3.35

Source: processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table, the organizational trust variable obtained an average value of 3.17, thus falling into the moderate category. This indicates that respondents generally have a fairly good level of trust in the organization where they work. Respondents assessed that the organization has demonstrated integrity, consistency, and concern for employees, although several aspects still need improvement to build stronger trust.

Based on the analysis of each indicator, indicator OT8 obtained the highest average score of 3.25. This result indicates that the majority of respondents assessed the organization as having implemented its policies consistently and reliably. Conversely, indicator OT1 obtained the lowest average score of 3.08, indicating that some respondents were still not fully confident that the organization was capable of achieving its stated goals and targets. Nevertheless, all organizational trust indicators were in the moderate category.

The psychological safety variable received an average score of 3.28, falling into the moderate category. These results indicate that respondents felt safe enough to express their opinions, ask questions, offer suggestions, and participate in the work environment. However, Thus, this sense of psychological security can still be increased so that employees become more confident in conveying ideas and carrying out innovations without fear of negative consequences.

The PS4 indicator received the highest average score of 3.38, indicating that most respondents were not afraid to admit mistakes made at work. Meanwhile, the PS3 indicator received the lowest average score of 3.21, indicating that respondents' courage in offering ideas or suggestions for improving their work still needs improvement. Overall, all psychological safety indicators fell into the moderate category.

The quiet quitting variable received an average score of 3.27, falling into the moderate category. This result indicates that respondents' tendency to engage in quiet quitting behavior is still moderate. This means that some respondents tend to work according to their assigned duties and responsibilities without making any further contributions outside of their formal work.

In general, the descriptive analysis results show that each indicator in the quiet quitting variable falls within the moderate category. This indicates that quiet quitting behavior is not yet at a high level, but it still requires organizational attention because it has the potential to impact productivity, work engagement, and the achievement of organizational goals if not managed properly.

3.3. Structural Model Testing (Inner Model Testing)

The final analysis in PLS is the structural model analysis, or inner model. In structural model analysis, hypotheses can be tested using t-statistics. The test results can be seen in the

structural model output, which demonstrates the significance of the loading factor, which explains the influence of the organizational trust construct on quiet quitting, moderated by psychological safety.

a. Coefficient of Determination(R-square)

The coefficient of determination (R-square) is used to determine the extent to which exogenous variables explain the variation in endogenous variables in a research model. The R-square value indicates the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in the structural model.

Table Results of Determination Test (R-Square)

	<i>R-square</i>	<i>R-square adjusted</i>
<i>Quiet Quitting</i>	0.589	0.584

Source: Primary data processing with SmartPLS 4.1.1.8 (2026) Based on the test results presented in Table, the Quiet variable

Quitting obtained an R-square value of 0.589 and an adjusted R-square of 0.584. These values indicate that 58.9% of the variation in quiet quitting behavior can be explained by the variables of organizational trust, psychological safety, and the interaction between organizational trust and psychological safety as moderating variables contained in the research model.

Meanwhile, 41.1% of the variation in quiet quitting is influenced by factors outside the research model that were not analyzed in this study. These factors can include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership, workload, work engagement, burnout, organizational culture, and other variables that have the potential to influence quiet quitting behavior. Referring to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2022), the R-square value of 0.589 is included in the moderate category. This indicates that the constructed structural model has a fairly good ability to explain variation quiet quitting variable. In addition, the difference between the R-square value (0.589) and the adjusted R-square (0.584) is relatively small, indicating that the research model has a good level of stability and does not experience a significant decrease in predictive ability after considering the number of constructs used in the model.

b. Effect size(f-square)

The effect size (f-square) test was conducted to determine the extent of influence of each exogenous variable on the endogenous variable in the research model. The f-square value is used to assess the contribution of an independent variable to changes in the R-square value of the dependent variable.

The results of data processing with SmartPLS-4 show the effect size (f-Square) value as presented in the following table.

Table Effect Size Test Results (f-Square)

	<i>Organizational Trust</i>	<i>Psychological Safety</i>	<i>Quiet Quitting</i>
<i>OrganizationalTrust</i>			0.669
<i>PsychologicalSafety</i>			0.380
<i>Quiet Quitting</i>			
<i>PsychologicalSafety x OrganizationalTrust</i>			0.158

Source: Primary data processing with SmartPLS 4.1.1.8 (2026)

Based on Table, the organizational trust variable has an effect size (f-square) value of 0.669 on the quiet quitting variable. This value is above the 0.35 threshold, making it a large effect. These results indicate that organizational trust makes a significant contribution significant in explaining changes in the quiet quitting variable. In other words, the presence of the organizational trust variable in the model plays a significant role in explaining variations in quiet quitting behavior.

Furthermore, the psychological safety variable has an f-square value of 0.380 on quiet quitting. This value is also above 0.35, making it a large effect. This indicates that psychological safety significantly contributes to changes in quiet quitting scores. Therefore, the higher the level of psychological safety perceived by employees, the more substantial the variable's influence in the research model.

In addition to the direct effect, this study also tested the moderating effect of psychological safety $\times$ organizational trust on quiet quitting. The test results yielded an f-square value of 0.158. This value falls within the range of 0.15–0.35, thus categorizing it as a medium effect. These results indicate that the interaction between organizational trust and psychological safety provides an additional contribution in explaining quiet quitting, although the magnitude of the effect is not as strong as the direct influence of the two main variables.

Overall, the results of the effect size test indicate that the organizational trust and psychological safety variables have a large contribution to the change in the quiet quitting variable, while the moderating variable psychological safety $\times$ organizational trust has a moderate contribution. Thus, the two main variables are dominant factors.

in explaining quiet quitting behavior, while the moderating effect of psychological safety provides additional significant influence on the research model.

c. Predictive Relevance(Q-square)

The predictive relevance (Q^2) test aims to determine the model's predictive ability regarding endogenous variables in the study. The Q^2 value is based on the results of the SmartPLS-4 analysis using the R-square value of the endogenous variables.

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.589)$$

$$= 0.589$$

The calculation results show a Q-square value of 0.589. This value is greater than 0 ($Q^2 > 0$), indicating that the research model has good predictive relevance for the quiet quitting variable. This means that the model can explain and predict quiet quitting behavior based on organizational trust and psychological safety, as well as the interaction between the two as moderating variables.

d. Hypothesis Testing

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method in PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS-4 software. This test aims to determine the significance of the relationship between variables through the path coefficient, T-statistic, and P-value. According to Hair

et al. (2011), a hypothesis is declared accepted if the T-statistic value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 at a significance level of 5%.

Table Total Effect Test Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Organizational Trust-> Quiet Quitting	-0.530	-0.532	0.042	12,565	0.000
Psychological Safety-> Quiet Quitting	-0.399	-0.400	0.043	9,321	0.000
Psychological Safetyx Organizational Trust -> Quiet Quitting	-0.258	-0.257	0.041	6,249	0.000

Source: Primary data processing with SmartPLS 4.1.1.8 (2026)

Table Hypothesis Test Results

Connection	Path Coefficient	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
<i>Organizational Trust</i> → Quiet Quitting	-0.53	12,565	0.00	Accepted
<i>Psychological Safety</i> → Quiet Quitting	-0.399	9,321	0.00	Accepted
<i>Psychological Safety</i> x <i>Organizational Trust</i> → Quiet Quitting	-0.258	6,249	0.00	Accepted

Source: Primary data processing with SmartPLS 4.1.1.8 (2026)

3.3. Hypothesis 1: The effect of organizational trust on quiet quitting

The first hypothesis test yielded a path coefficient of -0.530, indicating that organizational trust negatively impacts quiet quitting. The t-statistic of 12.565, greater than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.000, less than 0.05, indicate that the effect is statistically significant. Therefore, it

can be concluded that organizational trust has a negative and significant impact on quiet quitting, thus accepting Hypothesis 1.

The results of this study indicate that the higher the level of employee trust in the organization, the lower the tendency to quit. Trust in the organization makes employees feel that the organization has integrity, provides fair treatment, and considers their interests. This encourages employees to remain engaged and committed to their work, thus reducing the tendency to work only to fulfill minimum obligations.

a. Hypothesis 2: The effect of psychological safety on quiet quitting

The second hypothesis test yielded an original sample value of -0.399 for the relationship between psychological safety and quiet quitting. This value indicates a negative relationship. Furthermore, a t-statistic of 9.321 was obtained, which is greater than 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. These results indicate that the effect of psychological safety on quiet quitting is statistically significant.

A negative path coefficient indicates that the higher the level of psychological safety employees perceive, the lower their tendency to engage in quiet quitting. In other words, when employees feel psychologically safe to express their opinions, participate in their work, and are not worried about negative consequences in the work environment, they tend to be more engaged in their work and not just working to fulfill formal responsibilities. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

The results of this study indicate that psychological safety is a factor that plays a role in reducing quiet quitting behavior among Generation Z employees. A work environment that provides a sense of psychological safety can encourage work engagement, increase employee confidence in interactions, and reduce the tendency to withdraw from work. Therefore, the higher the psychological safety perceived by employees, the lower the rate of quiet quitting.

b. Hypothesis 3: The role of psychological safety in moderating the influence of organizational trust on quiet quitting.

The second hypothesis test yielded an original sample value of -0.258 for the interaction between psychological safety and organizational trust and quiet quitting. This value indicates a negative relationship. Furthermore, a t-statistic of 6.249 was obtained, which is greater than 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. These results indicate that the moderating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between organizational trust and quiet quitting is statistically significant.

A negative interaction coefficient indicates that the higher the level of psychological safety perceived by employees, the stronger the negative influence of organizational trust on quiet

quitting. In other words, when employees have high trust in the organization and Supported by a work environment that provides a sense of psychological safety, their tendency to engage in quiet quitting will be lower. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

The results of this study indicate that psychological safety acts as a moderating variable, strengthening the relationship between organizational trust and quiet quitting. This means that high levels of psychological safety can increase the effectiveness of organizational trust in reducing quiet quitting behavior among Generation Z employees.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the effect of organizational trust on quiet quitting with psychological safety as a moderating variable in Generation Z employees. Based on the results of the analysis using the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method through the SmartPLS 4 application, it can be concluded as follows: organizational trust has a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting in Generation Z employees. The test results show a path coefficient value (Original Sample) of -0.530, a t-statistic value of 12.565, and a p-value of 0.000. These results indicate that the higher the level of employee trust in the organization, the lower the tendency of employees to do quiet quitting. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. Psychological safety has a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting among Generation Z employees. The test results show a path coefficient value of -0.399, a t-statistic value of 9.321, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the higher the sense of psychological safety felt by employees in the work environment, the lower their tendency to do quiet quitting. Thus, the second hypothesis is accepted. Psychological safety proven to moderate the influence of organizational trust on quiet quitting in Generation Z employees. Results of the interaction test shows a path coefficient of -0.258, a t-statistic of 6.249, and a p-value of 0.000. These results indicate that psychological safety strengthens the negative influence of organizational trust on quiet quitting. This means that when the level of psychological safety is high, the influence of organizational trust in reducing the tendency for quiet quitting becomes stronger. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. Overall, this study shows that organizational trust and psychological safety are important factors in suppressing quiet quitting behavior in Generation Z employees. In addition, the existence of psychological safety strengthens the effectiveness of organizational trust in reducing the tendency of quiet quitting, so organizations need to pay attention to both aspects simultaneously to increase employee engagement and involvement.

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