
QUITE QUITTING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

This academic essay examines the quite quitting in Philippine education as a systemic symptom of eroded psychological contracts. Analyzing the macro, meso, and micro levels, it argues that chronic disengagement stems from policy failures, poor leadership, and unsustainable workloads, which collectively deplete teachers' vocational passion. Drawing on international literature and local studies, the analysis frames this withdrawal as a rational, self-preserving protest against conditions that hinder institutional mission. It concludes that reversing this trend requires integrated reforms –humane policies, transformational leadership, and cultural shifts to realign organizational systems with teacher well-being and restore the sector's relational core.

KEYWORDS: quite quitting, educational institutions, organizational purpose, institutional effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of educational institutions hinges on the shared commitment of teachers, administrators, and staff to advancing learning, research, and community transformation. In recent years, however, many institutions have faced growing challenges in sustaining this collective mission amid the rise of burnout, changing work dynamics, and declining employee engagement. A significant manifestation of this global crisis is the phenomenon known as quiet quitting (QQ)—a form of psychological withdrawal where employees

perform only the minimum required tasks while disengaging emotionally from their work (Papadopoulou & Vouzas, 2024). Quiet quitting has drawn international attention as both a symptom of and a reaction to systemic dysfunction in organizational cultures, including those within educational systems.

Quite quitting is a particularly corrosive within education, as the sector's core mission is inherently relational and value-driven. The drivers of quite quitting among educators and staff often stem from a profound violation of the psychological contract—the unwritten set of expectations between employee and institution (Abarantyne et al., 2019; Davis & Mountjoy; Khan et al., 2025; Hong et al., 2023). When systemic issues such as unsustainable workloads, top-down administrative mandate that undermine professional autonomy, inadequate compensation, and a lack of recognition for emotional labor become pervasive, the initial vocational passion that fuels extra-role effort is eroded (Bodenheimer & Shuster, 2025; Bushardt et al., 2016; Grandey et al., 2015; Kaylor et al., 2025).

Consequently, the strategic withdrawal characterized by quite quitting emerges as not as mere apathy, but as a rational form of self-preservation and a silent protest against conditions that impede one's ability to fulfill the very mission of the institution (Basha & Pathania, 2025; Corbin & Flenady, 2024; Lawless, 2023). In this light, quiet quitting within schools and universities is more than an HR challenge; it is a direct threat to educational quality and innovation, as it stifles the discretionary energy that drives mentoring, curriculum development, and transformative community engagement (Burch et al., 2025; Hong et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2025).

The concept gained prominence during the post-pandemic era when workers worldwide began re-evaluating the role of work in their lives. Though initially discussed in corporate settings, quiet quitting has become increasingly relevant in education, where chronic stress, administrative overload, and limited recognition have weakened professional morale. In the Philippine context, this issue is particularly concerning. The education sector, a cornerstone of national development, continues to struggle with underfunding, salary compression, and heavy bureaucratic demands. When educators withdraw psychologically, the institutional mission of excellence, innovation, and inclusive learning is compromised.

Quite quitting is not merely an individual coping mechanism but a systemic symptom with documented roots. Empirical studies have directly linked teacher disengagement to the very structural issues mentioned above, explicitly connecting high teacher workload and administrative burdens to burnout and compromised teaching quality (Artates, 2023; Cañete, 2025; Malquisto et al., 2023; Maquidato & Bayani, 2024). Furthermore, research on teacher

motivation consistently highlights the demoralizing impact of salary compensation and the perceived lack of recognition, with financial strain and “policy overload” leading directly to the emotional exhaustion that precedes quiet quitting (Etor, 2025; Gonzales et al., 2020; Pacquiao et al., 2025; Varias & Conway, 2024). The consequence is that when educators are burdened by systemic neglect, their organizational citizenship behavior – the voluntary, extra-effort roles crucial for student success significantly diminishes.

This academic essay argues that quiet quitting hinders educational institutions from fulfilling their existential purpose by eroding professional commitment, weakening instructional quality, and disrupting the social exchange relationships that sustain organizational vitality. Using a macro–meso–micro framework, this analysis examines the systemic, organizational, and individual dimensions of quiet quitting, drawing on international studies and recent Philippine evidence (Valdez & Limos-Galay, 2023; Reyes et al. 2019). It concludes with policy and leadership recommendations for restoring engagement and aligning institutional goals with employee well-being.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Macro-Level Analysis: Systemic and Policy Dimensions

Quiet quitting cannot be divorced from the structural and policy contexts that define educators’ working conditions. Papadopoulou and Vouzas (2024) emphasize that systemic instability—exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic—reshaped how employees perceive work boundaries and value reciprocity. In education, these transformations have blurred the distinctions between professional and personal life, leading to increased emotional fatigue (Atalay & Dağistan, 2023).

In the Philippines, this shift occurred abruptly. Teachers were required to transition to online learning with minimal training or infrastructure, and digital inequalities across regions exposed long-standing policy fragmentation. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued continuity plans; however, implementation gaps led to uneven access to technology and pedagogical resources. The sense of being "overworked but under-supported" became pervasive among educators.

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a valuable lens for understanding this disengagement (Blau, 1964; Whitener et al., 1998). When employees perceive that their contributions far exceed institutional reciprocity—whether in pay, recognition, or autonomy—they rationally reduce their discretionary effort. This imbalance is evident in both global and local contexts. According to Gallup’s (2022) State of the Global Workplace

Report, 59% of workers are disengaged, resulting in an annual cost to the global economy of \$8.8 trillion. In the Philippines, national surveys reflect this trend: teachers report working extended unpaid hours and facing administrative burdens that infringe on their personal time. Reyes et al. (2019) demonstrated that disengagement and turnover in private educational institutions were primarily driven by "push factors," including inadequate communication, unfair compensation, and rigid management structures. Similarly, Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) found that teacher loyalty in Occidental Mindoro was significantly influenced by leadership style, engagement, and career pathing opportunities. These local findings confirm that when educational policies fail to ensure equitable support and recognition, quiet quitting emerges as an adaptive, albeit detrimental, coping mechanism.

Ultimately, at the macro level, quiet quitting in Philippine education is symptomatic of policy insufficiencies—stagnant salary scales, weak implementation of workload regulations, and inadequate funding for professional development. Systemic reforms are needed not only to retain talent but to uphold the moral foundation of education as a profession built on care and service.

2.2 Meso-Level Analysis: Organizational and Institutional Factors

At the institutional level, management practices, workplace culture, and organizational justice play decisive roles in shaping engagement. Educational institutions are not merely bureaucratic entities but social systems where relationships and recognition profoundly affect morale.

2.2.1 Leadership and Management Practices

Leadership quality consistently emerges as the strongest predictor of engagement. Papadopoulou and Vouzas (2024) identify managerial neglect and lack of empathy as precursors to quiet quitting (Yu et al., 2020). Zenger and Folkman (2022) observed that employees under ineffective leaders are four times more likely to disengage from their work. Hamouche et al. (2023) also emphasize that leadership in service-oriented sectors, such as education, has a direct impact on emotional well-being.

In Philippine schools, leadership remains heavily administrative rather than developmental. Principals and deans often prioritize compliance metrics over human connection. Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) found that participatory and compassionate leadership increased teacher loyalty and professional integrity. Conversely, authoritarian or indifferent management reinforced cynicism and withdrawal. This echoes Liu-Lastres et al. (2024), who advocate for transformational leadership—one that fosters purpose, dialogue, and empowerment—as a means of combating disengagement.

2.2.2 Fairness of Rewards and Recognition

Compensation and recognition systems are equally critical. Atalay and Dağıstan (2023) and Malhotra et al. (2007) report that perceived inequity in rewards leads to emotional detachment. In Philippine higher education, faculty frequently cite salary delays and inequitable research incentives. Reyes et al. (2019) found that unfair pay was the primary driver of attrition in private schools, while Akafo and Boateng (2015) confirmed that transparent reward systems enhance performance and satisfaction. Thus, institutions must institutionalize fair, merit-based recognition and non-monetary rewards, such as mentorship and professional visibility.

2.2.3 Organizational Support and Climate

Perceived organizational support (POS) significantly moderates employee commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Papadopoulou and Vouzas (2024) assert that low support is correlated with high disengagement. The Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) study corroborates this, revealing that supportive climates strongly predict teacher loyalty. Filipino educators value belongingness and moral integrity; when these are absent, reciprocity collapses.

Moreover, Philippine schools often lack formal wellness programs or workload monitoring systems. The emotional labor demanded of teachers—especially women balancing familial roles—intensify burnout. Institutionalizing psychological support and participatory governance is therefore crucial in reversing the trend of quiet quitting.

2.3 Micro-Level Analysis: Individual and Classroom Factors

At the micro level, quiet quitting manifests as an individual strategy to cope with escalating demands and eroding meaning in work.

2.3.1 Work Overload and Emotional Fatigue

Work overload remains the most cited antecedent (Joseph et al., 2007; Sattler et al., 2010). Filipino teachers manage 50–60 students per class, perform clerical tasks, and comply with redundant reporting requirements. Odogwu (2021) and Saeed et al. (2016) confirm that excessive demands precipitate burnout and disengagement. Hamouche et al. (2023) interpret quiet quitting as a defensive adjustment to chronic exhaustion. Consequently, teachers may continue meeting basic requirements but disengage from innovation or co-curricular initiatives.

2.3.2 Generational Shifts and Work–Life Balance

Generational changes have also redefined engagement. Formica and Sfodera (2022) and Xueyun et al. (2025) found that Millennials and Generation Z workers prioritize flexibility

and purpose over hierarchy. Traditional Philippine schools, however, emphasize rigid schedules and mandatory reporting. Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) documented that Filipino educators value work–life balance to a "high extent" ($M = 3.96$), suggesting growing resistance to exploitative workloads. When such a balance is denied, quiet quitting becomes an act of self-preservation.

2.3.3 Psychological Detachment and Meaning

Quiet quitting ultimately signals a breakdown of meaning. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) and Lu et al. (2023) argue that empowerment and moral purpose serve as buffers against disengagement. Teachers who find purpose in mentoring or spiritual vocation show resilience against burnout (Galanis et al., 2024). Philippine culture, rooted in collectivism and bayanihan (mutual aid), can be leveraged to foster moral resilience if institutions prioritize community values over bureaucratic compliance.

2.4 Interconnections and Compounding Effects

Quiet quitting is not a single-cause phenomenon but a systemic feedback loop involving policy gaps, managerial shortcomings, and psychological fatigue. The cultural tendency toward pakikisama (harmony) and deference discourages teachers from voicing dissatisfaction; instead, they silently reduce effort to avoid confrontation. Hamouche et al. (2023) describe this as “latent disengagement,” a passive withdrawal that undermines productivity without overt resistance.

Philippine studies mirror this behavior. Reyes et al. (2019) noted that teachers often resign quietly to preserve social harmony, while Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) observed “compliant disengagement,” where educators remain loyal in form but not in spirit. Over time, these unaddressed issues culminate in collective burnout and institutional decline. The absence of longitudinal studies (Galanis et al., 2023; Srivastava et al., 2024) limits our understanding of how disengagement evolves; however, available evidence emphasizes that quiet quitting is an outcome of cumulative inequities.

2.5 Stakeholder Perspectives: Impact and Competing Interests

Quiet quitting in education impacts a broad network of stakeholders, each with unique perspectives and priorities. Teachers, as the system’s core actors, experience reduced motivation and creativity, undermining instructional innovation. Students, in turn, face diminished engagement, weaker mentorship, and declining learning outcomes. Papadopoulou and Vouzas (2024) argue that disengagement among teaching staff produces a ripple effect, including student apathy, reduced institutional performance, and community distrust.

Administrators grapple with reduced productivity, strained reputations, and higher turnover costs. They often operate within conflicting mandates: maintaining efficiency under budget constraints while ensuring staff well-being. Policymakers prioritize standardized performance metrics and fiscal responsibility, sometimes overlooking the importance of human factors. Meanwhile, communities, particularly in rural Philippine settings, bear the long-term consequences—loss of educational quality, widening inequality, and weaker civic engagement.

These competing interests must be balanced. Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) emphasize that participatory governance, where administrators, faculty, and communities share decision-making power, strengthens institutional cohesion. Likewise, Reyes et al. (2019) found that creative retention strategies rooted in open dialogue restore trust between management and staff. Stakeholder alignment—anchored in fairness, transparency, and shared purpose—is thus indispensable for reversing quiet quitting and restoring the moral core of Philippine education.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reversing quiet quitting requires a comprehensive strategy that encompasses policy, organizational, and individual dimensions.

3.1 Policy-Level Implications

At the national level, educational policy must integrate teacher welfare, engagement, and mental health into performance metrics. Government initiatives should revise Salary Standardization Laws to address wage stagnation and ensure parity with other professions. DepEd and CHED should mandate workload audits and provide funding for continuous professional development. Integrating well-being indicators in institutional evaluations would encourage sustainable work practices. Philippine findings (Valdez & Limos-Galay, 2023; Reyes et al., 2019) support the notion that transparent policies and career pathways can reduce disengagement and turnover.

3.2 Institutional-Level Strategies

Institutions should reimagine leadership development through transformational and empowering approaches (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). Training school heads in emotional intelligence, communication, and participatory governance enhances trust. Reward systems must transcend monetary compensation to include mentoring opportunities, recognition of innovation, and flexible scheduling. Collaborative professional learning communities—such as faculty circles, reflective sessions, and peer mentoring—can help counteract isolation and

rebuild morale. Moreover, integrating hybrid work models where feasible can respect teachers' autonomy without compromising accountability.

3.3 Individual-Level and Cultural Initiatives

At the personal level, educators should be supported in cultivating resilience, self-reflection, and a sense of purpose. Workshops on stress management, time optimization, and boundary-setting can empower teachers to balance dedication with self-care. Embedding discussions of moral resilience and vocation in teacher education curricula reinforces the ethical dimension of teaching. Culturally, Philippine education must shift from glorifying overwork toward valuing sustainable excellence—a mindset that honors rest, wellness, and quality engagement as integral to professionalism.

CONCLUSION

Quiet quitting in education reveals a profound misalignment between institutional expectations and human needs. In the Philippine context, it reflects structural inequities, weak leadership, and the erosion of meaning in work. Synthesizing Papadopoulou and Vouzas (2024) with Valdez and Limos-Galay (2023) and Reyes et al. (2019) demonstrates that disengagement is not apathy but a rational adaptation to unreciprocated labor.

To realign institutional purpose with engagement, reforms must integrate empathy, equity, and empowerment. Policymakers must pursue humane policies, administrators must cultivate participatory leadership, and educators must rediscover intrinsic purpose. Through multi-level, evidence-based interventions, quiet quitting can evolve into quiet re-engagement—a renewed commitment to excellence that harmonizes individual well-being with institutional vitality and the national vision for education.

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