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Determinants of Quiet Quitting among Generation Z Employees: The Mediating Effect of Employee Well-Being

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Abstract

In the logistics industry's transformation, human resource challenges have emerged as quiet quitting, particularly among Generation Z workers. This study aims to analyze the influence of quiet firing, perceived organizational support, and psychological capital on quiet quitting levels, with employee well-being as a mediating variable. This study employs a quantitative approach, using a sample of 300 permanent Generation Z employees in port service companies selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using covariance-based SEM with LISREL 8.80. The results show that quiet firing has a significant positive effect on quiet quitting behavior through the mechanism of eroding employees' psychological resources. Conversely, perceived organizational support and psychological capital are proven to have a positive influence on enhancing employee well-being. A significant finding in this study indicates that psychological capital does not have a direct effect on suppressing quiet quitting, but rather through partial mediation by employee well-being. Furthermore, psychological capital is proven to be the strongest personal factor capable of mitigating quiet quitting tendencies. These findings imply that port management needs to integrate managerial transparency with psychological capacity building to achieve performance sustainability within the global logistics chain.

Keywords

Employee Well-Being, Perceived Organizational Support, Psychological Capital, Quiet Firing, Quiet Quitting.

1. Introduction

The port service industry is a strategic node in the global supply chain that demands continuous operational efficiency, high accuracy, and strict safety standards (a safety-critical domain). As an archipelagic country, Indonesia is highly dependent on port performance as the backbone of national logistics distribution. However, amid the transformation toward the fully digital Port 4.0 era, the real challenge faced by organizations lies not only in technological integration but also in the readiness and engagement of the human resources operating it (Saputra & Saputra, 2020; Lestari et al., 2021; Aysila & Kusmaryani, 2025).

In the post-pandemic era, employee disengagement, often referred to as quiet quitting, has emerged as a significant organizational challenge. Data indicate that 62% of employees in Indonesia fall into this category, reflecting a substantial proportion of the workforce exhibiting low engagement. This issue is closely linked to employee well-being, where only a minority are classified as thriving, while the majority are struggling, accompanied by notable levels of stress and negative emotions. The phenomenon is particularly relevant among Generation Z, who tend to prioritize well-being more than previous generations. In high-pressure sectors such as port services characterized by safety-critical operations and continuous shift systems low well-being can intensify disengagement and even lead to practices such as quiet firing by management (Anand et al., 2023). Consequently, quiet quitting in such environments not only affects employee performance but also poses risks to operational efficiency and safety (Yusuf et al., 2023).

This tendency toward quiet quitting becomes highly relevant when associated with the presence of Generation Z, which is now beginning to dominate the new workforce. Compared to previous generations, Generation Z has unique characteristics that place greater emphasis on work-life balance, mental health, and the need for a supportive work environment (Adedeji et al., 2023). In port environments that are often rigid, hierarchical, and physically demanding, a disconnect arises between Generation Z's expectations and the reality of the job, ultimately triggering job dissatisfaction that manifests as quiet quitting.

In addition to heavy job demands, a managerial phenomenon known as quiet firing has also emerged. Quiet firing is a subtle and passive-aggressive practice in which management implicitly creates an unfavorable work environment, such as limiting access to career development or engaging in social exclusion, with the aim of encouraging employees to resign (Anand et al., 2024). Preliminary data from stress diagnosis surveys at PT Adhi Guna Putera and PT Titan indicate signs of organizational issues related to role ambiguity and limited career development, which point toward quiet firing practices. This directly undermines employee well-being and becomes a catalyst for employees to engage in quiet quitting as a form of psychological self-protection strategy (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

To mitigate these negative impacts, organizations require protective factors from both external and internal perspectives. Externally, perceived organizational support serves as a vital instrument to reassure employees that their contributions are valued and their well-being is considered (Kim et al., 2022). Internally, employees need psychological capital, which includes hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, to endure operational pressures (Bakker & Mostert, 2024). While prior research has explored the concept of quiet quitting, limited attention has been given to simultaneously examining the roles of quiet firing, perceived organizational support, and psychological capital in influencing quiet quitting through the mediating role of employee well-being, particularly within high-risk contexts such as Indonesia's port industry. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze the effects of quiet firing, perceived organizational support, and psychological capital on quiet quitting, with employee well-being serving as a mediating variable among

Generation Z employees in the port sector. The findings are expected to offer practical managerial insights to support sustainable human resource performance, especially in navigating the challenges of digital transformation.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. The Effect of Employee Well-Being on Quiet Quitting

The idea of “quiet quitting,” which refers to a situation in which workers continue to carry out their official duties while purposefully avoiding extra-role activities or discretionary efforts, has become popular in the workplace (Pevac, 2023). Although it does not involve actual resignation, this behavior can negatively affect both organizational performance and employee development. Within this context, Employee well-being has become a critical factor, as it encompasses not only job satisfaction but also broader dimensions such as emotional health, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose (Gabelaia & Bagociunaite, 2023; Prakasa et al., 2025). Higher employee well-being is linked to fewer inclinations toward silent resignation, according to earlier studies, indicating that psychological and emotional factors are important in determining employee involvement (Xueyun et al., 2023).

On the other hand, adverse working conditions, like job instability, few prospects for career progression, and insufficient organizational support, can worsen employee well-being and cause burnout, which in turn can lead to silent resignation. Employee well-being considerably lowers silent quitting, according to empirical research by Priya et al. (2025), underscoring the significance of well-being programs in reducing workplace withdrawal. This supports the notion that companies may reduce silent resignation by boosting job satisfaction tactics, offering mental health services, and fortifying employee support networks. Lu et al. (2023) reinforce this viewpoint by highlighting how favorable work environments, such as job stability, possibilities for professional growth, and organizational support, enhance well-being, which in turn reduces employees’ desire to disengage from their work.

H1: Employee well-being has a significant effect on quiet quitting.

2.2. The Effect on Quiet Quitting

The Conservation of Resources (COR) hypothesis, which holds that people work to acquire, hold onto, and safeguard important resources like energy, time, and social support, serves as the theoretical basis for this investigation. According to this theory, employees may utilize silent resignation as a coping mechanism to stop additional resource depletion brought on by job stressors (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Employees cut their involvement to the bare minimum instead of completely quitting their positions, which may result in worse performance and job satisfaction, but does not always cause turnover right away (Kaygusuz et al., 2016). This behavior reflects an adaptive mechanism to maintain psychological balance in demanding work environments.

From an organizational perspective, managerial practices such as quiet firing further exacerbate this phenomenon. Quiet firing refers to passive-aggressive actions by management that create unfavorable working conditions, indirectly encouraging employees to resign (Oquendo et al., 2024). In response, employees often engage in quiet quitting by limiting their efforts strictly to formal job requirements without additional initiative (Karrani et al., 2024). Empirical evidence by Othman et al. (2025) confirms that quiet firing significantly influences quiet quitting behavior. On the other hand, employees’ perceptions that the company appreciates their contributions and is concerned about their welfare are reflected in perceived organizational support, which is critical in reducing such outcomes (Winarno et al., 2022; Gün et al., 2025). Workplace stresses, including workload

pressure and ambiguous expectations, might be mitigated by perceived organizational support (Singh et al., 2025). Furthermore, as larger levels of positive psychological resources are linked to lower tendencies toward disengagement, it has been demonstrated that psychological capital directly reduces quiet quitting (Mohammadi et al., 2024).

H2: Quiet firing has a significant effect on quiet quitting.

H3: Perceived organizational support has a significant effect on quiet quitting.

H4: Psychological capital has a significant effect on quiet quitting.

2.3. The Effect on Employee Well-Being

Quiet quitting reflects a form of reduced employee engagement in which individuals limit their involvement to minimum job requirements without fully disengaging from the organization (Atiq et al., 2025). This phenomenon is often associated with unfavorable workplace conditions and managerial practices such as quiet firing, where employees experience implicit pressure through poor treatment or lack of support. Such conditions contribute to lower happiness at work and increased stress or burnout, ultimately weakening employee well-being (Karadas & Çevik, 2025). Empirical evidence further suggests that poor work conditions, job insecurity, limited career development opportunities, and weak organizational support significantly reduce employee well-being, which in turn increases quiet quitting intentions (Xueyun et al., 2023).

Positive organizational and individual resources, on the other hand, are essential for improving worker well-being and reducing unfavorable consequences. The degree to which workers feel that their company appreciates their contributions and is concerned about their welfare is reflected in perceived organizational support. Previous research repeatedly demonstrates that job satisfaction, positive mood, improved health, and reduced levels of burnout and emotional tiredness are all favorably correlated with perceived organizational support (Goleman, 2015; Eisenberger et al., 2020). Furthermore, it has been discovered that perceived organizational support enhances work-family balance, lowers stress levels, and fosters personal development in a variety of fields (Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023). According to Avey et al. (2011), psychological capital, which includes hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, is negatively correlated with stress, anxiety, cynicism, and intentions to leave an organization, but positively correlated with psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

H5: Quiet firing has a significant effect on employee well-being.

H6: Perceived organizational support has a significant effect on employee well-being.

H7: Psychological capital has a significant effect on employee well-being.

2.4. Employee Well-Being as Mediating Variable

Employee well-being plays a crucial role as an underlying mechanism that links organizational and individual factors to quiet quitting. Drawing on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, employees tend to protect their psychological and emotional resources when faced with workplace stressors, and one of the behavioral outcomes of resource depletion is quiet quitting (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Prior studies have consistently shown that higher levels of well-being are associated with lower tendencies toward disengagement, as employees with better emotional health, life satisfaction, and sense of purpose are more likely to remain actively involved in their work (Gabelaia & Bagociunaite, 2023; Xueyun et al., 2023). Conversely, unfavorable work conditions such as job insecurity, limited development opportunities, and lack of organizational support reduce well-being and increase the likelihood of quiet

quitting (Lu et al., 2023). These findings suggest that employee well-being serves as an important pathway through which workplace conditions influence employee behavior.

Furthermore, both organizational and individual resources are strongly associated with employee well-being, reinforcing their mediating role. Quiet firing, characterized by unfavorable managerial practices, has been shown to reduce employee well-being by increasing stress and burnout, which may subsequently lead to quiet quitting (Karadas & Çevik, 2025). In contrast, perceived organizational support enhances well-being by fostering positive emotions, reducing stress, and promoting work–life balance (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023). Meanwhile, psychological capital strengthens individuals’ resilience and optimism, contributing to better well-being and lower disengagement (Avey et al., 2011).

H8: Employee well-being mediates the effect of quiet firing on quiet quitting.

H9: Employee well-being mediates the effect of perceived organizational support on quiet quitting.

H10: Employee well-being mediates the effect of psychological capital on quiet quitting.

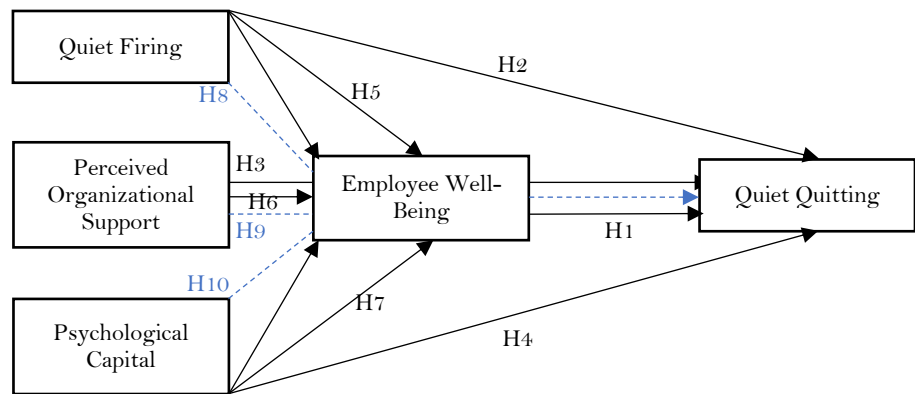


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework in which employee well-being serves as the central mechanism linking quiet firing, perceived organizational support, and psychological capital to quiet quitting. These antecedent factors influence employee well-being, where unfavorable treatment, low organizational support, and weak psychological resources reduce overall well-being. In turn, lower employee well-being increases the likelihood of quiet quitting behavior. The model also indicates that quiet firing and psychological capital may directly affect quiet quitting, suggesting both direct and indirect pathways. The framework highlights that quiet quitting is shaped not only by external organizational conditions but also by internal psychological processes mediated through employee well-being.

3. Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationships between quiet firing, perceived organizational support, psychological capital, employee well-being, and quiet quitting within a structured causal framework. A cross-sectional approach was employed, where data were collected at a single point in time to test the proposed structural model. The population consists of Generation Z employees working as permanent staff in port service companies, specifically PT Adhi Guna Putera and PT Titan. A total of 300 respondents were selected using

purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria limited to employees classified as Generation Z and holding permanent employment status. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, with all constructs measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This methodological approach allows for the empirical testing of both direct and indirect relationships among variables, particularly the mediating role of employee well-being in explaining the influence of organizational and psychological factors on quiet quitting behavior. Furthermore, the use of a relatively large sample size enhances the statistical power of the analysis and improves the generalizability of the findings within similar high-pressure service industry contexts.

The study involves five key variables: quiet firing, perceived organizational support, and psychological capital as exogenous variables, employee well-being as a mediating variable, and quiet quitting as the endogenous variable. Each construct was operationalized using multiple indicators adapted from established literature to ensure content validity. The measurement model was evaluated through factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All constructs met the recommended thresholds, indicating satisfactory convergent validity and internal consistency. Data analysis was conducted using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) with LISREL 8.80. This technique was selected due to its ability to simultaneously assess complex relationships, including both direct and indirect (mediating) effects among latent variables. Hypothesis testing was based on path coefficients and t-statistics, with a critical value of 1.96 at a 5% significance level (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, mediation analysis was performed to examine the role of employee well-being in linking exogenous variables to quiet quitting, where mediation effects were classified as full or partial depending on the significance of direct and indirect relationships.

4. Results

The measurement model was initially assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) based on the findings of data analysis utilizing the Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) approach with LISREL 8.80, showing that all indicators satisfied the necessary validity criteria. Additionally, reliability testing with Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) verified that all constructs showed acceptable internal consistency. The structural model was evaluated to look at the suggested hypotheses once the measurement model's suitability was determined. The significance of the correlations between the variables is shown by the path coefficients and associated t-values.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Result

Variable	Construct	Loading Factor
Quiet Quitting (QQ)	QQ1	0.76
	QQ2	0.76
	QQ3	0.82
	QQ4	0.79
	QQ5	0.76
	QQ6	0.84
	QQ7	0.81
	QQ8	0.75
	QQ9	0.80
	QQ10	0.80
Employee Well-Being (EWB)	EWB1	0.86
	EWB2	0.92
	EWB3	0.83
	EWB4	0.83

Variable	Construct	Loading Factor	
	EWB5	0.86	
	EWB6	0.83	
	EWB7	0.83	
	EWB8	0.80	
	EWB9	0.78	
	EWB10	0.84	
	EWB11	0.84	
	EWB12	0.85	
	EWB13	0.87	
	EWB14	0.83	
	EWB15	0.80	
	EWB16	0.82	
	EWB17	0.85	
	Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	POS1	0.81
		POS2	0.82
		POS3	0.82
		POS4	0.79
POS5		0.75	
POS6		0.78	
POS7		0.61	
POS8		0.76	
Quiet Firing (QF)	QF1	0.85	
	QF2	0.84	
	QF3	0.88	
	QF4	0.86	
	QF5	0.88	
	QF6	0.87	
	QF7	0.85	
	QF8	0.83	
	QF9	0.88	
	QF10	0.82	
	QF11	0.84	
	QF12	0.75	
	QF13	0.84	
	QF14	0.87	
Psychological Capital (PC)	PC1	0.90	
	PC2	0.90	
	PC3	0.89	
	PC4	0.84	
	PC5	0.84	
	PC6	0.84	
	PC7	0.83	
	PC8	0.88	
	PC9	0.82	
	PC10	0.82	
	PC11	0.89	
	PC12	0.84	

The confirmatory factor analysis results presented in Table 1 indicate that the quiet quitting construct has factor loadings ranging from 0.75 to 0.84, showing that all indicators consistently represent the construct well, with relatively stable contributions across items. The employee well-being construct shows very strong factor loadings between 0.78 and 0.92, where the highest value is found in the second indicator at 0.92, while all other indicators also demonstrate high and stable loadings, indicating strong measurement quality. The quiet firing construct also demonstrates strong indicator performance, with loadings ranging from 0.75 to 0.88,

where several indicators, such as the third and fifth items, reach the highest value of 0.88, reflecting good representation of the construct.

The psychological capital construct shows very strong factor loadings ranging from 0.82 to 0.90, indicating that all indicators strongly reflect the underlying construct, with the first and second indicators showing the highest values at 0.90. Meanwhile, the perceived organizational support construct has factor loadings ranging from 0.61 to 0.82, where most indicators fall within an acceptable range between 0.75 and 0.82. However, one indicator shows a relatively lower loading at 0.61 compared to the others, although it still meets the minimum acceptable threshold, suggesting that the construct is generally well-measured but with one weaker indicator.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and AVE

Variable	Construct Reliability	AVE
Quiet Quitting	0.943	0.623
Employee Well-Being	0.976	0.704
Quiet Firing	0.973	0.722
Perceived Organizational Support	0.904	0.546
Psychological Capital	0.966	0.702

Table 2's construct reliability analysis results show that every variable has a high degree of internal consistency. All constructions have Composite Reliability (CR) ratings between 0.904 and 0.976, which is higher than the suggested cutoff of 0.70. In particular, the dependability values for employee well-being and quiet firing are the highest (0.976 and 0.973), followed by psychological capital (0.966) and quiet resigning (0.943). Despite having the lowest CR score (0.904), perceived organizational support is still considerably within the acceptable range. These results attest to the excellent reliability and consistent measurement of each construct's corresponding latent variables.

Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results show that every concept satisfies the convergent validity requirements. The AVE values are all higher than the 0.50 minimum requirement, ranging from 0.546 to 0.722. Employee well-being (0.704), psychological capital (0.702), and quiet firing (0.722) have the greatest AVE values, showing excellent explanatory power of respective measures. With an AVE of 0.623, quiet quitting likewise demonstrates sufficient convergent validity. Perceived organizational support nevertheless meets the acceptable requirement despite having the lowest AVE value (0.546). These findings verify that every construct has adequate convergent validity and is suitable for additional structural examination.

Based on Table 3, the results of hypothesis testing indicate that most of the proposed relationships are statistically significant when compared to the critical t-value of 1.96. Employee well-being has a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting ($\beta = -0.35$; $t = -2.28$), suggesting that higher levels of well-being reduce employees' tendency to engage in quiet quitting. Quiet firing shows a positive and significant effect on quiet quitting ($\beta = 0.24$; $t = 2.84$), indicating that unfavorable managerial practices increase quiet quitting behavior. Similarly, psychological capital has a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting ($\beta = -0.24$; $t = -2.51$), meaning that stronger psychological resources help mitigate quiet quitting. However, perceived organizational support does not significantly affect quiet quitting ($\beta = 0.06$; $t = 0.83$), as the t-statistic is below the threshold of 1.96.

Table 3. Direct Effect Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	t-statistic	Information
H1	Employee Well-Being → Quiet Quitting	-0.35	-2.28	Significant
H2	Quiet Firing → Quiet Quitting	0.24	2.84	Significant
H3	Perceived Organizational Support → Quiet Quitting	0.06	0.83	Insignificant
H4	Psychological Capital → Quiet Quitting	-0.24	-2.51	Significant
H5	Quiet Firing → Employee Well-Being	-0.35	-6.73	Significant
H6	Perceived Organizational Support → Employee Well-Being	0.28	5.33	Significant
H7	Psychological Capital → Employee Well-Being	0.46	8.87	Significant

Furthermore, all relationships involving employee well-being as a dependent variable are found to be significant. Quiet firing negatively affects employee well-being ($\beta = -0.35$; $t = -6.73$), indicating that poor managerial treatment reduces employee well-being. In contrast, perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.28$; $t = 5.33$) and psychological capital ($\beta = 0.46$; $t = 8.87$) have positive and significant effects on employee well-being, as their t-values exceed 1.96. These findings confirm that six out of the seven hypotheses are supported, with only the direct effect of perceived organizational support on quiet quitting being statistically insignificant.

Table 4. Mediation Effect Analysis Results

Mediation Path	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect (β)	Type of Mediation
Quiet Firing → Employee Well-Being → Quiet Quitting	0.24	0.12	Partial
Perceived Organizational Support → Employee Well-Being → Quiet Quitting	0.06	-0.10	Full
Psychological Capital → Employee Well-Being → Quiet Quitting	-0.24	-0.16	Partial

The results of the mediation study in Table 4 show that the associations between the independent factors and silent quitting are significantly mediated by employee well-being. Both the direct effect ($\beta = 0.24$) and indirect effect ($\beta = 0.12$) are evident, indicating that quiet firing affects quiet quitting both directly and through its impact on employee well-being. This suggests that the effect of quiet firing on quiet leaving is somewhat mediated by employee well-being. In a similar vein, psychological capital also shows partial mediation (direct effect $\beta = -0.24$; indirect effect $\beta = -0.16$), suggesting that by improving employee well-being, psychological capital lowers quiet quitting both directly and indirectly. On the other hand, since the direct effect ($\beta = 0.06$) is negligible and the indirect effect ($\beta = -0.10$) is present, the relationship between perceived organizational support and quiet quitting is fully mediated by employee well-being, suggesting that perceived organizational support only affects quiet quitting by enhancing employee well-being.

Table 5. R Square Result

Variable	Result
Employee Well-Being	0.88
Quiet Quitting	0.58

According to Table 5, the R-square analysis indicates that the model demonstrates strong explanatory power for the endogenous variables. Specifically, employee well-being has an R^2 value of 0.88, meaning that 88% of the variance in employee well-being is explained by quiet firing, perceived organizational support, and psychological capital. Meanwhile, quiet quitting shows an R^2 value of 0.58, indicating that 58% of the variation in quiet quitting behavior is explained by the variables included in the model. These results suggest that the model has substantial predictive capability, particularly for employee well-being, and a moderate to strong explanatory power for quiet quitting.

5. Discussion

The results of the study indicate that quiet firing has a significant positive effect on quiet quitting ($\beta = 0.24$; $t > 1.96$) and a significant negative effect on employee well-being ($\beta = -0.35$; $t < -1.96$). These findings confirm that managerial practices that subtly marginalize employees become a major stressor in the port service industry. This is consistent with the conservation of resources theory, which states that individuals experiencing threats of resource loss, in this case, recognition and career support due to quiet firing, will engage in self-protective mechanisms (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In port environments characterized by high physical demands, quiet firing causes employees to feel undervalued, which in turn triggers quiet quitting behavior as a strategy to conserve their psychological energy (Anand et al., 2024). This study reinforces the findings of Nimmi et al. (2024), which show that the perception of quiet firing directly encourages employees to withdraw from extra responsibilities because they feel that the organization is no longer investing in their future.

One of the most interesting findings in this study is the non-significant direct effect of perceived organizational support on quiet quitting ($\beta = 0.06$; $t = 0.83$). This indicates the presence of full mediation by the employee well-being variable. In other words, organizational support (such as health benefits or work facilities) will not directly reduce quiet quitting behavior if such support does not first improve employees' psychological well-being. The reciprocal relationship between workers and businesses in the port sector is very emotional, according to social exchange theory. In order for employees to feel obligated to perform above and beyond conventional standards, the organization's support must address emotional and psychological factors (Kim et al., 2022). Perceived organizational support is ineffective in reducing silent quitting behavior if it is seen as merely an administrative formality that does not improve employees' pleasure or feeling of purpose in their employment. This conclusion is corroborated by Kurtessis et al. (2017), who claim that how organizational support is converted into mental stability for employees in safety-critical industries determines how effective it is.

This study finds that psychological capital has the strongest positive effect on employee well-being ($\beta = 0.46$; $t = 8.87$) compared to other variables. The elements of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism serve as crucial personal resources for Generation Z employees in the port sector. Within the framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, psychological capital functions as a personal resource that helps employees cope with extreme job demands (Bakker & Mostert, 2024). Employees with high psychological capital tend to perceive operational challenges at the port not as burdens, but as opportunities for growth, thereby maintaining their well-being even under demanding working conditions. This is

consistent with the study by Plessis and Altintas (2024), which emphasizes that individuals' internal psychological strength serves as the "last line of defense" in preventing mental exhaustion (burnout) and passive disengagement behavior.

The mediation test results indicate that employee well-being acts as a vital mediator. A decline in employee well-being becomes the primary pathway through which quiet firing increases quiet quitting. Conversely, an improvement in employee well-being serves as a bridge through which perceived organizational support and psychological capital are able to reduce the level of quiet quitting in the port industry. These findings confirm that for Generation Z, well-being is no longer merely a complement but a primary determinant in their decision to remain actively engaged. Employee well-being, which includes dimensions such as purpose in life and workplace well-being, has been proven to be a strong psychological regulatory mechanism in counteracting the negative effects of a toxic work environment (Xueyun et al., 2023). The nature of port operations, which run 24/7, requires stable mental readiness. If port management allows quiet firing practices to persist or provides only technical support without considering employee well-being, the risk of workplace accidents due to reduced employee focus (as a result of quiet quitting) will increase. Therefore, companies such as PT Adhi Guna Putera and PT Titan need to prioritize the development of employees' psychological capacity as a competitive strategy in the Port 4.0 era.

6. Conclusion

Quiet firing has been proven to significantly increase quiet quitting behavior. Perceived organizational support cannot directly reduce quiet quitting. Instead, it must first enhance employee well-being (full mediation). Psychological capital is the strongest internal factor that protects employees from the negative effects of quiet firing and reduces the tendency toward quiet quitting. To address the challenges identified in this study, organizations should prioritize managerial transparency by avoiding quiet firing practices and fostering open, two-way communication between management and employees. In addition, companies are encouraged to implement resilience development programs through psychological capital training, particularly focusing on optimism and resilience, to help Generation Z employees better cope with the high operational pressures characteristic of the port service industry. Furthermore, employee well-being should not be viewed merely as an additional initiative, but rather as a strategic investment that plays a critical role in maintaining workplace safety and ensuring sustainable performance, especially in safety-critical sectors.

When evaluating the results, it is important to take into account the many limitations of this study. When it comes to the dynamic role of employee well-being as a mediator between organizational conditions and silent quitting, the use of a cross-sectional methodology limits the capacity to establish causal links. Furthermore, the sample is restricted to Generation Z workers from two port service companies, which may limit the results' applicability to other sectors or demographic groups, particularly in light of the discovery that employee well-being fully influences quiet quitting rather than perceived organizational support. Therefore, future research is recommended to apply longitudinal or time-lagged designs to better capture causal mechanisms, expand the sample across different sectors and generational groups to test the robustness of the mediation findings, and incorporate multi-source data to enhance measurement validity. Further studies could explore other contextual variables, such as leadership style or organizational culture, to deepen the understanding of factors influencing quiet quitting behavior.

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Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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