

A Qualitative Exploration of Management and Leadership Challenges in Addressing Quiet Quitting Intention within Private Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Talent retention remains a persistent challenge for private educational institutions, particularly within the socio-cultural and resource-constrained context of South Punjab, Pakistan. Although existing literature has examined employee turnover and disengagement, the growing phenomenon of Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI), where talented employees remain physically present yet psychologically detached from their work, has received limited attention, especially in school and college settings. This qualitative study explored the leadership and managerial challenges underlying QQI and their implications for retaining talented teaching staff. Using purposive sampling, data were collected from 19 respondents, including principals, vice principals, teachers, HR officers, and administrators across private schools and intermediate-level colleges. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using a six-phase thematic analysis approach. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, thematic insights were further triangulated with existing scholarly literature. The analysis revealed ten major challenges contributing to quiet disengagement, including workload imbalance, limited career advancement, inadequate compensation, weak communication channels, emotional exhaustion, lack of HR governance, behavioral stressors in classrooms, insufficient recognition, digital competency pressures, and misalignment between institutional goals and ground-level realities. Findings showed that management struggled to address QQI due to informal organizational structures, scarcity of resources, and entrenched socio-cultural norms that shape leadership practices in the region. This study offers a nuanced, context-specific understanding of the managerial barriers in mitigating QQI and contributes to the broader discourse on employee disengagement by highlighting critical areas requiring administrative reforms and supportive leadership practices to improve talent retention in private educational institutions.

Keywords: *Quiet Quitting Intention, Talent Retention, Private Education Sector, Management Styles, Leadership Challenges, Thematic Analysis, South Punjab, Pakistan*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Talent retention (TR) is a capability of an organization to attract, encourage, and retain employees via policies that lessen the turnover rates, elevate the satisfaction levels, and give rise to the long-term commitment (Jain et al., 2023; Siddiqui and Shaukat, 2021). Sound retention plans meet professional, psychological, and personal demands of employees, positive engagement and performance, and

organizational balance (Gohar and Qureshi, 2021). In the global market, it is difficult to retain talented employees with the rapid technological change, globalization and changing expectations of the workforce (Butt et al., 2020; Meo et al., 2024).

According to recent studies, there is also the so-called Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI), which implies that the staff stays at the workplace but psychologically leaves work and performs minimum work duties (Nimmi et al., 2024; Russo, 2024). The autocratic leadership, absence of recognition, lack of career growth, low autonomy, and workplace stress are the reasons that make QQI deplete emotional and psychological resources (Pevac, 2024; Koch, 2024). In the world, such an unspoken breakup poses a threat to organizational performance and culture, and the engaged employees tend to quit, suddenly leaving a skill vacuum (Gallup, 2023; Wigert, 2021).

Low salaries, job insecurity, insufficient professional development, and management are the factors that make the functioning of private educational institutions in South Asia, including Pakistan, acute in terms of retention (Oad and Niazi, 2021; Antoninis et al., 2023). In comparison to the public schools, where policies are organized and training is formal, in the private schools, the career pathways and the supportive cultures at work are not well established, and educators become more susceptible to the QQI (Tahira, 2020; Alam et al., 2021). There is evidence in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka that teacher retention is a matter that requires not just financial rewards but also recognition, professional learning, workload that is manageable, and institutional practices that are supportive.

It is well established in the literature that such aspects of retention as work environment, autonomy, professional growth, communication, and compensation are important factors, but few studies directly associate their influence with the drivers of QQI (Salova et al., 2024; Pevac, 2024). The precursor effect of QQI on the long-term effect on turnover is under-researched, which has become a research gap. According to previous research, the mitigation of disengagement may be achieved through the focus on leadership styles, non-financial rewards, and workplace socialization (Oad and Niazi, 2021; Kim and Sohn, 2024).

The deteriorating quality of the school system in Pakistan has led to an increase in the number of the private education sector (Tahira, 2020). However, low remuneration, unreliable contracts, irregular training, and weak management assistance make it difficult to recruit and retain qualified teachers at the private school (Gohar and Qureshi, 2021; Smith, 2024). The differences between the two systems are apparent in the teacher pay, training, facilities, and curriculum, whereby, in most cases, the private schools do not have any formal training and career development opportunities, which adds to their susceptibility to QQI. This means that the risk of attrition, lack of employee engagement, and organizational capacity is increased in the case of private schools.

The majority of previous studies on faculty retention in Pakistan have concentrated on higher education establishments (Akhtar et al., 2015; Z. Ahmed and Ali, 2024), and hence, there is a gap in knowledge concerning secondary school and college establishments in Pakistan. To fill this gap, it is necessary to discuss the connection between QQI, management practices, and talent retention and to work out context-specific policies in order to increase employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention rates in the sphere of private education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Talent retention (TR) is one of the most significant human resource management functions, which covers policies, practices, and strategies to retain skilled staff, reduce turnover, and guarantee organizational sustainability (Christian et al., 2011; Gallup, 2024; Rich et al., 2010). Good retention strategies not only save on the costs of recruitment and training, but also ensure that knowledge is retained within the

institution, allow stakeholders to engage, and improve their performance. Talent retention is one of the main issues that organizations are grappling with across the world because of the fast changes in technology, labor markets, and employee demands (Butt et al., 2020; Meo et al., 2024). One of these issues has been the so-called Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI), which is defined as an employee who is present physically, but is psychologically absent and only does bare minimum work. QQI is represented by lower productivity, absenteeism, and reduced organizational commitment, which eventually affect the retention and performance of the organization (Koch, 2024; Igbokwe et al., 2021; Russo, 2024).

Empirical research indicated that insecurity at work, the absence of recognition, the absence of socialization, dehumanization, and insufficient support of well-being conditions are frequent antecedents of QQI (Gupta and Dhar, 2024; Sarwar et al., 2024; Bhoir and Sinha, 2024). The result of job insecurity caused by high turnover rates and unstable contracts in certain industries leads to stress and anxiety, which harm increased disengagement and intention to leave. Likewise, professional autonomy, non-financial rewards, and career development are deprived, which in turn causes emotional depletion in employees, subsequently resulting in QQI behaviors (Aliane et al., 2023; Uzair and Mehmood, 2021). The dehumanization, whereby employees are treated as resources but not as individuals who are looked after, will also reduce engagement and promote psychological withdrawal (Alam et al., 2024; Sarwar et al., 2024). In addition, lack of organizational socialization and mentoring influences employee integration and commitment in a negative way, which supports disengagement (Saks and Ashforth, 1997; Bauer et al., 2007).

Theoretical views also shed more light on such dynamics. According to the theory of Conservation of Resources (COR), employees are interested in conserving physical, emotional, and psychological resources; when they are lost due to negative managerial behaviors or unfriendly working conditions, they become disengaged and experience QQI, which eventually decreases retention (Lagios et al., 2024). Although the earlier research used the Social Exchange Theory and the Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg to analyze retention, they mostly tested HR practices in a vacuum without considering the effects of managerial styles, non-financial incentives, and factors of disengagement (M. P. Nimmi et al., 2024; Mansoor et al., 2022). The combination of elements is therefore necessary, with a thorough approach, especially in an active setting of education in private.

Managerial variables play a major role in TR, and micromanagement and despotic leadership styles were found to have a significant contribution to QQI. Overuse of control, observing employees, and limiting autonomy is a type of micromanagement that leads to stress, low job satisfaction, and decreased creativity, which in turn contributes to disengagement and turnover (Zakaria et al., 2023; Aljabri and Alharthy, 2025). Authoritarian leadership, which comes with despotism, arrogance, and exploitation, kills employee trust and morale, reducing engagement and elevating turnover potential (Khizar et al., 2023; Ghanem Atalla et al., 2024). On the other hand, non-financial incentives like recognition, career development, participative decision-making, and friendly working conditions create engagement, increase loyalty, and counteract QQI, which corresponds to the hierarchy of needs in addressing the needs of self-actualization and esteem (Uzair and Mehmood, 2021; Iram and Rafiq, 2024). Lack of such recognition can lead to increased chances of disengagement and reduction of effort to minimum duties by employees, which impacts retention and organizational results (Onavwie et al., 2023; Russo, 2024).

Research in the world has provided support that validates the applicability of these factors in learning organizations. European and Southeast Asian research points to the fact that teacher retention is not only affected by financial rewards, but also by work conditions, leadership, personnel development, and non-financial rewards (David and Naparan, 2024; Xuecheng et al., 2022). The detrimental consequences of disengagement are performance, teamwork, and general morale, which creates the condition favorable to QQI and turnover. The private education sector in Pakistan has been experiencing issues with acute

retention because of low pay, poor job security, low professional development, and the absence of formal managerial support (Oad & Niazi, 2021; Antoninis et al., 2023). Although the system of public schools inherits structured policies and higher pay, the system of private institutions is continuously dependent on the amount of tuition fees, does not have standard training, and offers fewer benefits, which makes them more susceptible to QQI. The lack of talent retention policies in the national and provincial systems such as the National Education Policy 2017-2025, the New Deal 2018-23 in Punjab, and the efforts of Punjab Education Foundation only makes this issue more severe because the institutions in this sector do not have any formal means of ensuring teacher welfare, opportunities, or sustainability (Akram and Yang, 2021; Bibi et al., 2022).

Although there are flaws in the area of talent retention, the current studies in Pakistan are mainly concentrated on the institution and higher education and little on secondary, higher secondary, and college-level education on the private sector (Tehseen and Ul Hadi, 2015; Siddiqui and Shaukat, 2021). This leaves a significant gap, since the dynamics of QQI, administrative styles, non-financial rewards, and socialization in the organization context of the private schools are under-researched. It is essential to deal with this gap because not only will the preservation of talented teachers contribute to the stability of the institutions, but also to the quality of teaching and achievements.

The retention of talent in private education institutions is a complex response that depends on employee disengagement, management practices, working conditions, and non-financial rewards. Quiet quitting intention proves to be a critical determinant in the connection between unfavorable workplace conditions and reduced retention, whereas supportive leadership, socialization, and recognition can alleviate this threat. The lack of any elaborate retention policies in the sector of the Pakistani personal education provides an indication of the necessity of specific interventions and studies that would allow building sustainable measures to increase engagement, turnover, and ensure the work of organizations.

Problem Statement

Organizational success heavily relies on employee retention, which is a vital element of the business, but the sector of the Pakistani economy, which is the private education, is in dire need of employee retention, in terms of faculty members and specialists in their subjects. Although it has a workforce of 60 to 61 percent (teachers), approximately 1,578,350 teachers (nearly half of total teachers in the sector) still reports incredibly high turnover rates of nearly 46 percent of teachers who shift their jobs because of poor job security, lack of career development, inadequate managerial support (Pakistan Education Statistics 2023-24; Siddiqui and Shaukat, 2021). Given that most of the subject specialists are either in the STEM or the business faculty, the resignation rates are higher than 25% as many are seeking corporate jobs or opportunities elsewhere, which is adding to the brain drain and jeopardizing the quality of education (Pakistan Education Statistics 2023-24; Butt et al., 2020).

Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI) of staying in a given role, but abstinence from discretionary duties is another phenomenon that further weakens retention and institutional performance (Gallup, 2024; Russo, 2024). Such passive disengagement is caused by such factors as dehumanization, ineffective socialization at work, job insecurity, and poor managerial practices, including micromanagement and despotic leadership (Abbasi and Belhadjali, 2024; F. U. Khan et al., 2021). Pakistan has not capitalized on the benefits of non-financial rewards and recognition as one of the most important incentives in the global setting, thereby limiting the ability to promote employee engagement and retention (Tang, 2023; Shahzad et al., 2024). Examples of these challenges are the private education sector in South Punjab. Having approximately 80,000 non-state schools and 43 percent of intermediate colleges, the region relies on quality teachers, but the lack of resources, low wages, and insufficient promotion systems force quite a significant part of the population to become disengaged or leave (Pakistan Education Statistics 2023-24; Hinduja et al., 2023). This

disengagement not only impacts institutional stability, but also student outcomes, organizational reputation, and general sector growth. Although the sector plays an essential role with an estimated enrolment of about 21 million students, 44 percent of all student enrolment despite the industry being unequally distributed, there are no systematic policies on retention, uniform pay scales, or management approaches, and thus the private institutions are not well-prepared to deal with talent drain (USAID Bureau, 2023; Asian Development Bank, 2023).

The gap is significant as there has not been any specific research on the interaction between managerial practices, quiet quitting intention, and employee retention, and such a study in the context of the Pakistani private education sector. In the absence of such interventions to help overcome these challenges, there is a possibility that the sector will continue to deteriorate in terms of educational quality, continue to argue with workforce instability, and jeopardize its ability to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. The issue is complex: the high turnover, the common cases of quiet quitting, the ineffective managerial habits, and the lack of retention measures endanger the sphere of Pakistani private education. To tackle this problem, empirical studies were needed to understand the causes of disengagement and create an evidence-based approach to retain the talented educators, increase the level of workplace well-being, and performance in the organization.

Research Question

RQ. What challenges do management and leadership face in addressing Quiet Quitting Intention and retaining talent in private education institutions?

Research Objective

To identify key challenges faced by management and leadership in addressing quiet quitting and maintaining staff retention in a private education institution

Significance of the Study

The study is important because it provides an answer to the under-investigated phenomenon of Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI) and how it affects talent retention in the private education industry in Pakistan. The study addresses a significant gap in the literature on the topic and in practice by exploring the impact of managerial styles (despotic leadership and micromanagement) and non-financial rewards and organizational citizenship behavior on faculty disengagement. The results will consist of empirical evidence on how the leadership practices can either alleviate or intensify passive disengagement and offer institutions with evidence-based strategies on ways to retain qualified teachers, improve workplace well-being, and quality of education.

There are also policy implications, practical implications, and social implications of the study. It provides practical suggestions to school administrators, policymakers, and provincial governments to adopt retention-based leadership, reward based on recognition, and work environments that are supportive. The enhancement in faculty retention will lower turnover-related expenses, provide continuity in the teaching field, and positively influence the learning outcomes of the students. Through its contribution to sustainable workforce practices, the research correlates with more global objectives, such as (UN long-term) SDGs of Quality Education and Decent Work and Economic Growth, in its efforts to support long-term institutional and socio-economic development in Pakistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative methodology, this research addresses the following research question:

What challenges do management and leadership face in addressing Quiet Quitting Intention and retaining talent in private education institutions?

The qualitative phase of the present research explored the issues influencing employee retention and Quiet Quitting Intention development in the sphere of the Pakistani private education. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with school administrators, college principals, faculty members, and human resource professionals, capturing their first-hand experience and views regarding managerial practices, workplace environment, and factors leading to disengagement and turnover, especially in South Punjab.

Population and Sampling of the Study

The qualitative part of the study was aimed at getting a deeper understanding of the affective, experiential, and perceptual aspects of Quiet Quitting Intention (QOI) in educators and administrators. The purpose of this phase was to understand how the stakeholders perceive the managerial behaviors, challenges at work, and retention problems in the private educational institutions. School principals, college administrators, senior teachers, and teachers who portrayed Quiet Quitting Intention among the three key regions of South Punjab, Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan were the target population. These respondents were chosen due to their first-hand experience with disengagement and retention issues and direct participation in the faculty supervision, institutional management, and day-to-day academic operations. The purposive sampling strategy was to be used to make sure that it captures information-rich cases, as shown in the table below.

Table No. 1

Participant Category	Role / Expertise Description	Region	Sampling Technique	Expected No. of Participants
School Principals / Heads	Provide insights on institutional policies, administrative challenges, staff management, and retention issues	Bahawalpur, Multan, D.G. Khan	Purposive Sampling	6 (2 per region)
College Principals / Administrators	Offer understanding of faculty supervision, resource constraints, policy implementation, and leadership challenges	Bahawalpur, Multan, D.G. Khan	Purposive Sampling	6 (2 per region)
Senior Teachers / Faculty Members	Provide classroom-level insights on workload, leadership interaction, organizational culture, and retention concerns	Bahawalpur, Multan, D.G. Khan	Purposive / Snowball Sampling	4 (distributed: 2 Bahawalpur, 1 Multan, 1 DG Khan)

Teachers Exhibiting Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI)	Share direct experiences of disengagement, psychological withdrawal, workload stress, and managerial shortcomings influencing QQI	Bahawalpur, Multan, D.G. Khan	Purposive Sampling (criterion-based)	3 (1 per region)
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The qualitative stage of the study has used 19 individuals at the private educational establishments of the three geographical divisions of the South Punjab: Bahawalpur, Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan as a way of having a balance and a sense of context in the study. The respondents were school principals, college administrators, senior teachers, and teachers who demonstrated Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI). Principals and administrators (12 participants) responded to the questions about the institutional policies, leadership practices, and structural issues affecting faculty retention. The views of senior teachers (4 participants) on work-related dynamics and managerial relationships were revealed at the classroom level, whereas three teachers who identified with Quiet Quitting Intention were able to share crucial first-person insights regarding disengagement and stressors in the workplace. Purposive and snowball methods were combined to make sure that only the relevant and information-rich cases were selected, resulting in deeper and more credible information gathered.

Qualitative Data Analysis and Validation

In this study, thematic analysis was used, which is considered to be one of the most methodical and rigorous methods of interpreting qualitative data. The qualitative information analysis was based on the six-step system suggested by the prominent researchers, which involves: becoming familiar with the data, creating the first codes, searching for possible themes, reviewing and refining the themes, defining and naming the themes, and the last step is writing the analytical report (Sandhiya & Bhuvanewari, 2024; McLeod, 2024). Through this process, the researcher was able to establish recurrent patterns, subtle perceptions, and hidden meanings that were associated with managerial issues, work experiences, and Quiet Quitting Intention in private education institutions. In order to make the findings more credible and trustworthy, the emerging themes were further triangulated with the existing literature, and the consistency, validation, and alignment with the already available scholarly evidence were ensured.

Qualitative Data Thematic Analysis

The qualitative part of the research utilized semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with principals, vice principals, headteachers, and teachers, as well as HR/administrative offices in the three regions (South Punjab, Bahawalpur, Multan, and DG Khan). The rationale was to dig profoundly into the managerial and leadership issues that have led to Quiet Quitting Intention (QQI) in the faculty and other supporting staff in the private academic institutions. It utilized thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which involves familiarization, coding, developing themes, refining, and interpreting. The last themes were also triangulated with the existing scholarly literature to enhance the validity of the analysis.

Throughout the interviews, the respondents all talked about a sense of growing disinterest, emotional burnout, and not feeling valued by the teachers within the individual educational institutions. Top managers complained of the lack of morale because of the workload, low payment systems, and increased parental expectations. The educators pointed to little or no professional growth, inadequate recognition, and inflexible top-down management practices as major forces behind the propensity of quiet quitting. The HR officers highlighted high turnover, difficulties related to keeping the number of the working staff on board, and the lack of clearly defined HR policies in small to medium-sized schools. In general, the accounts of

the participants showed the presence of a multi-layered structural and emotional load, representing a leadership environment that is strained and an employee base that is slowly declining to take an active role.

WORKLOAD IMBALANCE AND ROLE OVERSTRETCH

Respondent Opinions: Teachers, Principals, Vice Principals.

There were persistent reports by leaders on the lack of sharing academic and administrative roles, which led to teachers having too many classroom assignments, co-curricular activities, and paperwork. Teachers reported burnout and emotional exhaustion as the major causes of passive disengagement.

The same is evident in the Job Demands-Resources model, which was presented by Bakker and Demerouti, where workload pressure is an antecedent of withdrawal behavior as well as silent disengagement.

Poor Professional Promotion Opportunities

Respondent Opinions: Teachers, HR Officers.

The respondents articulated that in South Punjab, there is no well-organized promotional ladder in the private schools nor is there any promotion of professional development and the improvement of skills. The educators experienced a sense of stagnation, which discouraged and reinforced the intention to quit quietly.

Similar studies by Chambers (2023) support this problem, stating that a lack of occupation in education areas causes gradual deidentification and low performance commitment.

Poor Pay and Non-Financial Incentives

Respondents of Interest: Teachers, Principals.

Teachers also pointed out numerous times salary dissatisfaction, untimely payment, and lack of performance incentives. Managers admitted financial limitations and could not keep pace with the compensation rates in the market.

Among the most effective predictors of teacher turnover and intention to withdraw quietly in extra-role duties, literature (Akhtar and Hashmi, 2023) identifies compensation disparity.

Failure to Communicate with the Employees and Poor Communication Channels

Respondent Opinions: Principals, Teachers.

Most of the teachers complained that they were not heard, involved in planning processes, and were not able to express their concerns without fear. Administrative workload and time pressure were the reasons why leaders acknowledged gaps in participatory leadership.

Research by Edmondson (2019) proves that the reluctance to engage is lowered by the absence of psychological safety, which elevates the tendency of quiet quitting in academic workplaces.

Emotional Burnout and Absence of Well-Being Support

Respondent Opinions: Head-teachers, Teachers.

The participants reported increased mental pressure due to performance stress, discipline management, and parental expectations. The majority of institutions do not have official well-being systems.

According to current literature on teacher burnout (Madigan and Kim, 2021), emotional exhaustion is one of the most crucial antecedents of silent withdrawal and teacher disengagement.

Lack of Formal HR Policies and Institutional Governance

Respondent Opinions: HR Officers, Principals.

Little and medium-sized privately owned institutions are hardly likely to have a systematic HR rule. The unclear job descriptions, inconsistency of appraisal, and unreasonable administrative choices were highlighted by the respondents.

The lack of HR governance is a common motif in Pakistani research on the education sector of the private sector (Shah & Hameed, 2022), and the absence of policy is directly connected to turnover and disengagement.

Stress in Classroom Management and Behavioral Problems

Respondent Opinions: Teachers, Vice Principals.

The teachers reported that there was an increasing number of behavioral problems among the students, which made the work more emotional and less satisfying. It noted the lack of classroom support mechanisms in leadership.

The literature on teacher stress (Collie, 2022) also demonstrates that the lack of control over behavioral disturbances increases burnout and lowers the commitment of the employees.

Culture of Lack of Recognition and Appreciation

Viewpoints of the Respondents: Teachers, Administrators.

Respondents stated that the successes are not usually highly praised or noticed. According to teachers, this unvalued situation led to a significant portion of psychological disengagement and low levels of extra-role involvement.

Research confirms that quiet quitting behaviors are highly predicted by the lack of recognition because they reduce the intrinsic motivation and organizational attachment (Dai et al., 2023).

Adaptation Pressure of Technology and Gaps in Digital Competency

Respondent Views: Academic Supervisors, IT Coordinators, Teachers.

Especially, teachers of senior status indicated that there was growing pressure to embrace new Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital attendance systems, online tests, and multimedia instruction media.

There was a lot of undertraining and being overloaded with the constant digital shifts. IT coordinators underscored that leadership mostly presupposes that teachers are already digitally fluent, which provokes frustration, resistance, and disengagement.

Likewise, the similar conclusions by Trust and Whalen (2020) indicate that the majority of unprepared faculty members tend to react to the technological demands with a lack of engagement because they believe their capabilities are not similar to those they observed in the current case when discussing the quiet quitting indicators of the research.

Disjunction between Ground Realities and Institutional Vision

Views by Respondents: Principals, School Owners, Senior teachers.

Principals and owners said that they had ambitious institutional goals with regard to student outcomes, enrolment, branding, and competitive positioning. Teachers, however, stated that the demands frequently exceed the resources, the workforce capacity, and the institutional infrastructure. Lack of alignment between the vision-setting and ground-level constraints was frustrating, lessened confidence in the leadership, and led to silent withdrawal. According to senior teachers, the lack of clarity or unrealistic expectations demotivates staff and is directly related to passive disengagement.

The research on educational leadership (Bush, 2020) has proven the statement that the discrepancy between the strategic vision and the operational feasibility inhibits the motivation of the staff and causes a state of cognitive dissonance. Likewise, Onyango (2022) has discovered that unrealistic institutional instructions add to the burden of emotions and cause workers to exhibit a characteristic of quiet quitting behavior.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The research has examined the issue of management and leadership in dealing with quiet quitting intention and talent retention in the private education institutions, especially in South Punjab. The evaluation of the perspectives of the respondents that were conducted among teachers, principals, HR officers, academic supervisors, and administrators identified ten key issues that are interrelated and contribute to passive disengagement and lack of organizational commitment. Workload imbalance, administrative burden and classroom management stress were recurrently reported by teachers, which led to burnout and emotional fatigue. Leadership realized the same, as there were few resources to allocate work and behavioral support. There were gaps in career progression opportunities, official HR policies, and explicit governance procedures, which led to the development of the feeling of stagnation and injustice.

The comments of both principals and teachers pointed at discontent with salary and the absence of incentives as the core sources of quiet quitting intentions. Poor communication channels and top-down decision-making also contributed to challenges since they weakened psychological safety and diminished staff voice. Emotional burnout was determined to be rampant and the institutions provided little wellbeing support. Integration of technology became a major pressure point with lack of proper training being a source of frustrations and lack of engagement. In the meantime, a lack of coordination between the strategic expectations of the leadership and the realities on the ground decreased trust and motivation, driving the staff to minimal compliance behaviors. Finally, teachers stated that there was a serious lack of appreciation and recognition, which weakened their intrinsic motivation and supported quiet quitting tendencies.

The results of the research suggest that quiet quitting intention is not caused by one issue but by a complicated set of structural, managerial, psychological, and resource-based factors that deteriorate the morale of employees and institutional stability.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the educational problems experienced by the South Punjab private education institutions are multi-layered and threaten the institution greatly, which has led to quiet quitting intention and challenges in retaining qualified teachers. The themes show that quiet quitting is not an indicator of laziness among employees but is a manifestation of organizational failures such as work overloads, poor pay, the poor culture of communication, lack of career advancement, and unmitigated emotional exhaustion among employees. There is a predominantly reactive approach to management and leadership practices that are limited by small budgetary allocations, informal HR practices, and top-down administrative cultures that tighten teacher control and involvement. Lack of recognition systems, clarity of governance and wellbeing support is another contributing factor to disengagement. As well, disconnection between the vision of leadership and the capacity of teachers is increased by the rapid digitalization and unrealistic institutional expectations.

To realize sustainable improvement, the institutions should implement a strategic and humanistic leadership style through investment in the development of HR policies, teacher welfare, recognition, participatory communication, training with the help of technologies, and realistic expectations of performance. The structural changes coupled with relational leadership can only boost the commitment of staffs in private education institutions, minimize quiet quitting intentions, as well as improve retention of talents in the long term.

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