

The inclusion of employees in preventing quiet quitting among Generation X: the mediating role of organizational trust

European Journal
of Training and
Development

21

Magdalena Stefańska
*Department of Strategic Management, Poznań University of Economics and
Business, Poznań, Poland*

Aleksandra Gawel
*Department of International Competitiveness,
Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poznań, Poland, and*

Iwona Olejnik
*Department of Market Research and Services,
Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poznań, Poland*

Received 5 September 2025

Revised 1 December 2025

7 March 2026

Accepted 11 March 2026

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the influence of the inclusion practices of companies on quiet quitting (QQ) of employees from Generation X, as well as the direct and mediating roles of organizational trust.

Design/methodology/approach – The quantitative research was used in this study. The CAWI method was applied to randomly selected questionnaire responses of 410 employed Generation X respondents aged 42–49 years from Poland (Xennials). Hypotheses were examined using structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) as the data analysis method.

Findings – The study found an existing relationship between organizational inclusion practices and the willingness to quit a job quietly; higher inclusion reduces QQ, explaining 46% of the variance in quiet-quitting behaviors. Organizational trust plays both a direct and a mediating role in impacting QQ. It directly reduces QQ, accounting for 21% of its variance, as well as mediates the impact of inclusion on QQ by explaining an additional 15% of variance through the indirect pathway.

Research limitations/implications – This study offers practical implications for effectively understanding and preventing QQ within organizations by implementing inclusion policies and strengthening organizational trust.

Practical implications – The results also support the social exchange theory, according to which trust, developed in relationships, affects people's commitment. The authors confirmed that organizational trust prevents QQ, as an opposite attitude to commitment and engagement. Through inclusion practices, as part of ethical and charismatic leadership, employees feel accepted, contributing and belonging, which builds their trust in the organization.

Social implications – The research contribute to the discussion on the benefits of implementing inclusion policies. Inclusion should not only be viewed as an investment and a source of financial risk but also from the



© Magdalena Stefańska, Aleksandra Gawel and Iwona Olejnik. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

European Journal of Training and
Development
Vol. 50 No. 10, 2026
pp. 21-42
Emerald Publishing Limited
2046-9012
DOI 10.1108/EJTD-09-2025-0184

perspective of benefits. To add to all previously recognized benefits of inclusion, their role in preventing QQ has been proven and evaluated.

Originality/value – This paper broadens the literature on inclusion, shedding new light on the importance of such policies within an organization and their relationship to organizational trust and QQ. Along with the significance of QQ, recognizing the impact of inclusion and organizational trust on QQ gives new insights into sustainable human resource management policies and practices.

Keywords Quiet quitting (QQ), Inclusion, Organizational trust, Generation X

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Quiet quitting (QQ) of employees, defined as performing only essential tasks to maintain a job with minimal effort or commitment and without taking on additional responsibilities (Dillard *et al.*, 2025), has become one of the deeply discussed aspects of work on social media (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2024). According to the 2024 Gallup report, only about one-fourth of employees were fully engaged in their work, while the majority were not engaged (62%) or actively disengaged (15%), contributing to significant economic losses. These statistics are even worse for European employees, as only 13% of them are engaged in their work, whereas 72% are not engaged and 16% actively disengaged, representing the lowest level of engagement in the world (Gallup, 2024). The scale of the problem with QQ indicates the importance of investigating organizational factors that can effectively prevent it. As most scholarship on QQ comes from human resource management (HRM) and management studies, adding a human resource development (HRD) perspective offers a more balanced and developmental view of the phenomenon – one that considers not just organizational results but also employees' needs for engagement, purpose and work–life balance (Dillard *et al.*, 2025). A number of motivational and structural factors have been implicated as contributing factors to QQ, including chronic burnout, perceived inequities, lack of recognition, inadequate growth opportunities, limited work–life balance and misalignment with organizational values or leadership ethics (Choi, 2023). A phenomenon connected with QQ is employee engagement (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002), which exists at opposite ends of the motivational spectrum. Engaged employees often demonstrate discretionary effort, initiative and organizational citizenship behaviors (Dionisio *et al.*, 2025), whereas QQ reflects passive disengagement in which employees fulfill only their contractual obligations without emotional involvement or extra-role effort (Fugate and Kinicki, 2022). Research indicates that declining engagement is a strong predictor of QQ behavior. When employees experience persistent unmet expectations, lack of recognition or perceived unfairness, their engagement levels tend to erode, increasing the likelihood of QQ (Saks, 2006; Gallup, 2022). Thus, low engagement is a predictor of QQ, underscoring the need for proactive strategies that enhance meaningful employee connection to work and workplace culture. As quiet quitters limit their activities to the minimum required and disengage from discretionary and developmental ones (Serenko, 2024; Richardson, 2023; Bennett *et al.*, 2025), as a result, QQ can influence both individual professional development and the organization's development, as the main goals of HRD (Kim *et al.*, 2024; Dillard *et al.*, 2025).

In our research, we delve into the inclusion of employees as a means of preventing QQ. In the third decade of the 21st century, organizations are increasingly emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as human capital terms that encompass both ethical and strategic issues. Inclusion is considered a key objective of diversity practices (Leslie, 2019) and is conceptualized as the degree to which individuals feel accepted, respected and authentically valued within their teams and organizational systems. It is increasingly recognized as a

buffer against disengagement (Shore *et al.*, 2011; Javed *et al.*, 2019). In an era of profound social and technological change, a diverse workforce can be a source of competitive advantage (Bae and Han, 2020), higher profitability (Hunt *et al.*, 2018), provide a better understanding of customer needs (Park *et al.*, 2022) and higher levels of employee engagement. Fostering an inclusive environment is crucial for helping employees adapt and thrive in an organization (Miller and Manata, 2023). Moreover, as diverse teams are less homogeneous, they have greater creative potential because they can create more multidimensional, complex and better solutions for planned tasks. However, the implementation of DEI in an organization can also become a source of controversy, because employees may feel threatened by subjective evaluation criteria (e.g. fear of losing access to performance appraisal results and opportunities), may fear violating existing values strongly related to culture, beliefs or their own religion and may also feel that group morality is threatened (Iyer, 2022). Critics argue that DEI efforts prioritize identity over merit, leading to concerns about reverse discrimination or lowered standards (Baker, 2025). Noon and Ogbonna (2021) recognized that no single initiative will achieve diversity and inclusion goals. Dobbins and Kaler (2016) noticed that training often triggers resistance and can reduce workforce diversity over time. This study positions inclusion as an element of HRD. As HRD focuses on enhancing employees' skills, supporting their career growth and strengthening organizational effectiveness (Kim *et al.*, 2024), fostering inclusion within this framework contributes to HRD goals by creating conditions that encourage development and engagement rather than withdrawal through QQ. Therefore, through inclusion, organizations can mitigate the risk of QQ, foster deeper engagement and reinforce long-term organizational commitment.

As inclusion shapes employees' experiences of value, fairness and belonging, these perceptions also play a central role in developing relational qualities within the organization (Edmondson, 1999). The positive impact of organizational culture on employees' engagement is proven in previous studies (Dionísio *et al.*, 2025). One of the most critical of these relational outcomes is organizational trust (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001), which functions as a psychological foundation for employees' engagement and willingness to contribute (Liu *et al.*, 2025). When employees feel included in decision-making processes, they raise their confidence in the organization's values (Shore *et al.*, 2011). From an HRD perspective, organizational trust enables a supportive developmental climate in which employees can thrive.

Although QQ reflects growing disengagement, it remains unclear how employees' experiences of inclusion and the trust they place in their organizations interact to influence this behavior, creating a need for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, this article aims to determine the impact of inclusion on reducing QQ among employees, with the mediating role of organizational trust, and to answer the research question (RQ):

RQ1. How does perceived inclusion influence quiet quitting, and what role does organizational trust play in this relationship?

To achieve this goal, a survey was designed and conducted among a younger subset of Generation X employees from Poland, Xennials, a recognized microgeneration (Taylor, 2018). On the one hand, the phenomenon of QQ is better recognized in the younger Generation Z (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2024; Xueyun *et al.*, 2023, 2024; Taufik *et al.*, 2024) or Generation Y (Taufik *et al.*, 2024; Hamilton *et al.*, 2023), whereas Generation X is under-researched in this context, and we aim to fulfill this gap. We focused on full-time employed respondents aged 42–49 years who, at the same time, represent the youngest subset of Generation X, according to Howe and Strauss (2007). They have enough work experience to be aware of the quality of working conditions. Xennials experienced the shift from pre-internet to digital, uniquely used digital tech, and often learned on their own at work with no

previous experience, which set them apart from older Generation X members. This makes Xennials an intriguing, under-studied group in research.

Poland represents a particularly relevant context for examining QQ, as it is a member state of the European Union (EU) and has among the highest global prevalence of QQ (Gallup, 2024). Moreover, Poland is noteworthy for analysis because its unemployment rate remains significantly below the EU average, offering a distinctive labor market setting for such investigation. According to data published by Eurostat [1], the unemployment rate in Poland averaged 3.3% in the years 2018–2023 and 2.8% in 2023, whereas in the EU, it was 6.8% between 2018 and 2023 and 6.1% in 2023. This low level of unemployment makes the labor market situation favorable for employees, increasing the significance of sustainable HRM at the level of companies. Employees have a stronger negotiating position, as the demand for labor exceeds its supply. As a consequence, employers understand the need to improve working conditions and offer more competitive benefits. Furthermore, low unemployment fosters job security and mobility, enabling employees to seek positions that align better with their personal values and well-being.

The article is structured as follows. The theoretical part explains the basic concepts of inclusion, QQ and trust in organizations, sets out the research hypotheses and presents a conceptual model. The research assumptions and the empirical results using structural equations are then presented. The next section discusses the results, draws conclusions and identifies limitations and future research directions.

Literature review

This section aims to establish a theoretical foundation for the proposed conceptual model. Our study is grounded in social exchange theory (SET), which posits that individuals engage in social behavior to maximize social benefits and minimize costs (Mousa Alriyami *et al.*, 2024). SET proposes that relationships in organizations are built on reciprocal exchanges, where employees respond to the treatment they receive from their employer (Mohanty and P, 2021; Bennett *et al.*, 2025). When individuals receive positive treatment, they feel a sense of obligation to respond in kind based on transactional exchange, involving tangible rewards or socioemotional exchange, grounded in perceptions of fairness, trust and mutual support (Kalyar *et al.*, 2025). This theoretical framework has also been used in previous studies of QQ (Bennett *et al.*, 2025). Thus, SET provides a framework for understanding how perceived inclusion and organizational trust shape employees' willingness to contribute – or withdraw – in the workplace. When individuals feel valued, included and fairly treated, they tend to reciprocate with higher trust, engagement and discretionary effort. Conversely, when they experience exclusion, unfairness or a lack of support, they may reciprocate by reducing their effort and involvement, which can manifest as QQ.

We argue that in the context of organizational management and development, inclusive practices are a key element that, by building trust, fostering a sense of acceptance, respect and belonging, stimulates deeper engagement and minimizes the risk of QQ. With this framework in mind, the following sections will review the concepts of QQ, organizational integration (INC) and organizational trust (TRU), with a contextual focus on the younger Generation X group, and then construct research hypotheses (*H1–H4*).

Quiet quitting

According to the Cambridge Dictionary [2], QQ is “the activity of doing the work that you need to do in order to keep your job, but doing it without great enthusiasm or effort, and without agreeing to do extra tasks. Quiet quitting describes the situation when an employee

mentally and emotionally checks out from their job and does the bare minimum to get by. There's nothing new about quiet quitting. It's just a new name for an old phenomenon.”

Although the dictionary definition suggests that QQ is an old phenomenon, it should be clarified that disengagement is well-known. Meanwhile, QQ is a unique concept that captures a contemporary, post-pandemic shift in how employees consciously redefine their boundaries at work, openly rejecting extra-role expectations that organizations have traditionally assumed (Dillard *et al.*, 2025).

The root causes of QQ include low external motivation among employees, burnout (resulting, among other factors, from long-term stress and mental fatigue) and felt resentment toward superiors or the organization (Serenko, 2024). The growth of the QQ phenomenon may also result from ongoing political and economic changes. From the perspective of employees, reducing their involvement (time and effort) in work can be a solution to mitigate the stress related to external conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, high inflation or uncertain employment conditions and consequently unsatisfactory salary (Richardson, 2023). Gallup's 2022 State of the Global Workplace report indicates that a majority of employees in the USA perceive themselves as undervalued and insufficiently recognized in the workplace (Gallup, 2022). QQ indicators may include employee behaviors such as not volunteering to perform additional duties, staying at work only during mandatory hours or passively attending meetings (Klotz and Bolino, 2022); however, QQ is not perceived as individual deviant behavior (Kalyar *et al.*, 2025). The employee only does enough work to avoid being fired (Kachhap and Singh, 2024). Although for many years it was common for employees to engage at a minimal level, reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of work, it was more a form of collective protest to improve working conditions (Becker, 1994).

Growing expectations regarding achieving work–life balance (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) make employees increasingly wonder whether they are putting too much effort into their work and whether they should be active beyond the necessary minimum. QQ is often discussed as a coping strategy (Armstrong and Pfandler, 2024) and as a way to set healthy boundaries in professional work, increase rationality toward one's work and work–life balance activities. QQ does not mean giving up on doing one's job (due to, for example, a lack of better alternatives), but can be treated as focusing only on those tasks and professional activities that are assigned to a given position (Srivastava *et al.*, 2024). It may, therefore, appear as a protest against the “cult of work” and “rush culture” (Thapa, 2022), and indicate the need for changes in the hierarchy of values. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is more often seen as negative, as it reduces workers' productivity and adversely affects other employees (Anand *et al.*, 2024).

The QQ phenomenon exists among different generations. However, QQ behaviors are less common among Generation X compared with Millennials and Generation Z. Generation X demonstrates a pragmatic and reserved approach to quiet exit, viewing it as a temporary strategy rather than a long-term philosophy, as they often hold leadership positions and value job security (Hamilton *et al.*, 2023). Unlike younger workers, who view quiet exit as a lifestyle choice and prioritize clear boundaries for work engagement, Generation X interprets it as a necessary coping strategy in the face of poor management or a lack of organizational support (Jelača and Golubović, 2024).

Hypotheses development

The qualitative research identified several reasons behind QQ (Nimmi *et al.*, 2024), including personal factors (e.g. emotional exhaustion and emotional trauma stemming from personal life events), organizational politics (e.g. the absence of policies such as support

systems for new mothers and provisions for health and mental well-being) and people dynamics (e.g. unethical behavior of colleagues, often resulting from a toxic work culture and environment, which has led to the development of unhealthy workplace practices).

Research findings indicate that QQ tends to depend less on an employee's willingness to work harder and more creatively and more on the manager's ability to build relationships with employees (Zenger and Folkman, 2022) or the level of organizational support provided by the organization's employees during the implementation of various projects (Irfan *et al.*, 2023). Several organizational factors have been identified as influencing QQ, for example leadership styles, working conditions, bureaucracy or limited career opportunities (Alami *et al.*, 2024).

Contemporary organizations are increasingly emphasizing the importance of DEI in relation to human capital. Therefore, our research focuses on inclusion and its impact on QQ. Historically, the term *inclusion* is associated with the social phenomenon of the abolition of racial segregation in the 1960s, and later it was also used in the education sector, concerning the inclusion of children with special needs in the educational process (Qvortrup and Qvortrup, 2018).

Employee inclusion is understood as the removal of obstacles to employees' full participation and contributions in organizations (Roberson, 2006). Inclusion means the degree to which an employee feels they are accepted and treated as an insider by others in the organization (Brimhall *et al.*, 2017). It also reflects the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belonging and uniqueness (Shore *et al.*, 2011). The concept of inclusiveness is closely linked to equality, although these are separate concepts; the aim of implementing inclusive policies is to ensure that all people have equal access to all resources in society or services (Roberson, 2006). Inclusion is related to behaviors and leadership approach, encompassing both individual and group experience, as well as collective norms and values (Ferdman, 2013). Inclusion encompasses both equity and belonging: equity refers to fair organizational systems and practices that provide equal access to resources, opportunities and treatment, whereas belonging reflects an individual's psychological experience of being valued and accepted (Roberson, 2019). Generally, inclusion refers to the extent to which employees are encouraged to participate in the workplace, whereas diversity typically relates to the composition of differences among individuals in the organization.

Despite employees' growing awareness of the benefits of implementing DEI policies, the topic remains controversial (Iyer, 2022). On the one hand, there is an ethical expectation to provide all employees with the same rights, but on the other hand, implementing inclusion initiatives can create organizational constraints, such as allocating limited resources, prioritizing training or restructuring workflows, which may require adjustments in other employees' routines or roles. Critics argue that DEI efforts prioritize identity over merit, leading to concerns about reverse discrimination or lowered standards (Baker, 2025). Moreover, implementing solutions that ensure inclusion may involve costs within organizations that they are unwilling to bear. Inclusion should not only be incorporated in a long-term strategy to influence the situation of the organization (Suciu *et al.*, 2020) but also requires internalization, based on self-discipline and bottom-up engagement (Ferdman, 2013), as it is a process that is strongly linked to the socialization practices of organizations (Sancllemente *et al.*, 2024).

Inclusion also obliges organizations to invest and poses a financial performance risk (Suciu *et al.*, 2020). The primary reason for management's cautious attitude stems from companies' tendency to launch inclusion initiatives to "move to action" without taking the time to fully understand their actual challenges and opportunities (Giovannini, 2004). Thus,

organizations need to find the benefits of investing in inclusiveness. These benefits of inclusion are positively associated with employee assimilation outcomes, such as improved professional competence, familiarity with co-workers and superiors, employee recognition, employee involvement and role negotiation (Miller and Manata, 2023). Inclusion also supports creativity (Sweeney, 2003).

The empirical evidence from the study reveals that employees' perceptions of their institution significantly affect their intention to stay. Inclusion has a positive impact on employees' intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and persistence (Goto *et al.*, 2023). The indirect effect of an inclusive corporate climate on organizational citizenship behavior becomes stronger when inclusive leadership is promoted within an organization (Zaccone and Pedrini, 2024). Individual perceptions of inclusion are influenced by multiple factors, such as personality, self-confidence, locus of control and self-esteem (Shore *et al.*, 2011). Workplace ostracism plays a significant role in increasing QQ, with knowledge concealment serving as a partial mediator in this relationship (Dutta *et al.*, 2024). This phenomenon also arises in response to job stress, a lack of organizational support or inadequate leadership, which can have adverse long-term effects on organizational performance and employee retention (Hamouche *et al.*, 2023). Toxic work culture and a sense of being underappreciated (Kachhap and Singh, 2024) and emotional invalidation (Armstrong and Pfandler, 2024) are recognized as antecedents of QQ; thus, employee inclusion contradicts these as it aims to engage all employees. Therefore, in research hypothesis *H1*, we assume that employees of inclusive organizations are less likely to engage in QQ because they feel accepted and important to their employer:

H1. The inclusion of employees in the organization prevents their quiet quitting from work.

The presence and quality of inclusion policies are connected with TRU. These policies enhance psychological safety by creating an environment where individuals feel secure expressing themselves without fear of discrimination or retaliation (Edmondson, 1999). In addition, inclusion policies contribute to perceptions of fairness and transparency, particularly in processes such as hiring, promotion and conflict resolution. When such procedures are perceived as just, they foster greater trust across the organization (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001). Representation and employee voice also play critical roles; when individuals see their identities reflected in leadership and feel included in decision-making processes, their confidence in the organization's values and integrity grows (Shore *et al.*, 2011). Finally, the presence of feedback systems and grievance mechanisms demonstrates that the organization takes concerns seriously and acts on them (Mayer *et al.*, 1995).

As QQ depends on the organizational support of employees during the implementation of various projects (Irfan *et al.*, 2023), a consequence is to consider the level of employees' trust in the organization. Trust in an organization encompasses employees' willingness and confidence to act in line with the organization's actions and decisions, and it is influenced by factors such as HRM, organizational culture and processes (Liu *et al.*, 2025). Organizational trust is based on employees' confidence in the organization's integrity and competence (Men *et al.*, 2020). Employees' attitude and behavior are influenced by their trust in the workplace (Men *et al.*, 2020; Mousa Alriyami *et al.*, 2024).

The positive impact of TRU on the productivity and performance of an organization and its employees is recognized (Agarwal, 2013). What is particularly significant is the impact of TRU on mitigating workplace deviance, i.e. voluntary behavior harming the organization (Singh, 2019). In the context of QQ, the relationship between QQ and the level of trust has been examined in several studies (Alami *et al.*, 2024; Bahadori *et al.*, 2021), which confirm

that a lack of trust in the organization is one of the factors impacting QQ (Alami *et al.*, 2024; Kachhap and Singh, 2024). Furthermore, it has been confirmed that trust in both the team and the organization affects team engagement (Liu *et al.*, 2025).

Employees who perceive the company as fair, obtain support from their supervisor, receive rewards and are content with their working conditions are more likely to be more satisfied and less likely to show QQ tendencies (Anand *et al.*, 2024). All these arguments allow us to formulate the research hypothesis *H2*:

H2. Employees' trust in their employer prevents them from quietly quitting work.

The theoretical background for the study of trust in organizations is the SET, which assumes that people engage in social behavior to maximize their social benefits and minimize their costs, with trust being one of the essential aspects of maintaining equilibrium in this exchange (Mousa Alriyami *et al.*, 2024). By engaging in relationships, people create commitment and trust is developed (Mohanty and P, 2021). Trust is impacted by several aspects of leadership, for example transformational leadership (Ashfaq *et al.*, 2023; Jain *et al.*, 2019), charismatic leadership communication (Men *et al.*, 2020) or ethical leadership (Eluwole *et al.*, 2022).

Ethical leadership strengthens employees' TRU (Eluwole *et al.*, 2022), but inclusion is one aspect of an ethical attitude (Ferdman, 2013), which aims for employees to feel accepted, to be insiders (Brimhall *et al.*, 2017), to contribute to the organization (Roberson, 2006) and to be valued team members with a sense of belonging and uniqueness (Shore *et al.*, 2011). By being more engaged in the organization, through inclusion, trust is stimulated (Mohanty and P, 2021). All these arguments and the results of previous studies allow us to formulate the research hypothesis *H3*:

H3. The inclusion of employees in the organization influences their trust in their employer.

Organizational trust is often recognized as a mediator between some aspects of management and employees' attitudes or behaviors. For example, TRU mediates the relationship between social and psychological capital and organizational performance (Kidron and Vinarski-Peretz, 2024), between ethical leadership and employees' performance, including absenteeism (Eluwole *et al.*, 2022), and between leadership communication and employees' openness and behavioral support for change (Men *et al.*, 2020). Previous studies have shown that TRU mediates the impact of transformational leadership on proactive behavior (Ashfaq *et al.*, 2023) and organizational commitment (Jain *et al.*, 2019). Evidence has also been found for the mediating effect of trust on the relationship between organizational culture and employees' engagement (Mohanty and P, 2021). Guided by these arguments, research hypothesis *H4* was formulated:

H4. Employees' trust in the organization mediates the effect of the inclusion of employees in the organization on their quiet quitting from work.

The conceptual model, which reflects research hypotheses, is presented in Figure 1. By examining how inclusion and TRU reduce QQ, our model aligns with the humanistic values of HRD, which prioritize the dignity, empowerment, participation and well-being of employees (Dillard *et al.*, 2025).

Method and results

To verify the conceptual model (Figure 1), the study was designed and conducted based on data collected through a survey, and the structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) method was

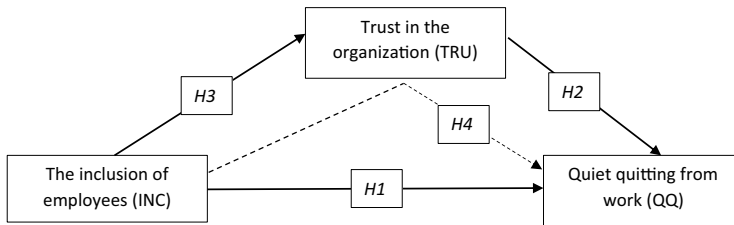


Figure 1. Conceptual model
Source: Authors’ own work

used with STATA software. A similar method was applied, for example by [Xueyun et al. \(2024\)](#) when investigating the phenomena of QQ, or analyzing the impact of TRU on workplace behavior or attitudes ([Ashfaq et al., 2023](#); [Mousa Alriyami et al., 2024](#)). The role of trust in mediating the relationship between organizational culture and employees’ engagement was also investigated with the use of the CB-SEM method ([Mohanty and P, 2021](#)).

In creating a questionnaire, contrary to the authors developing their own scales ([Armstrong and Pfandler, 2024](#)), we relied on validated items (details in [Table 1](#)). The five items reflecting QQ from work, i.e. “I feel that there is a lack of learning and growth opportunities in my organization,” were based on the scale from [Anand et al. \(2024\)](#). To create the latent variable of the inclusion of employees in the organization (INC), we adopted a scale of five statements from the scale of [Herlihy et al. \(2022\)](#), i.e. “People are valued as individuals by the organization I work for.” The latent variable of trust in the organization consists of two statements, i.e. “I have found that I can rely on the company I work for to keep the promises that it makes,” and was inspired by [Chow and Holden \(1997\)](#). The questionnaire used a seven-point scale to assess all items, where 1 means strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree. The questionnaire also included some questions regarding the personal situation of respondents.

Table 1. Measurement scale constructs

Latent variables	Items	Source of items
Quiet quitting from work (QQ)	QQ1. I feel there is a lack of opportunities to learn and grow in my organization QQ2. I feel there is a lack of meaningfulness at work QQ3. I feel I have a lack of interest in attending meetings QQ4. I feel there is a lack of passion and enthusiasm in me to work above and beyond QQ5. I feel there is a lack of feeling regarding my employer’s care for me	Anand et al. (2024)
Inclusion in the organization (INC)	I1. People are valued as individuals by the organization I work in I2. My opinions matter to the organization I work in I3. In my work, I have access to new opportunities I4. The organization, I work, distributes recognition fairly I5. I always feel like I’m part of a team at work	Herlihy et al. (2022)
Trust in the organization (TRU)	T1. I have found that I can rely on the company I work, to keep the promises that it makes T2. The company I work in is basically honest	Chow and Holden (1997)

Source(s): Authors’ own work

The research received ethical approval from the Committee for Ethics of Scientific Research Involving Human Subjects at the Poznań University of Economics and Business (Resolution No. 14/2024). All participants were informed about the scientific purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation and the anonymity of their responses. Completion of the survey constituted informed consent.

We collected responses based on a self-administered online questionnaire in July 2024 among randomly selected respondents of Generation X from Poland, who were employed at the time of the research and who represented all regions of the country. The data was collected by a professional research agency in Poland that conducts panel research. The identity of panel participants is verified; therefore, recruitment for the study excluded the use of random selection of respondents or, for example bootstrapping. However, the research is not based on a random sample drawn from the entire Polish population, but on a panel sample (currently, the panel includes over 300,000 people aged 15 and older). Within the panel, our sample was selected randomly, based on quotas, ensuring a representative sample in terms of age, gender, education and place of residence. The survey return rate was approximately 35%.

The respondents were the younger subset of Generation X, people born between 1975 and 1985. They are more specifically so-called Xennials (Taylor, 2018), a transitional microgeneration between Generation X (born around 1965–1980) and Millennials (Y) (born around 1981–1996); the years defining generations are unclear since they overlap without clear start or end points, forming a microgeneration (Taylor, 2018). They experienced the transition from the pre-internet to the digital world, which distinguishes them from older members of Generation X. They are usually not the subject of research, although it was their unique experience to use innovative digital technologies and learn them from scratch directly at the workplace, without any previous experience, and often learn on their own. Although the precise birth years defining when generations start and end vary, people born in these circumstances tend to have a mix of characteristics common to their adjacent generations and do not closely resemble those born in the middle of their adjacent generations. All these make Xennials a cognitively interesting research cohort, not studied in depth in previous research as a separate cohort.

We collected 410 correctly fulfilled responses; the profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 2. The average age of the respondents was 45.8 with a standard deviation (SD) of 2.3 years, with all respondents born between 1975 and 1982. Women accounted for 46.1% of the respondents, and men 53.9%. Respondents represented residents from a variety of locations, including rural areas (34.14%) and small (21.71%), medium (20.98%) and large cities (23.17%). The majority of respondents had higher education (59.27%), less often secondary education (32.93%) and a significant minority had primary or vocational education.

Looking at the means of the responses (Table 3), institutional trust is rated highest (means of 4.40 and 4.70), whereas QQ is evaluated lowest (means between 3.27 and 3.94). The variation of values, as measured by SD, is similar for all items, between 0.08 and 0.09. As expected, the highest number of respondents indicated a moderate acceptance of items (answers 3–5 out of a seven-point scale).

To verify the conceptual model, structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) was used with the use of STATA software. First, the measurement models were estimated and verified (see Tables 4 and 5). The fit statistics of the measurement model for Generation X are as follows: root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.08; comparative fit index (CFI)=0.96; Tucker–Lewis index (TLI)=0.94; standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)=0.04 and coefficient of determination (CD)=0.998. The recommended thresholds of RMSEA < 0.08, SRMR < 0.05, TLI > 0.9 and CFI > 0.9 (Dash and Paul, 2021) were

Table 2. Respondents' profiles

Characteristics	Frequency
No. of respondents	410
Age	Mean: 45.8 years SD: 2.3 years Born between 1975 and 1982 42 years, <i>n</i> = 40 (9.8%) 43 years, <i>n</i> = 41 (10.0%) 44 years, <i>n</i> = 53 (12.9%) 45 years, <i>n</i> = 49 (12.0%) 46 years, <i>n</i> = 53 (12.9%) 47 years, <i>n</i> = 55 (13.4%) 48 years, <i>n</i> = 51 (12.4%) 49 years, <i>n</i> = 68 (16.6%)
Gender	Women: <i>n</i> = 189 (46.1%) Men: <i>n</i> = 221 (53.9%)
Place of living	Rural, <i>n</i> = 140 (34.15%) Town with a population of below 20,000 inhabitants, <i>n</i> = 43 (10.49%) Town with a population of 20,000–49,000 inhabitants, <i>n</i> = 46 (11.22%) Town with a population of 50,000–99,000 inhabitants, <i>n</i> = 50 (12.20%) Town with a population of 100,000–199,000 inhabitants, <i>n</i> = 36 (8.78%) Cities with a population of 200,000–500,000 inhabitants, <i>n</i> = 39 (9.51%) Cities with a population of above 500,000 inhabitants, <i>n</i> = 56 (13.66%)
Education	Elementary, <i>n</i> = 3 (0.73%) Vocational, <i>n</i> = 29 (7.07%) Secondary, <i>n</i> = 135 (32.93%) Higher, <i>n</i> = 243 (59.27%)

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 3. Results of responses about quiet quitting, inclusion and organizational trust

Item	Mean	SD	Frequencies and shares of answers						
			1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	6 (%)	7 (%)
QQ1	3.94	0.09	50 (12.20)	54 (13.17)	63 (15.37)	88 (21.46)	59 (14.39)	50 (12.20)	46 (11.22)
QQ2	3.27	0.09	82 (20.00)	70 (17.07)	75 (18.29)	84 (20.49)	58 (14.15)	18 (4.39)	23 (5.61)
QQ3	3.82	0.09	52 (12.68)	50 (12.20)	60 (14.63)	107 (26.10)	73 (17.80)	33 (8.05)	35 (8.54)
QQ4	3.90	0.09	51 (12.44)	51 (12.44)	57 (13.90)	96 (23.41)	76 (18.54)	43 (10.49)	36 (8.78)
QQ5	3.91	0.09	50 (12.20)	50 (12.20)	59 (14.39)	107 (26.10)	66 (16.10)	27 (6.59)	51 (12.44)
I1	3.87	0.08	54 (13.17)	36 (8.78)	59 (14.39)	120 (29.27)	74 (18.05)	37 (9.02)	30 (7.32)
I2	4.10	0.08	40 (9.76)	42 (10.24)	43 (10.49)	104 (25.37)	106 (25.85)	43 (10.49)	32 (7.80)
I3	4.21	0.08	37 (9.02)	35 (8.54)	45 (10.98)	97 (23.66)	112 (27.32)	53 (12.93)	31 (7.56)
I4	3.79	0.09	61 (14.88)	47 (11.46)	56 (13.66)	97 (23.66)	77 (18.78)	46 (11.22)	26 (6.34)
I5	4.62	0.08	21 (5.12)	23 (5.61)	30 (7.32)	107 (26.10)	112 (27.32)	71 (17.32)	46 (11.22)
T1	4.40	0.08	29 (7.07)	20 (4.88)	42 (10.24)	121 (29.51)	97 (23.66)	66 (16.10)	35 (8.54)
T2	4.70	0.08	19 (4.63)	20 (4.88)	37 (9.02)	101 (24.63)	95 (23.17)	86 (20.98)	52 (12.68)

Source(s): Authors' own work

exceeded for all measures of model fit for Generation X employees, allowing the measurement model to be accepted.

The loading values of all items in the measurement model were high, between 0.735 and 0.945, and statistically significant (see Table 4). The values of Cronbach's alpha were

Table 4. Constructs and their measurements

Latent variable	Item	Loading	p-value
Quiet quitting from work (QQ)	QQ1	0.806	***
	QQ2	0.809	***
	QQ3	0.735	***
	QQ4	0.876	***
	QQ5	0.765	***
Inclusion in the organization (INC)	I1	0.901	***
	I2	0.784	***
	I3	0.816	***
	I4	0.787	***
	I5	0.751	***
Trust in the organization (TRU)	T1	0.945	***
	T2	0.848	***

Note(s): *** $p < 0.001$

Source(s): Authors' own work

between 0.890 and 0.903. The average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged between 0.640 and 0.806, which is above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.5. Next, the composite reliability (CR) values ranged between 0.892 and 0.905, also above the threshold of 0.6. Altogether, the values of CR, AVE and Cronbach's alpha (see Table 5), together with the values and significance of the factor loadings, exceed commonly accepted thresholds (Dash and Paul, 2021; Vinkóczy *et al.*, 2024), which confirms convergent validity and allows all constructs to be accepted for further modeling.

As the trust construct was measured using two reflective indicators, additional measures were verified to validate this two-item construct. Both trust items demonstrated high factor loadings (0.95 for T1 and 0.85 for T2, respectively), with narrow 95% confidence intervals (item T1: 0.91–0.98; item T2: 0.81–0.89), indicating precise estimation. The interitem correlation was strong ($r = 0.801$), yielding a Spearman–Brown reliability coefficient ($\rho = 0.89$), which is the recommended reliability estimate for two-item scales. Taken together with indicators showing high reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha = 0.890; AVE = 0.806 and CR = 0.892), these results demonstrate that the two-item trust scale exhibits adequate stability, reliability and convergent validity, supporting its appropriateness in the study context.

To evaluate potential common method variance (CMV), we implemented both procedural and statistical remedies. Procedurally, the survey ensured respondent anonymity, used validated and clearly worded items and randomized item order, all of which reduce evaluation apprehension and method-related biases. Statistically, we first conducted Harman's single-factor test by loading all measurement items into an unrotated exploratory factor analysis. Two factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged, and the first factor accounted for

Table 5. Convergent and discriminant validity

Variable	INC	TRU	QQ	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	CR
INC	0.810			0.903	0.655	0.905
TRU	0.746	0.898		0.890	0.806	0.892
QQ	0.616	0.552	0.800	0.897	0.640	0.898

Source(s): Authors' own work

49.5% of the total variance, which is below the level typically interpreted as indicating substantial CMV. Second, we also address collinearity by estimating variance inflation factors (VIFs). Because CB-SEM software does not provide VIFs for latent variables by default, we followed the full collinearity procedure of factor scores generated for each latent variable, and each construct was regressed on the remaining constructs to obtain VIFs. All VIF values were below the recommended threshold of 3.3 (maximum = 2.76), indicating that CMV is unlikely to pose a significant threat to the validity of the results.

Following recommendations for theory-driven structural equation modeling, control variables were not included in the structural model because the theoretical framework does not posit their influence on the focal relationships.

In the next step, a structural model with path coefficients of the relations between the constructs was estimated. The fit statistics of the Generation X structural model are as follows: RMSEA = 0.08; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.94; SRMR = 0.04; and the coefficient of determination $CD = 0.926$. The recommended results should be: RMSEA < 0.08, SRMR < 0.05, TLI > 0.9 and CFI > 0.9 (Dash and Paul, 2021). These thresholds were reached for the structural model, and these results allow the models to be accepted for further investigation.

The results of the CB-SEM estimations (Table 6) allow us to verify the structural paths between the variables to verify the hypotheses and, consequently, the conceptual model. In the case of the models estimated for both generations, the inclusion of employees (INC) significantly and negatively affects their QQ, meaning that the more employees feel included by their employer, the less likely they are to quit quietly. The predictive power of inclusion in explaining QQ was 46.1%. Such results support hypothesis *H1*.

Next, trust in the organization (TRU) as impacting QQ was considered to verify hypothesis *H2*. In the case of Generation X, the structural path shows a negative and statistically significant impact, meaning that institutional trust in the employer reduces QQ among the Generation X employees with a predictive power of 20.9%; therefore, hypothesis *H2* is supported. It is also worth noting the stronger impact of inclusion ($\beta = -0.461^{***}$) compared with TRU ($\beta = -0.209^{**}$) in preventing QQ.

The last indirect effect considered is the effect of employees' inclusion in the organization (INC) on their trust in their employers (TRU), reflected in hypothesis (*H3*). This impact is positive and statistically significant, with a predictive power of 74.6%. The more employees are included in the organization, the higher the level of their trust is, which supports hypothesis *H3*.

To verify hypothesis *H4*, which assumed the effect of TRU in mediating the impact of inclusion on QQ, the models were decomposed into direct, indirect and total effects (Table 7). The decomposition is also used in other studies on QQ (Xueyun et al., 2024).

The indirect effect of inclusion on QQ, mediated by TRU, is statistically significant for Generation X employees. Both the direct and indirect effects of inclusion on QQ are negative, which means that the mediating effect exacerbates the direct effect. When

Table 6. Results of structural equation modeling (CB-SEM)

Variable structural path	Beta	SE	p-value	Hypotheses
INC → QQ	-0.461	0.071	***	<i>H1</i> : supported
TRU → QQ	-0.209	0.074	**	<i>H2</i> : supported
INC → TRU	0.746	0.027	***	<i>H3</i> : supported

Note(s): *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table 7. Decomposition into direct, indirect and total effects

Variable structural path	Beta	SE	p-value
<i>Direct effects</i>			
INC → QQ	-0.450	0.076	***
TRU → QQ	-0.211	0.076	**
INC → TRU	0.720	0.042	***
<i>Indirect effects</i>			
INC → QQ	-0.152	0.055	**
<i>Total effects</i>			
INC → QQ	-0.602	0.051	***
TRU → QQ	-0.211	0.076	**
INC → TRU	0.720	0.042	***

Note(s): *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$
Source(s): Authors' own work

employees perceive their organization as inclusive and trustworthy, they are less likely to quietly quit, which supports hypothesis *H4*.

In addition to maximum likelihood (ML) estimation with standard errors implemented in the study, we also estimated the model using ML with bootstrapping (5,000 replications) to obtain nonparametric confidence intervals for effects. The bootstrapped solution yielded virtually identical fit indices and path coefficients compared with the original ML estimates. Standard errors were slightly higher, as expected with resampling procedures, but all focal paths remained statistically significant. These results provide additional support for the robustness and stability of the mediation findings.

Discussion

The study aimed to identify the effect of companies' inclusion practices on QQ of Generation X employees and the direct and mediating role of TRU. Based on the research results, we confirmed that an organization's inclusion reduces the willingness of employees to quit quietly. The standardized direct effect indicates that inclusion accounts for 46% of the explained variance in quiet-quitting behaviors. Organizational trust plays both a direct and mediating role in impacting QQ. Directly, TRU accounts for 21% of the variance in QQ. In addition, trust mediates the relationship between inclusion and QQ, with the indirect path contributing 15% of the total effect of inclusion on QQ. The total effect of inclusion, both direct and indirect through trust, on QQ is therefore 60%, which means that 60% of QQ variance is explained by inclusion. Therefore, we confirm the importance of HRD in understanding the QQ phenomenon, both through the importance of humanistic values of participation and well-being of employees, and the role of institutional settings (Dillard *et al.*, 2025). Our results contribute to HRD literature by positioning inclusion and TRU as relational mechanisms that counteract QQ.

Among the identified factors of QQ of diverse nature (Dutta *et al.*, 2024; Goto *et al.*, 2023; Nimmi *et al.*, 2024; Zaccone and Pedrini, 2024), we focus on those dependent on the organization's strategy, as being shaped by the organization. The importance of including employees and building their trust in preventing QQ is in line with research pointing to the role of managers' ability to build relationships with employees (Zenger and Folkman, 2022), organizational support (Irfan *et al.*, 2023) or leadership styles (Alami *et al.*, 2024). As the

positive impact of organizational culture on employees' engagement is discussed in HRD studies (Dionísio *et al.*, 2025), we contribute to this discussion by proving that organizational culture built on inclusion and trust also reduces QQ of employees.

Our findings contribute to the HRD literature by positioning inclusion and TRU as developmental levers that can enhance support for organizational development initiatives as one of three main HRD domains (Kim *et al.*, 2024), thereby reducing disengagement behaviors such as QQ. Our results contribute to the discussion on the benefits of implementing inclusion policies (Iyer, 2022). Inclusion should not only be viewed as an investment and a source of financial risk (Suciu *et al.*, 2020) but also from the perspective of benefits. To add to all previously recognized benefits of inclusion (Miller and Manata, 2023; Sweeney, 2003), their role in preventing QQ has been proven and evaluated.

Based on our research results, we have also confirmed the impact of organizational trust on preventing QQ among Generation X, in line with other studies (Alami *et al.*, 2024; Bahadori *et al.*, 2021; Kachhap and Singh, 2024). However, our contribution to the research field is to identify its explanatory power at 21% and to recognize its mediating impact on the relationship between inclusion and QQ at 15%.

Since organizational trust is influenced by, among other things, organizational culture (Liu *et al.*, 2025), in line with previous studies, we confirm its interaction with inclusion as an HRD of an organization. The positive influence of organizational trust on the performance of an organization (Agarwal, 2013) may also be related to its ability to prevent employees from quietly quitting and thus discovering their full potential. As organizational trust reduces workplace deviance (Singh, 2019), QQ can also be seen as a kind of workplace deviance with the mitigating effect of organizational trust. Therefore, our results contribute to the discussion on the organizational culture-employees' engagement nexus (Dionísio *et al.*, 2025).

Our results also support the SET (Mousa Aliyami *et al.*, 2024), according to which trust, developed in relationships, affects people's commitment (Mohanty and P, 2021). We confirmed that organizational trust prevents QQ as an opposite attitude to commitment and engagement. Thus, we contribute to SET by demonstrating how inclusion initiates a positive exchange cycle. By empirically validating both the direct and indirect pathways, we extend SET to contemporary post-pandemic work behaviors of QQ and show how modern disengagement patterns can be understood as responses to relational and developmental signals from the organization.

Trust is recognized as related to some aspects of leadership, such as ethical leadership (Eluwole *et al.*, 2022), transformational leadership (Ashfaq *et al.*, 2023; Jain *et al.*, 2019) or charismatic leadership communication (Men *et al.*, 2020). Our results contribute to the discussion of these phenomena indirectly, due to the recognition of the mediating role of trust. Through inclusion practices, as part of ethical and charismatic leadership, employees feel accepted, contributing and belonging (Brimhall *et al.*, 2017; Roberson, 2006; Shore *et al.*, 2011), which builds their trust in the organization.

The conclusions interfere with HRD because inclusion practices, organizational trust and QQ are constructs related to employee and organizational development. Framing the findings in this domain is consistent with established theoretical approaches (e.g. Shore *et al.*, 2011; Bennett *et al.*, 2025). As these variables originate from employee-organization relations and engagement dynamics, the HR perspective provides the most appropriate context for interpreting the results. In addition, inclusion and trust foster a culture of learning and development (e.g. access to new opportunities is part of HRD).

Training and development implications

As this study makes a theoretical contribution by empirically analyzing the impact of inclusion policies on QQ, we also offer practical implications for human resource training and development. From an HRD perspective, our results highlight that organizational inclusion is not merely a symbolic value but a strategic resource with substantial behavioral consequences, and organizations should embed inclusion within learning and development processes. By creating an environment in which employees feel valued, heard and fairly treated, organizations can directly reduce the likelihood of QQ. Our study highlights the importance of an inclusive organizational policy for preventing employee QQ. It seems necessary, on the one hand, to strengthen supervisors' competencies in fostering a sense of belonging among employees and to strengthen their individual resources through mutual learning and support. The results suggest that supporting the development of managerial competencies to recognize employee signals of disengagement and work engagement before they decide to leave is crucial. It also seems crucial that training programs include topics that build employee awareness of diversity, equality and inclusion. To maximize the benefits of such development-oriented workplace interventions, those responsible for planning and evaluating employee training and empowerment should create a workplace climate that fosters inclusivity and enables supervisors to engage employees in tasks that strengthen their sense of teamwork. This could include training supervisors to recognize and support inclusivity verbally, emphasize teamwork and include them in workplace activities that were previously routinely assigned to other employees. It also seems necessary to strengthen communication processes and continuous discussions based on cooperation.

The study highlights the importance of continuous assessment and improvement of inclusion policies, as well as the need to strengthen organizational trust, as this mitigates the negative effects of a lack of inclusion policies. HRD practitioners can support the development of organizational trust through learning environments that emphasize transparency, feedback and participative communication. Programs that strengthen interpersonal communication, collaborative problem-solving and trust-building behaviors among managers and employees may reinforce the relational climate that discourages disengagement.

Strengthening these relational dimensions is particularly important for mid-career employees, such as those in Generation X, who value fairness, recognition and respect as determinants of engagement. HRD systems that provide access to development opportunities, skill upgrading and internal mobility pathways may reinforce employees' perceptions that the organization values their long-term professional growth. In this way, HRD interventions can help transform inclusion into meaningful developmental experiences that sustain engagement and reduce the likelihood of QQ.

Limitations and future research

Although this study provides significant insight into the impact of inclusion policies on the willingness to quit a job quietly, it also has several limitations. We focused on Poland, a member of the European Union with a relatively low unemployment rate, in a specific cultural context. Similar studies need to confront our results in other countries with higher unemployment rates and different organizational cultures. In addition, the broader applicability of the results should be verified in other countries to understand the impact of cultural differences. Cross-cultural research would allow us to verify whether the relationships identified in our study differ across countries characterized by different cultural values, leadership styles and organizational norms. Such comparative research could also

reveal how national HRD systems and organizational learning cultures influence the effectiveness of inclusion-oriented practices in reducing QQ.

As our study relies on cross-sectional survey data, which restricts the ability to draw causal inferences, it would be worthwhile to conduct further research using longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture the temporal dynamics between inclusion, trust and QQ behaviors. Next, all variables were measured through self-reported statements; therefore, future studies could incorporate multisource data, for example supervisor evaluations, behavioral indicators or organizational records, to corroborate self-reported quiet-quitting tendencies. Using mixed-method approaches, including qualitative interviews or diary studies, may also provide deeper insight into how employees interpret inclusion and trust in everyday work experiences. It would also be advisable to further improve the scales used in research on QQ. Given the dynamic development of this phenomenon and the reliability of the research, there is a need for further testing of measurement scales and for data triangulation across multiple sources.

Furthermore, the study focuses on Generation X employees in one national context, which may limit generalizability. Thus, the comparison between the Xennial generation and other subgroups – Generations Y or Z – may bring new conclusions about how the process of changes in employees occurs and how the HRD can modify its policies toward a more expected workplace. Comparative studies across generations could reveal whether the mediating role of organizational trust operates similarly or differently. Such research could provide valuable insights for HRD practitioners seeking to design development programs and workplace learning initiatives tailored to the needs of diverse generational groups.

Finally, the present model examined inclusion and trust as predictors of QQ; however, other organizational factors may further deepen the understanding of this phenomenon. Future research could, therefore, extend the model by incorporating additional mediating and moderating variables that may affect the relationship between inclusion and QQ. In particular, HRD-related constructs such as learning climate, leadership development practices, mentoring systems and opportunities for continuous skill development may provide important insights into how developmental environments influence employee QQ. Future research may also extend the model by examining whether the relationships identified in this study differ across employees at different career stages, level of tenure or work arrangements (e.g. hybrid work arrangements).

Funding

This work is supported by funds granted by the Minister of Science of the Republic of Poland under the “Regional Initiative for Excellence” Program for the implementation of the project “The Poznań University of Economics and Business for Economy 5.0: Regional Initiative – Global Effects (RIGE).”

Notes

- [1.] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00203/default/table?lang=en&category=t_labour.t_employ.t_lfsi.t_une, access: 16/01/2025.
- [2.] <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/quiet-quitting>, access: 04/11/2024.

References

- Agarwal, V. (2013), “Investigating the convergent validity of organizational trust”, *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 24-39, doi: [10.1108/13632541311300133](https://doi.org/10.1108/13632541311300133).

- Alami, R., Stachowicz-Stanusch, A., Agarwal, S. and Al Masaeid, T. (2024), "Predicting quiet quitting: machine learning insights into silent resignations in healthcare industry", *Journal of Ecohumanism*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 3444-3462, doi: [10.62754/joe.v3i4.3864](https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i4.3864).
- Anand, A., Doll, J. and Ray, P. (2024), "Drowning in silence: a scale development and validation of quiet quitting and quiet firing", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 721-743, doi: [10.1108/IJOA-01-2023-3600](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-01-2023-3600).
- Armstrong, R. and Pfandler, C. (2024), "Taming a wild new term: exploring the concept of quiet quitting as a coping response", *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, Vol. 46 No. 8, pp. 1805-1825, doi: [10.1108/ER-03-2024-0172](https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-03-2024-0172).
- Ashfaq, F., Abid, G. and Ilyas, S. (2023), "Transformational leadership and life satisfaction: the sequential mediation model of organizational trust and proactive behavior", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, Vol. 39 No. 4, p. 101298, doi: [10.1016/j.scaman.2023.101298](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2023.101298).
- Bae, S.J. and Han, S. (2020), "The impact of R&D workforce diversity on firm's performance in internal and external R&D", *European Journal of Innovation Management*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 454-473, doi: [10.1108/EJIM-09-2018-0204](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-09-2018-0204).
- Bahadori, M., Ghasemi, M., Hasanpoor, E., Hosseini, S.M. and Alimohammadzadeh, K. (2021), "The influence of ethical leadership on the organizational commitment in fire organizations", *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 145-156, doi: [10.1108/IJOES-04-2020-0043](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-04-2020-0043).
- Baker, B. (2025), "A DEI dilemma: race versus merit and an erosion of academic civility", *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 32-44, doi: [10.33423/jlae.v22i2.7627](https://doi.org/10.33423/jlae.v22i2.7627).
- Becker, C. (1994), "Better than a strike': protecting new forms of collective work stoppages under the national labor relations act", *The University of Chicago Law Review*, Vol. 61 No. 2, pp. 351-421.
- Bennett, A.A., Epler, R.T., Thomas, V.L. and Jalil, D. (2025), "Exploring coworker perceptions of and reactions to quiet quitting", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 64 No. 6, pp. 1815-1831, doi: [10.1002/hrm.70014](https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.70014).
- Brimhall, K.C., Mor Barak, M.E., Hurlburt, M., McArdle, J.J., Palinkas, L. and Henwood, B. (2017), "Increasing workplace inclusion: the promise of leader-member exchange", *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership and Governance*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 222-239, doi: [10.1080/23303131.2016.1251522](https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1251522).
- Choi, S.L. (2023), "Understanding quiet quitting through the lens of employee well-being and job satisfaction", *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 15-28.
- Chow, S. and Holden, R. (1997), "Toward an understanding of loyalty: the moderating role of trust", *Journal of Managerial Issues*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 275-298.
- Colquitt, J.A., Conlon, D.E., Wesson, M.J., Porter, C.O. and Ng, K.Y. (2001), "Justice at the millennium: a meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 86 No. 3, pp. 425-445, doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.425](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.425).
- Dash, G. and Paul, J. (2021), "CB-SEM vs PLS-SEM methods for research in social sciences and technology forecasting", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol. 173, p. 121092, doi: [10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121092](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121092).
- Dillard, N., Cavallo, T. and Zhang, P. (2025), "A return to humanism: a multi-level analysis exploring the positive effects of quiet quitting", *Human Resource Development Review*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 127-156, doi: [10.1177/15344843241305655](https://doi.org/10.1177/15344843241305655).
- Dionísio, A.L., Sousa, M.J. and Palma-Moreira, A. (2025), "Organisational culture and engagement: the role of shared leadership and delegation in minimal teams", *European Journal of Training and Development*, pp. 1-27, doi: [10.1108/EJTD-07-2024-0099](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-07-2024-0099).
- Dobbin, F. and Kalev, A. (2016), "Why diversity programs fail", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 94 No. 7, pp. 52-60.
- Dutta, D.S., Thomas, A., Shiva, A., Papa, A. and Cuomo, M.T. (2024), "The hustle behind knowledge: role of workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding towards quiet quitting in knowledge-intensive

- organisations”, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 28 No. 10, pp. 2911-2939, doi: [10.1108/JKM-01-2024-0035](https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-01-2024-0035).
- Edmondson, A. (1999), “Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 350-383, doi: [10.2307/2666999](https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999).
- Eluwole, K.K., Karatepe, O.M. and Avci, T. (2022), “Ethical leadership, trust in organization and their impacts on critical hotel employee outcomes”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 102, p. 103153, doi: [10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103153](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103153).
- Ferdman, B.M. (2013), “The practice of inclusion in diverse organizations”, in Ferdman, B.M. and Deane, B.R. (Eds), *Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion*, 1st ed., Wiley, pp. 3-54, doi: [10.1002/9781118764282.ch1](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118764282.ch1).
- Fugate, M. and Kinicki, A.J. (2022), “A dispositional approach to understanding quiet quitting: implications for engagement”, *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 32 No. 3, p. 100859.
- Gallup (2022), “State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report”, Gallup.
- Gallup (2024), “State of the Global Workplace: 2024 Report”, Gallup.
- Giovannini, M. (2004), “What gets measured gets done: achieving results through diversity and inclusion”, *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 21-27.
- Goto, S., Makino, H. and Ando, T. (2023), “Making the most out of the innovation of meaning: the importance of inclusion for creativity in inside-out envisioning”, *Creativity and Innovation Management*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 298-315, doi: [10.1111/caim.12546](https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12546).
- Greenhaus, J.H. and Beutell, N.J. (1985), “Sources of conflict between work and family roles”, *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1, p. 76, doi: [10.2307/258214](https://doi.org/10.2307/258214).
- Hamilton, O.S., Jolles, D. and Lordan, G. (2023), “Does the tendency for ‘quiet quitting’ differ across generations? Evidence from the UK”, *IZA Discussion Papers*, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Bonn, p. 16240.
- Hamouche, S., Koritos, C. and Papastathopoulos, A. (2023), “Quiet quitting: relationship with other concepts and implications for tourism and hospitality”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 35 No. 12, pp. 4297-4312, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1362](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1362).
- Herlihy, P., Sharar, D. and Robey, M. (2022), “Workplace inclusion scale – another tool for EAPs”, *Journal of Employee Assistance. First Quarter*, Vols 12-15.
- Howe, N. and Strauss, W. (2007), “The next 20 years: how customer and workforce attitudes will evolve”, *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 85 Nos 7-8, pp. 41-52.
- Hunt, V., Prince, S., Dixon-Fyle, S. and Fyle Y.L. (2018), *Delivering through Diversity*, McKinsey and Company.
- Irfan, M., Khalid, R.A., Kaka Khel, S.S.U.H., Maqsoom, A. and Sherani, I.K. (2023), “Impact of work-life balance with the role of organizational support and job burnout on project performance”, *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 154-171, doi: [10.1108/ECAM-04-2021-0316](https://doi.org/10.1108/ECAM-04-2021-0316).
- Iyer, A. (2022), “Understanding advantaged groups’ opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies: the role of perceived threat”, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, Vol. 16 No. 5, p. e12666, doi: [10.1111/spc3.12666](https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12666).
- Jain, P., Duggal, T. and Ansari, A.H. (2019), “Examining the mediating effect of trust and psychological well-being on transformational leadership and organizational commitment”, *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 1517-1532, doi: [10.1108/BIJ-07-2018-0191](https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-07-2018-0191).
- Javed, B., Rawwas, M.Y.A. and Afshan, G. (2019), “Inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior: the role of psychological empowerment”, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 285-300.
- Jelača, S. and Golubović, M. (2024), “The impact of the quiet quitting phenomenon on employees in Serbia”, *The European Journal of Applied Economics*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 60-80.

- Kachhap, V. and Singh, T. (2024), "Quiet quitting: a comprehensive exploration of hidden problems", *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 5, pp. 23-26, doi: [10.1108/DLO-10-2023-0214](https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-10-2023-0214).
- Kalyar, M.N., Shafique, M., Ahmad, B., Shafique, I. and Abrudan, D.B. (2025), "Linking ethical leadership with employees' emotional reactions and deviant behavior: a multilevel moderated mediation study", *European Journal of Training and Development*, Vol. 50 Nos 1-2, doi: [10.1108/EJTD-11-2024-0166](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-11-2024-0166).
- Kidron, A. and Vinarski-Peretz, H. (2024), "Linking psychological and social capital to organizational performance: a moderated mediation of organizational trust and proactive behavior", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 245-254, doi: [10.1016/j.emj.2022.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2022.11.008).
- Kim, K.N., Wang, J. and Williams, P. (2024), "Self-leadership: a value-added strategy for human resource development", *European Journal of Training and Development*, Vol. 48 No. 10, pp. 1-15, doi: [10.1108/EJTD-10-2023-0163](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-10-2023-0163).
- Klotz, A. and Bolino, M. (2022), "When quiet quitting is worse than the real thing", *Harvard Business Review*, No. 9, pp. 1-5.
- Leslie, L.M. (2019), "Diversity initiative effectiveness: a typological theory of unintended consequences", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 538-563.
- Liu, X., Kassa, A. and Tekleab, A.G. (2025), "Are intrateam trust and organizational trust substitutable? Effects on team reflexivity, engagement and performance", *Journal of Business Research*, Elsevier BV, Vol. 189, p. 115164, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.115164](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.115164).
- Liu-Lastres, B., Karatepe, O.M. and Okumus, F. (2024), "Combating quiet quitting: implications for future research and practices for talent management", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 13-24, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-08-2023-1317](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-08-2023-1317).
- Mayer, R.C., Davis, J.H. and Schoorman, F.D. (1995), "An integrative model of organizational trust", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 709-734, doi: [10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335](https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335). Vo
- Men, L.R., Yue, C.A. and Liu, Y. (2020), "'Vision, passion, and care:' the impact of charismatic executive leadership communication on employee trust and support for organizational change", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 46 No. 3, p. 101927, doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101927](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101927).
- Miller, M.J. and Manata, B. (2023), "The effects of workplace inclusion on employee assimilation outcomes", *International Journal of Business Communication*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 777-801, doi: [10.1177/2329488420976805](https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420976805).
- Mohanty, S.K. and P, A. (2021), "Identification of drivers of employee engagement in Indian power companies", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 70 No. 6, pp. 1263-1290, doi: [10.1108/IJPPM-08-2019-0414](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-08-2019-0414).
- Mousa Alriyami, H., Alneyadi, K., Alnuaimi, H. and Kampouris, I. (2024), "Employees trust, perceived justice, on task performance: mediating and moderating role of autonomy and organizational culture", *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, Elsevier BV, Vol. 104, pp. 103647, doi: [10.1016/j.ergon.2024.103647](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ergon.2024.103647).
- Nimmi, P.M., Syed, F., Manjaly, N.B. and Harsha, G. (2024), "Employee's narrative on quiet quitting – a qualitative analysis", *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, Vol. 46 No. 7, pp. 1406-1421, doi: [10.1108/ER-10-2023-0538](https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-10-2023-0538).
- Noon, M. and Ogbonna, E. (2021), "Controlling management to deliver diversity and inclusion: prospects and limits", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 619-638.
- Park, Y.W., Voss, G.B. and Voss, Z.G. (2022), "Advancing customer diversity, equity, and inclusion: measurement, stakeholder influence, and the role of marketing", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 51 No. 1, pp. 281-302, doi: [10.1007/s11747-022-00883-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-022-00883-6).
- Qvortrup, A. and Qvortrup, L. (2018), "Inclusion: dimensions of inclusion in education", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 22 No. 7, pp. 803-817, doi: [10.1080/13603116.2017.1412506](https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1412506).

- Richardson, S.D. (2023), "Reimagining quiet quitting", *Making the Entrepreneurial Transition*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp. 105-117, doi: [10.1007/978-3-031-29211-8_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-29211-8_8).
- Roberson, Q.M. (2006), "Disentangling the meanings of diversity and inclusion in organizations", *Group and Organization Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 212-236, doi: [10.1177/1059601104273064](https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601104273064).
- Roberson, Q.M. (2019), "Diversity in the workplace: a review, synthesis, and future research agenda", *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 69-88, doi: [10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015243](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015243).
- Saks, A.M. (2006), "Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 21 No. 7, pp. 600-619.
- Sanclemente, F.J., Gamero, N., Medina, F.J. and Mendoza-Denton, R. (2024), "A multilevel model of job inclusion of employees with disabilities: the role of organizational socialization tactics, coworkers social support, and an inclusive team context", *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 73 No. 3, pp. 887-909, doi: [10.1111/apps.12390](https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12390).
- Schaufeli, W.B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V. and Bakker, A.B. (2002), "The measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 71-92.
- Serenko, A. (2024), "The human capital management perspective on quiet quitting: recommendations for employees, managers, and national policymakers", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 27-43, doi: [10.1108/JKM-10-2022-0792](https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-10-2022-0792).
- Shore, L.M., Randel, A.E., Chung, B.G., Dean, M.A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K. and Singh, G. (2011), "Inclusion and diversity in work groups: a review and model for future research", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 1262-1289, doi: [10.1177/0149206310385943](https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310385943).
- Singh, R. (2019), "Organisational embeddedness as a moderator on the organisational support, trust and workplace deviance relationships", *Evidence-Based HRM: a Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1-17, doi: [10.1108/EBHRM-03-2019-0025](https://doi.org/10.1108/EBHRM-03-2019-0025).
- Srivastava, A., Pandey, A., Sharma, D. and Ghosh, K. (2024), "Apathy under the surface: theorizing quiet quitting's impact on organizational learning", *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, Vol. 39 No. 2, doi: [10.1108/DLO-03-2024-0080](https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-03-2024-0080).
- Suciu, M.-C., Noja, G.G. and Cristea, M. (2020), "Diversity, social inclusion and human capital development as fundamentals of financial performance and risk mitigation", *Amfiteatru Economic*, Vol. 22 No. 55, p. 742, doi: [10.24818/EA/2020/55/742](https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2020/55/742).
- Sweeney, R.B. (2003), "An examination of creativity in the information systems curriculum model and a proposal for revision", *Information Systems Education Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 13.
- Taufik, N., Rosyadi, A. and Aliyuddin, M. (2024), "Why millennials and gen Z are silently leaving their jobs? Unraveling the 'quiet quitting' trend", *Asian Management and Business Review*, pp. 276-292.
- Taylor, M.K. (2018), "Xennials: a microgeneration in the workplace", *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol. 50 No. 3, pp. 136-147, doi: [10.1108/ICT-08-2017-0065](https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-08-2017-0065).
- Thapa, A. (2022), "How 'quiet quitting' became the next phase of the great resignation", available at: www.cnn.com/2022/09/02/how-quiet-quitting-became-the-next-phase-of-the-great-resignation.html (accessed November 2024).
- Vinkóczy, T., Heimné Rácz, É. and Koltai, J.P. (2024), "Exploratory analysis of zero waste theory to examine consumer perceptions of sustainability: a covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM)", *Cleaner Waste Systems*, Vol. 8, p. 100146, doi: [10.1016/j.clwas.2024.100146](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clwas.2024.100146).
- Xueyun, Z., Al Mamun, A., Masukujjaman, M., Rahman, M.K., Gao, J. and Yang, Q. (2023), "Modelling the significance of organizational conditions on quiet quitting intention among gen Z workforce in an emerging economy", *Scientific Reports*, Vol. 13 No. 1, p. 15438.

- Xueyun, Z., Al Mamun, A., Yang, Q., Naznen, F. and Ali, M.H. (2024), "Modeling quiet quitting intention among academics: mediating effect of work addiction and satisfaction", *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 1-37, doi: [10.1080/15555240.2024.2323636](https://doi.org/10.1080/15555240.2024.2323636).
- Xueyun, Z., Yang, Q. and Al Mamun, A. (2024), "Predicting the quiet quitting intention among the Generation z workforce in hotel industry", *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 1-30.
- Zaccone, M.C. and Pedrini, M. (2024), "Cultivating inclusive leadership: a catalyst for enhanced organizational citizenship", *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, doi: [10.1108/CG-01-2024-0065](https://doi.org/10.1108/CG-01-2024-0065).
- Zenger, J. and Folkman, J. (2022), "Quiet quitting is about bad bosses, not bad employees", *Harvard Business Review*, available at: <https://hbr.org/2022/08/quiet-quitting-is-about-bad-bosses-not-bad-employees> accessed (29 October 2024).

Corresponding author

Magdalena Stefańska can be contacted at: magdalena.stefanska@ue.poznan.pl