

Mapping Global Research Trends and Directions on the Quiet Quitting Phenomenon: A Bibliometric Analysis in the Context of Human Resource Management

Darmayanto Darmayanto^{1*}, Siti Mujanah², & Achmad Yanu Alif Fianto³

^{1, 2, 3} Fakultas Ekonomi Dan Bisnis, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

Email: lvindra@gmail.com; sitimujanah@untag-sby.ac.id ; achmadyanu@untag-sby.ac.id

* Corresponding Author: lvindra@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Mapping Global Research The phenomenon of quiet quitting describes employee behavior in which individuals continue to perform their formal duties while psychologically and emotionally disengaging from the organization. This issue has become more prominent in the post-COVID-19 era, alongside the growing awareness of work-life balance and mental well-being. This study aims to map global research trends and directions related to quiet quitting through a bibliometric analysis of publications indexed in the Scopus database for the 2020–2024 period using the VOSviewer and Biblioshiny tools. The results reveal a significant increase in publications since 2022, highlighting three dominant themes: employee engagement and burnout, work-life balance and mental health, as well as leadership and organizational culture. These findings enrich the Human Resource Management (HRM) literature related to employee engagement and provide insights for developing adaptive HR strategies aligned with evolving work values and modern organizational culture.

Keywords: Quiet quitting, bibliometric analysis, employee engagement, work life balance, human resource management.



INTRODUCTION

The field of Human Resource Management (HRM), as it reflects a fundamental shift in employee behavior and work attitudes. The term describes employees who continue performing their formal job responsibilities but psychologically and emotionally disengage from their organizations [1]. Rather than physically resigning, these employees gradually withdraw from informal aspects of work such as collaboration, innovation, and discretionary effort, leading to declining affective commitment, productivity, and organizational competitiveness [2], [3].

The rising prominence of quiet quitting is closely linked to post-COVID-19 workplace transformations. The widespread adoption of flexible and remote work, increased awareness of work-life balance, and greater emphasis on mental well-being have reshaped how employees define loyalty, motivation, and engagement at work [2]. Consequently, quiet quitting should not be viewed merely as a form of passive resistance to organizational demands, but rather as a coping mechanism to address the imbalance between corporate productivity pressures and employees' need for psychological and emotional well-being [4]. This shift also signifies a transition from hustle culture—which glorifies overwork—to a more sustainable awareness of mental health and employee welfare [5].

Although quiet quitting has gained immense popularity across social media and public discourse, academic exploration of this phenomenon remains limited and fragmented across various disciplines such as organizational psychology, behavioral management, and HRM [6], [7]. Most existing studies are conceptual or exploratory in nature, lacking comprehensive mapping of global research trends, influential authors, and emerging themes. Recent bibliometric and systematic reviews [8] have emphasized the need for structured, data-driven analysis to identify key research clusters, intellectual structures, and thematic evolution surrounding quiet quitting.

To address this gap, this study employs a bibliometric analysis to map the global research landscape on quiet quitting within the HRM context. Data were collected from the Scopus database for the period 2020–2024 and analyzed using VOSviewer and Biblioshiny to identify publication trends, co-authorship networks, and thematic clusters. This method has been widely recognized for visualizing intellectual linkages and knowledge structures in emerging management topics [8].

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing HRM literature by enhancing understanding of employee engagement, burnout, and well-being in the post-pandemic era. Practically, it provides insights for organizations to design adaptive, human-centered, and sustainable HR strategies aligned with evolving work values and organizational culture in the modern workplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomenon of quiet quitting has gained substantial scholarly attention in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM) as it reflects evolving employee values, motivations, and work engagement in the post-pandemic era. The term refers to employees who continue fulfilling their formal duties while mentally and emotionally disengaging from the organization [1].

Theory Foundationd

Several grand theories in organizational psychology provide conceptual grounding for understanding quiet quitting. The Social Exchange Theory [9] posits that employment relationships are reciprocal in nature. When employees perceive an imbalance between their contributions and the rewards received, they are likely to reduce their discretionary effort as a rational response to perceived injustice [10].

The Job Demands Resources (JDR) Model [11] explains that excessive job demands coupled with insufficient job resources lead to burnout and reduced engagement. In this framework, quiet quitting functions as a self-preserving response to protect psychological well-being. Similarly, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll 1989) [12] argues that individuals seek to maintain and conserve limited resources such as energy, time, and emotional capacity; hence, reducing extra-role efforts is a defensive strategy against resource depletion.

From the perspective of the Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1995) [13], unmet expectations such as broken promises or lack of fairness diminish trust and affective commitment, prompting employees to disengage silently rather than resign formally. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) [14] emphasizes that the absence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness undermines intrinsic motivation, leading to minimal engagement. Finally, Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986 [15] and Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory [16] highlight that low organizational support and poor leader-subordinate relationships weaken organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), a key indicator diminished in quiet quitting.

Together, these theories suggest that quiet quitting is not merely an act of apathy but a complex behavioral adjustment resulting from imbalances between organizational expectations and individual well being, mediated by psychological and relational dynamics.

Emperical Insights: Antecedents And Consequences

Empirical research reveals consistent patterns linking quiet quitting with psychological strain and organizational context. Common antecedents include: (1) Burnout and emotional exhaustion, which lead employees to limit their engagement and effort [11], [17]; (2) Perceived injustice and psychological contract breach, which erode trust and commitment [1]; (3) Leadership style and supervisor support, where the absence of transformational or servant leadership correlates with increased disengagement [18],

[19]; (4) Work conditions and work-life balance, where excessive workload and limited flexibility trigger withdrawal behaviors [20]; and (5) Unmet psychological needs, such as lack of autonomy and relatedness [14].

The consequences of quiet quitting are equally significant. Prior studies report declines in productivity and discretionary performance [21], rising turnover intention despite continued employment [22], and broader organizational costs including cultural degradation and uneven workload distribution. Over time, these outcomes can diminish collective morale and organizational competitiveness [18].

Methodological And Bibliometric Trends

Research on quiet quitting and related constructs such as employee disengagement or work withdrawal has primarily employed cross-sectional survey designs using scales of engagement, burnout, and perceived organizational support. Qualitative studies have explored personal narratives and coping mechanisms behind reduced motivation [3]. The term quiet quitting gained public attention in 2021 through social media discourse before entering academic scholarship [2]. As a result, earlier works often used synonymous terms like silent resignation or withdrawal behavior [22]. In bibliometric research, scholars have mapped adjacent themes such as employee engagement, burnout, and psychological contract to visualize publication patterns, key authors, and thematic clusters [6]–[8]. These studies reveal a post-pandemic surge in topics linking mental health, remote work, and well-being.

Research Gaps And Implications For The Current Study

Despite its growing visibility, quiet quitting research remains fragmented. Several gaps can be identified. First, conceptual definitions remain inconsistent, blurring distinctions between disengagement and withdrawal behavior. Second, most existing studies are cross-sectional, limiting understanding of behavioral dynamics over time. Third, research remains Western-centric, with limited empirical evidence from developing countries such as Indonesia [6], [7]. Fourth, tested organizational interventions including well being programs, job redesign, and leadership development are scarce [18]. Finally, the connection between popular narratives on social media and empirical evidence remains underexplored.

Accordingly, the present bibliometric study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. By mapping terminologies, thematic clusters, and global authorship networks, this research clarifies the conceptual position of quiet quitting within HRM scholarship and identifies directions for cross cultural and sustainable HRM research.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design using bibliometric analysis to systematically map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaboration networks in the

research domain of quiet quitting. The bibliometric approach enables the quantification and visualization of scientific publications to identify influential authors, sources, and conceptual trends over time [8], [23].

The research framework was structured into two sequential stages: (1) Data extraction using Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) software from the Google Scholar database to collect bibliographic records; and (2) Data visualization and network mapping using VOSviewer to identify clusters of co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic density. This design was chosen because bibliometric analysis offers a robust and transparent method for analyzing a large volume of research outputs, especially in emerging topics such as quiet quitting, where conceptual boundaries and terminologies are still evolving [24].

Data Collection

The bibliographic data were retrieved from the Google Scholar database through Publish or Perish software [25]. Google Scholar was selected due to its comprehensive coverage of scholarly materials across multiple disciplines and its inclusion of grey literature that often precedes formal journal publications on new social phenomena [26].

The search query used the main keyword “quiet quitting”, combined with Boolean operators to ensure relevance (e.g., “quiet quitting” AND “employee engagement” OR “disengagement”). The publication period ranged from 2015 to 2025, allowing for the identification of temporal trends across the last decade. For each retrieved article, the following metadata were collected:

1. Title and year of publication
2. Author(s) and institutional affiliation
3. Source title (journal, conference, or repository)
4. Citation count
5. Abstract and keywords

The dataset was cleaned and filtered to remove duplicate entries, non-English publications, and irrelevant records not related to Human Resource Management (HRM), Organizational Behavior (OB), or related management fields.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis followed three sequential steps adapted from the bibliometric protocols Aria & doCuccurullo (2017) and Donthu et al. (2021) [8], [24]:

1. Performance Analysis, this stage examined publication trends, citation counts, and productivity patterns of authors, institutions, and journals to assess the growth trajectory of quiet quitting research.
2. Science Mapping Analysis, using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20), a network visualization was performed to explore the intellectual and thematic structure of the field.
 - a. Co-authorship Analysis identified collaboration patterns among authors and institutions.
 - b. Co-occurrence Analysis of keywords revealed thematic clusters and conceptual linkages.
 - c. Co-citation Analysis helped identify the most influential sources and intellectual roots of the topic.
3. Thematic Evolution Analysis, the study examined how research themes evolved temporally by tracking keyword density and the emergence of new clusters across publication years. Thematic visualization maps were generated to represent hot topics and research gaps.

This combination of performance and science mapping techniques ensured a holistic understanding of the quiet quitting research landscape, consistent with previous bibliometric frameworks in management and psychology [8], [23].

Research Limitations

Despite its methodological rigor, this study acknowledges several limitations:

1. The data source was limited to Google Scholar, which while comprehensive may include non-peer-reviewed materials and duplicate records. Cross-verification with Scopus or Web of Science could improve dataset reliability [26].
2. The search scope relied solely on the keyword “quiet quitting”, potentially omitting related terms such as “employee disengagement”, “silent resignation”, or “work withdrawal” used in earlier literature.
3. Bibliometric analysis is descriptive in nature, meaning it captures patterns and relationships but does not infer causality or theoretical validation [24].
4. Since the topic is relatively new, citation metrics might be biased toward recent popular publications rather than theoretically robust studies.

Future research could expand the scope by integrating systematic literature review (SLR) techniques or conducting content analysis on key publications to complement quantitative mapping with qualitative insights.

RESULTS

As the outcome of the bibliometric analysis, this section presents the major findings derived from the mapping of scholarly publications concerning the quiet quitting phenomenon. The analysis includes several key aspects, namely citation performance, patterns of scientific collaboration, keyword co-occurrence networks, and thematic as well as density visualizations.

These findings provide an overview of how academic interest in quiet quitting has evolved and how research interconnections have emerged among authors and institutions. Moreover, the discussion links these bibliometric patterns with core theoretical frameworks including the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model, Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory to offer a more comprehensive understanding of modern employee behavior and engagement in the organizational context.

Citation Performance

The bibliometric data extracted via Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) revealed 500 academic publications on quiet quitting spanning 2015 – 2025, accumulating 307,178 citations with an average of 614 citations per paper. The calculated h-index of 284 and g-index of 500 reflect both the productivity and the widespread scholarly impact of this topic. These figures confirm the growing legitimacy of quiet quitting as an interdisciplinary research area bridging human resource management, psychology, and behavioral science. The substantial annual citation rate over 30,000 citations per year demonstrates the rapid acceleration of research interest, particularly in the post-pandemic period when issues of engagement, burnout, and well-being became central to HRM discussions (see Figure 1).

Citation metrics	Help
Publication years:	2015-2025
Citation years:	10 (2015-2025)
Papers:	500
Citations:	307178
Cites/year:	30717.80
Cites/paper:	614.36
Cites/author:	194014.58
Papers/author:	295.12
Authors/paper:	2.29
h-index:	284
g-index:	500
hI,norm:	217
hI,annual:	21.70
hA-index:	116
Papers with ACC >= 1,2,5,10,20:	497,497,490,486,461

Figure 1. Citation Metrics of Quiet Quitting Research (2015–2025)

Figure 1 shows bibliometric metrics extracted from Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) software. The analysis identified 500 publications with 307,178 citations, an h-index of 284, and a g-index of 500, indicating a sharp growth in academic attention and citation influence within quiet quitting research. This surge of publication and citation activity mirrors global academic responses to shifting work paradigms following COVID-19, echoing prior bibliometric findings on engagement and burnout dynamics [1], [8], [11]. It also aligns with recent bibliometric analyses on well-being and sustainable HRM practices, where post-pandemic work adaptation, hybrid work systems, and employee mental health dominate current scholarship [18], [27].

Network Visualization of Keyword Co-occurrence

In addition to the citation performance analysis, this study also conducted a thematic mapping to identify conceptual linkages among keywords frequently appearing in scientific publications on quiet quitting. The network visualization, produced using VOSviewer, employs the co-occurrence of keywords method to reveal the relational structure and association strength among terms within the research corpus. Through this approach, the dominant thematic clusters can be identified, illustrating how quiet quitting has evolved conceptually and thematically across related disciplines over the past decade (see Figure 2).

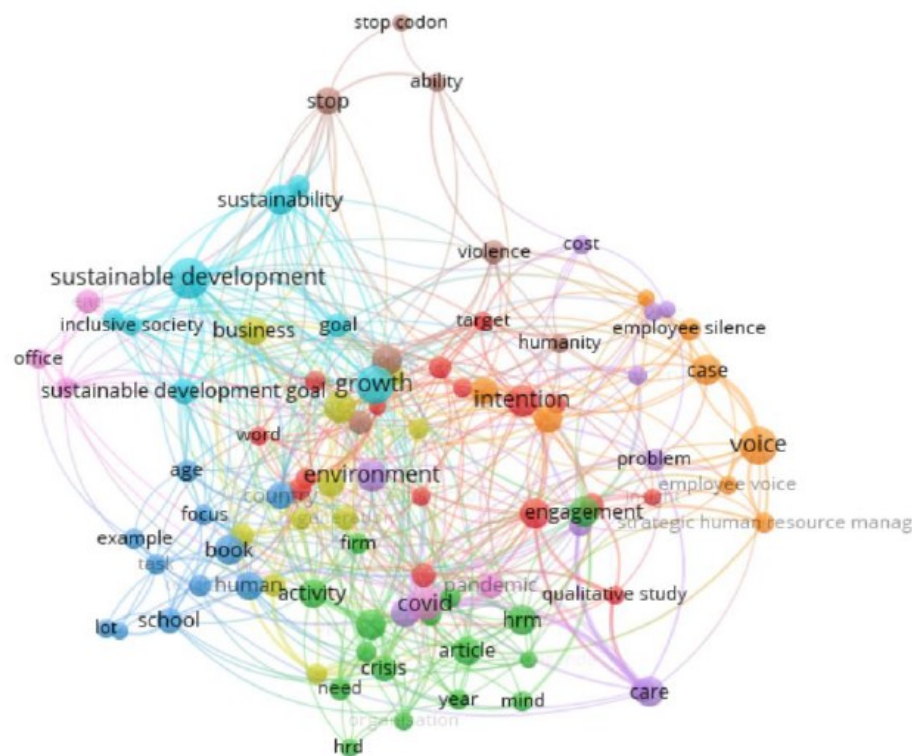


Figure 2. Bibliometric Network Visualization of Keyword Co-occurrence in Quiet Quitting Research (2015–2025)

Figure 2 presents the network visualization of bibliometric relationships, mapping how keywords co-occur across quiet quitting research between 2015 and 2025. The map displays multiple interconnected thematic clusters, reflecting the multidisciplinary evolution of this phenomenon—spanning organizational behavior, human resource management (HRM), psychology, and sustainability. The orange cluster contains the keywords quiet quitting, voice, employee silence, engagement, and intention, highlighting the behavioral and psychological dimension of employee withdrawal and work motivation. The strong interlinkages between employee voice and employee silence suggest that communication dynamics and trust in leadership are essential factors influencing engagement, consistent with the principles of Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) and Social Exchange Theory [9], [16].

The red cluster includes terms such as intention, COVID-19, pandemic, and care, reflecting the post-pandemic transformation of work values. These terms emphasize the growing concern for psychological well-being, empathy, and work-life balance, which became central to HRM discussions during and after the pandemic (Klotz & Bolino, 2022). The linkage between intention and COVID-19 also indicates that quiet quitting is closely associated with changes in work motivation and burnout, as described by the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model [11]. The green cluster, centered on environment, growth, and crisis, connects quiet quitting to discussions of organizational resilience and sustainability. This suggests that disengagement behaviors are not solely individual responses but also organizational adaptation mechanisms under environmental or economic pressures [28].

Meanwhile, the blue cluster—with keywords such as sustainable development, inclusive society, and business—positions quiet quitting within the broader discourse of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8). This integration implies that research on quiet quitting now extends beyond micro-level HRM studies to engage with global agendas on sustainable and equitable work practices [29]. The purple cluster includes terms such as care, humanity, and mind, representing an emerging paradigm of human-centered management. This perspective emphasizes empathy, psychological safety, and holistic well-being as essential dimensions of engagement and retention strategies [14], [18].

Overall, the network structure demonstrates that quiet quitting has evolved into an interdisciplinary construct, bridging individual motivation theories with macro-level frameworks of organizational sustainability. The recurring association among keywords such as intention, engagement, environment, and sustainable development reveals a conceptual shift toward human sustainability management, in which productivity and mental health are treated as interdependent priorities for modern organizations [8], [24].

Thematic Mapping of “Intention” in Quiet Quitting Research

To complement the previous network visualization, this study conducted a more focused bibliometric analysis using “intention” as the central keyword. This approach aims to identify how the concept of intention interacts with other dominant themes in quiet quitting research. By examining the co-occurrence network centered on this keyword, it becomes possible to observe which conceptual domains are most strongly associated with employees intentions ranging from organizational practices and communication behavior to sustainability and human well-being (see Figure 3).

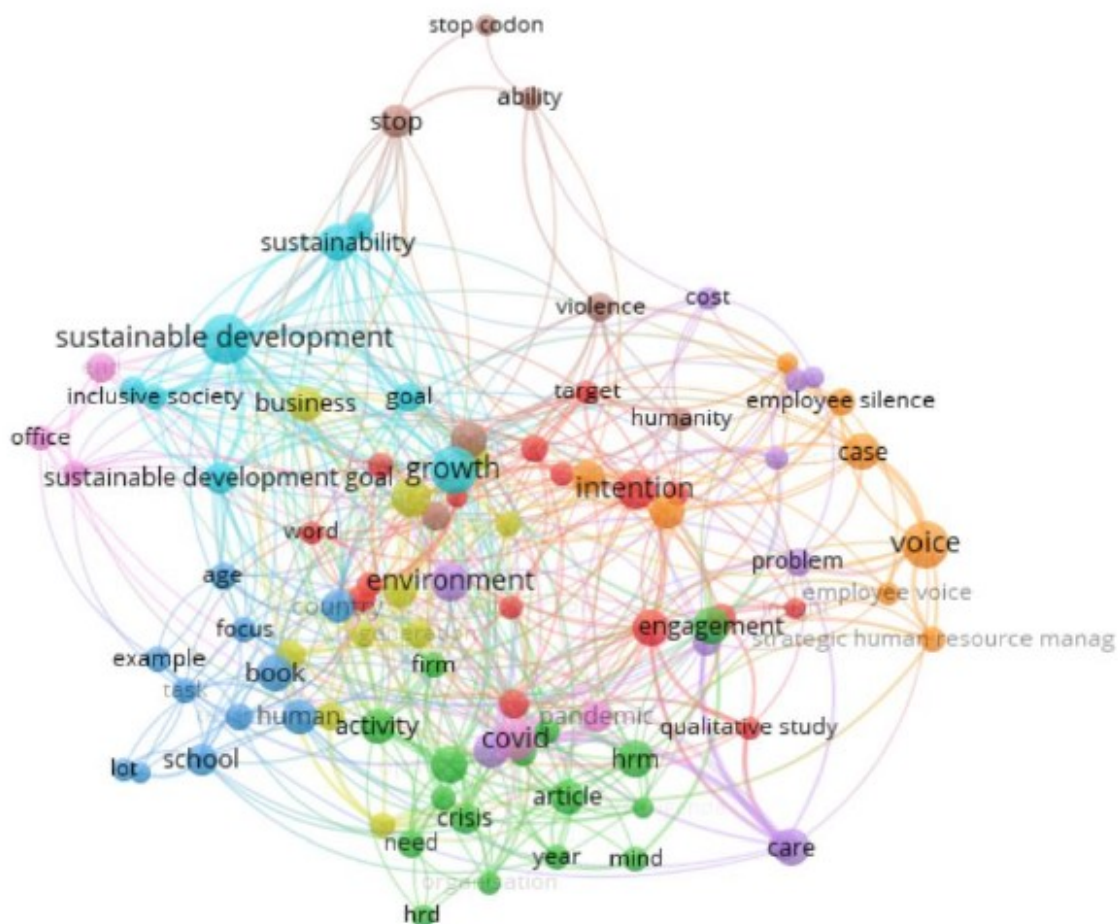


Figure 3. Bibliometric Mapping Analysis with the Keyword “Intention” (2015–2025)

Figure 3 illustrates the bibliometric network centered on the keyword “intention”, highlighting its function as a conceptual bridge that connects multiple research domains within the study of quiet quitting and employee behavior. The visualization reveals several interconnected clusters that represent distinct but thematically related areas of inquiry. The red cluster emphasizes the association between intention and elements of human resource management, such as HRM, target, and workplace bullying. This cluster

reflects how employees' behavioral intentions are shaped by managerial practices, perceived fairness, and workplace environment (Blau, 1964; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The inclusion of workplace bullying underscores increasing scholarly attention to toxic leadership and its detrimental effects on psychological engagement, a theme closely related to the notion of quiet quitting.

The green cluster associates intention with engagement, firm, and COVID-19, signifying how both organizational context and external crises influence employee motivation and participation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, rising workloads and shifting work structures led to declining intrinsic motivation and increased disengagement, aligning with the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These results are consistent with the findings of Klotz and Bolino (2022), who noted that quiet quitting often emerges as a rational response to the imbalance between work demands and available job resources. The light blue cluster connects intention with sustainability-related concepts such as sustainable development and inclusive society. This demonstrates a broader academic trend linking employee behavior with organizational and social sustainability. Such integration aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8—Decent Work and Economic Growth—which encourages ethical employment practices and inclusive workplaces (Bansal & Song, 2017; Paoloni et al., 2022). The presence of these terms indicates that employee intentions and engagement are increasingly viewed as key components of human sustainability management.

The orange cluster depicts the relationship between intention, voice, and employee silence. This cluster focuses on communication dynamics in the workplace—specifically how employees choose whether to express or withhold their opinions. These findings resonate with the Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) framework and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasize that managerial support and autonomy fulfillment play crucial roles in encouraging open communication and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Bakker, 2022). Collectively, the bibliometric map demonstrates that intention acts as a central thematic nexus, integrating diverse strands of research in HRM, organizational psychology, and sustainability. It bridges micro-level factors (e.g., engagement, communication, motivation) with macro-level considerations (e.g., ethical leadership and sustainable organizational growth). Consequently, studies on quiet quitting are evolving beyond discussions of declining motivation—toward a more holistic understanding of employee intention as a mediator between organizational demands, managerial behavior, and personal well-being.

Network Visualization and Thematic Interpretation of the Keyword “Voice”

To extend the previous analyses, this section focuses on the bibliometric network visualization centered on the keyword “voice.” This keyword was selected because it represents a core construct in organizational behavior and human resource management (HRM), often associated with employee

communication, expression, and participation within workplace contexts. By mapping the relational structure around “voice,” this analysis aims to uncover how the concept interacts with related themes such as employee silence, strategic HR management, and organizational problem-solving (see Figure 4).

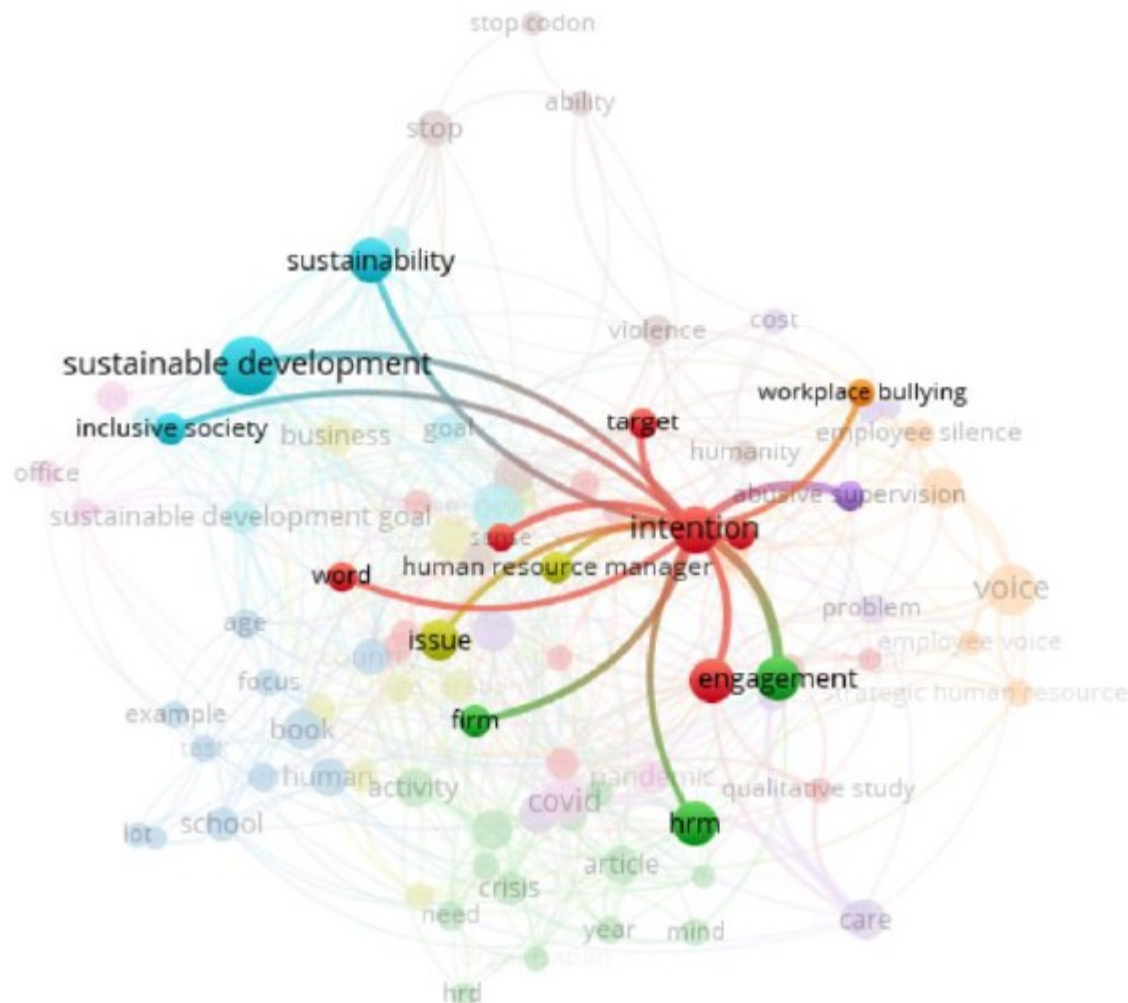


Figure 4. Network Visualization Map of the Keyword “Voice” (2015–2025)

Figure 4 depicts the bibliometric network visualization map emphasizing the keyword “voice.” The visualization reveals several dominant and interrelated thematic clusters, reflecting how voice functions as a bridge between communication, management, and organizational psychology within the discourse of quiet quitting. The orange cluster (commonly referred to as the voice cluster) includes key terms such as employee silence, case, problem, context, and strategic human resource management. This cluster highlights that the phenomenon of employee voice is frequently analyzed in tandem with employee silence representing two contrasting yet complementary dimensions of workplace communication. The strong association between these keywords suggests that voice and silence are both

strategic responses to organizational conditions, influenced by perceived fairness, leadership behavior, and psychological safety [30].

The green cluster, which connects context and order, reflects the structural and situational determinants of voice behavior. This indicates that employees' willingness to express their opinions depends on contextual factors such as organizational culture, hierarchy, and managerial openness [31]. These contextual cues often determine whether voice is perceived as constructive participation or as a threat to authority an issue that has gained renewed relevance in the post-pandemic era of hybrid work. Meanwhile, the blue cluster encompassing sustainable development and sustainability suggests that research on voice is gradually linking to broader themes of organizational ethics and social responsibility. This aligns with the idea of sustainable HRM, where promoting open communication and employee empowerment contributes to long-term organizational resilience and innovation [28][29].

Collectively, the visualization indicates that voice serves as a conceptual nexus connecting micro-level employee behavior with macro-level HRM and sustainability practices. Within the context of quiet quitting, voice plays a critical role in mediating the relationship between disengagement and organizational support where a lack of safe communicative channels can accelerate psychological withdrawal and silence behaviors [2][18]. Thus, empowering employee voice is not merely an issue of engagement but a fundamental strategy for sustaining well-being and ethical leadership in modern organizations.

Network Visualization and Thematic Interpretation of the Keyword “Engagement”

Following the previous keyword-based analyses, this section presents a network visualization centered on the term “engagement.” This keyword holds a pivotal role in human resource management (HRM) and organizational psychology, as it encapsulates the degree to which employees are emotionally and cognitively connected to their work. The analysis aims to explore how engagement interacts with related constructs such as intention, human resource management, opportunity, and employee voice, providing deeper insights into its relationship with quiet quitting behavior (see Figure 5).

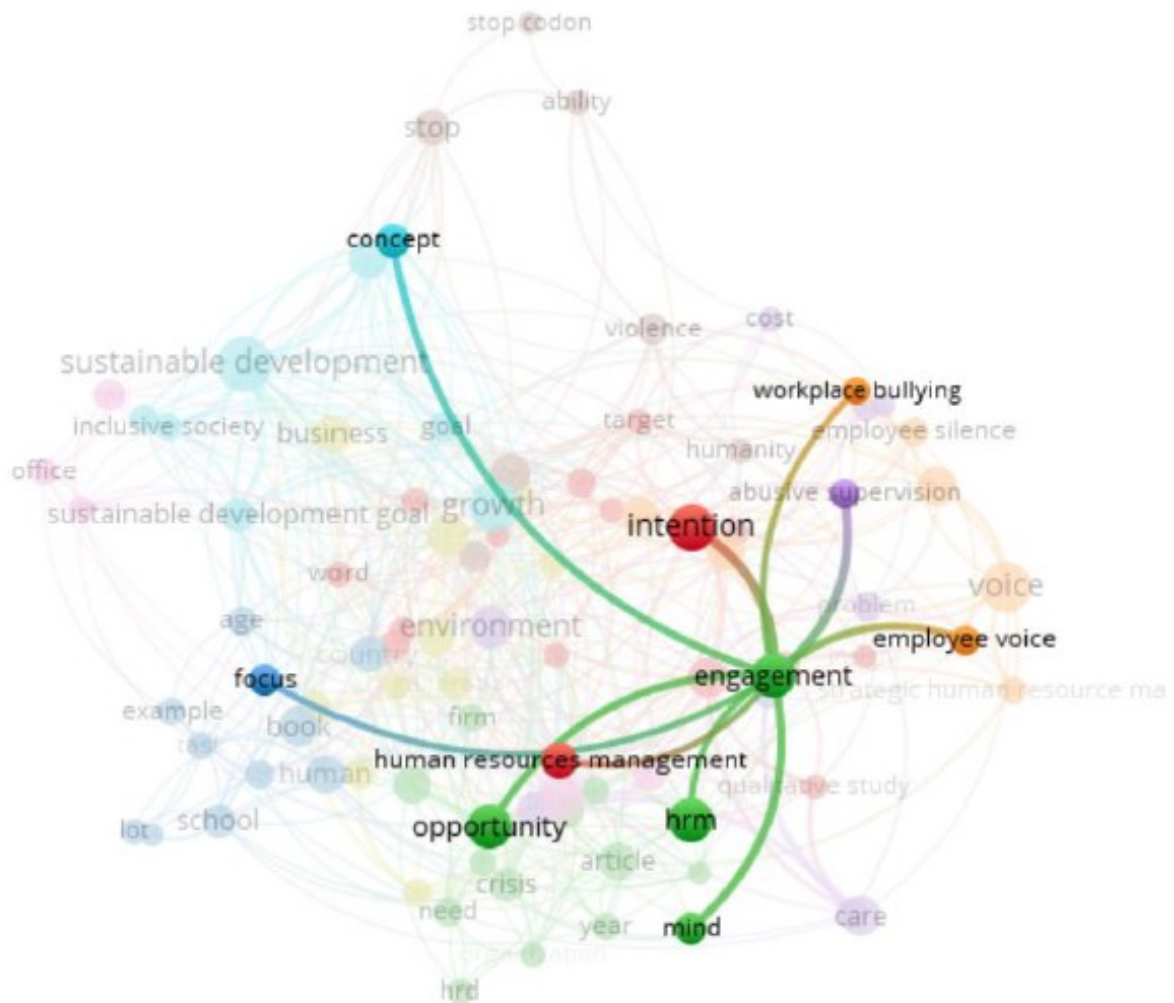


Figure 5. Network Visualization Map of the Keyword “Engagement” (2015–2025)

Figure 5 presents the bibliometric network map with “engagement” as the central keyword. The visualization highlights several prominent thematic clusters that are strongly interlinked, signifying the multidimensional nature of engagement within quiet quitting research and broader HRM studies. The green cluster demonstrates a strong interconnection among engagement, human resource management, opportunity, and HRM. This cluster represents the managerial and organizational dimension of engagement, emphasizing that supportive HR practices and professional development opportunities play a crucial role in sustaining employee motivation and reducing disengagement. This finding is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model, which posits that adequate job resources—such as autonomy, feedback, and growth opportunities—promote higher engagement and mitigate burnout [18].

The red cluster connects engagement with intention and growth, illustrating the psychological and behavioral linkage between an employee’s engagement level and their intention to remain or withdraw.

High engagement often correlates with positive job intentions and proactive behavior, whereas low engagement can act as a precursor to quiet quitting, where employees maintain minimal performance while psychologically disengaging from their roles [2].

The orange cluster, encompassing employee voice and workplace bullying, highlights the communication and relational context of engagement. It reflects that open dialogue and supportive leadership foster engagement, while toxic supervision or suppressed communication can erode psychological attachment to work. This aligns with the Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which underscores the importance of high-quality leader–employee relationships in sustaining motivation [16].

Meanwhile, the blue cluster, connecting concept and sustainable development, points toward a macro-level integration of engagement within organizational sustainability frameworks. This indicates a growing scholarly recognition that fostering employee engagement contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth—by ensuring humane, inclusive, and productive workplaces [28][29].

Overall, the visualization reveals that engagement acts as a conceptual nexus uniting various dimensions psychological, managerial, communicative, and sustainable. In the context of quiet quitting, engagement functions both as a protective factor that mitigates withdrawal and as a diagnostic indicator of organizational well-being. Hence, promoting engagement through ethical leadership, employee empowerment, and sustainable HR practices is critical for maintaining both productivity and psychological resilience in contemporary organizations.

Network Visualization and Thematic Interpretation of the Keyword “Environment”

Building upon the previous keyword-based analyses, this section explores the network visualization centered on the keyword “environment.” The concept of environment within quiet quitting research is not limited to the physical workspace; it also encompasses psychological, social, and organizational dimensions that shape employees’ behavior, engagement, and well-being. The visualization highlights how environment serves as a nexus connecting various research domains—from workplace culture and sustainability to crisis management and healthcare contexts (see Figure 6).

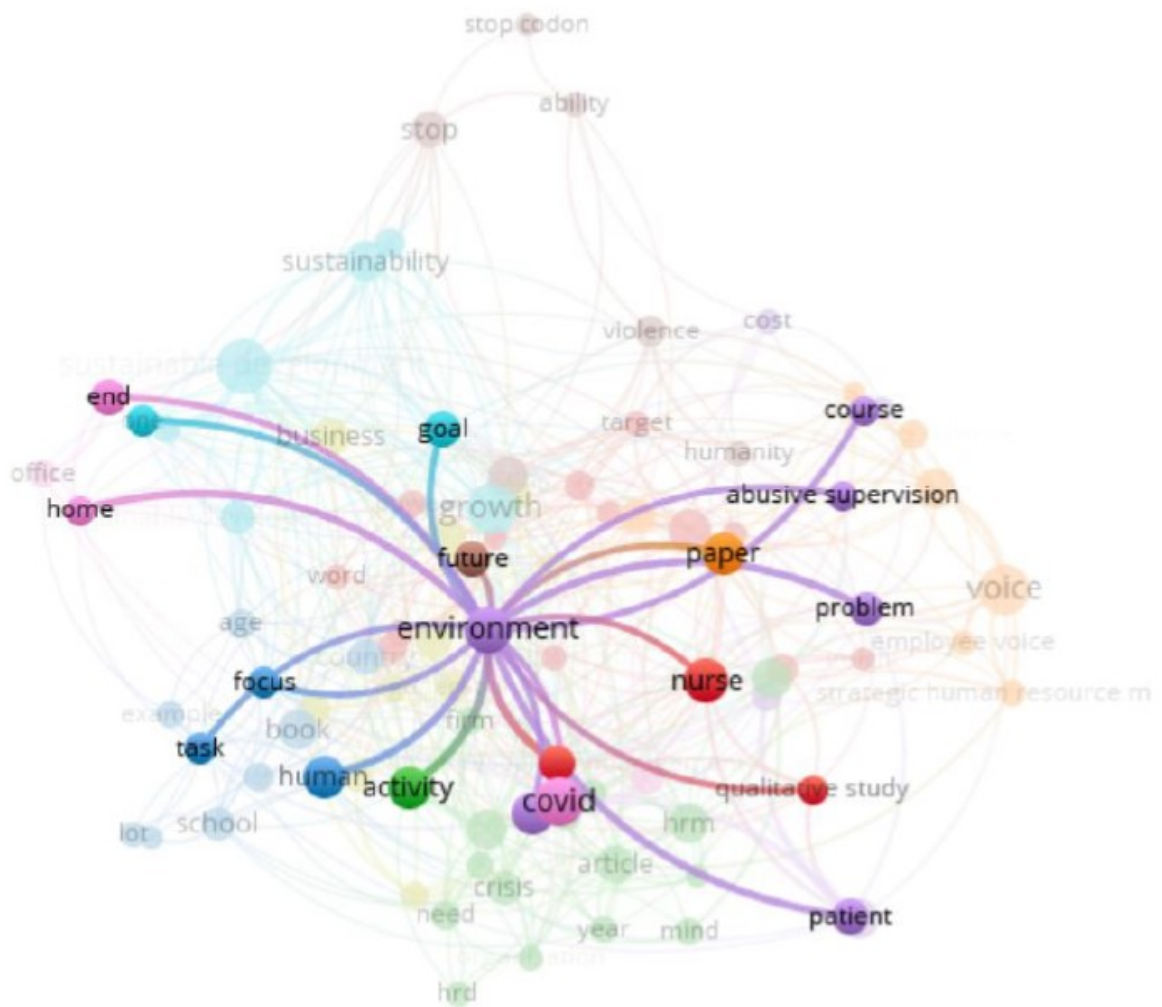


Figure 6. Network Visualization Map of the Keyword “Environment” (2015–2025)

Figure 6 presents a comprehensive network visualization map highlighting the relational structure surrounding the keyword “environment.” The visualization reveals several major thematic clusters that are strongly interconnected, demonstrating how environmental factors whether organizational, social, or contextual play a pivotal role in shaping employee experiences and the broader discourse on quiet quitting.

The purple cluster forms the central structure of the map, linking environment with activity, covid, goal, and growth. This cluster illustrates the systemic and contextual dimension of environment, where both organizational activities and external crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affect employee engagement and workplace adaptation. The strong link between environment and covid emphasizes how remote work conditions, health risks, and changing job demands during the pandemic have reshaped perceptions of well-being and motivation at work (Klotz & Bolino, 2022; Bakker, 2022).

The blue cluster, which includes sustainable development, home, and inclusive society, connects the environment keyword with the sustainability and social inclusion discourse. This indicates that recent studies have extended environmental themes beyond physical and corporate contexts toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 13 (Climate Action) (Bansal & Song, 2017; Paoloni et al., 2022). This integration reflects an increasing awareness of how sustainable workplaces contribute to both human and ecological well-being.

The red cluster, encompassing nurse, patient, and qualitative study, highlights the emergence of environment as a research focus within healthcare and occupational well-being. This suggests that the concept of a supportive and safe work environment is essential for maintaining professional performance and psychological resilience among healthcare professionals, especially during crisis periods [11], [18]. The presence of terms such as nurse and patient indicates cross-sectoral interest in studying environmental stressors and coping mechanisms across high-pressure professions. The orange cluster, connecting paper, course, and abusive supervision, points to a growing scholarly emphasis on the academic and managerial interpretation of environmental issues in leadership and HRM contexts. Specifically, the association between environment and abusive supervision underscores that toxic work climates can severely undermine psychological safety, leading to higher disengagement and potentially fostering quiet quitting behaviors [30], [32].

Overall, this visualization demonstrates that environment operates as a multidimensional and integrative concept—bridging organizational management, sustainability, and psychological health. In the context of quiet quitting, the environment can be interpreted both as an antecedent (e.g., workplace conditions and culture) and as a moderating factor (e.g., supportiveness and adaptability) that determines the extent of employee engagement or withdrawal. Promoting a positive work environment grounded in ethical leadership, inclusivity, and sustainability is therefore essential for mitigating disengagement and fostering long-term organizational resilience.

Overlay Visualization Map: Temporal Evolution of Research Themes

To further examine the temporal progression of quiet quitting research, an overlay visualization analysis was conducted using VOSviewer. This visualization captures the chronological development of keywords and thematic linkages across publications from 2017 to 2020, revealing how scholarly attention has shifted over time. The color gradient—from dark blue (earlier years) to bright yellow (more recent years)—represents the average publication year associated with each keyword (see Figure 7).

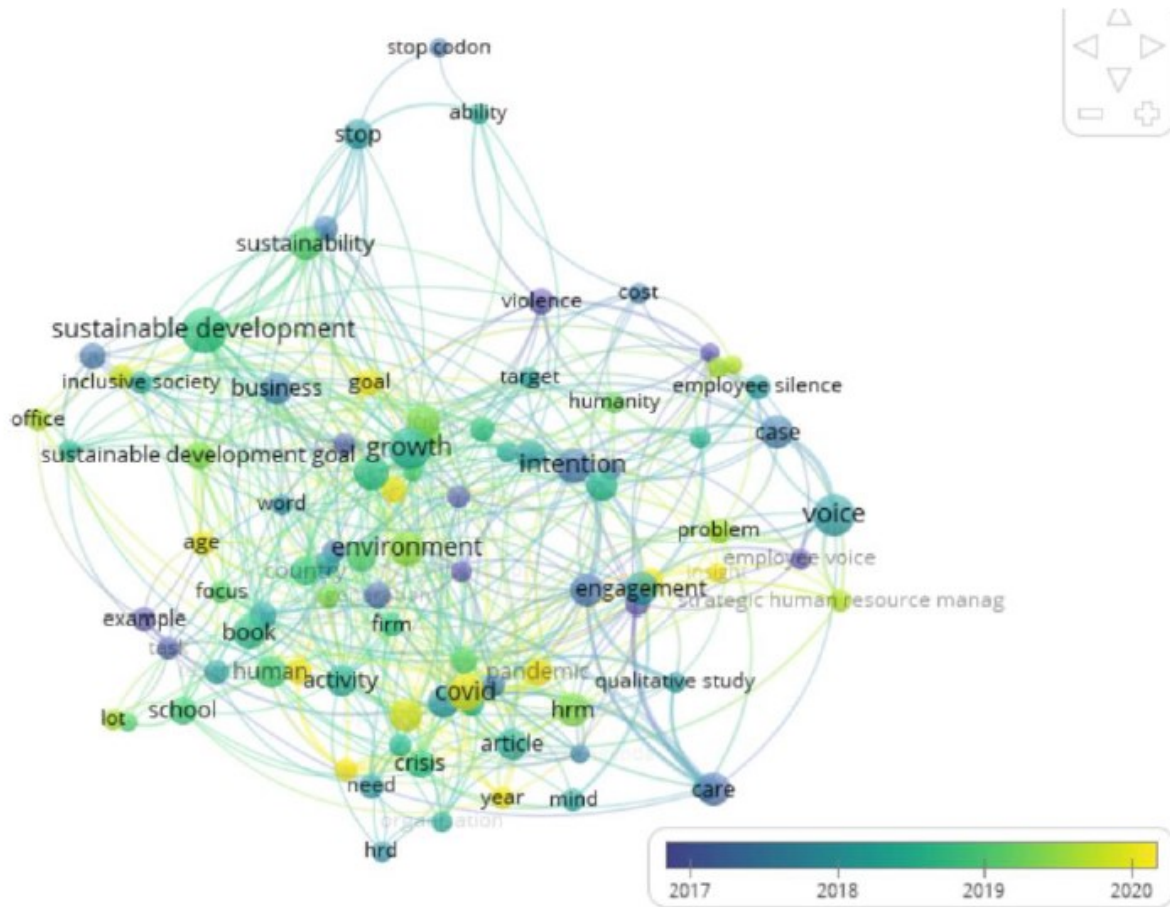


Figure 7. Overlay Visualization Map of Keyword Co-occurrence in Quiet Quitting Research (2017–2020)

Figure 7 presents an overlay visualization map that illustrates the chronological dynamics and interconnectedness among major keywords within the quiet quitting research landscape. The visualization highlights how central research themes have evolved over time, transitioning from early discussions of sustainability and organizational structure toward more contemporary emphases on engagement, intention, and employee behavior.

The earlier research phase (2017–2018), represented by blue to green nodes, primarily focused on macro-level topics such as sustainable development, inclusive society, goal, and business. These themes reflect the academic interest in organizational sustainability and ethical management, aligning with the broader discourse on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and responsible corporate governance [28][29]. During this period, research tended to conceptualize workplace issues through a sustainability and policy-driven lens rather than focusing on individual employee experiences.

In contrast, the subsequent years (2019–2020)—indicated by yellow-green nodes—show a thematic shift toward micro-level and psychological constructs such as intention, engagement, voice, and environment. This transition signifies the emergence of quiet quitting as a behavioral phenomenon deeply connected to employee motivation, well-being, and communication. The increasing co-occurrence between engagement and intention underscores a growing scholarly effort to explain how psychological withdrawal manifests as a response to perceived imbalance between organizational demands and personal well-being [11], [18][2].

The visualization also highlights covid as a recently emerging keyword, indicating the influence of the pandemic in reshaping organizational priorities. The global crisis intensified the discourse on remote work, burnout, and mental health—further amplifying interest in quiet quitting as a symptom of employee fatigue and disconnection [18]. This period witnessed an increase in studies connecting environment and care with psychological resilience, reflecting the expansion of research into well-being and human sustainability themes.

Moreover, the linkage between voice and employee silence persisted across the timeline, demonstrating continuity in research exploring communication behaviors and their impact on engagement and retention [32][33]. These constructs remain central to understanding how leadership style and organizational culture affect employee willingness to express concerns or withdraw silently.

Overall, the overlay visualization reveals a clear evolutionary trajectory in the academic understanding of quiet quitting from structural and sustainability-oriented perspectives toward psychologically grounded frameworks emphasizing engagement, well-being, and work life balance. This trend indicates that modern HRM research increasingly adopts an integrative, human-centered approach, positioning quiet quitting not merely as a disengagement behavior but as an outcome of complex interactions between environmental conditions, leadership, and employee mental health.

Density Visualization Map: Keyword Concentration and Research Focus

To complement the previous network and overlay analyses, this section presents the Density Visualization Map generated using VOSviewer. This visualization illustrates the concentration and relative prominence of keywords across the analyzed literature, highlighting the thematic “hotspots” where research activity has been most intense (see Figure 8). The color intensity—from light green to bright yellow—represents the density or frequency of keyword co-occurrence, indicating which themes dominate the scholarly discourse on quiet quitting and related human resource management topics.



Figure 8. Density Visualization Map of Keyword Co-occurrence (2015–2025)

Figure 8 presents the density distribution of keywords within the body of literature examined between 2015 and 2025. The visualization reveals several high-density clusters that indicate the thematic concentration and evolution of research within the quiet quitting domain. The bright yellow zones, such as sustainable development, growth, environment, engagement, intention, voice, and covid, denote the most frequently studied and interconnected topics. These terms represent interdisciplinary intersections that connect sustainability, employee behavior, and organizational adaptation. The co-occurrence of sustainability and environment with engagement and voice signifies an emerging recognition of how environmental and social dynamics interact with human resource management [29][28].

The central area around growth, intention, and engagement reflects the core psychological and managerial constructs of the quiet quitting phenomenon. These concepts indicate that researchers have been increasingly interested in understanding how organizational growth, leadership, and motivation dynamics shape employees' behavioral intentions and discretionary efforts [11], [18][2].

Meanwhile, the yellow concentration surrounding “covid” underscores a temporal surge in literature addressing the pandemic’s socio-economic and psychological impacts. The COVID-19 crisis triggered widespread organizational restructuring, shifting work arrangements, and altered employee–employer relationships, leading to new patterns of disengagement and changing definitions of work commitment [11], [18]. The association between covid, care, and human activity further indicates a research focus on resilience, mental health, and the humanization of work systems.

On the other hand, green zones, including education, school, and book, indicate supporting research areas where academic discussions around human development and learning environments contribute indirectly to the broader quiet quitting narrative. These peripheral clusters show that the conversation is expanding toward education, training, and career development as long-term engagement strategies [32].

Overall, the density map demonstrates that recent research trends have moved toward a multidimensional and systemic perspective, combining environmental sustainability, social behavior, and organizational well-being. This interdisciplinary convergence indicates a paradigm shift: quiet quitting is no longer viewed solely as individual disengagement, but rather as a systemic response influenced by environmental stressors, leadership practices, and institutional resilience.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric overview of the global research landscape on the quiet quitting phenomenon within the context of human resource management. By utilizing Harzing’s Publish or Perish and VOSviewer, the analysis systematically mapped publication trends, citation performance, thematic clusters, and keyword evolution across the period 2015–2025. The combination of network, overlay, and density visualizations offers a multidimensional understanding of how the topic has evolved both conceptually and contextually.

The results reveal a significant increase in scholarly attention after 2020, reflecting heightened awareness of employee well-being, work–life balance, and post-pandemic shifts in workplace values. Citation metrics (Figure 1) indicate rapid publication growth and strong citation performance, suggesting that quiet quitting has emerged as a salient academic discourse bridging psychology, management, and organizational behavior.

The network visualizations (Figures 2–6) demonstrate that the research field is organized around several core thematic clusters—particularly intention, engagement, voice, and environment.

1. The intention cluster reflects growing interest in employee behavioral motives and managerial factors influencing discretionary effort.

2. The voice cluster emphasizes the duality between employee voice and silence, underscoring communication dynamics in modern organizations.
3. The engagement cluster reveals the central role of human resource management, opportunity, and motivation in understanding proactive or passive employee behavior.
4. The environment cluster integrates issues of sustainability, well-being, and organizational adaptation, signaling a broader interdisciplinary connection between human, social, and ecological dimensions of work.

The overlay visualization (Figure 7) highlights a temporal shift from macro-level themes—such as sustainability and ethical business practices—to micro-level psychological constructs like engagement, intention, and well-being. This progression suggests a theoretical convergence between traditional HRM studies and emerging behavioral sciences perspectives on employee disengagement.

Meanwhile, the density map (Figure 8) illustrates that the most active research “hotspots” over the past five years center on sustainability, environment, engagement, intention, voice, and covid. This indicates that recent studies tend to adopt an interdisciplinary and systemic orientation, integrating environmental, psychological, and managerial factors into the understanding of modern work behavior.

Overall, the bibliometric evidence underscores that quiet quitting is not merely a post-pandemic trend but represents a structural transformation in employee–organization relationships. It reflects deeper shifts in organizational culture, leadership style, and employee expectations regarding fairness, autonomy, and purpose. Future research should extend this bibliometric foundation by conducting longitudinal, cross-cultural, and empirical investigations to validate causal pathways between engagement, intention, and organizational outcomes. Moreover, integrating well-being, sustainability, and digital work dynamics into HRM frameworks will be critical in shaping adaptive and human-centered management strategies for the future of work. For practitioners and policymakers, the findings highlight the need to:

1. Foster transparent communication and psychological safety to prevent silent disengagement.
2. Develop leadership models that balance productivity with well-being.
3. Promote sustainable HRM practices that align organizational goals with employee fulfillment.
4. Utilize bibliometric insights as evidence-based guidance for designing interventions addressing burnout, motivation loss, and cultural misfit in hybrid and remote work settings.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study offers valuable insights, it is limited by its reliance on bibliometric data from Google Scholar and keyword-based analyses that may overlook non-indexed or emergent literature. Future studies could employ Scopus or Web of Science databases, apply text-mining or co-citation

analysis, and explore qualitative validation to deepen the theoretical understanding of quiet quitting and its management implications.

CREDIT AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Darmayanto: Conceptualization, Supervision, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Project Administration, Writing-original Draft, and Writing-review Editing. **Siti mujanah:** Conceptualization, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, and Writing-review Editing. **Achmad Yanu Alif Fianto:** Funding Acquisition, Investigation, Writing-original Draft, and Writingreview Editing.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

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