

Quiet Quitting, Engagement, & Personality

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Middle Tennessee State University

August 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee for their knowledge and help throughout this process. Also, I would like to thank all of my friends and family for their support and encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank Hailey Moss for answering my endless amount of questions about the thesis process. I truly appreciate all of the help.

ABSTRACT

This research focused on the relationship between quiet quitting and engagement, achievement, and personality. There is limited research on quiet quitting which suggests that this is an important concept to investigate due to the increasing popularity of the topic of quiet quitting in the workplace. We tested correlations between quiet quitting and each of the Big 5 Personality traits, employee engagement, and achievement motivation. Extroversion and conscientiousness were both found to be negatively correlated to quiet quitting. Neuroticism was found to be positively correlated with quiet quitting. The results showed support for openness and agreeableness being negatively correlated with quiet quitting. Engagement and achievement motivation were both found to be negatively correlated with quiet quitting. This research provides better understanding of the type of individuals who engage in quiet quitting behavior.

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CHAPTER I: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

QUIET QUITTING

Quiet quitting is a relatively new term that has been growing more popular within organizations. However, there is not much research on this topic. This thesis aims to fill this gap by determining if personality and engagement are related to quiet quitting. Research on this topic is important because it could be beneficial for understanding the relationship between personality and quiet quitting and the relationship between engagement and quiet quitting. This research could also show the importance of limiting quiet quitting in the workplace. The following research covers topics including quiet quitting, engagement, work-life balance, burnout, and personality.

Quiet Quitting Definition

Quiet quitting is a new name for a behavior that has been a part of the workforce for a long time (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). Once this name was created, quiet quitting became increasingly popular on social media, and researchers began to further define the term. Quiet quitting can be defined as an employee's refusal to be an extra-mile performer typically due to an organization's inability to form a meaningful relationship with the employee (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). Quiet quitters have a decrease in their commitment to carry out assigned tasks and to avoid tasks that are not within their job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Instead of striving to perform their best at work, quiet quitters typically only put in the amount of effort needed to complete tasks that are within their job description. Quiet quitters have the tendency to opt out of any opportunity to increase their job requirements and refuse to put maximal effort into their roles. This thesis will use Formica and Sfodera's definition of quiet quitting for this thesis: Quiet quitters have a decrease in their commitment to carry out assigned tasks and to

avoid tasks that are not within their job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). There are several causes of quiet quitting including the lack of a career growth plan, low employment rates, lack of sensitivity to work-life balance, and organizational distrust.

Causes of Quiet Quitting

There are many reasons why quiet quitting exists in organizations. First, employers often do not provide employees with a career growth and development path, and this leaves employees feeling uncertain about their future and disengaged from their work (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023; Smith, 2022). If employees do not have the opportunity to grow in their career, they might have the tendency to opt out of any tasks that are not within their job description since they do not have a goal these tasks could help them obtain. This belief leads to the quiet quitting behavior. Second, there has been a shift in the workforce that resulted in a low employment rate and an inability for organizations to retain workers which gives employees the realization that there will be minimal repercussions for only performing tasks that are within their job description (Serenko, 2024). Employees have realized that they can keep their job and pay without having to go above and beyond in their work lives, so they participate in quiet quitting due to the lack of rewards for completing tasks outside of their job description and the lack of consequences for putting minimal effort into job tasks. Third, employees working in a company after the pandemic typically feel pressured by supervisors to take on projects beyond their job description that result in longer hours and putting their social life and family behind their work (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). When employees experience unrealistic demands, frustration, and fear spikes while motivation decreases (Smith, 2022). This lack of understanding and sensitivity to work-life balance causes problems for the employer-employee relationship and engagement in employees (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). The failure to value employees gives room for employees to

become unmotivated to put more energy into their work, and this results in the employees practicing quiet quitting. Fourth, organizational trust has recently declined (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). As organizational trust declines, commitment to the organization also declines which leads to a decrease in an organization's success (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). If employees do not trust an organization, their commitment drops, and they are far less likely to feel the want to go above and beyond in their job. Employees then participate in quiet quitting behaviors such as only performing jobs within their job description and putting minimal effort into their work. One study found that organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) can be related to quiet quitting (Suhendar et al., 2023). OCBs are voluntary actions that exceed an employee's job requirements and support the operation of a company (Suhendar et al., 2023). Since quiet quitters avoid tasks that are not within their job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022), a decrease in employees performing voluntary actions that go beyond the requirements of a job (OCBs) can be an indicator that employees are quiet quitting. To further understand quiet quitting, it is important to compare this term to similar concepts such as engagement, work-life balance, and burnout.

Relationship Between Quiet Quitting and Engagement

To look at the relationship between quiet quitting and engagement, definitions and comparisons need to be noted. Engagement can be defined as when employees put their whole physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities into their job performance (Saks, 2022). Low engagement is similar to quiet quitting because quiet quitters typically do not put their whole physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities into their performance. There are different types of performance that can be connected to engagement: task and contextual. One study found that vigor, dedication, and absorption variables of engagement are connected to contextual performance while vigor and absorption variables of engagement are related to task performance (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021). Task performance is the behaviors and services of an employee that

are related to the work, and contextual performance refers to the behaviors of an employee that is not directly related to the work (Cheng & Gu, 2022). According to Formica and Sforzera's definition of quiet quitting, quiet quitters have a decrease in their commitment to carry out assigned tasks and to avoid tasks that are not within their job description, quiet quitting involves employees having a decreased commitment to task performance and a decreased overall contextual performance. This further shows the relationship between engagement and quiet quitting. Engagement can also be compared to quiet quitting because engagement is connected to the causes of quiet quitting. Studies have shown that engagement has a relationship with developmental plans. Developmental human resource management is positively related to work engagement (Ba et al., 2013). When companies spend time developing their employees, those same employees have higher employee engagement because they have a relationship that is less transactional with the employers (Bal et al, 2013). Another study found that career planning, development, and opportunity all have an impact on work engagement (Korankye, 2020). Engagement is also related to employee retention. Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and employee retention meaning that high engagement levels lead to higher retention levels (Singh, 2021; Desai, 2019). It can be assumed that low retention rates can lead to low engagement levels, since engagement has a positive relationship with retention. However, there have not been any studies that show low retention rates leading to low engagement levels. Studies have also found that engagement is related to job demands which is another cause of quiet quitting. When employees view their job demands as hindrances, such as feeling pressured to take on projects outside of their job description, the employees' engagement levels decrease (Crawford et al., 2010). Engagement is also related to organizational trust. One study showed that organizational trust is needed to cultivate employee

engagement (Vinarski-Peretz & Kidron, 2023). Another study looked at improving employee engagement through organizational trust. This study found that organizational trust has a significant impact on employee engagement.

There has been research conducted linking engagement to personality. One study sought out to determine how the Big 5 Personality Traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness impacted engagement levels of students. The results showed that conscientiousness was the best predictor of heightened engagement while openness to experience was not associated with engagement (Audet et al., 2023). Research has also found that extroversion has a positive relationship with engagement (Kim et al., 2009). In another study, researchers compared burnout and engagement using the Big Five Personality dimensions. Results showed that Conscientiousness and neuroticism are the most important traits that predict engagement (Kim et al., 2009). Research has also shown that engagement has a relationship with conscientiousness, neuroticism, and extroversion (Truss et al., 2013). Engagement has a positive relationship with conscientiousness and a negative relationship with neuroticism (Truss et al., 2013). Since engagement is associated with the causes of quiet quitting and can be related to personality, it can be assumed that the Big Five Personality traits can also be related to quiet quitting.

This thesis aims to determine the relationship between engagement and quiet quitting. Since engagement linked to the causes of quiet quitting, it can be assumed that engagement is related to quiet quitting. To determine if this assumption is correct, engagement measure results and quiet quitting measure results will be compared.

Relationship Between Quiet Quitting and Work-life Balance

Quiet quitting has been stated to be employees finally voicing their work boundaries, and this definition shows a similarity between quiet quitting and work-life balance (Scymcyk et al., 2023). Work-life balance refers to having equal investment in an employee's work and life obligations and having a clear separation between the two (Iyer, 2022). Work life balance allows employees to focus on their lives when they are at home and focus on work when they are at their job (Khateeb, 2021). Work-life balance is connected to retention, job pressure, and trust which links this concept to quiet quitting. This concept is related to the cause of quiet quitting that deals with retention. One study found that work-life balance has a strong, positive correlation with employee retention (Santhoskkumar et al., 2022). Work-life balance has also been shown to relate to job pressure. One study mentioned that perceived job stress is associated with poor work-life balance (Bell et al., 2012). Work-life balance improves organizational trust (Tosun, 2023).

Studies have linked personality to work-life balance when using the Big Five Personality traits. One study found that openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism all have a relationship with work-life balance (Soni & Bakhru, 2019). However, another study found that there no significant relationship between openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, and work-life balance (Devi & Rani, 2012). That same study found that agreeableness does have a significant relationship with work-life balance (Devi & Rani, 2012). Since studies have shown that work-life balance can be related to certain personality traits, a similar concept such as quiet quitting could also be related to personality.

Relationship Between Quiet Quitting and Burnout

Burnout is the next concept to be discussed that is similar to quiet quitting. Burnout can be defined as a work-related condition that involves both physical and mental fatigue and

exhaustion that can be related to the work environment (Canu et al., 2021). Another definition describes burnout as a condition that occurs in employees who have worked productively and without issues for a significant period of time to provide satisfaction of themselves and others, and this leads to fatigue, emotional and cognitive disruptions, and mental distance (Canu et al., 2021). Burnout is also connected to the causes of quiet quitting. Burnout has been found to have a positively related relationship to career turnover intentions. (Barthauer et al., 2020) Burnout is also connected to job stress which is another cause of quiet quitting. One study mentions that burnout can occur when an employee experiences high efforts, poor satisfaction, and stressful work conditions such as high demands (Iacovides et al., 2003). The last cause of quiet quitting that burnout is connected to is organizational trust. A study examining the correlation between nurses' organizational trust and burnout levels found that there is a negative correlation between trust and burnout (Özgür & Tektas, 2018).

Even though burnout is connected to the causes of quiet quitting and is similar to quiet quitting, there are differences between these two constructs. Quiet quitting definitions do not mention the emotion toil, physical fatigue, or emotional disruptions that occur in burnout. Since quiet quitting is a relatively new concept, there are a lot of holes in this research. This thesis aims to fill these holes by determining if personality can be related to quiet quitting. Since burnout and quiet quitting are related to each other, it can be assumed that if burnout can be related to personality traits, then so can quiet quitting.

Research shows connections between burnout and the Big Five Personality Indicator traits. One study that tested the relationship between personality factors and burnout among volunteer counselors found that neuroticism and extraversion are related to different components of burn out such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment

(Bakker et al., 2006). Another study aimed to show a correlation between the Big Five Model and job burnout through a systematic literature review. The results showed that agreeableness is negatively correlated with burnout, conscientiousness is negatively related to burnout, extroversion is negatively related to burnout, neuroticism is positively related to burnout, and openness has a negative relationship with burnout (Angelini, 2023). Since studies have shown that burnout can be related to certain personality traits, a similar concept such as quiet quitting could also be related to personality.

Relationship Between Quiet Quitting and Achievement Motivation

The final concept to be discussed is achievement motivation. This concept has been defined as behavior that leads to concern for a standard of excellence that is important to individuals (Lang & Fries, 2006). Most scales split achievement motivation into two parts. The first part is approach tendency, and this part involves the hope of success (Lang & Fries, 2006). The second part is avoidance tendency, and this part involves the fear of failure (Lang & Fries, 2006). Research has shown that achievement is related to some of the causes of quiet quitting: pressure, a lack of trust, and career development. One study researched the relationship between mental pressure and academic achievement motivation. The study found that academic achievement is negatively related to student achievement motivation (Sarouni et al., 2016). Research has also shown that achievement motivation is also related to organizational trust. One study researched the influence of work team, trust in supervisors, and achievement motivation on organizational commitment of lecturers. The results of the study found that there is a direct effect of trust in supervisors on achievement motivation (Faruq & Abdullah, 2021). Achievement has been shown to propel career development (Dam, 2023). Achievement personality traits lead individuals to create goals and gain direction within their career (Dam, 2023). Since achievement

motivation is related to some of the causes of quiet quitting, it can be assumed that achievement motivation is related to the concept quiet quitting.

Research also shows a relationship between achievement motivation and personality. One study researched the relationship between the Big Five Personality traits and teachers' achievement motivation. The results showed that conscientiousness is the biggest predictor of achievement motivation out of all of the Big Five Personality traits. Extroversion and openness were also found to be predictors of achievement motivation (Mirkovic, Biljana, et al. 2020). Another study looked at the effect of personality factors on achievement motivation. This study found that there is a relationship between personality factors with achievement motivation, and neuroticism is positively correlated with achievement motivation (Rahman, 2014). Since studies have shown that achievement motivation can be related to certain personality traits, a similar concept such as quiet quitting could also be related to personality.

PERSONALITY

Research on Personality

Since engagement, work-life balance, and burnout can be related to personality, then it can be assumed that similar concepts such as quiet quitting can also be related to personality. To show the importance of personality and further proof that engagement, work-life balance, and burnout can be related to personality, a brief mention of past studies that use personality measures will be mentioned. Many researchers have used personality in their studies. Some research includes understanding personality as a moderator between perceived organizational injustice and deviant workplace behaviors (Khattak et al., 2019), personality differences involved in burnout (Moon et al., 2023), the relationship between organizational revenge and personality (Sommers et al., 2002), and the relationship between personality and counterproductive

workplace behaviors (Yang & Diefendorff, 2009). One study suggests that extraversion is associated with less burnout (Moon et al., 2023). This shows that personality can be related to employee behavior such as burnout. This thesis will use the Big Five Personality Test to measure personality traits including emotional stability, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Harris & Rouse, 2014). Another study determined the relationship between the Big Five Personality traits and teachers' achievement motivation. The results of this study showed that conscientiousness is the biggest predictor of achievement motivation out of all of the Big Five Personality traits, and extroversion and openness were also found to be predictors of achievement motivation (Mirkovic, Biljana, et al. (2020). Researchers used the Big Five Personality Test to determine if personality is a predictor of organizational citizenship behavior, and personality traits such as extroversion and openness were shown to be related to organizational citizenship behaviors (Akinbode, 2011). Researchers also used the Big Five Personality Test to determine if personality serves as a moderator in the relationship between organizational injustice and deviant workplace behaviors (Khattak et al, 2019). The research showed that agreeableness and neuroticism are related to deviant workplace behaviors (Khattak et al, 2019). One study aimed to determine if the Big Five Personality test could predict OCB in employees. The results of this study indicated that extraversion and openness to experience significantly predict OCB in employees (Akinbode, 2011). These studies show that personality can be related to employee behavior. Even though there has been research conducted on personality being related to counterproductive work behaviors, there has been little to no research conducted on if personality is related to quiet quitting. This thesis aims to fill this gap and determine if personality traits such as extroversion, emotional stability, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are related to quiet quitting actions in employees.

Hypotheses of the Study

Research has found that extroversion has a negative relationship to burnout and a positive relationship with engagement (Kim et al., 2009). Because of this research, I hypothesize that extraversion will be negatively related to quiet quitting.

Hypothesis 1: Extraversion is negatively related to quiet quitting.

Research has shown that conscientiousness is an important personality trait that predicts engagement (Kim et al., 2009). There have also been studies that suggest conscientiousness is negatively related to burnout (Angelini, 2023). Since conscientiousness is related to engagement and negatively related to burnout and since these two concepts are related to the causes of quiet quitting, I hypothesize that conscientiousness will be negatively related to quiet quitting.

Hypothesis 2: Conscientiousness is negatively related to quiet quitting.

Research has found that neuroticism is positively related to exhaustion and cynicism (Kim et al., 2009). Since neuroticism is positively related to exhaustion and cynicism, I hypothesize that neuroticism will be positively related to quiet quitting.

Hypothesis 3: Neuroticism is positively related to quiet quitting.

Most research has not found a relationship between openness and engagement (Kim., Shin, & Swanger 2009). Since engagement is related to the causes of quiet quitting, openness should not be related to quiet quitting. This thesis aims to determine if this statement is true.

Research Question 1: Is openness related to quiet quitting?

Studies found that relationships between agreeableness and job performance and burnout are not found or are very weak (Kim, H. J., Shin, K. H., & Swanger, N. (2009). Since burnout is

related to the causes of quiet quitting, agreeableness should not be related to quiet quitting. This thesis aims to determine if this statement is true.

Research Question 2: Is agreeableness related to quiet quitting?

Studies have shown that engagement is related to the causes of quiet quitting: developmental plans (Ba et al., 2013; Korankye, 2020), employee retention (Singh, 2021; Desai, 2019), job pressures (Crawford et al., 2010), and organizational trust (Vinarski-Peretz & Kidron, 2023). Since engagement is related to the causes of quiet quitting, it can be assumed that engagement is related to quiet quitting. This thesis aims to determine if this statement is true.

Research Question 3: Is engagement related to quiet quitting?

Studies have shown that achievement motivation is related to some of the causes of quiet quitting: pressure (Sarouni & Pourghaz, 2016) and organizational trust (Faruq & Abdullah, 2021). Since achievement motivation is related to some of the causes of quiet quitting, it can be assumed that achievement motivation is related to quiet quitting. This thesis aims to determine if this statement is true.

Research Question 4: Is achievement motivation related to quiet quitting?

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Participants

The population of interest for this study is individuals who are employed. The sample was obtained by collecting participants' responses to the survey using Prolific, an online platform on which researchers can publish their studies and find and compensate research participants. To have been eligible to participate in the study, individuals must have met the following eligibility requirements: at least 18 years of age or older, currently employed in the United States, fluent in English, and worked within the same organization for a year or longer. Participants who were retained in the final sample had to pass attention checks, supply the correct completion code, and finish the study in at least five minutes. We recruited 248 participants through Prolific for this study. A total of 47 participants were removed from the study due to screening requirements. A total of 16 participants were removed due to the failure of attention checks. A total of 4 participants were removed due to not supplying the correct completion code, and 10 participants were removed after not passing the time requirement for this study. A total of 171 participants were retained in the final sample.

Of the 171 participants, 69 were male, 97 were female, 4 were non-binary or third gender, and 1 preferred not to say. On average, participants were 36.9 years of age ($SD = 10.4$) with the lowest being 20 and the oldest being 68. For ethnicity, 66% of participants were White/Caucasian, 16% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% were Hispanic, 8% were Black or African American, 2% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 5% selected Other. For education, 13% of participants held a High school diploma or equivalent, 18% had some college with no degree, 9% held an Associate degree, 40% held a Bachelor's degree, 16% held a Master's degree, and 4% held a Doctorate. When looking at how often participants worked remotely in their current job, 40% of participants selected never, 22% selected sometimes, 8% selected about

half the time, 12% selected most of the time, and 18% selected always. On average, participants worked 36.8 hours a week ($SD = 9.17$) with a range of 10 to 60 hours a week. On average, participants have held their current job for 5.31 years ($SD = 4.59$) with a range of 0.17 to 25 years. When looking at if participants completed this survey during their normal working hours, 5% of participants stated yes while 95% of participants stated no. See Appendix A for demographic information.

Procedures

Our study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Middle Tennessee State University (Appendix B). The study was distributed to participants through Prolific. The study included a brief description that contains a Qualtrics link to the surveys. When the participants clicked on the link, they were directed to a Qualtrics survey. This survey included the informed consent section where participants were informed that this is a voluntary study and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. The informed consent document can be found in Appendix C. The participants were also informed of their responses being kept confidential and anonymous. Next, the participants answered screening questions to confirm the participants' eligibility. Those who meet the requirements were presented with the following measures: A Quiet Quitting Scale, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, the BFI, the Achievement Motivation Scale – reduced version, and a demographics survey. Quality assurance items were included throughout the survey to verify that participants are paying attention. The demographic questions were placed at the end of the study. After the completion of these four measures and the demographic questionnaire, there was an end of survey message that informs the participants of their completion code and that they have completed the study. They were also provided with an email address for further questions.

Measures

The Quiet Quitting Scale (QQS) is a three-factor, nine-item scale that has been determined to be easy to administer, valid, and a reliable tool to measure employees' quiet quitting (Galanis et al., 2023). Researchers found that Cronbach's α for the QQS is 0.80. (Galanis et al., 2023). The three factors in this scale include detachment, lack of initiative, and lack of motivation (Galanis et al., 2023). Researchers found Cronbach's α for the three factors of the QQS: detachment is 0.71, lack of initiative is 0.71, and lack of motivation is 0.75 (Galanis et al., 2023). All three factors make up different aspects of quiet quitting, so combining the scores for factors helps to identify the overall quiet quitting scores for each participant. This scale involves using a cut-off point of 2.06 to determine which participants can be considered quiet quitting (Galanis, Katsiroumpa & Vraka). However, since this thesis will use correlations to determine the relationships between quiet quitting, engagement, and personality, cut-off points will not be needed to complete the correlations. Participants were asked to rate their behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 is Strongly disagree and 5 is Strongly agree. See Appendix D1 for the QQS.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) contains 17 items and assesses energy levels and mental resilience while working. Cronbach's α for the UWES-17 is 0.93 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, NCCMT). This measure also includes the three dimensions of work engagement including vigor, dedication, and absorption (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, NCCMT). Cronbach's α was also found for the three dimensions: vigor is 0.82, dedication is 0.89, and absorption is 0.83. Participants were asked to rate their feelings about work on a 6-Point Likert scale with 1 being Almost never and 6 being Always. See Appendix D2 for the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a 44-item inventory that measures individuals on the Big Five Factors: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness. Researchers found Cronbach's α for each of the five factors: the score for Extroversion is 0.75, Agreeableness is 0.69, Conscientiousness is 0.64, Neuroticism is 0.75, and Openness is 0.65 (Costa et al., 2023). Participants were asked to rate their characteristics on a 5-Point Likert scale with 1 being Disagree strongly and 5 being Agree strongly. See Appendix D3 for the BFI.

The Achievement Motivation Scale – Reduced Version is a 10-item version of the Achievement Motives Scale. This scale contains two subscales including 5 hope of success items and 5 fear of failure items (Lang & Fries, 2006). Cronbach's α for the hope of success items ranges from 0.71 to 0.80 (Lang & Fries, 2006). Cronbach's α for the fear of failure items ranges from 0.76 to 0.88 (Lang & Fries, 2006). Participants were asked to rate their behaviors on a 5-Point Likert scale with 1 being Strongly disagree and 5 being Strongly agree. See Appendix D4 for the Achievement Motivation Scale.

The demographics survey, Appendix D5, will be given to participants after completing the QQS and BFI. This survey will include questions asking about age, gender, and ethnicity, length of current job being held, how often participants work remotely, how many hours participants work in a week, if participants filled out this questionnaire during their normal working hours, and the highest degree or level of school achieved. The demographics survey will ask about these topics to increase generalizability for the study.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The following variables were tested for reliability: Quiet Quitting, Engagement, Achievement, Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. The final coefficient alphas of Personality factors can be found in Table 1, and the final coefficient alphas of all other factors can be found in Table 2.

Cronbach's alpha for the 8 scales tested ranged from 0.72 to 0.94. As a result of the adequate reliability for each scale, no items were removed from any of the scale. Descriptive statistics for the Personality scales can be found in Table 3, and the descriptive statistics for all other variables can be found in Table 4.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis for Personality

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
<i>Openness</i>	10	.83
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	9	.82
<i>Extroversion</i>	8	.91
<i>Agreeableness</i>	9	.79
<i>Neuroticism</i>	8	.88

Table 2: Reliability Analysis for Quiet Quitting, Engagement, and Achievement

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
<i>Quiet Quitting</i>	9	.77
<i>Engagement</i>	17	.94
<i>Achievement</i>	10	.72

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Personality Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Openness</i>	171	3.66	.65
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	171	3.96	.65
<i>Extroversion</i>	171	2.89	.97
<i>Agreeableness</i>	171	3.98	.61
<i>Neuroticism</i>	171	2.85	.89

Note. 5-point Likert scales were used for the Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism measures.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Quiet Quitting, Engagement, and Achievement

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Quiet Quitting</i>	171	2.39	.59
<i>Engagement</i>	171	3.20	1.11
<i>Achievement</i>	171	3.25	.50

Note. 5-point Likert scales were used for the Quiet Quitting and Achievement measures. A 6-point Likert scale was used for the Engagement measure.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that extraversion is negatively related to quiet quitting. Pearson's correlation indicated extroversion and quiet quitting were negatively correlated $r(171) = 0.48, p < 0.001$. Participants with lower Quiet Quitting scores were likely to have higher Extraversion scores. This shows that there is a relationship between quiet quitting and extroversion, and one can impact the other.

As stated previously, Hypothesis 2 claimed that conscientiousness would be negatively related to quiet quitting. Pearson's correlation indicated conscientiousness and quiet quitting were negatively correlated $r(171) = 0.47, p < 0.001$. This means that when a person scores high in conscientiousness, they tend to participate in very little quiet quitting activity. This shows a relationship between conscientiousness and quiet quitting.

Hypothesis 3 posited that neuroticism is positively related to quiet quitting, and this was supported. $r(171) = 0.30, p < 0.001$. This means that a person who scores high in neuroticism is likely to participate in more quiet quitting behaviors.

We were able to explore relationships between quiet quitting and several concepts through our research questions. The first research question considered the relationship between openness and quiet quitting. Openness was found to be negatively correlated with quiet quitting $r(171) = 0.42, p < 0.001$. This means that individuals with more quiet quitting behaviors tend to score lower in openness. Next, the relationship between QQ & Agreeableness was considered.

The results indicated that agreeableness was negatively correlated with quiet quitting $r(171) = 0.28, p < 0.001$. According to this finding, individuals that are high in agreeableness tend to have less quiet quitting tendencies. In addressing the third research question. The results showed that engagement is negatively correlated with quiet quitting $r(171) = 0.66, p < 0.001$. Individuals who have high quiet quitting behaviors tend to score low in engagement. The final research question suggested that achievement motivation is related to quiet quitting. The results of the study showed that achievement motivation is negatively related to quiet quitting $r(171) = 0.47, p < 0.001$. This means that individuals who score high in achievement tend to have less quiet quitting tendencies. See Table 5 for the full correlation matrix.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix for all Variables

	<i>QQuit</i>	<i>ENG</i>	<i>Extro</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Consc</i>	<i>Neurot</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>nACH</i>
<i>QQuit</i>								
<i>ENG</i>	0.66***							
<i>Extro</i>	0.48***	0.50***						
<i>Agree</i>	0.28***	0.27***	0.21**					
<i>Consc</i>	0.47***	0.31***	0.26*	0.36***				
<i>Neurot</i>	0.30***	-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.49***	-0.34***			
<i>Open</i>	0.42***	0.31***	0.34***	0.29***	0.25***	-0.26***		
<i>nACH</i>	0.47***	0.41***	0.41***	0.19*	0.33***	-0.40***	0.36***	

*=p<0.05, **=p<0.01, ***=p<0.001

Note. Table 3 shows the correlations between all of the variables discussed. The abbreviations in the correlation matrix above stand for the following: quiet quitting (*QQuit*), engagement (*ENG*), extroversion (*Extro*), agreeableness (*Agree*), conscientiousness (*Consc*), neuroticism (*Neurot*), openness (*Open*), and achievement (*nACH*).

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

All three hypotheses involved connecting quiet quitting to the Big Five Personality traits specifically extroversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. All three hypotheses were supported by the results of this study. Extroversion and conscientiousness were both found to be negatively correlated to quiet quitting. This suggests that individuals that score high on extroversion and conscientiousness are less likely to participate in quiet quitting behaviors. Neuroticism was found to be positively correlated with quiet quitting. This suggests that individuals who score high in neuroticism are more likely to participate in quiet quitting behaviors. Since all of the hypotheses were supported, the results show that extroversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism play a role in whether or not individuals participate in quiet quitting behaviors. Research has found that extroversion has a negative relationship to burnout and a positive relationship with engagement (Kim et al., 2009). Since both extroversion is related to both burnout and engagement and these concepts are related to the causes of quiet quitting, the results of hypothesis 1 match past research and supported hypothesis 1. Research has also shown that conscientiousness is an important personality trait that predicts engagement (Kim et al., 2009). There have also been studies that suggest conscientiousness is negatively related to burnout (Angelini, 2023). Since conscientiousness is related to engagement and negatively related to burnout and since these two concepts are related to the causes of quiet quitting, the results of hypothesis 2 support both past research and the expectations for hypothesis 2. Research has found that neuroticism is positively related to exhaustion and cynicism (Kim et al., 2009). Since neuroticism is positively related to exhaustion and cynicism, the results of hypothesis 3 support both past research and the expectations for hypothesis.

The rest of the Big Five Personality traits were explored as part of the research questions. The results showed support for openness being negatively correlated with quiet quitting. This suggests that individuals who score high on openness are less likely to participate in quiet quitting behaviors. This was not expected. Most research has not found a relationship between openness and engagement (Kim et al., 2009). Since engagement is related to the causes of quiet quitting, openness should not be related to quiet quitting. However, openness involves being curious, eager to learn, and enjoying new experiences (Cherry, 2023). Maybe the correlation between openness and quiet quitting is due to OCBs being related to quiet quitting. Since openness behaviors are related to OCBs, the results showing the relationship between openness and quiet quitting could be supported by this thought. The results also showed that agreeableness was negatively correlated with quiet quitting. This means that individuals that score high on agreeableness are less likely to participate in quiet quitting behaviors. This result was not anticipated. Studies found that relationships between agreeableness and job performance and burnout are not found or are very weak (Kim, et al., 2009). However, people who exhibit low agreeableness often do not care and show little interest in others (Cherry, 2023). These characteristics could also be found in individuals that have extremely low engagement levels or burnout. If the characteristics are related to low engagement and burnout, it would make sense why agreeableness was found to be related to quiet quitting. Since the first two research questions were supported, the results suggest that openness and agreeableness might play a role in what causes individuals to participate in quiet quitting behaviors. Engagement and achievement motivation were also explored as part of the research questions. Engagement and achievement motivation were both found to be negatively correlated with quiet quitting. Studies have shown that engagement is related to the causes of quiet quitting: developmental plans (Ba et

al., 2013; Korankye, 2020), employee retention (Singh, 2021; Desai, 2019), job pressures (Crawford et al., 2010), and organizational trust (Vinarski-Peretz & Kidron, 2023). This suggests that there is a relationship between engagement and quiet quitting, and this finding also suggests that individuals who score high in engagement are less likely to participate in quiet quitting behaviors. Since engagement is related to the causes of quiet quitting, the results of this study are supported by past research. Studies have shown that achievement motivation is related to some of the causes of quiet quitting: pressure (Sarouni & Pourghaz, 2016), organizational trust (Faruq & Abdullah, 2021), and career development (Dam, 2023). Achievement has been shown to propel career development (Dam, 2023). Achievement personality traits lead individuals to create goals and gain direction within their career (Dam, 2023). This finding suggests that people who score high in achievement are less likely to engage in quiet quitting behaviors. Since achievement is related to unfulfilled career growth, which is a cause of quiet quitting, it was assumed that achievement would be related to quiet quitting. Also, this may explain why people who do not have career development options are prone to quiet quitting. Since achievement motivation is related to some of the causes of quiet quitting, the results of this study are supported by past research. This suggests that engagement and achievement motivation might play a role in what causes individuals to participate in quiet quitting behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation observed is that the results were obtained from self-surveys. Even though there are many positive aspects of self-surveys, there are also some negative aspects. Participants may not answer the questions honestly. Participants also might not pay attention to the survey questions when answering. This limitation was addressed by including attention checks in the survey. Any participant who failed an attention check was excluded from the study. The participants could also be distracted by environmental distractions when taking the surveys. We

were unable to address this issue due to participants taking the survey online. Another limitation that was observed is that participant's levels of quiet quitting were low. The cutoff score for individuals to be considered quiet quitters was 2.06, and the mean of participant's quiet quitting scores was 2.39. Previous research had similar findings when using the Quiet Quitting Scale. These researchers found a mean of 2.23 when looking at participant's quiet quitting scores (Galanis et al., 2023).

Future research is needed for many different aspects of quiet quitting since there is a lack of research on this topic. One area that might need further research is determining if quiet quitting tendencies are more common for individuals who work remotely or in-person. It might also be interesting to explore if quiet quitting behaviors are more or less likely to be present in certain types of industries such as customer service, hospital settings, or education. Lastly, it would be interesting to see if quiet quitting behaviors are more or less present within individuals from different age groups.

Conclusion

This study sought to widen the research on quiet quitting by looking at the possible relationships between quiet quitting to engagement, achievement motivation, and personality using the Big Five Personality Indicator. We found support for positive correlations between neuroticism and quiet quitting. We found support for negative correlations between quiet quitting and openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, engagement, and achievement motivation. This suggests that the Big Five Personality traits may be useful in identifying the kind of individual who is more likely to engage in quiet quitting behaviors. This also suggests that engagement and achievement motivation may play a role in determining which individuals are more likely to engage in quiet quitting behaviors. These findings suggest that companies

could us this research to further understand the concept of quiet quitting, what could cause quiet quitting in the workplace, and how quiet quitting could be impacted by personality, achievement, and engagement levels. This could help practitioners understand and monitor quiet quitting within the workplace. These findings help researchers to understand quiet quitting and fill the gap in research on this topic.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Option</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	Male	69	40%	
	Female	97	57%	
	Nonbinary	4	2%	
	Preferred Not to Say	1	1%	
<i>Ethnicity</i>	White/Caucasian	112	66%	
	Asian/Pacific Islander	27	16%	
	Hispanic	7	4%	
	Black or African American	14	8%	
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	2%	
	Other	8	5%	
	<i>Education</i>	High school diploma or equivalent	22	13%
		Some college with no degree	30	18%
Associate degree		16	9%	
Bachelor's degree		69	40%	
Master's degree		27	16%	
Doctorate		7	4%	

<i>Working Remote</i>	Never	68	40%
	Sometimes	37	22%
	Half of the time	14	8%
	Most of the time	21	12%
	Always	31	18%
	<i>Completed the Survey</i>	Yes	8
<i>During Normal Working Hours</i>	No	163	95%

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Age</i>	20 - 68	36.9	10.4
<i>Hours Worked a Week</i>	10 - 60	36.8	9.17
<i>Years of Holding Current Job</i>	0.17 - 25	5.31	4.59

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd.
Sam H. Ingram Bldg (ING) Room 010A
Box 324
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
www.mtsu.edu/irb

Date: April 29, 2024
PI: Sarah Wicker
Department: Middle Tennessee State University, Psychology
Re: Initial - IRB-FY2024-216
Quiet Quitting, Engagement, and Personality

The Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for the above referenced study.

Decision: Exempt

Category: Category 2.(f). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Findings:

Research Notes:

Please note that even though your proposed study is deemed exempt from further IRB review, the following apply to your approved study:

1. In accordance with 45 CFR 46.110, expiration dates do not apply to research eligible for Exempt Review under the Common Rule, and continuing review is not required by the IRB.
2. Any unanticipated harm to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance.
3. All modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB for approval before their implementation. Adding new researchers constitutes a modification to the protocol. Per MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who handles the data or interacts with participants. Everyone meeting this definition for this project must have completed the required CITI training and received IRB approval prior to becoming actively involved in the project.
4. Closure of the study must be submitted within Cayuse when the study ends or when personal identifiers are removed from the data and all codes and keys are destroyed.
5. All research materials must be retained by the PI for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Sincerely,

The Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board

Appendix C: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT

Intro Study Title: Tell us how you work

Principal Investigator: Sarah Wicker and Judith Van Hein, Ph.D.

Approval date: TBD

Protocol Number: TBD

Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it. Please read this form carefully. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to investigate what types of activities you do at work, how often you do them, and your feelings about doing them. The researchers will investigate this through measures involving work engagement and personality.

Description of procedures to be followed and approximate duration of the study: You will be asked to complete measures assessing what types of activities you do at work, how often you do these activities, and your feelings about them. Some of these measures involve work engagement and personality. You will also be asked to answer some open screening questions and demographic questions. The study should take approximately 12 minutes to complete.

Description of the discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study: There are little to no known or expected risks/discomforts for participants volunteering in this study.

Anticipated benefits from this study: There are no direct benefits to participating in this study.

Alternative treatments available: N/A

Here are your rights as a participant:

- a) Your participation in this research is voluntary.
- b) You may skip any item that you don't want to answer, and you may stop the research at any time. Note that if you leave an item blank, you will be warned that you missed one, just in case it was an accident. You can still click that you don't want to answer. Some items may be required in order to accurately present the study.
- c) There are no risks associated with your participation besides possible discomfort with some of the questions.
- d) There are no real benefits to you from participating besides possibly learning something about the research.
- e) You will NOT be asked to provide any identifiable personal information.

- f) All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private, but total privacy cannot be promised. Your information may be shared with people at MTSU (such as the MTSU Institutional Review Board) or other agencies (such as the Federal Government Office for Human Research Protection) if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

Compensation for participation: Compensation will be provided through the Prolific access code at the end of the survey. Note: Completion of the survey is mandatory to receive compensation for your participation. Participants who pass the attention check, pass the screening questions, complete the survey in a reasonable time frame, and provide the completion access code will be compensated.

What happens if you choose to withdraw from study participation: You may refuse to participate or quit at any time.

Contact Information If you should have any questions about this research study or possible injury, please feel free to contact Sarah Wicker, at saw8m@mtmail.mtsu.edu. Alternatively, you may contact the project advisor, Dr. Judith Van Hein, via email at judith.vanhein@mts.edu.

For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Office of Compliance at 615-494-8918 or via email at irb_information@mts.edu. (<http://www.mtsu.edu/irb>).

Confidentiality: Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. The results of this study will NOT be published or presented at meetings. The results of this study will only be used for the class project being conducted by those listed as researchers. Your responses, informed consent document, and records will be kept completely confidential.

Please do not use the "Back" button on your internet browser while completing this survey.

By continuing with this survey, you are also acknowledging that you have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described.

I consent.

I do not consent.

Appendix D: Online Survey

Appendix D1: “Quiet Quitting” Scale

Please answer the following items.

Items	Answers				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I do the basic or minimum amount of work without going above and beyond.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
2. If a colleague can do some of my work, then I let him/her do it.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
3. I take as many breaks as I can.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
4. How often do you pretend to be working in order to avoid another task?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
5. I don't express opinions and ideas about my work because I am afraid that the manager assigns me more tasks.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
6. I don't express opinions and ideas about my work because I think that work conditions are not going to change.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
7. How often do you take initiative at your work?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
8. I find motives in my job.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
9. I feel inspired when I work.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Appendix D2: Work & Well-being Survey (UWES) English Version

English version

Work & Well-being Survey (UWES) ©

The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the '0' (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

1. _____ At my work, I feel bursting with energy* (VI1)
2. _____ I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (DE1)
3. _____ Time flies when I'm working (AB1)
4. _____ At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (VI2)*
5. _____ I am enthusiastic about my job (DE2)*
6. _____ When I am working, I forget everything else around me (AB2)
7. _____ My job inspires me (DE3)*
8. _____ When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work (VI3)*
9. _____ I feel happy when I am working intensely (AB3)*
10. _____ I am proud on the work that I do (DE4)*
11. _____ I am immersed in my work (AB4)*
12. _____ I can continue working for very long periods at a time (VI4)
13. _____ To me, my job is challenging (DE5)
14. _____ I get carried away when I'm working (AB5)*
15. _____ At my job, I am very resilient, mentally (VI5)
16. _____ It is difficult to detach myself from my job (AB6)
17. _____ At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well (VI6)

* Shortened version (UWES-9); VI= vigor; DE = dedication; AB = absorption

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Appendix D3: BFI

How I am in general

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others*? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which **you agree or disagree with that statement.**

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly

I am someone who...

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ____ Is talkative | 23. ____ Tends to be lazy |
| 2. ____ Tends to find fault with others | 24. ____ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset |
| 3. ____ Does a thorough job | 25. ____ Is inventive |
| 4. ____ Is depressed, blue | 26. ____ Has an assertive personality |
| 5. ____ Is original, comes up with new ideas | 27. ____ Can be cold and aloof |
| 6. ____ Is reserved | 28. ____ Perseveres until the task is finished |
| 7. ____ Is helpful and unselfish with others | 29. ____ Can be moody |
| 8. ____ Can be somewhat careless | 30. ____ Values artistic, aesthetic experiences |
| 9. ____ Is relaxed, handles stress well. | 31. ____ Is sometimes shy, inhibited |
| 10. ____ Is curious about many different things | 32. ____ Is considerate and kind to almost everyone |
| 11. ____ Is full of energy | 33. ____ Does things efficiently |
| 12. ____ Starts quarrels with others | 34. ____ Remains calm in tense situations |
| 13. ____ Is a reliable worker | 35. ____ Prefers work that is routine |
| 14. ____ Can be tense | 36. ____ Is outgoing, sociable |
| 15. ____ Is ingenious, a deep thinker | 37. ____ Is sometimes rude to others |
| 16. ____ Generates a lot of enthusiasm | 38. ____ Makes plans and follows through with them |
| 17. ____ Has a forgiving nature | 39. ____ Gets nervous easily |
| 18. ____ Tends to be disorganized | 40. ____ Likes to reflect, play with ideas |
| 19. ____ Worries a lot | 41. ____ Has few artistic interests |
| 20. ____ Has an active imagination | 42. ____ Likes to cooperate with others |
| 21. ____ Tends to be quiet | 43. ____ Is easily distracted |
| 22. ____ Is generally trusting | 44. ____ Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature |

Appendix D4: Achievement Motivation Scale – Reduced Version

Achievement Motivation Scale – reduced version

Source: Adapted from: Lang, J.W.B. and S. Fries (2006), “A revised 10-item version of the Achievement Motives Scale: Psychometric properties in German-speaking samples”, *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* Vol. 22/3, pp. 216-224, <http://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.22.3.216>.

Answer categories

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>

1. I like situations in which I can find out how capable I am.
2. When I am confronted with a problem, which I can possibly solve, I am enticed to start working on it immediately.
3. I enjoy situations in which I can make use of my abilities.
4. I am appealed by situations allowing me to test my abilities.
5. I am attracted by tasks in which I can test my abilities.
6. I am afraid of failing in somewhat difficult situations, when a lot depends on me.
7. I feel uneasy to do something if I am not sure of succeeding.
8. Even if nobody would notice my failure, I'm afraid of tasks which I'm not able to solve.
9. Even if nobody is watching, I feel quite anxious in new situations.
10. If I do not understand a problem immediately I start feeling anxious.

Appendix D5: Demographics

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-binary / third gender
 - d. Prefer not to say
3. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - b. Asian / Pacific Islander
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. White/Caucasian
 - f. Other
4. How long have you held your current job?
5. How often do you work remotely in your current job?
6. How many hours a week do you work?
7. Did you fill out this questionnaire during your normal working hours?
8. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
 - a. High school diploma or equivalent
 - b. Some college, no degree
 - c. Associate degree
 - d. Bachelor's degree
 - e. Master's degree

f. Doctorate

9. Should we use your results for this study? Why or why not?