

Careerist Orientation and Quiet Quitting

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Abstract

This study examines the multidimensional factors influencing educators' professional orientation, motivation, and engagement in the workplace. It explores the dynamics of autonomy, competency, belonging, self-determined orientation, careerist ambitions, and quiet quitting among educators, emphasizing structural and demographic nuances. Findings reveal that educators experience average levels of autonomy, competency, and belonging but demonstrate a low self-determined orientation, suggesting external pressures that undermine intrinsic motivation, increasing susceptibility to job dissatisfaction and burnout. Quiet quitting is moderately prevalent, driven by structural challenges such as insufficient support and excessive workloads, which compromise educators' engagement and the quality of education delivered. Career ambitions are shaped by age, gender roles, and leadership positions, with younger educators showing a stronger desire for advancement. Female educators often navigate distinct professional trajectories shaped by gender dynamics. Leadership roles foster greater careerist orientation compared to entry-level positions. Living conditions emerge as a significant factor influencing career perspectives; educators in disadvantaged areas prioritize job security over career progression. A notable negative correlation is identified between careerist orientation and quiet quitting, indicating that teachers focused on career advancement are less likely to disengage, displaying higher investment in their roles and institutional success. Recommendations include providing tailored professional development programs, fostering inclusive and supportive workplace environments, implementing mentorship initiatives, and regular feedback mechanisms. These strategies aim to align educators' aspirations with their daily responsibilities, enhance engagement, reduce disengagement, and promote equitable career opportunities. Cultivating a culture of openness and collaboration is suggested as a pathway to boosting educators' motivation and satisfaction while addressing structural issues within educational institutions. The study underscores the importance of integrating diverse perspectives and prioritizing both professional growth and well-being to achieve a committed and dynamic workforce that contributes to the success of educational organization.

Keywords

Careerist Orientation; Quiet Quitting; Educator Burnout; Educational Leadership.

1. Introduction

Our world faces complex disruptions, unique opportunities, and uncertain futures. These sociological, ecological, and technological trends are transforming education systems, necessitating adaptation. Yet, education holds the most transformational potential to shape just and sustainable futures (UNESCO, 2024). The increasing complexities in the field of education have led to various challenges related to job satisfaction, burnout, and attrition, with one notable phenomenon being the "quiet quitting" of educators. The term "quiet quitting" is

characterized by employees putting in the bare minimum effort to maintain their jobs, without dedicating additional time or energy to their roles (Smith et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2021).

In contrast to turnover intention, which refers to mental or physical exhaustion from a job, quiet-quitting intention (QQ) is a novel concept that involves performing only the minimal amount of work necessary to meet obligations and never going beyond that (Collin's Dictionary, 2022). Increasingly, individuals are opting to devote more time and effort to their personal lives rather than striving to become better versions of themselves at work (Li, 2018; Mohammed et al., 2020). This subtle form of disengagement sees educators continuing their roles while emotionally distancing themselves from the teaching-learning process, unlike traditional resignations where educators openly express their intention to leave (Harris, 2020; Smith et al., 2022).

The phenomenon of "quiet quitting," also known as "lying flat," has emerged as a significant social issue, particularly among young people. This term describes a disengagement from the traditional hustle culture, where individuals prioritize leisure and personal time over career advancement and financial gain. According to Xue Fang (2024), the root causes of "quiet quitting" are multifaceted, involving the consolidation of social classes due to modernization, economic and social development, media influence, and technological progress. The increasing employment pressure and peer group dynamics add to the high-pressure life, exacerbated by contradictions within the school education system and a protective family education mechanism.

The shift in social forms and cultural values, coupled with the negative effects of consumerism, contribute to the rise of "quiet quitting." As Yang Wei (2021) points out, this phenomenon reflects young people's anxiety about realizing personal value in a fiercely competitive, zero-sum game environment. The increasing pressure on young people to match or exceed the achievements of their predecessors with significantly higher efforts and financial resources, highlights a systemic issue where the traditional modes of operation in enterprises and the market economy lag behind the rapid technological advancements and changing societal expectations.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study will determine the level of careerist orientation of the teachers in selected universities in Hunan China as assessed by the teachers with the end view of develop strategies and recommendations for educational leaders and policymakers to enhance teachers' engagement and well-being in this specific context.

Specifically, the following problems will be answered:

1. What is the profile of the teacher respondents in terms of:

1.1 Age;

1.2 Sex;

1.3 Titles and positions of teachers;

1.4 Years of Teaching Experience;

1.5 Current living conditions?

2. What is the assessment of the teacher respondents on the level of careerist orientation of the teachers in selected universities in terms of:

2.1 Autonomy

2.2 Competency

2.3 Sense of belonging

2.4 Commitment

3. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the teacher respondents on the level of careerist orientation of the teachers in selected universities when their profile is taken as test factor?

What is the assessment of the teacher respondents on the level of quiet quitting of the teachers in selected universities in terms of:

4.1 Personal burnout

4.2 Work-related burnout

4.3 Client-related burnout

Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the teacher respondents on the level of quiet quitting when grouped according to their profile variables?

6. Is there a significant relationship between the level of careerist orientation of the teachers and their quiet quitting tendency in selected universities?

7. Based on the results of the study, what leadership strategies and policies are proposed to improve teachers' sense of identity, job accomplishment, and organizational affiliation?

3. Hypothesis

This study will test the following hypothesis at 5%:

H1: There is no significant difference in the assessment of the teacher respondents on the level of careerist orientation of the teachers in selected universities when their profile is taken as test factor.

H2: There is no significant difference in the assessment of the teacher respondents on the level of quiet quitting when grouped according to their profile variables.

H3: There is no significant relationship between the level of careerist orientation and quiet quitting tendency of the teachers in selected universities.

4. Scope and Delimitation

This study focused on assessing the careerist orientation and quiet quitting levels among teachers in selected universities in Hunan Province. Specifically, the research evaluated the teachers' perceptions in the following areas: Careerist Orientation: Autonomy, Competency, Sense of Belonging, Commitment; While the Quiet Quitting Levels are: Personal Burnout, Work-related Burnout, Client-related Burnout. Subsequently, the researcher will explore the correlation between the major variables mentioned above.

The target set of participants for this study includes 339 teachers working in selected universities in Hunan Province. Due to time constraints and the specific research purpose, this study only investigated teachers from three specifically selected colleges and universities. These institutions were chosen to ensure feasibility and focus within the scope of the study.

This limitation ensures that the research remains focused and manageable within the given time frame. Other variables that could provide detailed information, such as specific demographic factors or external influences, are not considered in this study to maintain a clear focus on the primary research questions.

The use of online questionnaires may result in sampling bias, as only individuals with internet access will be able to participate. This could make the sample less representative of the entire target population.

Participation in online questionnaires is voluntary, which may lead to self-selection bias. Those who choose to participate might have a stronger interest in the topic or more pronounced opinions, which could skew the results.

Online questionnaires rely on self-reported data, which may introduce subjective and recall bias. Unlike face-to-face surveys, online investigators cannot directly control the survey process, making it difficult to ensure respondents fully understand the questions.

While the study aims to address variations in teachers' intent to quietly retire, it acknowledges that some aspects remain unexplored. Factors such as help-seeking behavior, school environment, role stability, and emotional control may contribute to these variations. Future research should consider these variables in light of the findings from this study.

5. Results Analysis and Discussion

Profile Of The Teacher Respondents:

1. **Table 1.** Frequencies and Percentage of Demographic Factors

Age	Counts	% of Total
after 1995	200	59 %
before 1995	139	41 %
Sex	Counts	% of Total
Female	168	50 %
Male	171	50 %
Position	Counts	% of Total
Intermediate Teacher	83	24 %
Junior Teacher	204	60 %
Senior Teacher	52	15 %
Teaching Experience	Counts	% of Total
5-10 years	87	26 %
less than 5 years	200	59 %
more than 10 years	52	15 %
Living Conditions	Counts	% of Total
30,000-80,000RMB	156	46 %
80,000-120,000RMB	131	39 %
more than 120,000RMB	52	15 %

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentages of demographic information for a sample of teachers, including age, sex, position, teaching experience, and living conditions. The analysis of the descriptive statistics indicates that 59% of them were born after 1995, while 41% were born before 1995. This may suggest that most of the teachers who participated in the present study are born after 1995.

Based on their assigned, 50% of respondents are male and 50% are female. This implies that the teachers' sexes are somehow evenly distributed.

Concerning their position, 4% possess 24% and hold a position as intermediate teachers, 60% are junior teachers, and 15% are senior teachers. This suggests that the majority of teachers assume a position as junior teachers.

In terms of their teaching experience, 26% have between 5 to 10 years, 59% have less than 5 years, and 15% have more than 10 years. The analysis of their responses revealed that the vast majority of the teachers have less than 5 years of teaching experience.

Lastly, based on their living conditions, 46% have between 30,000 to 80,000 RMB, 39% between 80,000 to 120,000 RMB, and 15% for more than 120,000 RMB. This may imply that most of the teachers who participated in the study have 30,000 to 80,000 RMB as their living conditions.

6. Conclusion

1. Educators experience average levels of autonomy, competency, and belonging, yet exhibit low self-determined orientation, indicating external pressures that hinder intrinsic motivation and may lead to job dissatisfaction and burnout.

2. Quiet quitting among teachers is moderately prevalent, highlighting structural issues such as inadequate support and excessive workloads that lead to teacher disengagement, compromising the quality of education.

3. living conditions. Younger teachers seek advancement more than older ones, while gender roles and leadership positions influence career ambitions.

4. Gender differences shape careerist ambitions, with female educators often facing distinct professional trajectories. Leadership roles increase careerist orientation, contrasting with entry-level positions.

5. Living conditions impact career advancement perspectives; educators in disadvantaged areas prioritize job security over progression. Policies must address diverse backgrounds to ensure equitable professional growth.

6. A strong negative significant correlation exists between careerist orientation and quiet quitting. Teachers focused on career advancement are less likely to disengage, showing greater investment in their roles and organizational success.

7. Recommendation

1. The school administrator may offer workshops, mentoring programs, and advanced certification courses can serve to elevate teachers' skills, enhancing their career prospects while simultaneously benefiting the educational environment.

2. The school administrator may initiate creating a supportive and collaborative workplace culture can significantly bolster the careerist orientation. This involves encouraging open communication, recognizing achievements, and providing platforms for teachers to share best practices. Such initiatives may help cultivate a sense of community and belonging, motivating educators to pursue their professional ambitions with vigor.

3. Educational institutions adopt proactive measures aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. It may include implementing regular check-ins between administration and faculty, thereby promoting open dialogue about workplace challenges and personal well-being.

4.The school administrator may provide professional development opportunities y be tailored to rejuvenate teachers' passion for their profession, emphasizing collaboration and innovation in teaching practices.

5.Educational institutions may encompass tailor-made professional development programs that address the varied motivations across these demographic groups, fostering an inclusive environment where all educators can thrive in their careers.

6.Organizations may prioritize fostering an environment that aligns teachers' aspirations with their day-to-day responsibilities. Recommendations include implementing mentorship programs that facilitate career development while encouraging active participation and engagement in work tasks.

7.The school administrator may cultivate a culture that values open communication, allowing employees to express concerns regarding their roles and career growth.

8.Regular feedback mechanisms may help teachers may feel recognized and motivated, thus mitigating feelings of disillusionment that contribute to quiet quitting.

9.By harmonizing careerist orientation with active engagement, organizations may enhance employee satisfaction and performance, thereby creating a more dynamic and committed workforce.

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