

From resources to retention: how meaningful work mediates the link between job resources and quiet quitting

Central European
Management
Journal

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Received 15 September 2025
Revised 20 January 2026
30 April 2026
Accepted 29 July 2026

Abstract

Purpose – Grounded in the framework proposed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), this study examines job resources at the task level (role clarity and job autonomy), the interpersonal level (managerial feedback and teamwork) and the organizational level (learning and development opportunities and access to resources). Through this approach, we aim to capture a more comprehensive and integrative conceptualization of JR while also accounting for the outcomes of employees' experiences across different levels. Furthermore, this study investigates the effect of JR on quiet quitting through the mediating role of meaningful work and examines whether this relationship is moderated by work type (hybrid versus regular work).

Design/methodology/approach – Drawing on data from 429 employees, we tested a mediation model with a moderated direct path using PROCESS Model 5.

Findings – The results reveal that JR does not directly reduce QQ; instead, its effect is fully transmitted through MW. Additionally, MW significantly decreases QQ, confirming its central role in preventing behavioral disengagement. Moderation analysis shows that JR only reduces QQ among hybrid workers, indicating that the impact of resources depends on the structural context of work.

Practical implications – Organizations should focus on fostering MW, particularly in hybrid settings where JR are more impactful. Training and development programs should integrate meaning-enhancing components into learning design.

Originality/value – The study identifies MW as a core mechanism linking JR to QQ and shows that the influence of resources is context-dependent, offering actionable insight for engagement strategies.

Keywords Quiet quitting, Job resources, Meaningful work, Work routines, Hybrid work

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

Quiet quitting (QQ) has emerged as a prominent topic in the post-pandemic business landscape (Lu, Al Mamun, Chen, Yang, & Masukujjaman, 2023). The commonly agreed-upon definition for quiet quitters is that they are employees who perform their jobs at only the minimum level and do not make any extra effort (Bennett, Epler, Thomas, & Jalil, 2025). In this context, they continue to fulfill their job descriptions but refrain from going beyond the minimum, such as participating actively in meetings or demonstrating extra-role behaviors like arriving early or staying late (Klotz & Bolino, 2022; Hervé & Oh, 2025). This behavior is not necessarily a negative situation like leaving a job, it depends on the employee's intentions (Hervé & Oh, 2025).

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Central European Management Journal
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 2658-2430
p-ISSN: 2658-0845
DOI 10.1108/CEMJ-09-2025-0281

From this point, it is likely that employees exhibit intentional behavior rather than passive withdrawal behavior (Gray, Zabinski, Fu, & Darden, 2025).

A growing body of research has explored the underlying factors contributing to QQ, identifying a variety of antecedents at both the organizational and individual levels (Dillard, Cavallo, & Zhang, 2025; Geng, Geng, & Geng, 2025). However, QQ is better understood not merely as a behavioral response but as a psychological state involving a conscious mental and emotional decision (Gray *et al.*, 2025). In this respect, it is closely associated with meaningful work (MW), as employees' perceptions of meaning shape their level of engagement and contribution (Bennett *et al.*, 2025). Accordingly, QQ represents a strategic, intentional, and calculated contribution decision rather than a passive form of withdrawal (Gray *et al.*, 2025). On the other hand, QQ is characterized by diminished psychological commitment, limited personal involvement, inadequate managerial support, and declining job quality (Anand, Doll, & Ray, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of considering both external work conditions and internal psychological needs when addressing withdrawal behaviors like QQ (Öztürk, Arıkan, & Ocak, 2023). Furthermore, MW may play a central role in the occurrence of QQ behaviors (Kanwal *et al.*, 2025). This line of reasoning raises a critical question: *To what extent can both externally imposed job demands and employees' internal psychological states be considered drivers of QQ?* Addressing this question requires a deeper understanding of how job resources (JR) shape employees' experience of MW, which, in turn, may significantly influence their propensity to engage in QQ.

Recent research also suggests that QQ may be linked to employees' perceptions of inadequate access to the resources required to cope with job demands or to progress in their careers (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). JR, which encompasses physical, psychological, social, and organizational components of the work environment, serves not only to buffer the impact of high demands but also to facilitate learning, personal growth, and goal attainment. When such resources are perceived as lacking, employees may experience reduced engagement and a diminished sense of meaningfulness in their roles, both of which can contribute to an increased likelihood of QQ. Thus, we argue that JR should not only be viewed as coping mechanisms but also as valuable assets (Hobfoll, 2002).

Our study contributes to the growing QQ literature in several keyways. First, we identified core job resources (JR), including managerial support and feedback, teamwork (particularly colleague support), role clarity, learning and development opportunities, access to resources, and job autonomy. Drawing on Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) categorization of JR into task-level (e.g. performance feedback), interpersonal-level (e.g. coworker support), and organizational-level (e.g. supervisory coaching) resources, we structured our model accordingly. In this study, we drew on Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) multidimensional conceptualization of job resources by examining job resources at the task level (role clarity and job autonomy), the interpersonal level (supervisor feedback and teamwork), and the organizational level (learning and development opportunities, and access to resources). By doing so, we aim to capture a more comprehensive and integrative job resources construct while also accounting for the outcomes of employees' experiences across different levels. In line with this approach, our study is grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory and investigates the relationship between JR and QQ using multiple measurement tools, thereby offering a comprehensive and original perspective on the phenomenon. Second, we introduced MW as a mediating variable in the relationship between JR and QQ. JR are known to satisfy fundamental psychological needs such as the need for belonging and for engaging in meaningful, autonomous activities (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). This, in turn, enhances intrinsic motivation and fosters persistence and performance (Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jonas, 2013). While scholars argue that QQ reflects a crisis in experiencing work as meaningful (Baker, 2023; Caldwell, Jamali, Elwin, & Allard-Blaisdell, 2023; Mahand & Caldwell, 2023; Kanwal *et al.*, 2025; Gray *et al.*, 2025), studies directly linking MW to QQ in management literature remain scarce (Corbin & Flenady, 2024). By examining this mediating effect, we aim to provide deeper insights into the underlying

psychological mechanisms of QQ. Lastly, we explored whether work routines (WT) which are hybrid versus regular office-based work, moderate the relationship between JR and QQ. Work routines shape employees' access to JR and influence the psychological outcomes of work. In light of the well-documented psychological benefits of JR, we highlight the hybrid work model's positive impact, particularly its enhanced autonomy and flexibility provided through remote work.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Job resources

JR refers to physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of work that have motivating potential, such as constructive feedback, skill variety, and social support from colleagues (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024). They are not only utilized to cope with high job demands but also to reduce job-related physiological and psychological costs, facilitate goal achievement, and promote personal growth, learning, and development (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). JR can fulfill fundamental psychological needs, such as the need to belong to an organization and the need to autonomously engage in meaningful activities (e.g. MW) (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2008). This enhances intrinsic motivation to achieve meaningful work-related goals, thereby facilitating persistence and performance (Kovjanic *et al.*, 2013). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory suggests that challenging job demands can only be mitigated through the presence of various JR (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Specifically, when employees need to cope with demanding job requirements (e.g. job complexity, time pressure), they can benefit from multiple JR, including managerial feedback and support from colleagues or supervisors (Bakker *et al.*, 2007; Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), in their examination of the effects of job resources on burnout and work engagement, conceptualized job resources at the task level (performance feedback), the interpersonal level (support from colleagues), and the organizational level (supervisory coaching). Drawing on these levels, we selected managerial feedback and teamwork at the interpersonal level, role clarity and job autonomy at the task level, and learning and development opportunities and access to resources at the organizational level.

2.2 Quiet quitting

While scholars have offered different definitions, the vast majority have defined QQ as employees who perform their jobs at only the minimum level and do not make any extra effort (Bennett *et al.*, 2025). While this definition highlights the intentional and voluntary nature of QQ, it also embraces the idea that quiet quitting involves active management of behaviors and inactions, e.g. avoiding activities or taking on roles (Atalay & Dağıstan, 2023). Many view this phenomenon as a contribution of Generation Z to the business world. This perception stems from the idea that, particularly during the pandemic, this generation entered the workforce and experienced various working models, leading them to dislike traditional work methods. Moreover, it is believed that they express their demands and reactions more boldly than previous generations (Atalay & Dağıstan, 2023). While initially perceived as a trend, the broad scope of its impact suggests that QQ represents a global phenomenon (Formica & Sfodera, 2022).

2.3 Meaningful work

MW, which tends to be intensely personal and individual, has been a subject of curiosity and debate for centuries. People from many different fields, from philosophers to researchers, have searched for the answer to this question (Bailey, Yeoman, Madden, Thompson, & Kerridge, 2018). Recent studies have tried to treat MW as a single construct and have tried to develop

measurement tools accordingly (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012; Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). However, there has been diversity conceptualizing it and, therefore, no consensus has been reached. Because meaning is quite subjective for the individual and varies according to everyone (Bailey, 2016). Nevertheless, it can be clustered in certain issues. Firstly, MW is intensely personal and tends to be individualistic. Secondly, people at work often want to find their own sources of meaning rather than having a manager come in and give it to them. However, managers can easily destroy people's sense of meaning (Bailey, 2016). Although the praise that people receive from their surroundings is a very powerful source for them, it is not enough on its own. Here, it is very important for people to find and build their own world of meaning (Lips-Wiersma, Haar, & Wright, 2020). As a result, MW is defined as a multifaceted concept that is influenced by pathways such as self-efficacy, contribution, self-connection and engagement that interact to create a sense of purpose and significance at work (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

3. Hypothesis development

3.1 *Job resources and quiet quitting*

The presence of certain key job resources such as role clarity, access to resources, learning and development opportunities, supervisory feedback, teamwork, and job autonomy empowers employees and enhances their commitment to their job and organization (Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2006; Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; De Villiers & Stander, 2011; Schaufeli, 2012). Using the Voice Climate Survey, a tool designed to measure employee perceptions, Langford (2009) indicated that the absence of key JR could lead to outcomes such as increased employee turnover, reduced organizational commitment, and absenteeism all of which may also be considered significant drivers of quiet quitting. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model offers valuable insights into this issue. Employees require certain JR to cope with high job demands and to foster their own development. Distinct from previous studies, this research investigates multidimensional JR at the task level (e.g. performance feedback), interpersonal level (e.g. colleague support), and organizational level (supervisory coaching), aiming to explore how these resources may manifest in relation to quiet quitting behaviors. Therefore, we propose that

H1. JR are negatively related to QQ.

3.2 *Resources and meaningful work*

Human resource development studies aim to empirically identify the mutual benefits of MW for both employees and organizations (Bailey *et al.*, 2018). Various empirical studies in the literature emphasize these benefits, such as enhancing workplace performance (Wrzesniewski, 2003), reducing absenteeism (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997), and strengthening organizational identity (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). The phenomenon of quiet quitting refers to employees who are no longer motivated due to issues such as job responsibilities, working hours, work-life balance, compensation policies, managerial attitudes, MW, and organizational justice (Atalay & Dağistan, 2023). As noted by Rosso *et al.* (2010), the literature on MW is highly diverse and inevitably dispersed across various interdisciplinary approaches. While some researchers suggest that quiet quitting reflects a crisis in the experience of MW (Baker, 2023; Caldwell *et al.*, 2023; Mahand & Caldwell, 2023), studies linking the profound impact of QQ on MW to the management literature are still in their infancy (Corbin & Flenady, 2024). The perception of work as meaningful by individuals depends on the adequacy of job-related resources. Therefore, we proposed that

H2. JR are positively related to MW.

3.3 Meaningful work and quiet quitting

Kahn (1990) described MW as the feeling that expressing one's true self at work is both valuable and significant. In other words, when the nature of a job and its tasks resonate with employees' personal values and identities, they tend to perceive their work as more meaningful and are consequently more engaged in their roles (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Steger & Dik, 2010). Therefore, MW serves as a motivational driver that encourages individuals to pursue goal-oriented actions and fosters positive emotional states linked to work engagement (Chalofsky, 2003; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). One of the earliest organizational theories to incorporate the concept of MW is the JCT (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This theory outlines the necessary conditions for individuals to be intrinsically motivated and to perform effectively in their roles. Moreover, this dynamic may result in improved job performance, increased organizational citizenship behaviors, and reduced turnover intentions—findings that are supported by a range of empirical studies (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Saks, 2006). Therefore, when integrating the literature on MW and QQ, we propose that considering employees' work-life balance, the perceived discrepancy between the work they perform and the work they aspire to or find meaningful will directly influence quiet quitting behaviors. As this discrepancy widens—that is, as the perception of meaningfulness in one's current job diminishes—we anticipate an increase in the likelihood of quiet quitting. Therefore, we propose that

H3. MW is negatively related to QQ.

3.4 The mediator role of meaningful work

Quiet quitting refers to a situation in which employees minimally limit their job descriptions and consciously withdraw from work activities (Atalay & Dagistan, 2023). This withdrawal is mostly caused by work environments and conditions that are perceived as negative (Lu *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, it can be triggered by the fact that jobs and roles are tied to poor management design, which can limit satisfaction and lead to QQ (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Öztürk *et al.*, 2023). At this point, according to the JD-R theory, these resources serve both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational functions, helping employees cope with job demands and sustain work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, the extent to which JR influence workplace behavior, particularly QQ, may depend on employees' perceptions of MW. Employees who perceive high MW are likely to internalize JR more effectively, experiencing them as enablers of personal and professional growth. In contrast, when MW is low, the motivational effects of JR may be diminished, potentially weakening their ability to counteract disengagement behaviors like QQ. Thus, MW may function as a psychological mechanism that mediates the relationship between JR and QQ, transforming external job characteristics into meaning-driven motivation that influences work engagement. Therefore, we propose that

H4. Employee MW perceptions mediate the negative relationship between JR and QQ.

3.5 The moderator role of hybrid work and regular work model

Hybrid work model aims to combine the best aspects of both remote and regular work (Moglia, Hopkins, & Bardoel, 2021). Remote work provides employees with greater autonomy over where they perform their jobs (Spivack & Milosevic, 2018), while also offering geographical independence. In this study, we base our explanation of the relationship between work models JR, and MW on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). JR can provide intrinsic motivation by supporting employees' growth, learning, and development, while also serving as a source of extrinsic motivation by helping them achieve work goals. Especially JR such as autonomy play an important role in meeting basic human needs (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sources are considered together, the importance of a "meaningful" work and life for employees becomes clearer. In the literature, it is discussed that the remote work model may hinder access to certain resources. For example, due to physical,

mental, and social isolation, it can hinder employees’ access to essential work resources such as task completion and interpersonal relationships (Raghuram, Hill, Gibbs, & Maruping, 2019; Liu, Wan, & Fan, 2021), which can lead to a lack of important work resources like social support and feedback. Considering these views, we believe that the balanced dual aspects of the hybrid work model, such as remote and regular work, will help reduce these negative aspects. Considering the positive relationship between MW and resources, we suggest that the hybrid work model, particularly the remote work component, can strengthen this relationship not only through the advantages it provides such as autonomy, flexibility, reduced personal expenses, and commuting time, but also through better work-life balance and increased motivation (Van Steenbergen, van der Ven, Peeters, & Taris, 2018; Chung & van der Horst, 2020; Mortensen & Haas, 2021). Therefore, we propose that

H5a. Hybrid work moderates the direct relationship between JR and QQ, such that the negative effect of JR on QQ is stronger for employees in hybrid work settings.

In today’s business world and the “new order” shaped by technology and the pandemic, the traditional regular work model is increasingly losing its value. In this changing context, we emphasize the importance of JR such as autonomy support, control, and flexibility, which enable employees to bring meaning to their work and lives. In their study, Deci and Ryan (1987) emphasized the importance of autonomy support as a key JR, concluding that such support fosters higher intrinsic motivation, greater interest in work, reduced environmental pressure and tension, increased creativity and flexibility, enhanced self-esteem and confidence, as well as better physical and psychological health among employees. Moreover, the demanding pace and workload associated with the regular work model can lead to the rapid depletion of existing JR (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Based on these findings, we also argue that the traditional regular work model offers employees less autonomy, support, and flexibility, while accelerating the consumption of resources. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5b. Regular work moderates the direct relationship between JR and QQ, such that the negative effect of JR on QQ is not significant for employees in regular work settings.

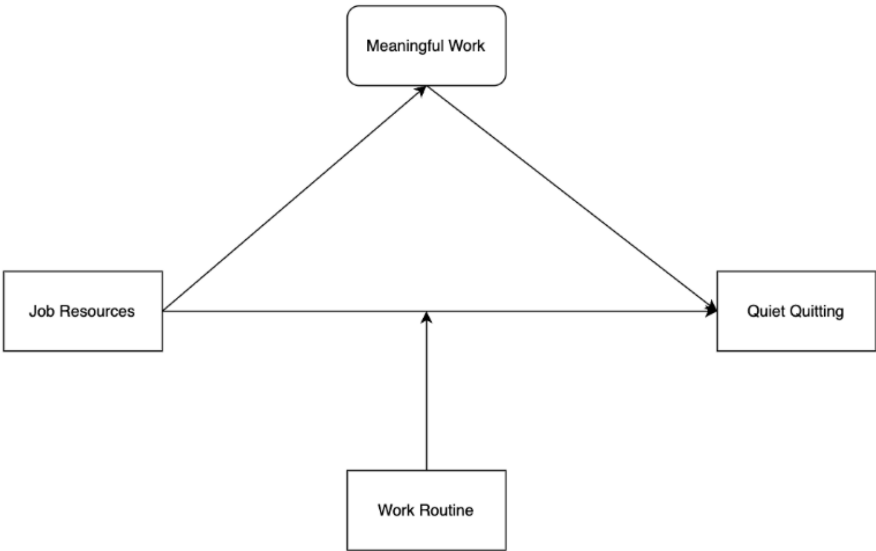


Figure 1. Theoretical model. Source: authors’ own elaboration

4. Methodology

4.1 Sampling strategy

The data were collected from MBA, executive MBA and PhD students in different programmes at a medium-sized Turkish university and their work colleagues. We told these students about the topic of our study and asked them to find at least 10 people willing to participate. As an incentive, students who participated in the study were given extra credit for their support of the research. The sampled employees were from both the public and private sectors, working full-time. These students enabled us to make real-world inferences (Espinosa & Ortinau, 2016).

After cleaning data that were missing, incorrectly filled in and did not fit our sample, we reached the final dataset of the study. As a result, 429 participants were included in the study, representing an adequate sample size (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). As shown in Table 1, 47.3% of the participants were female, and 52.7% of the participants were male. In terms of age, most of the participants were aged between 26–43 (70.6%), followed by 18–25 (22.4%), 44–59 (6.5%), and 60 and above (0.5%). In terms of educational background, a significant majority of participants held a bachelor's degree (68.1%), while 16.1% possessed a master's degree, 15.4% had vocational school training, and 0.5% held a doctorate. As for work arrangements, over half of the respondents (58.3%) worked on-site, with the remaining 41.7% engaged in hybrid models.

4.2 Measures

4.2.1 Meaningful work. Despite the availability of numerous MW scales, research suggests that these scales often produce consistent results (Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling, & Tay, 2019). In this study, we utilized the Meaningful Work Scale developed by Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012), which comprises 28 items distributed across seven sub-dimensions. This particular scale was selected because, among the 28 existing MW scales identified by Bailey *et al.* (2018), the CMWS offers a more comprehensive framework to capture the intricate interactions between dimensions and their relationships with antecedents and outcomes (Both-Nwabuwe, Dijkstra, & Beersma, 2017). Furthermore, in the context of Türkiye, Ünal (2017) tested the reliability of this scale and reported a high Cronbach's

Table 1. Demographics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Age</i>		
18–25	96	22.4
26–43	303	70.6
44–59	28	6.5
>59	2	0.5
<i>Gender</i>		
Women	203	47.3
Men	226	52.7
<i>Education</i>		
Vocational school	66	15.4
Bachelor's degree	292	68.1
Master graduation	69	16.1
PhD graduation	2	0.5
<i>Work arrangement</i>		
Regular	250	58.3
Hybrid	179	41.7

Source(s): authors' own elaboration

Alpha ($\alpha = 0.95$). Thus, the application of this scale was considered appropriate for the study. It has items such as “*I have a sense of belonging*”.

4.2.2 Quiet quitting. The 10-item scale developed by [Karrani, Bani-Melhem, and Mohd-Shamsudin \(2023\)](#) was used. It has items such as “*I don’t volunteer for additional responsibilities*” and “*I only communicate when necessary*”.

4.2.3 Job resources. We intended to construct a comprehensive job resources scale by averaging several multi-dimensional subscales. Similar approaches exist in the literature; see, for example, [Schaufeli and Bakker \(2004\)](#). The multidimensional scale developed by [Langford \(2009\)](#) was used. Specifically, the following subscales and item counts were included: three items for role clarity (for example, “*I understand my goals and objectives and what is required of me in my job.*”), three items for access to resources (for example, “*I have access to the right equipment and resources to do my job well.*”), three items for learning and development (for example, “*There is a commitment to ongoing training and development of staff.*”), four items for supervision (for example, “*My manager gives me help and support.*”), and three items for teamwork (for example, “*My co-workers give me help and support.*”). Additionally, to assess job autonomy, a four-item scale developed by [Dude \(2012\)](#) was employed. It has items such as “*I can make changes to my job objectives.*”

4.2.4 Work routines. Work routine was measured using a single-item categorical question in which participants indicated their primary work arrangement (regular, hybrid, or remote). Because the number of remote employees was very small ($n = 25$), this group was excluded from the sample, leaving two categories that were recoded as 0 = regular and 1 = hybrid for use as a binary moderator in the PROCESS analysis. This recoding re-labeled existing categories rather than collapsing a multi-level variable. The remaining sample, dominated by regular and hybrid workers, formed the basis of our subsequent analyses and discussion.

4.2.5 Control variables. In line with previous studies ([Alhammadi, Bani-Melhem, Mohd-Shamsudin, & Ramanathan, 2025](#); [Xu, Yang, & Wang, 2026](#)), we included demographic variables such as age, gender, educational level, tenure with their current company as a control variable to account for their potential confounding effects on the relationship between JR, MW and QQ. However, in the prior research, no significant effect of these control variables on quiet quitting has been reported ([Karrani, Bani-Melhem, Mohd-Shamsudin, Usman, & Boğan, 2025](#)).

5. Results

5.1 Test of common method variance

Given that the data were collected from a single source, the Harman single-factor test was conducted to assess the potential presence of common method variance. The results showed that the first factor accounted for 38.09% of the total variance, which is below the commonly accepted 50% threshold. These findings suggest that common method variance is unlikely to pose a serious threat to the validity of the results.

5.2 Measurement model, validity and reliability

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 24 to evaluate the measurement model and to ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs. The results indicated an acceptable model fit [$\chi^2 (1,619) = 3841.439$, CFI = 0.901, IFI = 0.901, TLI = 0.895, $\chi^2/df = 2.373$, RMSEA = 0.057, PNFI = 0.796], suggesting that the measurement model was reasonably consistent with the data. All factor loadings were significant and exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50. The AVE values were above 0.50, and both Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity and internal consistency. Discriminant validity was further supported as the square roots of AVE values were greater than the inter-construct correlations.

CFA was utilized to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement models. The results indicated that all items significantly loaded onto their respective constructs, exceeding the 0.5 threshold. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were above the accepted 0.50 cutoff (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To evaluate construct reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) scores were employed. As shown in Table 2, all Cronbach's alpha values (Nunnally, 1978) and CR scores surpassed the 0.70 threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, the CR values for all three constructs were greater than their corresponding AVE scores ($CR > AVE$), confirming adequate reliability.

The square roots of the AVE scores ranged from 0.889 to 0.906, and they exceeded the correlations among study variables (see Table 3). Table 3 provides evidence on the means, standard deviations, square roots of the AVE scores, and intercorrelations among the research variables.

5.3 Hypothesis testing

To test the proposed hypotheses, we employed PROCESS macro for SPSS (version 4.2; Hayes, 2013), specifically utilizing Model 5, which allows for the estimation of a mediation model with a moderator on the direct path between the independent and dependent variable. A total of 5,000 bootstrap resamples were used to obtain bias-corrected confidence intervals. Table 4 shows that the indirect effect was statistically significant, whereas the direct effect of JR on QQ was not significant ($\beta = -0.0438$, $SE = 0.1985$, $t = -0.22$, $p = 0.8255$, 95% CI $[-0.4339, 0.3463]$). Therefore, H1 was not supported. Next, as H2, a significant and positive effect of JR on MW was observed ($\beta = 0.5464$, $SE = 0.0320$, $t = 17.05$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI $[0.4834, 0.6094]$). Lastly, MW significantly predicted a decrease in QQ ($\beta = -0.2774$, $SE = 0.0805$, $t = -3.45$, $p = 0.0006$, 95% CI $[-0.4356, -0.1192]$). For this reason, H3 was supported.

Findings indicated that MW significantly mediated the relationship between JR and QQ. JR was positively associated with MW, which in turn was negatively associated with QQ. As Table 5 shows, the indirect effect was statistically significant (effect = -0.1516 , 95% CI $[-0.2597, -0.0510]$), while the direct effect of JR on QQ was not significant. These results indicate a mediation pattern consistent with full mediation, as the indirect effect was significant while the direct effect was not. In other words, employees' access to JR reduces their tendency to QQ, primarily by enhancing the meaning of their work.

The analysis examined whether the direct effect of JR on QQ differed by work type (WT; hybrid vs regular). The interaction term ($JR \times WT$) was not significant ($\beta = -0.0802$, $SE = 0.1114$, $p = 0.472$), indicating that work routine did not significantly moderate the overall JR–QQ relationship. However, conditional effects showed that JR was significantly and negatively associated with QQ among hybrid workers ($\beta = -0.2042$, $SE = 0.0782$, $p = 0.009$), whereas this effect was not significant among regular on-site workers ($\beta = -0.1240$, $SE = 0.1017$, $p = 0.223$). Taken together, these findings suggest a potential contextual pattern in hybrid work settings. However, given the nonsignificant interaction term, the moderation effect should be interpreted cautiously. Accordingly, as shown in Figure 2,

Table 2. Factor loadings, Cronbach's α , CR and AVE scores

Variables	Factor loadings	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Quiet Quitting	0.85–0.91	0.94	0.97	0.79
Meaningful Work	0.62–0.92	0.96	0.97	0.82
Job Resources	0.64–0.82	0.95	0.96	0.60

Note(s): CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$; CR > 0.70 ; AVE > 0.50 ; CR $>$ AVE

Source(s): authors' own elaboration

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, inter-correlations and square roots of AVE scores

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1.53	0.50	–							
2. Age	1.85	0.53	0.041	–						
3. Education	2.02	0.57	–0.192**	0.121*	–					
4. Salary	2.56	0.88	0.043	0.475**	0.284**	–				
5. Work Routine	1.58	0.49	0.060	–0.059	–0.115*	–0.179**	–			
6. MW	2.01	0.72	0.060	0.019	–0.096*	0.023	–0.055	(0.906)		
7. QQ	3.91	0.97	–0.007	–0.081	–0.010	–0.068	0.047	0.301**	(0.889)	
8. JR	3.96	0.84	0.080	–0.006	–0.071	–0.019	–0.083	0.636**	–0.284**	(0.777)

Note(s): $n = 429$; Values in parentheses on the diagonal are the square root of AVE of each scale; SD = standard deviation; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; QQ = Quiet Quitting; MW = Meaningful Work; JR = Job Resources

Source(s): authors' own elaboration

Table 4. Results of hypotheses testing

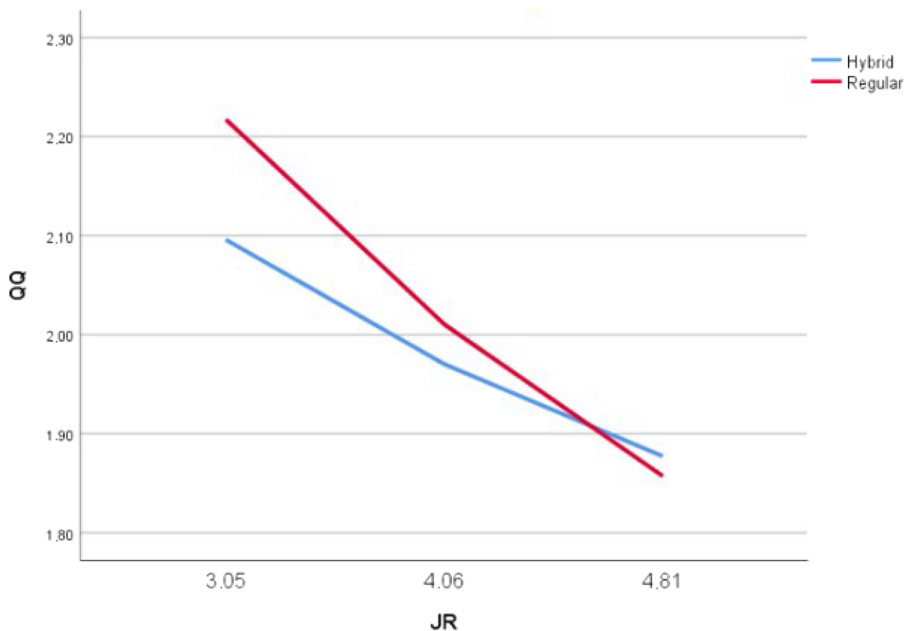
Hypotheses	Relationships	β	SE	CI
H1	Job Resources $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting	-0.0438	0.1985	[-0.4339, 0.3463]
H2	Job Resources $\rightarrow$ Meaningful Work	0.5464	0.0320	[0.4834, 0.6094]
H3	Meaningful Work $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting	-0.2774	0.0805	[-0.4356, -0.1192]

Note(s): $n = 429$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table 5. Direct and indirect effect

	Estimated effect	SE	95% CI LL	UL
<i>Direct effects</i>				
<i>Job Resources $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting</i>	-0.0438	0.1985	-0.4339	0.3463
<i>Job Resources $\rightarrow$ Meaningful Work</i>	0.5464	0.0320	0.4834	0.6094
<i>Meaningful Work $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting</i>	-0.2774	0.0805	-0.4356	-0.1192
<i>Mediating effect</i>				
<i>Job Resources $\rightarrow$ Meaningful Work $\rightarrow$ Quiet Quitting</i>	-0.1516	0.0531	-0.2597	-0.0510

Note(s): $n = 429$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

**Figure 2.** Plot of significant work routine interaction. Source: authors' own elaboration

the results provide exploratory rather than confirmatory support for [H5a](#), while [H5b](#) was not supported. These findings indicate that the moderating role of work routine warrants further investigation in the future research section.

6. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine how JR influence QQ, and whether this relationship is mediated by MW and moderated by work routines (WT; hybrid vs regular). The findings of the study can also be summarized and discussed in a few ways. First, supporting [H2](#), JR had a significant positive effect on MW, suggesting that employees who perceive their work environment as resourceful are more likely to experience their work as meaningful. Although the [H1](#) hypothesis, which suggests that JR has a direct negative effect on QQ, has not been supported, the mediation analysis strongly supports the [H4](#) hypothesis. Therefore, MW has a full mediating effect between JR and QQ. The effect of JR on QQ was fully mediated by MW, suggesting that job resources may only reduce quiet quitting when they enhance employees' sense of meaningfulness. This result emphasizes the central role of MW as a psychological mechanism linking environmental factors to behavioral outcomes. Finally, the relationship between JR and QQ showed meaningful moderation only under hybrid working conditions. That is, when hybrid work, employees experience the JR effect more strongly, which in turn reduces their QQ tendencies.

6.1 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to literature in several respects. First, QQ is an important response that employees have exhibited toward their jobs and work environments in recent years. Understanding the responses that highlight this response has been the call of many studies ([Serenko, 2023](#); [Hamouche, Koritos, & Papastathopoulos, 2023](#); [Liu-Lastres, Karatepe, & Okumus, 2023](#)). In this regard, our study highlights that MW is an antecedent that negatively affects QQ. Although this effect has been emphasized in previous studies ([Kanwal et al., 2025](#); [Gray et al., 2025](#)), the current study positions MW as an important mechanism that reduces QQ behavior rather than treating it as an outcome variable. Thus, the study shows that MW is not only a result of positive work experiences but also a structural element that prevents employees' psychological withdrawal behaviors. In this regard, the research contributes uniquely to the literature by revealing that MW plays a more functional and protective role in an organizational context.

Second, when JR are considered as a one-dimensional and holistic structure, it plays a decisive role in employees' perception of MW. Our findings show that job resources do not directly reduce QQ but indirectly achieve this effect through MW. This result reveals that, within the framework of JD-R theory, JR influence employee behavior not only through structural conditions but also through how employees interpret their work. Therefore, the key mechanism in reducing employees' tendency toward QQ is not the mere presence of JR but rather the capacity of these resources to foster a sense of MW. JR that enriches employees' world of meaning may also positively influence their effort and engagement toward work. This finding is also consistent with the finding that QQ is more of a psychological state ([Gray et al., 2025](#)).

Lastly, another important theoretical contribution of this study is that it demonstrates the context-dependent nature of JR in influencing QQ. Our findings reveal that the negative effect of JR on QQ is significant only under hybrid working conditions. This result suggests that hybrid work environments provide employees with greater autonomy, flexibility, and control over their work settings, enabling them to translate available job resources into more positive behavioral outcomes. In contrast, under regular work arrangements, the same level of resources may not be sufficient to prevent disengagement behaviors. This finding extends JD-R theory by suggesting that the effectiveness of job resources may vary depending on the

structural characteristics of the work context. Accordingly, job resources should not be viewed solely as uniform organizational provisions; rather, their impact appears to be shaped by how work is organized and experienced in different settings.

6.2 Practical implications

This study offers several key insights into how organizations can address QQ by leveraging JR and fostering MW. First, we found that JR alone does not directly reduce QQ; instead, its impact is fully transmitted through MW. This means that providing resources such as supervision, role clarity, or access to development opportunities is not sufficient unless those resources also help employees find meaning in their work. Organizations should therefore design resource-related interventions that are clearly linked to purpose, values, and personal relevance.

Second, MW significantly reduces QQ, positioning it not just as an additional outcome but as a central mechanism that shapes behavioral disengagement. This means that cultivating MW should be a strategic priority for HR and team leaders. Simple yet consistent actions—like explaining the “why” behind tasks, giving constructive feedback, and recognizing individual strengths—can support meaning and thereby reduce withdrawal.

Lastly, the effect of JR on QQ was significant only among hybrid workers, indicating that work context shapes how resources influence engagement. This means that hybrid work arrangements may amplify the effectiveness of JR by offering greater autonomy and flexibility. For training and development professionals, this highlights the importance of designing programs that not only build skills but also help employees interpret and internalize available resources in meaningful ways—particularly in flexible work environments.

7. Limitations and directions for future research

Various limitations of the study that could guide future research should be noted. First, in our study, while we included the JR variables that we thought would be suitable for our model as JR, we overlooked other variables. However, future research can investigate the impact of different dimensions of JR on QQ by incorporating them into the model. Second, our study aimed to explain the relationship between JR and QQ through the lens of MW. However, alternative mediating or moderating variables may offer additional insights into QQ behaviors. For instance, a study conducted by [Li, Kong, Zhou, Crossley, and Lin \(2025\)](#) found that, based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), promotive voice behavior satisfies employees’ basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In QQ behavior, withdrawal from work occurs as psychological needs are not met, or the meaningfulness of the job decreases. In this context, promoting voice behavior may function as a self-directed regulatory strategy that enhances individuals’ retention and sense of meaning. Therefore, future research may examine whether voice behavior plays a mediating or moderating role in the relationship between JR and QQ. Based on the findings of [Li et al. \(2025\)](#), combining a voice model based on SDT with the literature on QQ could provide important insights into how these behaviors can be reduced. Third, work arrangement was originally captured as a three-category single-item measure, but the small number of remote participants required us to exclude this group, leaving only two categories for the moderation analysis. Future studies should recruit larger samples that allow three-category comparisons (regular, hybrid, remote) and complement categorical measures with continuous indicators such as the proportion of weekly hours worked remotely. Finally, this study focused on MBA students who are in the workforce and their workmates. Therefore, this may limit the generalizability of the findings and introduce potential selection and common-method biases. Future studies are encouraged to test the model using more diverse, multi-institutional, and multi-source samples.

8. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between JR and QQ within the framework of MW's mediating role. It also revealed the moderating effect of hybrid work on the relationship between JR and QQ. The findings show that JR does not directly reduce QQ. However, it achieves this effect indirectly through MW. This result reveals that employees' QQ tendencies are shaped not only by structural conditions but also by how these conditions are interpreted by employees. However, the fact that JR's effect on QQ only becomes meaningful under hybrid work conditions shows that the way work is organized is a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of resources. In this context, the study contributes to the literature by pointing out that structural and psychological processes must be considered together in understanding QQ.

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