Team Viability Relationship with Quiet Quitting and Career Satisfaction in Knowledge Workers Teams

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Abstract. This study analyses the role of team viability in quiet quitting and career satisfaction. Understanding the core principles of viable teams and disengaged team members or being satisfied with their careers could enable organisations to be more adaptable to the workforce. An empirical study was conducted on a sample of 207 knowledge workers from various organisations. The results of the multiple regression analysis suggest that team viability has a significant negative relationship with quiet quitting, and a significant positive relationship with career satisfaction. The mediation analysis results showed that career satisfaction mediated the relationship between team viability and quiet quitting. The study provided insights about viable team members participating in lower quiet quitting behaviours, and if those team members feel satisfied with their careers, quiet quitting behaviours are even lower.

Key words: team viability, career satisfaction, quiet quitting, knowledge workers teams.

Introduction

Relevance of the article

There is increasing concern about the phenomenon of quiet quitting, where workers intentionally restrict their job-related activities to the absolute minimum required by their position's specifications (Serenko, 2024). These disengaged team member behaviours can affect team dynamics and overall organisational performance. In addition, while quiet quitting may help individual employees avoid burnout and prioritise their well-being (Serenko, 2024), it can also jeopardise their professional careers, team effectiveness, and team viability. Career satisfaction is an additional individual outcome that can be affected by team viability and, in turn, lower team members' quiet quitting behaviours. Knowledge workers in organisations tackle difficult tasks to concentrate on solving problems, generate information, share it, and apply it to get results (Surawski, 2019). These teams are essential for fostering innovation and adaptability within a rapidly changing economic landscape. Understanding the links between team viability, career satisfaction, and quiet quitting is vital for maintaining effective and sustainable teams of knowledge workers in today's work environment. This group and individual outcome connection covers the complexity of managing modern workplaces, and is an important research topic.

Problem investigation level

There are studies on factors that affect team viability (Tekleab et al., 2009; Maynard et al., 2019; Sniffen et al., 2019); however, the impact of team viability on other team dynamics or individual team members has only been studied in the context of performance (Xue et al., 2022; Hu & Liden, 2015). In this research field, the mechanisms that may account for the relationship between team viability, career satisfaction, and quiet quitting remain largely unexplored, thus limiting our understanding of these relationships.

Scientific problem: How does team viability affect quiet quitting and career satisfaction in a knowledge worker team?

Object of the article: The impact of team viability on quiet quitting and career satisfaction.

The aim of the article is to investigate the relationships between team viability, quiet quitting, and career satisfaction in knowledge worker teams.

Objectives of the article:

1. To analyse the scientific literature and develop hypotheses on the relationship between team viability, quiet quitting, and career satisfaction.
2. To conduct an empirical study on the links between team viability, quiet quitting, and career satisfaction.
3. To evaluate the strength of the relationship between team viability, quiet quitting, and career satisfaction.

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***Methods of the article*.** Analysis of literature sources, synthesis, and comparative data analysis were employed. For the empirical study, an online questionnaire survey was chosen and data analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS and JASP 0.19.1.

1. Literature review

The knowledge possessed by work teams is a significant asset for a variety of organisations (Lewis, 2004). According to Davenport (2005), knowledge workers have a high degree of expertise, education, and experience. His descriptions and theoretical explanations of knowledge workers are widely used in the scientific literature, this article being no exception, for it adopts the same conceptualisation. Davenport (2005) states that knowledge workers "think for a living" and "any heavy lifting on the job is intellectual, not physical." According to Todericiu, & Beca (2022), in modern organizations, knowledge workers' teams are characterised by creativity, a drive for change, problem-solving abilities, and a focus on opportunities for development. In addition, these teams perform complex tasks (Lewis, 2004; Surawski, 2019) where members must create, apply, and combine their expertise to achieve effective performance (Lewis, 2004). The productivity of knowledge worker teams is important not only for organisation (Todericiu, & Beca, 2022), but also for generating goods or services (Lewis, 2004).

For organisations to achieve their objectives and maintain long-term sustainability, the effectiveness of teams, especially team viability, is a crucial foundational element. Team viability emerged in the scientific literature as a part of team effectiveness research. Hackman's group effectiveness model (Hackman, 1987) introduced three aspects of effectiveness, including a new criterion, "capability of members to work together in future is maintained or strengthened", which was later named team viability. Subsequently, the concept of team viability gained increased attention in the field. Later, Sundstrom et al. (1990) viewed team effectiveness as two elements of performance and viability, and described team viability as "members' satisfaction, participation, and willingness to continue working together". Other authors have defined team viability as members' willingness to continue functioning as a team (Barrick et al., 1998), or a "team's capacity to adapt to internal and external changes, as well as the probability that team members will continue to work together in the future" (Aubé, & Rousseau, 2005). In the modern context, team viability is described as "a team's capacity for the sustainability and growth required for success in future performance episodes" (Bell, & Marentette, 2011).

Members' participation in quiet quitting behaviours is one negative aspect that can affect team dynamics and viability. As posited by Formica and Sfodera (2022), the term quiet quitting can refer to the "limited commitment of employees to carry out the assigned duties and to relinquish from any other task not specified in their job description." Participating in quiet quitting behaviours can prevent burnout and help set boundaries between work and personal life (Boy & Sürmeli, 2023; Hamouche et al., 2023). Quiet quitting also entails being disengaged from work and doing the minimum to cope (Scheyett, 2023). The negative consequences of being a quiet quitter can include leaving the job, getting demoted, denying promotions and increased salaries (Serenko, 2024), or positive promotions and/or increased salaries (Serenko, 2024).

Individual team members' satisfaction with their careers could affect team dynamics, or vice versa. A construct of career satisfaction is the degree to which individuals believe that their career advancement is in accordance with their objectives, values, and preferences (Barnett, & Bradley, 2007). The most commonly used scale to measure career satisfaction was developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990), where career satisfaction is viewed as a career outcome. Employees' subjective assessment of their professional accomplishment is referenced in the term "career satisfaction" (Chang et al., 2020) and can be evaluated both objectively (salary, title, promotions, etc.) and subjectively (feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction). Career satisfaction differs considerably from job satisfaction. According to Chang et al. (2020), job satisfaction refers to satisfaction with a specific job, rather than a long-term career. Having theoretically framed the concepts of team viability, quiet quitting, and career satisfaction, further analysis guides the research and possible relationships.

2. Hypothesis development

Team viability involves a plethora of aspects. According to Sundstrom et al. (1990), it can consist of members' satisfaction, participation, and willingness to continue working together. However, no scientific studies have shown the direct impact of team viability on quiet quitting behaviours. Team viability, as a positive team state, can help reduce disengagement from one's work.

Various studies have found a connection between quiet quitting and factors, such as workplace ostracism, knowledge hiding (Dutta et al., 2024), dissatisfaction, and disengagement (Hamouche et al., 2023). Several studies have discovered that job burnout is statistically significant for quitting and has a positive effect (Lu et al., 2023; Xueyun, Yang, et al., 2024; Thu Trang, & Thi Thu Trang, 2024). Results from a study conducted by Bansal, & Garg (2024) showed that workplace conflict (relationship and task conflicts) can lead to higher quiet quitting intentions in the workplace. Since members of viable teams were found to be flexible (Afolabi, & Osayawe 2005), have trust and respect (Jehn et al., 2008), team cohesion (Barrick et al., 1998), satisfaction (Poulton, & West, 1994), and other positive states that promote positive emotions as well as team member well-being, these states should reduce the aspects of dissatisfaction, disengagement, burnout, and conflicts experienced by members, thus lowering quiet quitting behaviours. In addition, some studies have shown that employee well-being lowers quiet quitting (Lu et al., 2023; Prentice et al., 2024). This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: team viability is negatively related to quiet quitting.

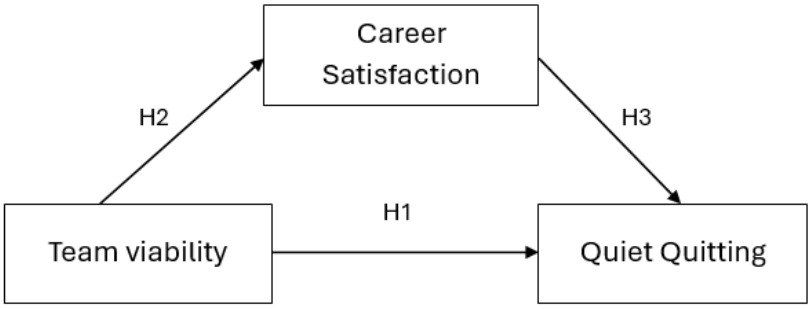
Team viability can strongly influence various aspects of team members' experiences. Nevertheless, research is yet to explore the direct influence of viable teams on team members' career satisfaction. A study by Foo et al. (2006) found that open communication and intrateam processes of social integration were positively related to team viability and member satisfaction. According to Latan et al. (2022), career satisfaction is strongly related to trust in superior members and a positive work environment. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: team viability is positively related to career satisfaction.

Quiet quitting implies low investment in work activities; therefore, employees are disengaged at work and do not intend to go above or beyond their line of duty (Formica, & Sfodera, 2022). There is statistical evidence that satisfaction affects quiet quitting, because there is a negative relationship between quiet quitting and job satisfaction (Galanis et al., 2023; Suhendar et al., 2023; Xueyun et al., 2024; Karadas, & Çevik, 2024), demonstrating that employees with lower levels of job satisfaction may have higher levels of quiet quitting (Galanis et al., 2023). Talukder and Prieto (2024) found that a moderate level of job satisfaction co-exists with a moderate level of quiet quitting. Although job satisfaction and career satisfaction are different constructs, there is no direct evidence that career satisfaction can affect quiet quitting. Various studies have demonstrated a negative correlation between career satisfaction and the intention to quit (Verbruggen, & van Emmerik, 2018; Chan et al., 2016), which suggests that it could also affect quiet quitting. Keeping in mind that team viability consists of satisfaction, cohesion, and other positive states, there is a possibility of a mediating relationship in which team viability influences quiet quitting behaviours through career satisfaction. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 3: career satisfaction mediates the relationship between team viability and quiet quitting.

The conceptual framework of the study's hypotheses is presented in Fig. 1.



Source: created by the author.

Fig. 1. Conceptual research model

3. Research methodology

This study aims to statistically examine the relationships between team viability, career satisfaction, and quiet quitting in knowledge worker teams. **The objectives of this study are as follows**: (1) to describe sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample; (2) to determine the impact of team viability on quiet quitting; (3) to determine whether team viability impacts career satisfaction; and (4) to identify whether career satisfaction mediates the relationship between team viability and quiet quitting.

Research methods. The research employs quantitative empirical research (online survey), statistical data analysis using BM SPSS Statistics 30.0.0 software and JASP 0.19.1.0, with the application of statistical analysis methods: descriptive, multiple regression, and process analyses.

Survey sample. This study focuses on knowledge worker teams in Lithuania. Data were collected from September to November 2024 using an online Qualtrics survey. The target group was approached through Facebook and LinkedIn using the purposive sampling method. To qualify for the study, participants were required to be 18 years or older, be a knowledge worker, and to work in the team. Before answering the questionnaire, the respondents were provided with a description of a knowledge worker based on Davenport's (2005) conceptualisation: *"A knowledge worker is a person whose main resource is what he/she knows. A popular expression would be 'an employee who works with his head, not his hands' or 'does mental, not physical work'. For example, administrative staff, managers, consultants, engineers, analysts, architects, researchers, accountants, medical workers, or educational specialists".* Subsequently, an additional question was posed to ascertain whether the respondents were currently engaged as knowledge workers. An additional requirement for managerial positions was to be part of the team where they were the team members and not managers, since the study focused on the team member perspective. An additional question was posed to ascertain this requirement. Only after reading the informed consent form and confirming their willingness to participate did respondents take part in the study and answer the questionnaire.

Data were obtained from 207 individuals, and the full profile of the research respondents is shown in Table 1. In terms of gender, women accounted for 71.5 %. In terms of age, the majority of employees were aged 27–35 (69.57 %). In terms of educational level, the highest proportion of respondents had a master's degree (46.86 %). Most of the participants worked in large organisations with 250 or more employees (41.55 %). A high percentage of the respondents (58.94%) worked in a hybrid work environment. As for the organisational tenure, most respondents had worked for 1–3 years (37.68%) and 5–10 years (31.40 %). These findings revealed a reasonable distribution of respondents in the study.

Table 1

Profile of research respondents

	N	%		N	%
Gender			**Size of the organisation**		
Male	59	28.50	Very small (up to 9 employees)	11	5.31
Female	148	71.50	Small (10 to 49 employees)	66	31.88
			Medium (50 to 249 employees)	44	21.26
Age group			Large (250 or more employees)	86	41.55
18–26	17	8.21			
27–35	144	69.57			
36–45	35	16.91	**Organisational tenure**		
46–64	11	5.31	Up to 3 months	15	7.25
			3 months – 1 year	19	9.18
Education			1–3 years	78	37.68
Secondary	7	3.38	3–5 years	26	12.56
Bachelor's degree (college)	19	9.18	5–10 years	65	31.40
Bachelor's degree	65	31.40	More than 10 years	4	1.93
Bachelor's degree (college)	19	9.18			
Master's degree	97	46.86	**Work Environment**		
Doctorate degree (PhD)	19	9.18	Hybrid	122	58.94
			Remote	16	7.73
			Office	69	33.33

Source: created by the author.

Measures. In this research, the scales of team viability, career satisfaction, and quiet quitting were used to measure the variables. Double translation was applied to verify the consistency of the questionnaire in Lithuanian. Each statement was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "completely disagree", 5 = "completely agree"). Cronbach's alpha was used to test the scale reliability of all constructs used in the data analysis.

The scale developed by Demir, & Ergün (2023) was used to assess team viability. The scale consisted of seven items. Examples of items include "The members of this team could work for a long time together" and "This team has the capacity for long-term success". As the number of points collected in the questionnaire increased, so did the perceived team viability. The overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale (Cronbach's α) is 0.86.

To assess career satisfaction, the scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) was used. This scale consists of five items; an example is "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career". As the number of points collected in the questionnaire increases, the more satisfied with their careers the employees are considered to be. The overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale (Cronbach's α) is 0.81.

A quiet quitting scale (QQS) was used to assess quiet employees quitting. The QQS consists of nine items that measure detachment, lack of initiative, and lack of motivation. The scale was developed by Galanis et al. (2023). An example of an item is "I do the basic or minimum amount of work without going above and beyond". Two items were removed from the scale for higher reliability, after which the overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale was (Cronbach's α) = 0.71.

Control variables. Consistent with prior research (Wang et al., 2019; Galanis et al., 2024), the following control variables are selected: age, gender, education, work environment, organisational tenure, and organisation size.

4. Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations. The descriptive statistics for all the study variables are presented in Table 2. As can be seen in the table, the mean for team viability is 24.22 (SD = 4.15) and the mid-point is 17.5, indicating that employees are working in teams with a perceived high viability. The results indicate that career satisfaction is high, with a mean sum score of 18.25 (SD = 3.44) and a mid-point of 12.5, suggesting that knowledge workers are more satisfied with their careers. Quiet quitting, with a mean sum score of 15.17 (SD = 3.93) and a mid-point of 17.5,

shows that knowledge workers demonstrate lower participation in quiet quitting behaviours. In addition, as shown in Table 2, team viability was found to be significantly correlated with age ($r = -0.15$, $p < 0.05$) and education ($r = -0.235$, $p < 0.01$). Career satisfaction was significantly correlated with team viability ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$). Quiet quitting, as seen in Table 2, was significantly correlated with work environment ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$), organisational tenure ($r = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$), education ($r = -0.27$, $p < 0.001$), age ($r = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$) and career satisfaction ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Correlation matrix with means and standard deviations

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Age	—								
2. Gender	0.02	—							
3. Education	0.33***	-0.11	—						
4. Org. size	-0.13	-0.12	-0.13	—					
5. Org. tenure	0.29***	-0.03	0.04	0.19**	—				
6. Work Environment	0.13	-0.02	-0.06	-0.14*	-0.10	—			
7. TV	-0.15*	0.08	-0.24***	0.08	0.06	0.03	—		
8. CS	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.09	-0.10	0.26 ***	—	
9. QQ	-0.18**	0.121	-0.27***	-8.26×10^{-4}	-0.18**	0.20**	-0.12	-0.28***	—
Mean	2.19	1.71	3.49	2.99	3.58	1.74	24.22	18.25	15.17
Standard deviation	0.66	0.45	0.91	0.98	1.27	0.93	4.15	3.44	3.93

Note. N=207, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, CS – career satisfaction, QQ – quiet quitting TV – team viability.

Source: created by the author.

Variance tests were used to compare the differences between age groups, education, organisational tenure, and work environments for significant differences in quiet quitting using the recommended post hoc analysis tests.

Study respondents aged 36–45 scored significantly lower in quiet quitting than younger respondents aged 18–26 (t-value= 3.005, $p = 0.02$) and respondents aged 27–35 (t-value= 2.895, $p = 0.02$). A significant difference in quiet quitting behaviours was found between respondents with a master's degree and those with a doctorate (t-value= 3.200, $p = 0.01$), whose scores were significantly lower. In comparison, respondents with a master's degree and a bachelor's degree scored significantly higher in quiet quitting (t-value= -3.928, $p < 0.01$). Respondents with a doctorate scored significantly lower in quiet quitting than those with a bachelor's degree (t-value= −5.492, $p < .001$) or a bachelor's degree (college) (t-value= −2.919, $p = 0.03$). Organisational tenure of 3 months and 1 year was significantly higher in quiet quitting than tenure of 5–10 years (t-value= 3.202, $p = 0.02$) and tenure of more than 10 years (t-value= 3.511, $p = 0.01$). A significant difference was found when comparing the work environment of hybrid and office workers (t-value= −2.957, $p = 0.01$), with office workers scoring significantly higher in quiet quitting.

Hypothesis testing. This hypothesis was tested using a multiple regression analysis. Model 1 is the base model testing the relationship between the control variables and the dependent variable (see Table 3). Model 2 tested the relationships between the independent and dependent variables quiet quitting (H1) and career satisfaction (H2).

Hypothesis 1 states that team viability is negatively related to quiet quitting. The regression Model 2 was significant ($R^2 = 0.21$, $F = 6.547$, $p < 0.01$). The results in Table 3 confirm Hypothesis 1: team viability negatively affects quiet quitting ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis 2 states that team viability is positively related to career satisfaction. Regression analysis shows that Model 2 was significant ($R^2 = 0.04$, $F = 3.290$, $p < 0.001$). As shown in Table 3, the team viability effect on career satisfaction was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3

Regression of team viability on quiet quitting and career satisfaction

Model		Quiet Quitting			Career Satisfaction		
		β	R^2	R^2 change	β	R^2	R^2 change
M_1							
	Control variables		0.17			0.04	
M_2							
	Team viability	-0.21**	0.21	0.04**	0.28***	0.11	0.7***

Note. ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Control variables: age, gender, education, org. size, org. tenure, work environment.

Source: created by the author.

Hypothesis 3 was tested using the PROCESS macro in the JASP software with 5,000 bootstrapped samples. The path coefficients showed that career satisfaction significantly predicted quiet quitting (p = < 0.001); the higher the career satisfaction, the lower the quiet quitting behaviours (see Table 4). Team viability significantly positively predicted career satisfaction (p < 0.001). The higher the team viability, the higher the career satisfaction, which is consistent with H2. Furthermore, to assess the mediation effect, the direct and indirect paths were analysed (see Table 4). The indirect effect of team viability on career satisfaction was statistically significant, indicating that career satisfaction mediates the relationship between team viability and quiet quitting. The 95% CI of the indirect effect was [-0.128, -0.021], p < 0.01. Thus, the results support Hypothesis 3.

Table 4

Direct and indirect effects

									95% CI	
Paths					Estimate	SE	z-value	p-value	Lower	Upper
TV	→	QQ			-0.051	0.065	-0.783	0.434	-0.195	0.084
CS	→	QQ			-0.308	0.079	-3.905	< .001	-0.484	-0.133
TV	→	CS			0.215	0.056	3.878	< .001	0.103	0.337
TV	→	CS	→	QQ	-0.066	0.024	-2.752	0.006	-0.128	-0.021

Note. Confidence intervals are percentile bootstrapped. Standard errors, z-values and p-values are based on the delta method. CS – career satisfaction, QQ – quiet quitting TV – team viability.

Source: created by the author.

The final relationships can be summarised as follows from the hypothesis testing: team viability has a significant negative impact on knowledge workers' quiet quitting behaviours. Team viability has a significant positive impact on knowledge workers' career satisfaction. Career satisfaction plays a mediating role in the impact of team viability on quiet quitting behaviours in knowledge worker teams. Team viability can increase employees' career satisfaction and reduce quiet quitting behaviours.

Conclusions

1. Team viability is conceptualised as a team's capacity for long-term success and stainability, while quiet quitting is conceptualised as limited commitment of employees to carry out their assigned duties. The theoretical knowledge about these two variables is unexplored; thus, the hypothesis was formulated as H1: team viability is negatively related to quiet quitting. Additional variable individual outcome (career satisfaction) was included, and H2 and H3 were formulated accordingly: (H2) team viability was positively related to career satisfaction, and (H3) career satisfaction mediated the relationship between team viability and quiet quitting.

2. An empirical study with an online questionnaire was carried out. The sample consisted of 207 knowledge workers. Statistical analysis methods (descriptive, regression, and process analyses) were used to test the hypothesised relationships.
3. This study found a significant negative relationship between team viability and quiet quitting. A significant positive relationship was observed between team viability and career satisfaction. The mediating role of career satisfaction in team viability and quiet quitting relationship was found to be significant. These findings demonstrated that team viability can directly or indirectly influence quiet quitting when team members experience career satisfaction. The results of this study offer practical implications for organisations that focus on building and fostering viable knowledge worker teams that could help decrease quiet quitting.

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