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The Influence of Digital Fatigue and Occupational Stress on Quiet Quitting in Generation Y and Z in the Agency Industry

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Abstract

This research investigates the influence of digital fatigue on quiet quitting among Generation Y and Z employees in the agency industry, with occupational stress as a mediating variable. The rapid digitalization of work environments has led to increased digital fatigue, particularly affecting younger generations who are heavily reliant on technology. The research problem centers on understanding how excessive digital technology use contributes to employee disengagement in the form of quiet quitting behavior. The objective is to examine the direct and indirect relationships between digital fatigue, occupational stress, and quiet quitting among Gen Y and Z employees in Jakarta's agency industry. Using a quantitative approach, the study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze data from 236 respondents from various divisions, predominantly under contract employment and using digital technology intensively (10–12 hours daily). Validity and reliability tests confirmed the soundness of the measurement instruments. The results showed that digital fatigue significantly increases occupational stress ($\beta = 0.652$, $p < 0.001$) and quiet quitting behaviors ($\beta = 0.295$, $p < 0.05$). Occupational stress also significantly influences quiet quitting ($\beta = 0.328$, $p < 0.05$), confirming its partial mediating role in the relationship between digital fatigue and quiet quitting. These findings highlight the critical impact of digital workloads on employee engagement and underline the need for managerial strategies to mitigate digital fatigue and occupational stress to enhance work productivity and reduce quiet quitting. The study contributes practical solutions for managing employee well-being in highly digital and demanding agency work environments.

Keywords: Digital Fatigue, Occupational Stress, Quiet Quitting, Generation Y, Generation Z, Agency industry

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the workplace, particularly with the increased use of digital devices and the implementation of remote work systems (Mariani et al., 2023). Intensive use of digital technology has led to increased workloads and the emergence of digital fatigue, a phenomenon characterized by physical and mental exhaustion resulting from excessive use of technology in a work context (Ramadhi et al., 2024). This condition is particularly felt by Gen Y and Z employees, who make up the majority of the workforce in the agency industry today.

Generations Y and Z are the dominant productive age groups in Indonesia's demographic structure. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for 2024–2025, Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, dominates Indonesia's population, accounting for approximately 27.94% of the total population, while Millennials (Y) account for approximately 25.87%. This second generation plays a significant role in the workforce, including in the agency sector, which encompasses temporary, freelance, and contract work. However, working conditions in the agency industry, which demand high creativity and intensive use of digital technology, lead to high workloads and the phenomenon of digital fatigue (Ramadhi et al., 2024). This digital fatigue has the potential to increase occupational stress, which impacts decreasing employee motivation and engagement, then triggering the

phenomenon of quiet quitting, where employees only perform work according to minimum standards without further initiative (Ramadhi et al., 2024).

Fatigue is generally defined as a progressive decline in awareness and performance leading to sleep (OGP, 2007) and is characterized by symptoms like poor performance, loss of attention, and increased sleepiness (Energy Institute, 2006). Within the JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), digital fatigue is understood as the result of high job demands from intensive digital technology use which, without adequate resources like support or rest, leads to exhaustion. This aligns with the Health and Safety Executive's view that fatigue results from prolonged mental and physical exertion that impairs performance and alertness.

Occupational stress is a related condition where job demands exceed an individual's ability to cope, resulting in negative physical, psychological, and behavioral reactions (Pello et al., 2021; Foti et al., 2023). It arises from an imbalance between job requirements and an individual's adaptability, often triggered by factors such as role failure, communication barriers, and unfulfilled professional advancement (Naseem, 2018; Wu et al., 2019). If not managed, this condition can severely reduce productivity and the quality of work life (Moyosore, 2021).

In response to such high demands and a lack of organizational support for well-being, employees may engage in quiet quitting (Wang et al., 2023). This behavior involves working only to the minimum required by one's responsibilities, accompanied by psychological detachment from work (Lu et al., 2023; Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Hamouche et al., 2023). Employees adopt this approach to maintain work-life balance and prioritize health when they feel unappreciated (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023), but it is highly detrimental to organizations, leading to decreased productivity, poorer work quality, and a reduced competitive advantage (Yıldız, 2023; Öztürk et al., 2023). This concept is similar to other forms of disengagement, such as withdrawal behavior or work neglect (Aydin & AziZoğlu, 2022; Jo & Lee, 2022).

The agency industry is one sector vulnerable to this phenomenon. With its project-based nature, flexible working hours that blur the lines between work and personal time, and high performance expectations, workers in this sector are more susceptible to quiet quitting than other sectors (Kumar et al., 2023). This research is particularly significant given the increasing level of competition and work pressure in the agency industry.

Thus, there is a significant research gap regarding how digital fatigue influences quiet quitting through the mediation of occupational stress among Gen Y and Z employees in the Jakarta agency industry. This research is expected to provide important contributions to human resource management in the agency industry, particularly in facing the challenges of the digital era and the unique characteristics of the younger generation.

Previous research has primarily focused on digital fatigue as a technological or ergonomic issue, while studies on quiet quitting have largely examined organizational factors without considering the role of technology-induced stress. Limited research has explored the intersection of digital fatigue and quiet quitting, particularly among younger generations in creative industries. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western contexts, leaving a significant gap in understanding these phenomena within Asian, specifically Indonesian, work environments.

The research gap identified centers on the lack of empirical investigation into how digital fatigue influences quiet quitting through occupational stress mediation among Gen Y and Z employees in the Jakarta agency industry. While individual studies have examined digital fatigue, occupational stress, and quiet quitting separately, no comprehensive framework has been developed to understand their interconnected relationships within this specific demographic and industry context.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrated approach to examining the digital fatigue-occupational stress-quiet quitting nexus, specifically tailored to younger generations in the creative agency sector, using Indonesian cultural and workplace contexts. The research problem emerges from the concerning trend of employee disengagement in the digital era, specifically manifesting as quiet quitting behavior among younger generations. This phenomenon is particularly critical in the agency industry, where intensive digital technology use has become the norm, yet its psychological and behavioral consequences remain understudied.

The urgency of this research is underscored by several factors: first, the accelerated digital transformation post-pandemic has intensified technology dependence in workplace settings; second, the agency industry's project-based nature creates unique stressors that compound digital fatigue; and third, the economic implications of quiet quitting behavior pose significant challenges to organizational productivity and competitiveness.

This study aims to examine the influence of digital fatigue on quiet quitting among Gen Y and Z employees in the agency industry, considering the mediating role of occupational stress. The results are expected to provide practical contributions to agency management in managing employee workload and well-being to increase work engagement and productivity. The expected benefits include providing theoretical contributions to digital workplace psychology literature, offering practical insights for human resource management in the agency industry, informing policy development for employee well-being programs, and establishing a foundation for future research on technology-related workplace phenomena. The implications extend to improved employee retention strategies, enhanced organizational productivity, and the development of healthier digital work environments that can effectively manage the challenges posed by intensive technology use while maintaining high performance standards.

Digital Fatigue and Occupational Stress

A study by Ramadhi et al. (2024) confirmed that fatigue resulting from excessive use of digital technology can increase levels of occupational stress among employees, particularly Generation Z, who rely heavily on digital technology for their work. Digital fatigue, a consequence of intense digital exposure, directly contributes to increased occupational stress experienced by employees. Fatigue resulting from excessive use of digital technology, both in terms of duration and intensity, can burden an individual's cognitive and emotional capacities, thereby increasing their vulnerability to occupational stress in the workplace. A comprehensive study by Ramadhi et al. (2024) explicitly confirmed that persistent fatigue from the use of digital devices and platforms significantly increases levels of occupational stress among employees, particularly among Generation Z, who grew up relying heavily on digital technology in their professional activities. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Digital fatigue affects occupational stress.

Occupational Stress and Quiet Quitting

A study by Smith & Turner (2022) showed that high levels of occupational stress cause employees to experience emotional exhaustion and decreased motivation, leading to disengagement or quiet quitting. Research by Karapetrou (2023) supports these findings by demonstrating a direct link between burnout and quiet quitting. This underscores that workplace stress not only impacts performance but also triggers employees' subconscious decision to gradually withdraw from additional roles and responsibilities. Based on these theories and findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Occupational stress affects quiet quitting.

Digital Fatigue and Quiet Quitting

Digital fatigue can also directly influence quiet quitting behavior because persistent fatigue reduces productivity and motivation. Brilianti et al.'s (2023) study supports a negative relationship between digital stress and performance, which may lead to increased quiet quitting. Digital fatigue causes employees to feel bored and unmotivated, ultimately triggering a gradual withdrawal from work. They may avoid taking on additional tasks, participating in volunteer initiatives, or even simply interacting more deeply with coworkers. This is an effort by employees to conserve remaining energy and protect themselves from further exhaustion by limiting their efforts to only what is necessary. This direct impact suggests that digital fatigue is not only an individual health issue but also a strategic challenge to organizational productivity and engagement. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Digital fatigue affects quiet quitting.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data used in this study were primary data obtained through a questionnaire specifically designed for this research purpose. The questionnaire was distributed through online platforms such as Google Forms and social media, making it easy for respondents to complete.

This study's measurement used a Likert scale, a measurement scale used to collect data regarding respondents' views or attitudes toward a series of statements or items. The Likert scale is designed to assess how strongly subjects agree or disagree with statements on a five-point scale (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with these statements. Researchers distributed questionnaires to respondents using a Likert scale.

Hair et al. (2019) also explain sample size in SEM (Structural Equation Model) analysis. Based on the calculations above, the sample size for this study was 150 respondents. However, to reduce the risk of error, the researchers selected a sample size of 236 respondents using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that respondents met the established criteria. This technique allowed researchers to obtain more relevant and in-depth information.

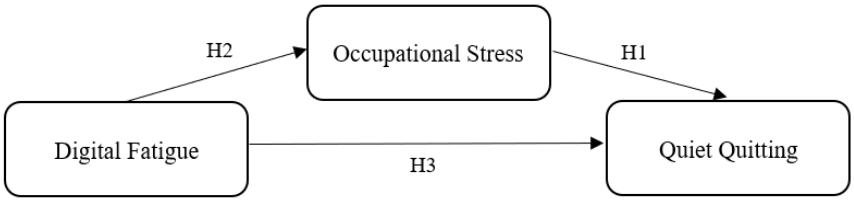

Figure 1 Framework Model

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The research framework can be seen in Figure 1, and the constructs are adapted through pre-existing studies. Digital fatigue scale was incorporated from Ghosh and Cavanagh (2024) and Frone et al. (2015), and a total of 6 items are included to measure the variable. For the variable quiet quitting, it is adapted from Fikriando et al. (2024), with a total of 6 items added. For the variable occupational stress, it is adapted from Hart and Staveland (1988) with a total of 6 items adapted from their studies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent Gender

Respondent Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	160 People	67,80%
Female	76 People	32,20%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The data above shows that 160 respondents were male and 76 respondents were female. This indicates that the respondents were generally male.

Table 2. Respondent Age

Respondent Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 15 Years	0 People	0,00%
16 to 20 Years	5 People	2,12%
21 to 25 Years	222 People	94,07%
25 to 28 Years	5 People	2,12%
Over 28 Years	4 People	1,69%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

From the data above, it can be seen that there were no respondents under 15 years old, 5 respondents aged 16 to 20 years old, 222 respondents aged 21 to 25 years old, 5 respondents aged 25 to 28 years old, and 4 respondents aged over 28 years old. This can illustrate that in general the respondents are dominated by respondents aged 21 to 25 years old.

Table 3. Respondent Education

Respondent Education	Frequency	Percentage
High School / Equivalent	4 People	1,69%
Diploma	57 People	24,15%
Bachelor's Degree	172 People	72,89%
Master's Degree	3 People	1,27%
Doctoral Degree	0 People	0,00%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The data above shows that 4 respondents had a high school or equivalent education, 57 had a diploma, 172 had a bachelor's degree, 3 had a master's degree, and none had a doctoral degree. This indicates that the majority of respondents were undergraduates.

Table 4. Respondent's Length of Service

Respondent's Length of Service	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 Months	0 People	0,00%
6 Months to Less than 1 Year	3 People	1,27%
1 to 5 Years	231 People	97,88%
More than 5 Years	2 People	0,85%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

From the data above, it can be seen that there were no respondents who worked for less than 6 months, 3 respondents who worked for 6 months to less than 1 year, 231 respondents who worked for 1 to 5 years, and 2 respondent who worked for more than 5 years. This can illustrate that in general, respondents are dominated by respondents who have worked for 1 to 5 years.

Table 5. Respondent Division

Respondent Division	Frequency	Percentage
Human Resources Development	6 People	2,54%
Account Executive / Marketing	121 People	51,27%
Content Creator	8 People	3,39%
Social Media	5 People	2,12%
Information Technology	58 People	24,58%
Digital Marketing	23 People	9,75%
PPC (Pay Per Click)	5 People	2,12%
Talent	4 People	1,69%
Other:	6 People	2,54%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

From the data above, it can be seen that there are 6 respondents in the human resources development division, 121 respondents in the account executive/marketing division, 8 respondents in the content creator division, 5 respondents in the social media division, 58 respondents in the information technology division, 23 respondents in the digital marketing division, 5 respondents in the PPC (pay per click) division, 4 respondents in the talent division, and 6 respondents in other divisions. This can illustrate that in general the respondents are dominated by respondents in the account executive/marketing division.

Table 6. Respondent's Employment Status

Respondent's Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent Employees	4 People	1,69%
Contract Employees	230 People	97,47%
Offline/Online Freelancers	1 People	0,42%
Others:	1 People	0,42%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The data above shows that 4 respondents were permanent employees, 230 were contract employees, 1 was freelance offline/online, and 1 was other. This indicates that the majority of respondents are contract employees.

Table 7. Respondent's Position

Respondent's Position	Frequency	Percentage
Staff	212 People	89,83%
Supervisor	22 People	9,32%
Manager	2 People	0,85%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The data above shows that 212 respondents held staff positions, 22 held supervisory positions, and 2 held managerial positions. This indicates that the respondents are generally dominated by staff positions.

Table 8. Respondents' Use of Digital Technology in Their Work

Respondents' Use of Digital Technology in Their Work	Frequency	Percentage
Under 9 Hours per Day	9 People	3,81%
10-12 Hours per Day	165 People	69,92%
13-15 Hours per Day	60 People	25,42%
Over 15 Hours per Day	2 People	0,85%
Total	**236 People**	**100,00%**

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

From the data above, it can be seen that respondents who use digital technology in working for less than 9 hours per day are 9 people, respondents who use digital technology in working for 10 to 12 hours per day are 165 people, respondents who use digital technology in working for 13 to 15 hours per day are 60 people, and respondents who use digital technology in working for more than 15 hours per day are 2 people. This can illustrate that in general the respondents are dominated by respondents who use digital technology in working for 10 to 12 hours per day.

Instrument Validity Test

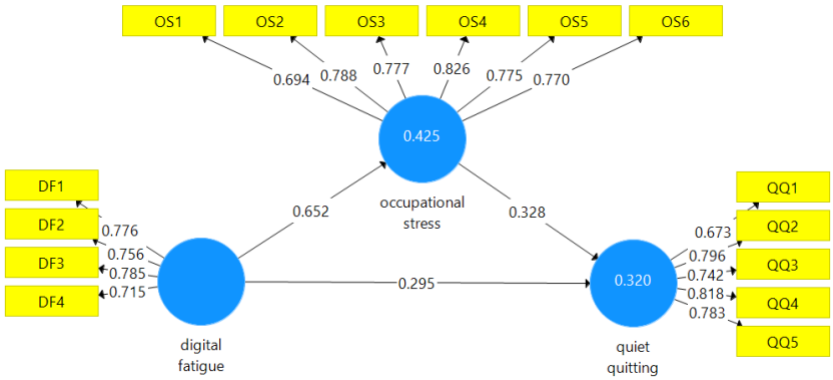

Figure 2 Complete SEM Model
Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

Figure 2 shows the structural equation model of the relationship between digital fatigue, occupational stress and quiet quitting where there is 1 indicator of occupational stress and 1 indicator of quiet quitting which do not meet the validity criteria with an outer loading value > 0.7, but all the other indicators in this model meet the validity criteria with an outer loading value > 0.7. The four digital fatigue indicators (DF1–DF4) have outer loading values between 0.715 to 0.785, which shows validity in measuring the digital fatigue construct. The six occupational stress indicators (OS1–OS6) have outer loading values between 0.694 to 0.826, which shows validity in measuring the occupational stress construct. Finally, the five quiet quitting indicators (QQ1–QQ5) have outer loading values between 0.673 to 0.818 which shows validity in measuring the quiet quitting construct.

Table 9. Validity Test Results

Variabel	Item Code	Outer Loading	Information
Digital Fatigue	DF1	0,776	Valid
Digital Fatigue	DF2	0,756	Valid
Digital Fatigue	DF3	0,785	Valid
Digital Fatigue	DF4	0,715	Valid
Occupational Stress	OS1	0,694	Invalid
Occupational Stress	OS2	0,788	Valid
Occupational Stress	OS3	0,777	Valid
Occupational Stress	OS4	0,826	Valid
Occupational Stress	OS5	0,775	Valid
Occupational Stress	OS6	0,770	Valid
Quiet Quitting	QQ1	0,673	Invalid
Quiet Quitting	QQ2	0,796	Valid
Quiet Quitting	QQ3	0,742	Valid
Quiet Quitting	QQ4	0,818	Valid
Quiet Quitting	QQ1	0,783	Valid

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

Instrument Reliability Test

Table 10. Composite Reliability Test Results

Variabel	*Composite Reliability*	Information
Digital Fatigue	0,844	Reliable
Occupational Stress	0,899	Reliable
Quiet Quitting	0,875	Reliable

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

Table 10 presents the results of the reliability test for the three variables in this study. All variables show a high level of reliability, which shows that the indicators for each variable are consistent in measuring the construct. Occupational stress has the highest reliability with a value of 0.899, followed by quiet quitting with a value of 0.875 and digital fatigue with a value of 0.844. The composite reliability value of the three variables exceeds 0.84, indicating strong consistency and reliable realism of the research instrument.

Test of Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Table 11. Average *Variance Extracted* (AVE) Test Results

Variabel	AVE	Information
Digital Fatigue	0,575	Reliable
Occupational Stress	0,597	Reliable
Quiet Quitting	0,584	Reliable

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

Table 11 shows that all variables have an AVE value above 0.50 so they are declared valid. Digital fatigue has an AVE value of 0.575, which shows that the indicators in this variable are able to explain 57.5% of the variance in the digital fatigue construct so that it is valid and reliable. Occupation stress has an AVE value of 0.597, which shows that the indicators in this variable are able to explain 59.7% of the variance in the occupational stress

construct so that it is valid and reliable. Quiet quitting has an AVE of 0.584, which means 58.4% of the variance of this construct can be explained by the indicators so that it is declared valid and reliable. Thus, all constructs in this research model meet the criteria for convergent validity, meaning that the indicators for each variable consistently represent the construct they measure.

Cronbach's Alpha Test

Table 12. *Cronbach's Alpha Test Results*

Variable	*Cronbach's Alpha*	Information
Digital Fatigue	0,754	Reliable
Occupational Stress	0,865	Reliable
Quiet Quitting	0,833	Reliable

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

Table 12 shows that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, thus being considered reliable. Digital fatigue has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.754, indicating good internal consistency. Occupational stress has a value of 0.865, indicating strong consistency and reliability in measuring this construct. Quiet quitting has a value of 0.833, indicating strong reliability. Thus, all constructs in this study meet the reliability criteria based on Cronbach's Alpha test, which indicates that all indicators in each variable have good internal consistency in measuring their respective constructs.

Coefficient Determination Test

Table 13. Test Results Coefficient of Determination

Variable	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	Information
Occupational Stress	0,422	Moderate Relationship
Quiet Quitting	0,314	Moderate Relationship

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

Table 13 shows that occupational stress has an R^2 value of 0.422, meaning 42.2% of the variation in occupational stress can be explained by the independent variables in the model. This value is considered moderate, indicating the model has good predictive ability for this variable. Meanwhile, quiet quitting obtained an R^2 value of 0.314, meaning only 31.4% of the variation in quiet quitting can be explained by the independent variables. This value is considered moderate, indicating the model has good predictive ability for this variable. There are still opportunities to improve the model's predictive power, for example by adding new independent variables, improving indicators or measurement instruments, using other, more complex mediation and moderation models, and expanding the research sample. Thus, the variable of employee involvement is the most strongly described by the model, while employee performance is the weakest predicted so it requires the exploration of additional factors outside of this research model.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 14. Direct and Indirect Hypothesis Test Results

Construct	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Digital Fatigue → Occupational Stress	0,652	0,092	7,090	0,000
Digital Fatigue → Quiet Quitting	0,295	0,141	2,091	0,037
Occupational Stress → Quiet Quitting	0,328	0,142	2,304	0,022

Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The results of the study showed that all three tested relationship pathways had a positive and statistically significant effect: digital fatigue on occupational stress (65.2%), digital fatigue on quiet quitting (29.5%), and occupational stress on quiet quitting (32.8%). These findings confirm that digital fatigue plays a significant role in influencing the other two aspects: occupational stress and quiet quitting. With its significant influence, digital fatigue not only increases workplace stress levels but also triggers quiet quitting behavior among employees.

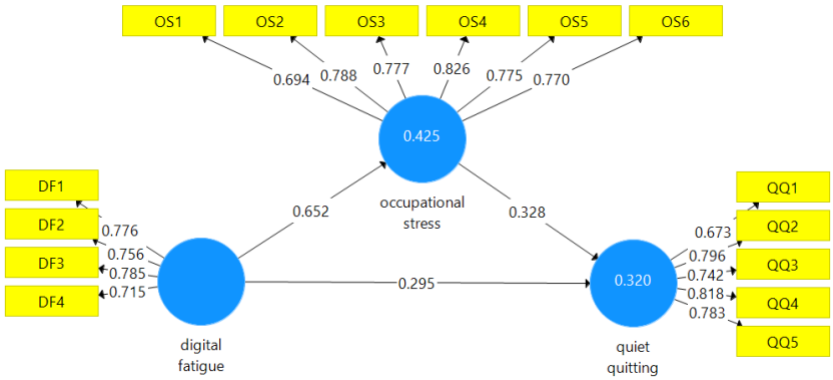

Figure 3 Model Bootstrapping
Source : Data Processing Results (2025)

The results of the hypothesis testing in Figure 3 show that of the three relationships tested, all hypotheses are accepted because they have a positive and significant influence. Digital fatigue shows a positive and significant influence on occupational stress, so H1 is accepted. Digital fatigue and occupational stress have a positive and significant effect on quiet quitting, so H2 and H3 are accepted.

The Effect of Digital Fatigue on Occupational Stress

The first hypothesis (H1) in this study states that digital fatigue has a positive and significant effect on occupational stress. Digital fatigue, which results from excessive technology use, can increase employees' mental burden in the workplace.

This finding aligns with previous research showing that digital fatigue directly impacts individual stress levels. Employees who feel exhausted by the demands of being constantly connected and responsive often experience increased stress, which can disrupt their work-life balance.

Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand the impact of digital fatigue and implement strategies that can reduce workplace stress, in order to create a healthier and more productive work environment.

The Influence of Digital Fatigue on Quiet Quitting

The second hypothesis (H2) in this study states that digital fatigue has a positive and significant influence on quiet quitting. In the modern workplace context, digital fatigue refers to mental and physical exhaustion caused by excessive technology use.

When employees feel exhausted by the demands of constant connectivity, they tend to withdraw from active engagement at work. Previous research has shown that digital fatigue can lead to decreased motivation and productivity, contributing to the phenomenon of quiet quitting, where employees perform only the minimum tasks without exerting any effort.

These findings confirm that the higher the level of digital fatigue, the more likely employees are to choose quiet quitting. Therefore, it is important for organizations to recognize the impact of digital fatigue and take steps to support employee well-being, thereby preventing a decline in workplace engagement.

The Effect of Occupational Stress on Quiet Quitting

The third hypothesis (H3) in this study states that occupational stress has a positive and significant effect on quiet quitting. Occupational stress, which arises from pressure and demands in the workplace, can affect employee engagement levels.

This finding aligns with several previous studies showing that the higher the level of stress experienced, the more likely employees are to engage in quiet quitting, which involves doing the minimum required without exerting additional effort. Employees who feel stressed tend to withdraw from active engagement, thereby reducing their contribution to the organization.

Therefore, it is important for companies to recognize the impact of occupational stress and take steps to create a supportive work environment to prevent quiet quitting and increase employee engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital fatigue significantly increases occupational stress by elevating employee mental distress due to excessive technology use, and it also directly contributes to quiet quitting, where exhausted employees withdraw from active engagement. Additionally, occupational stress itself triggers quiet quitting, creating a reinforcing cycle between stress and fatigue that diminishes employee motivation and involvement. The hypothesis testing confirmed all proposed relationships, establishing digital fatigue as a key factor influencing both occupational stress and quiet quitting, with occupational stress serving as a crucial mediator in this dynamic among Generation Y and Z employees in the agency industry. To enhance employee engagement and productivity, organizations must address both digital fatigue and occupational stress. Future research could explore specific organizational interventions or digital wellbeing programs that effectively mitigate digital fatigue and its cascading effects on stress and disengagement in diverse industry contexts.

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