

## THE ROLE OF WORK MOTIVATION AS MEDIATION AGAINST WORKLOAD AND QUIET QUITTING IN GEN Z CONTENT CREATORS AND AFFILIATORS, MADIUN CITY

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### *Abstract*

*The digital revolution has had a major impact on the structure and dynamics of the global workforce. Rapidly developing information and communication technology has enabled the creation of new professions that previously did not exist, such as content creators, streamers, influencers, and affiliate marketers. This study aims to determine the effect of workload and work motivation on quiet quitting, the effect of workload on work motivation, and to determine whether work motivation can mediate the effect of workload on quiet quitting among Gen Z content creators and affiliates in Madiun City. This study is quantitative. The sample size used is 100 respondents. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis. The results of the study indicate that: 1) workload has a positive and significant effect on work motivation among content creators and affiliates, 2) work motivation has a positive and significant effect on quiet quitting among content creators and affiliates, and 3) work motivation positively mediates the effect of workload on quiet quitting among Gen Z content creators and affiliates in Madiun City.*

**Keywords:** *Reward, Training and Mentoring, Job Satisfaction, and Motivation.*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Quiet quitting is a new phenomenon in the modern world of work, which is characterized by the behavior of continuing to carry out work at a minimum without additional initiative or emotional commitment. Although seemingly passive, this phenomenon is considered a form of “quiet resistance” to work imbalance, burnout, and unrealistic expectations. McKinsey (2025) adds that quiet quitting is more common in the digital sector and flexible work because of the blurring of the boundaries between professional and personal. Indonesia is not immune from this

phenomenon. Sources from LinkedIn in 2023 noted that 45% of Gen Z workers in Indonesia showed symptoms of low engagement, and minimal work behavior without initiative. This is most pronounced in the profession of content creator and affiliate, which Gen Z is increasingly choosing as a career path. In developing cities like Madiun, the growth of the digital creator community is quite significant, but has not been studied scientifically

In Indonesia, this job is not only a side option, but has also become the main source of income for some Gen Z. The 2023 Shopee Affiliate report notes a significant increase in affiliate program users from 18–25 year olds since 2021. In fact, many of them operate from small cities like Madiun. According to the Madiun Communication and Information Service report in 2024, there are hundreds of active accounts involved in the digital content-based creative economy in the city, showing a trend that this work has become part of the local economic ecosystem. To strengthen this contextual understanding, the following is an overview of initial data on the content creator and affiliate profession in Madiun City:

Tabel 1. Madiun City Content Creator and Affiliate Community Data

Platform	Content Type	Estimated Monthly Income
TikTok	Entertainment, Local Education, UMKM Promotion	Rp. 1-5 Million
Instagram	Fashion, Culinary, Lifestyle Content	Rp. 2-6 Million
Shopee Affiliate	Reviews of local products, skincare, household appliances, etc	Depends on traffic (Rp. 5-4 Million)

Source: Local Digital Community 2023, Madiun Communication and Information Service 2024, Shopee Affiliate Network Report 2023

In the context of digital work such as content creators and affiliates, this phenomenon can be seen from a decrease in upload frequency, reduction in content quality, or loss of creator interaction with the audience (Nguyen & Vu, 2025). As a response to this increasingly widespread phenomenon, many researchers have begun to explore the relationship between quiet quitting and other variables such as workload and work motivation. Work motivation is one of the most important psychological factors in determining an individual's engagement, productivity and resilience to work pressure. In the context of organizational psychology, motivation is defined as internal and external drives that influence the direction, intensity and persistence of individual work behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2020). When workload increases, individuals with high

motivation will be better able to persist and continue to show work engagement. Conversely, when motivation is low, workload tends to lead to passive behavior such as quiet quitting (Hiltunen, 2023).

The city of Madiun, which is located in the western part of East Java, is a developing city that is experiencing accelerated digitalization and growth in the creative economy sector. Even though it is not part of a large metropolitan area such as Surabaya or Yogyakarta, Madiun has significant potential in developing a community-based digital creative ecosystem explained in the Madiun Communication and Information Service in 2024. In recent years, the young generation in this city has begun to utilize digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Shopee Affiliate to build personal branding, promote local products, and create income-generating content.

The tendency is that quiet quitting is still considered a popular discourse on social media, not as a work phenomenon worthy of academic analysis. In fact, for young digital workers like Gen Z creators in Madiun, quiet quitting is not just "lazy to work", but a form of coping with work pressure without a support system. The absence of scientific approaches that address this area indicates a significant conceptual gap in the digital work psychology literature. Moreover, there has been no previous study that simultaneously examined the three variables workload, work motivation (as a mediator), and quiet quitting in one complete research model among Gen Z digital creators. Previous studies tend to only connect the two variables directly, or separate the study of work motivation from the phenomenon of disengagement. Therefore, this research occupies a strategic position in filling the empirical and theoretical gap by designing a mediation model that is methodologically, contextually and sociologically relevant.

Meanwhile, work motivation is positioned as a mediating variable because of its very strategic function in bridging work pressure and work results. Individuals with high motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, tend to be able to withstand workload pressures and continue to show positive work behavior. Conversely, when motivation decreases, workload that was previously tolerable becomes a source of frustration, stress and emotional withdrawal from work (Saraiva &

Nogueiro, 2025). Thus, motivation has a dual role: as a protector when pressure comes, as well as an early indicator when symptoms of disengagement begin to appear. That is why motivation was chosen as a crucial mediating variable in this model.

## B. METHODS

This type of research is quantitative. The number of samples used was 100 respondents. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. The results of data analysis in this research used instrument tests which include validity and reliability tests, descriptive analysis, and path analysis using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis method.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH RESULT

#### 1. Struktural Model (*Inner Model*)

##### a. *R-Squares*

The results of PLS R-Square values produce the number of Variance of the construct explained by the model. Presented the results of calculating the R-Square value:

Variabel	<i>R-Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R-Square</i>
Work Motivation (Z)	0,893	0,892
Quit Quitting (Y)	0,465	0,448

Source: Data Processing Using SmartPLS (2025)

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be seen that the ultimate R-Square of the variable quitting variable (Y) is a total of 0.465. These results show that approximately 46.5% of the efficiency of quitting (Y) is influenced by variable workload (X). The ultimate R-Square of work motivation variable (Z) is 0.893. These results show that 89.3% of the effectiveness of work motivation (Z) is influenced by variable workload (X).

##### b. *Model Goodness of Fit (GoF)*

The results of the Goodness of Fit (GoF) assessment in this study can be seen in the following table:

**Tabel 3. Output Quality Indexes**

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,079	0,079

Source: Data Processing Using SmartPLS (2025)

The result of the SRMR value is 0.080. Where the SRMR value means that the path model built in this research is a good model.

### c. Q-Squares

The results of the Q-Squares test in this research can be seen in the following table:

**Tabel 4. Q-Square Value from SmartPLS3 Application Analysis Results**

Variabel	Q-Squares
Work Motivation (Z)	0,675
Quit Quitting (Y)	0,605

Source: Data Processing Using SmartPLS (2025)

The Q-Squares value for the endogenous variable, namely quiet quitting (Y), is 0.605. Because Q-Squares  $0.605 > 0$ , it is concluded that workload (X) and work motivation (Z) have predictive relevance for quitting (Y). If the Q-Squares value is 0.639, which is greater than 0.35, it can be concluded that the predictive relevance is strong. This indicates that the model has a relevant predictive value and has a good observation value (more than 0).

The Q-Squares value for the endogenous variable, namely work motivation (Z), is 0.675. Because Q-Squares is  $0.675 > 0$ , it is concluded that workload (X) has predictive relevance for work motivation (Z). It is known that the Q-Squares value is 0.639, which is greater than 0.35, so it is concluded that predictive relevance is strong.

## 2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis research in SmartPLS using bootstrapping models. There are pictures of bootstrapping models as follows:

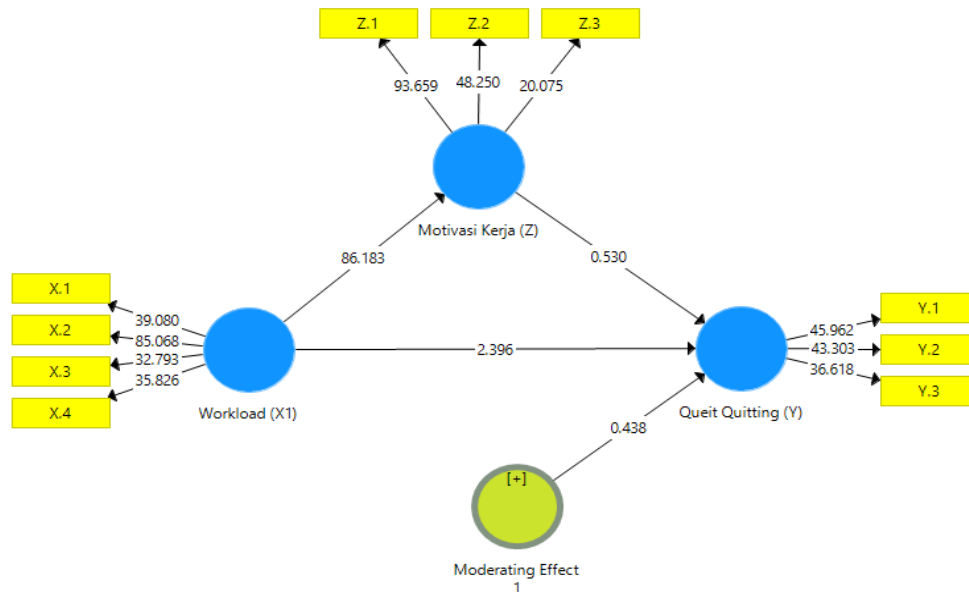


Figure 1. SmartPLS3 Bootstrapping Model

Table 5. Significance Test Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Workload (X1) -> Work Motivation (Z)	0,945	0,946	0,011	8,183	<b>0,000</b>
Workload (X1) -> Queit Quitting (Y)	0,871	0,937	0,363	2,396	<b>0,017</b>
Work Motivation (Z) -> Queit Quitting (Y)	0,195	0,263	0,368	0,530	<b>0,096</b>
(workload) x Work Motivation -> Queit Quitting (Y)	0,060	0,049	0,137	0,438	<b>0,061</b>

Source: Data Processing Using SmartPLS (2025)

From the table above, it can be seen that the results of the analysis using SmartPLS 3 bootstrapping obtained the following results:

- The path coefficient value is 0.945, the p-value is 0.000, and the T-Statistics value is 8.183. The p-value is smaller than 0.05 and the T-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (1.66), which indicates that hypothesis-1 can be accepted. This indicates that the workload variable has a significant effect on work motivation.

- b. The path coefficient value is 0.871, the p-value is 0.017, and the T-Statistics value is 2.396. The p-value is smaller than 0.05 and the T-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (1.66), which indicates that hypothesis-2 can be accepted. This indicates that the workload variable has a significant influence on quiet quitting.
- c. The path coefficient value is 0.195, the p-value is 0.096, and the T-Statistics value is 2.530. The p-value is smaller than 0.05 and the T-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (1.66), which indicates that hypothesis-3 can be accepted. This indicates that the work motivation variable has a significant effect on quiet quitting.
- d. The path coefficient value is 0.060, the p-value is 0.061, and the T-Statistics value is 2.438. The p-value is smaller than 0.05 and the T-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (1.66), which indicates that hypothesis-4 can be accepted. This indicates that the work motivation variable can significantly moderate workload on quiet quitting

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The Influence of Workload on Work Motivation

The implications of this research regarding the influence of workload on the work motivation of GEN Z content creators and affiliates in Madiun City show that the ambiguous and unmeasurable workload in this profession makes Gen Z more susceptible to experiencing a loss of work motivation, especially when work expectations are not commensurate with the results obtained. In the creator and affiliate profession, success is not only measured by effort, but also by how effectively one navigates algorithms and trends that are often beyond an individual's control. This causes workload to become a major stressor which can trigger burnout or even withdrawal from work involvement (quiet quitting).

Quiet quitting, which is currently widely developing, is associated with various aspects of the work behavior of the younger generation, especially Gen Z, which shows a decrease in work engagement. One of the main triggers of this phenomenon is believed to come from

excessive workload and low work motivation of employees. This is in line with research conducted by Hardono (2020) explaining that there is an influence of workload on work motivation and its impact on employee work performance. When the workload is too high, the individual's internal motivation will be depressed and overall performance will decrease, opening up space for disengagement behavior such as quiet quitting.

Wijaya (2020) also explains that there is an influence of workload on work motivation (Study at PT Mayora Indah). Amri (2021) also explained that there is an influence of placement and workload on employee work motivation at the Aceh Province Water Service Office. Lioni (2021) also explained that there was an influence of workload on the work motivation of members of the Tni-Ad Battalion 641 Raider, West Kalimantan Province. Ramadhani (2023) also explained that there is an influence of workload on the work motivation of Plasa Telkom Group Maros employees. Prehastanti (2024) also explains that there is an influence of workload and work stress on employee performance with motivation as a mediating variable at Mahkota Shop in Ngawi.

## 2. Effect of Workload on Quiet Quitting

The implications of this research regarding the influence of workload on the quiet quitting content of GEN Z creators and affiliates in Madiun City show that workload in the context of digital work has expanded its meaning. No longer just about the number of physical tasks, workload in the content creator and affiliate profession includes mental, emotional and social burdens caused by algorithmic pressure and public expectations. In the creator and affiliate profession, success is not only measured by effort, but also by how effectively one navigates algorithms and trends that are often beyond an individual's control. This causes workload to become a major stressor which can trigger burnout or even withdrawal from work involvement (quiet quitting).

Work motivation has a significant influence on the quiet quitting phenomenon. Low work motivation can be the main trigger for employees choosing to do quiet quitting, that is, working

to the extent required without more initiative or emotional involvement. On the other hand, high work motivation can reduce the possibility of quiet quitting because employees feel motivated to give their best and contribute more to the organization.

This is confirmed by research conducted by Margaretha (2025) explaining that there is an influence of motivation on quiet quitting with organizational justice as a mediator in generation Z employees. Sulthan (2024) also explains that there is an influence of work motivation on quiet quitting in employees of Bank Muamalat, Surabaya Branch. Maulana (2024) also explains that there is an influence of Work Motivation on Quiet Quitting. Astuti (2024) also explains that there is an influence of motivation and job satisfaction on quiet quitting in employees.

### **3. The Influence of Work Motivation on Quiet Quitting**

The implications of this research regarding the influence of work motivation on quiet quitting content creators and GEN Z affiliates in Madiun City show that the symptoms of quiet quitting arise from emotional exhaustion, high performance expectations, and a lack of space for self-reflection. In the context of digital work such as content creators and affiliates, this phenomenon can be seen from a decrease in the frequency of uploads, a reduction in content quality, or a loss of interaction between the creator and the audience. In response to this increasingly widespread phenomenon, many researchers have begun to explore the relationship between quiet quitting and other variables such as workload, work motivation, and emotional involvement.

This research also encourages a reorientation of organizational theory approaches towards digital informal workers, who are often positioned outside the scope of formal theory. By showing that Gen Z content creators and affiliates also experience work psychological patterns such as burnout, loss of meaning, and quiet quitting even though they are not in a formal organization, the boundaries between formal and informal workers are starting to blur from a psychological perspective. This opens up space to expand organizational behavior theory to include the dynamics of platform-based work, digital freelancing, and the economy

This is reinforced by research conducted by Sulthan (2024) which explains that there is an influence of workload on quiet quitting in employees of Bank Muamalat Surabaya Branch. Oktaviani (2023) also explains that there is an influence of workload on the quiet quitting potential of employees (Study of Gen Z Employees in Bandung City). Wulandari (2024) also explained that there is an influence of workload and job satisfaction on quiet quitting in generation Z employees with Psychological Empowerment as a Moderation. Ashim (2025) also explains that there is a relationship between workload and the quiet quitting phenomenon among Generation Z employees at PT X.

#### **4. The Role of Work Motivation as a Mediator for Workload and Quiet Quitting**

The implication in this research regarding the role of work motivation as a mediator of workload and quiet quitting is that it not only examines the direct relationship between classic variables such as workload and quiet quitting, but also places work motivation as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of workload on the level of involvement or emotional disconnection of workers. This kind of model provides a new understanding that motivation not only functions as the main driver of performance, but also as an adaptive mechanism that can prevent the negative impacts of high work pressure.

The research results show that work motivation acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between workload and Quiet Quitting. This means that a high workload does not necessarily have a negative impact on Quiet Quitting, as long as the individual has an adequate level of work motivation. Strong work motivation allows employees to respond to work pressure as a constructive challenge, not as a burden that weakens productivity. On the other hand, if motivation is at a low level, the workload has the potential to become psychological pressure which can trigger disengagement, ultimately leading to quiet quitting behavior.

This is confirmed by research conducted by Sulthan (2024) explaining that there is an influence of workload on quiet quitting with work motivation as a mediating variable in employees of Bank Muamalat Surabaya Branch. Work motivation can mediate the influence of

workload on quiet quitting. This means that work motivation acts as a variable that connects workload and quiet quitting behavior. High workload can reduce work motivation, and low work motivation can then encourage employees to engage in quiet quitting.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that: 1) The workload variable has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of GEN Z content creators and affiliates in Madiun City, so the first hypothesis is accepted. 2) The workload variable has a positive and significant effect on Quiet Quitting content for GEN Z creators and affiliates in Madiun City, so the second hypothesis is accepted. 3) The work motivation variable has a positive and significant effect on Quiet Quitting content for GEN Z creators and affiliates in Madiun City, so that the third hypothesis is accepted. 4) Work motivation is able to positively mediate the influence of workload on the quiet quitting content of GEN Z creators and affiliates in Madiun City. This shows that the presence of work motivation can increase the influence of workload on the quiet quitting content of GEN Z creators and affiliates in Madiun City so that the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

#### E. Suggestions

Based on the conclusions of this research, suggestions can be given to other researchers, to consider the contribution of the influence of other independent variables that influence quiet quitting which were not examined in this research. Apart from that, you should take different research respondents with different numbers so that more accurate results will be obtained.

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# SIMBA

**7<sup>th</sup> SEMINAR INOVASI  
MANAJEMEN BISNIS DAN  
AKUNTANSI**

Wulandari, A. (2024). Pengaruh Beban Kerja dan Kepuasan Kerja Terhadap Quiet Quitting pada Karyawan Generasi Z dengan Pemberdayaan Psikologis sebagai Pemoderasi. *Skripsi*. Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2024 | Diunduh dari <http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/>