QUIET QUITTING, FIRING AND HIRING: JUST A SOCIAL MEDIA TREND?

QUIET QUITTING, FIRING E HIRING: SÓ UMA TENDÊNCIA DAS REDES SOCIAIS?

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Abstract: The concept of *Quiet Quitting* (QQ) has recently gained prominence in social discussions. It is characterized by workers refusing to perform tasks beyond their contractual obligations. In the field of business management, some evidence has emerged linking QQ to two related phenomena: *Quiet Firing* (QF), where superiors restrict subordinates' career development opportunities, and *Quiet Hiring* (QH), a method for identifying employees who exceed their stated objectives. This study aim was to develop assessment instruments, drawing upon the limited existing literature, to facilitate the evaluation of QQ, QF, and QH constructs. This cross-sectional study includes a non-probabilistic sample of 118 professionally active Portuguese adults (M_{age} = 38.9, SD = 11.5, 61.7% women) and was conducted online. An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed for all scales. The QQ scale comprises 13 items, the QH scale comprises 10 items, and EFA revealed a single factor for both, with reliability values within the recommended range (ω_{QQ} = .53; ω_{QH} = .50). The QF is composed of 13 items and 3 factors (Insatisfaction/Dropout, Professional Isolation, and Impediment to Professional Development). The proposed models should be tested in future studies to confirm their psychometric properties across different samples. The phenomena under examination may have impact on the well-being and work performance of employees.
Keywords: Quiet quitting, Quiet firing, Quiet hiring

Resumo: O conceito de *Quiet Quitting* (QQ) ganhou recentemente destaque em fóruns sociais, sendo marcado pela rejeição dos trabalhadores em realizar tarefas, para além das contratualizadas. No campo da gestão empresarial tem surgido alguma evidência que liga o QQ a dois outros fenómenos: *Quiet Firing* (QF) – i.e., os superiores não permitem aos seus subordinados terem oportunidades de evoluírem na sua carreira e *Quiet Hiring* (QH) – i.e., método de identificação de colaboradores que estão a ir além dos objetivos estipulados. O objetivo deste estudo foi desenvolver instrumentos, a partir da escassa literatura existente, que facilitem a avaliação dos constructos de QQ, QF e QH. Este estudo transversal inclui uma amostra não probabilística de 118 adultos portugueses profissionalmente activos (M_{idade}= 38,9; DP = 11,5; 61,7% mulheres) e foi conduzido online. Foi realizada uma Análise Fatorial Exploratória (AFE) para todas as escalas. A escala QQ é composta por 13 itens; a escala de QH é composta por 10 itens; a AFE mostrou 1 fator em ambas, sendo a fiabilidade dentro dos valores recomendados (ω_{QQ} = 0,53; ω_{QH} = 0,50). O QF é composto por 13 itens e 3 fatores (Insatisfação/Abandono, Isolamento Profissional e Impedimento do Desenvolvimento Profissional). Os modelos propostos deverão ser testados em estudos futuros para confirmar as propriedades

psicométricas, em amostras diferentes. Os fenómenos em análise poderão influenciar o bem-estar dos trabalhadores e a sua performance laboral.
Palavras-Chave: Quiet quitting, Quiet firing, Quiet hiring

In recent years, Gallup has conducted numerous studies on performance and work engagement. Researchers have identified several factors that have a negative impact on engagement and performance, with the primary ones being stress and leadership (Gallup, 2023; Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). According to Clifton and Harter (2019), a supervisor who practices leadership without the ability to motivate and inspire their subordinates to perform their tasks may inadvertently encourage the phenomenon known as Quiet Quitting (QQ) (Clifton et al., 2019).

QQ has become a recurring topic in recent months in media discussions and has also been the focus of some (though still scarce) academic research. Although it has only recently gained prominence, this concept was initially introduced in 2009 by the economist Mark Boldger (Campton et al., 2023). From an economist's perspective, QQ is characterized by employees making a moderate investment in their work responsibilities but refusing to take on additional tasks beyond what is stipulated in their contracts (Formica & Sfodera, 2022).

In the current state of the art, there has been ongoing development and debate regarding two perspectives on the concept of QQ. One perspective raises awareness among supervisors about the risks associated with employees merely fulfilling the minimum requirements of their roles and being unwilling to exert extra effort (Hamouche et al., 2023). This approach poses a threat to effective business management since it results in decreased productivity and can influence other team members to adopt similar behaviors (Campton et al., 2023), potentially leading to reduced profits for the organization (Mahand et al., 2023).

From a second perspective, the practice of QQ reflects employees' attempts to establish clear boundaries in their professional lives. In this view, they diligently fulfill their responsibilities but refrain from working overtime or taking on additional tasks without a corresponding renegotiation of their compensation (Hamouche et al., 2023). Employees' need to set these boundaries stems from efforts to improve their *Work-Life Balance* and serves as a protective measure against Burnout (Campton et al., 2023).

According to some researchers, QQ represents the behavioral response of employees to a culture of constant change and high demands within organizations. In response to this, organizations may exhibit the phenomenon known as Quiet Firing (QF) (Yikilmaz, 2022). The limited existing literature defines this concept as a passive-aggressive managerial approach aimed at intentionally obstructing the professional growth of subordinates and compelling them to resign (Mahand et al., 2023). Examples of Quiet Firing practices include increasing employees' workloads and tasks, restricting their participation in new projects, and impeding their access to career promotions (Yikilmaz, 2022).

The latest data from the *State of the Global Workplace: 2023 Report* highlights the growing prevalence of forceful practices associated with the concept of QF. According to the report, half of the surveyed workers are actively seeking new job opportunities where they can access enhanced professional development prospects, improve their well-being, and renegotiate their compensation (Gallup, 2023; Mahand et al., 2023). Researchers also suggest that the increase in employees adopting this perspective may lead to decreased performance and lower productivity, potentially impacting organizational profits (Consorte, 2022). To mitigate these challenges, it would be beneficial for organizations to consider implementing incentive measures aimed at retaining their employees. Such measures could involve identifying and addressing the specific needs of employees (Mahand et al., 2023).

Some companies have embraced what are referred to as Quiet Hiring (QH) measures. This concept is characterized by recognizing employees who consistently meet their set goals and are willing to go the extra mile (Houghton, 2022). In response, organizations provide these dedicated employees with new career opportunities, such as team leadership roles, and offer various advantages, including salary increases (Yikilmaz, 2022).

The implementation of these practices has become quite common in organizations, particularly in the technology sector, with companies like Google leading the way. By doing so, organizations can decrease the turnover rates, avoid the need to hire new employees (and subsequent investment in training), and instead acknowledge the commitment and dedication of their existing workforce (Houghton, 2022).

Currently, there are one existing instrument available for measuring the concepts of Quiet Quitting and Firing (Anand et al., 2023). By fostering increased debate around these concepts which might impact the daily operations of companies and the lives of their employees, the goal of this study is to develop three instruments that will enable the assessment of these concepts within the Portuguese population.

METHOD

Participants

The initial sample comprised 125 participants who willingly responded to the provided questionnaire. Inclusion criteria for participation were as follows: (a) Portuguese nationality, (b) age over 18 years old, (c) currently employed, and (d) with access to internet.

Based on the established criteria, seven participants were excluded from the study because they were not employed at the time of their responses. Consequently, the final sample size was reduced to a total of 118 participants. Table 1 provides a detailed characterization of this sample.

Materials

The protocol utilized in this study was purposefully designed for this research and was self-administered by the participants. Initially, participants were requested to provide sociodemographic information, encompassing biological sex, age, relationship status, academic qualifications, and specific details related to their professional environment, such as the organization's size and work regime. Moreover, the survey included items related to Quiet Quitting (QQ) (13 items), Quiet Hiring (QH) (10 items), and Quiet Firing (QF) practices (14 items). These items were assessed on a Likert-type response scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree). In the measures used, the higher the score, the more dominant the practice of these phenomena.

Procedure

Searches for literature were conducted across multiple databases, including EBSCO, Web of Science, and B-On, using the keywords: Quiet Quitting, Quiet Hiring, and Quiet Firing. Given the limited availability of scholarly literature on these concepts, expert opinions, editorials, and articles from journalistic sources were also consulted to gather insights. Following the collection of articles,

an analytical protocol was developed with the aim of identifying the specific work practices associated with Quiet Quitting, Hiring, and Firing within a sample of the Portuguese population. From an initial pool of 24 items for QQ, 10 for QH and 18 for QF, a final pool of 13 items for QQ and 14 items for QF, was agreed among two researchers, that would represent the construct being tested.

Table 1. Characterization of the sample according to sociodemographic variables.

Characteristics	*n*	%
Age *M (SD)*	38.98 (11.55)	---
Sex		
Man	26	17.4
Woman	92	61.7
Relationship status		
In a relationship, and living with the partner	71	47.7
In a relationship, but not living with the partner	24	16.1
Single	23	15.4
Education		
Primary School	1	.7
Middle School	2	1.3
High School	20	13.4
College Degree	50	33.6
Post-Graduation or Higher (Master's/Doctorate)	45	30.2
Organization Size		
Microenterprise (1 to 9 employees)	12	8.1
Small business (10 to 49 employees)	10	6.7
Medium-sized company (50 to 249 employees)	20	13.4
Large corporation (250 or more employees)	76	51.0
Work Regime		
Full-time	34	63.1
Part-time	24	16.1

A protocol s created using the Google Forms platform and was then shared via various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The online protocol included several components, such as informed consent and the previously mentioned materials. Prior to accessing the questions, participants were presented with an informed consent form outlining the study's objectives, providing a brief introduction to the research protocol, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the collected data, and formalizing their acceptance of the terms of participation.

The protocol was made accessible and disseminated online from May to September 2023. The present study followed the ethical guidelines and the standards of the Portuguese Psychologists Association (2011) and the American Psychological Association (2017).

Data Analysis

The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS), version 29.0 for Windows. This analysis involved calculating various statistical measures, including percentages, means, and standard deviations.

It's important to emphasize that this study is exploratory, primarily due to the limited sample size in relation to the total number of items in the scales. As a result, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the psychometric properties of the instruments in question. Contemporary best practices dictate several prerequisites, one of which is assessing data factorability.

In order to operationalize this step, the Bartlett sphericity test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement are performed (Damásio, 2012; Lorenzo-Seva et al., 2011). The KMO measure aims to inform how adequate the EFA is to be carried out for the data under study. The values obtained are in the range between 0 and 1, and their reference values are: [1; .9[- excellent; [.9; .8[- good; [.8; .7[- reasonable; [.7; .6[- sufferable; [.6; .5[- bad and ≤.5 – unacceptable (Marôco, 2021).

Another criterion employed is the Bartlett sphericity test. The present study aims to measure in which dimension the variance matrix is similar to the primordial matrix (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The significance values $p<.05$, demonstrate that the matrix is adequate and is not like the original matrix. The literature also reports that the results of the KMO measurement and the Bartlett sphericity test tend to be uniform (Damásio, 2012).

When conducting an EFA, it becomes essential to determine the number of factors to retain. Various methods are applied for this purpose, with the Kaiser-Guttman criterion being widely accepted (Damásio, 2012; Marôco, 2021). This criterion suggests that only factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 should be retained, allowing for a reduction in observed variables while preserving the most critical information (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Furthermore, was assessed evidence based on internal structure. Evidence of construct (convergent evidence) was evaluated through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the scales employed in the study. In line with the literature, convergent evidence values (AVE) of $\geq .50$ were considered appropriate (Coolican, 2014). Moreover, discriminant evidence was also assessed in this study. Adhering to current best practices, discriminant evidence is evaluated by comparing the AVE of each factor with the square of Pearson's correlation (R^2) between factors, as suggested by Prioste et al. (2018). Therefore, good discriminant evidence is confirmed when it is observed that the AVE of each factor exceeds the R^2 among the factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Composite reliability was also evaluated using McDonald's Omega. The existing literature indicates that all McDonald's Omega values exceeding .70 indicates suitability of the instrument (Damásio, 2012; Rodrigues et al., 2021). The sensitivity of the data was also examined by analyzing minimum and maximum values, as well as assessing the asymmetry (skewness, Sk) and kurtosis (Ku) coefficients. In this context, absolute values indicating $|Sk| > 3$ and $|Ku| > 7$ were taken as indicators of potential sensitivity issues (Marôco, 2021).

Additionally, evidence based on Relations to Other Variables (convergent criteria evidence) will be explored through a correlation between Quiet Firing and Quiet Quitting, which are expected to have a positive and significant association. Discriminant criteria evidence will be explored through the association between Quiet Hiring and both Quiet Firing and Quiet Quitting: a negative and significant association in expected.

RESULTS

Quiet Quitting

The results obtained from the Bartlett sphericity test ($\chi^2 = 971.79$, $p < .001$) and the KMO measure (.90), demonstrated an excellent suitability for performing exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Marôco, 2021).

The EFA was conducted without forcing a fixed number of factors. The results showed that the scale is composed for two factors, as displayed in Table 2. The factors presented were the only ones that presented eigenvalue ≥ 1, with the total explained variance of 62.94%.

Table 2. Initial rotating component matrix

Itens	Factorial Weight 1	Factorial Weight 2
In my workplace… QQ1: …I only do the work that I am responsible for and that is determined in my contract.	.81	
QQ2: …I do not dedicate extra time to my work beyond the hours specified in my contract.	.84	
QQ3: …it is not important for me to do extra work with the aim of gaining additional benefits (e.g., recognition from colleagues, career promotion, salary increase).	.67	
QQ4: …I do not volunteer to do work that is outside of my professional responsibilities.	.67	
QQ5: …I do not stay at the workplace (or engaged in work-related tasks) beyond the hours required by my contract.	.79	
QQ6: …I do not exert more effort than strictly necessary to fulfill my duties.	.59	
QQ7: … I do not participate in work-related activities that are not mandatory (e.g., meetings, training sessions, *team-building* events).		.66
QQ8: … I only do the essential tasks as a form of silent protest.		.82
QQ9: …I only do the minimum necessary to maintain my employment.		.84
QQ10: …my sole motivation for working is the monthly remuneration.		.77
QQ11: … I do not identify with the call for "overtime," "wearing the company's colors," or "giving it your all".		.65
QQ12: … I do not answer work-related calls or respond to work-related emails/messages during my personal time.	.58	
QQ13: …when I reach the end of my work hours, I finish what I'm doing and leave, even if it means leaving tasks unfinished.	.45	

Note. QQ=Quiet Quitting

Despite the second factor had an eigenvalue slightly higher than 1, the explained variance was only 9.18%. Also, the researchers concluded that there were no theoretical differences which supported the structure of the two-factor scale. Thus, the structure of the scale was forced to change to one factor, as shown in Table 3. All items presented good factorial weights (i.e., above .50) (Marôco, 2021).

Table 3. Final Component Matrix.

Items	QQ Factorial Weight
QQ1	.72
QQ2	.78
QQ3	.66
QQ4	.74
QQ5	.83
QQ6	.83
QQ7	.67
QQ8	.79
QQ9	.75
QQ10	.71
QQ11	.70
QQ12	.68
QQ13	.60

Note. QQ=Quiet Quitting

The scale maintained excellent adequacy, as can be seen in the results of Bartlett's sphericity test ($\chi2$= 971.79; p <.001) and the KMO measure (.90). In contrast, the total variance explained was 53.78%.

All items showed a good psychometric sensitivity (.45 < |Sk| < 1.51; 1.19 < |Ku| < 1.22). Regarding the convergent evidence, the value obtained was good (AVE = .54). Composite reliability was above the recommended values (ω = .94).

Quiet Firing

The result obtained in the Bartlett sphericity test (χ^2 = 1265.94, p <.001) and in the KMO measure (.89), showed that the data were well suited to EFA (Marôco, 2021). The total explained variance was 73.59%.

As a result of the EFA (without forcing a fixed number of factors), the scale was composed of three factors with eigenvalue values > 1, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Rotating component matrix

Itens	Insatisfaction / Droupout Factorial Weight	Professional Isolation Factorial Weight	Impediment to Professional Development Factorial Weight
In my workplace…			
QF1:… my boss prevents me from having opportunities for professional growth.			.83
QF2: … my management does not allow me to participate in projects beyond those already assigned to me.			.88
QF3: … my boss prevents me from getting promotions, such as a salary increase.			.77
QF4: …I feel that they want me to seek new job opportunities outside the organization.		.76	
QF5: …my management has not provided me with guidance on my work tasks.	.55		
QF6: …I feel that my boss wants me to resign.		.83	
QF7: …I feel like I am being pushed out the door.		.86	
QF8: …I no longer have the motivation to continue in my job.	.82		
QF9: …I am thinking about resigning.	.78		
QF10: …I feel stagnant.	.73		
QF11: …they have been removing responsibilities and work tasks from me.		.63	
QF12: …my work tasks have increased significantly, and I feel drained.	.79		
QF13: …I am dissatisfied with the work tasks assigned to me.	.83		
QF14: …I feel that my opinions are not considered in team decisions.	.55		

Note. QF=Quiet Firing

All items presented good factorial weights (i.e., above .50) (Marôco, 2021). The convergent evidence presented good values ($AVE_{Insatisfaction/Dropout}$=.53; $AVE_{Professional\ Isolation}$=.60; $AVE_{Professional\ Development\ Impediment}$=.68). Also, the scale demonstrates good composite reliability ($\omega_{Professional\ Isolation}$=.86; $\omega_{Professional\ Development\ Impediment}$=.86), except for the factor Dissatisfaction/Withdrawal ($\omega_{Insatisfaction/Dropout}$=.64). In addition, all items have a good psychometric sensitivity ($.34 < |Sk| < 1.57$; $1.45 < |Ku| < .98$).

Table 5. Correlations between the factors of Quiet Firing scale

Fators	Insatisfaction/ Dropout Factorial Weight	Professional Isolation Factorial Weight	Impediment to Professional Development Factorial Weight
Insatisfaction/ Dropout	--		
Professional Isolation	.63***	--	
Impediment to Professional Development	.63***	.57***	--

Note. ***p<.001

Concerning discriminant evidence, the sole pair of correlations which showed this evidence was the Impediment to Professional Development factor and the Professional Isolation factor, as illustrated in Table 5 and 6.

Table 6. Quiet Firing scale: Discriminant evidence

Fators	Squared correlations
Insatisfaction/ Dropout - Professional Isolation	.63
Professional Isolation - Impediment to Professional Development	.58
Impediment to Professional Development - Insatisfaction/ Dropout	.62

Quiet Hiring

The results of the Bartlett sphericity test ($\chi2$= 574.96; p <.001) and the KMO measure (.88), show that the data under study presented a good suitability for EFA (Marôco, 2021).

The EFA showed that the scale is composed of two factors with eigenvalue values ≥ 1, as shown in Table 7. The total explained variance was 60.52%.

The second factor had an eigenvalue of just over 1 however the explained variance was 10.52% and only aggregated two items from the total scale. After analyzing the results, the team concluded that there were no theoretical differences that supported the two-factor scale structure. Thus, a new EFA was done, forcing a single factor, as shown in Table 7.

The scale maintained the excellent adequacy, as previously observed, in the results of the Bartlett sphericity test and the KMO measurement. However, the total variance explained became 49.99%.

Although two items presented factor weights below .50 (Q2: λ= .39, Q10: λ= .41) they were not excluded since this is the first study done with this scale and the items present theoretical pertinence.

Regarding convergent evidence, it is adequate (AVE = .50). In contrast, the scale demonstrated high composite reliability (ω = .90). In addition, all items have a good psychometric sensitivity ($.60 < |Sk| < .70$, $1.30 < |Ku| < .69$).

Table 7. Initial rotating component matrix

Items	Factorial Weight 1	Factorial Weight 2
In my workplace…		
QH1: …the recruitment methods used contribute to an improvement in the organization.		.49
QH2: …there is a department dedicated to employees' career planning (e.g., helping them find the best role based on their motivations and skills).	.55	
QH3: … employees who are willing to make an extra effort (e.g., working overtime, taking on additional responsibilities beyond their contracts) are recognized.	.69	
QH4: …it is common practice to identify employees with the competence to take on key positions that contribute to the organization's development.	.82	
QH5: … there is training available for employees to enhance their job performance.	.77	
QH6: … employees who perform work tasks beyond their assigned responsibilities are valued.	.72	
QH7: … external recruitment is limited, and there is a preference for investing in the development/training of internal employees.	.65	
QH8: … employees whose skills are still underdeveloped are identified, and their professional development is promoted.	.83	
QH9: … employees who consistently exceed their job goals are recognized and appreciated.	.86	
QH10: …there is low turnover among employees (i.e., employees tend to stay with the organization for an extended period).		.79

Note. QH=Quiet Hiring

Table 8. *Final component matrix*

Items	QH Factorial Weight
QH1	.58
QH2	.39
QH3	.66
QH4	.85
QH5	.75
QH6	.78
QH7	.68
QH8	.86
QH9	.89
QH10	.41

Note. QH=Quiet Hiring

Evidence based on relations to other variables

Regarding the Convergent Criterion Evidence, the subscales of QF Insatisfaction/Dropout ($r=.43$; $p<.001$) and Professional Isolation ($r=.38$; $p<.001$) exhibited a moderate and significant relationship with the QQ scale. On the other hand, the QF Impediment to Professional Development subscale ($r=.26$; $p=.004$) showed a weak, but significant relationship with the QQ scale.

As for Criterion Discriminant Evidence, the QH scale and the QQ scale ($r=-.36$; $p<.001$) displayed a moderate, and significant relationship. Similarly, the Insatisfaction/Dropout ($r=-.64$; $p<.001$), Professional Isolation ($r=-.51$; $p<.001$) and Impediment to Professional Development ($r=-.53$;

p<.001) subscales of the QF scale also showed negative and significant relationships with the QH scale.

Descriptive Analytics

Finally, a descriptive analysis of the variables was performed, the results of which are expressed in Table 10.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of the variables: Quiet Quitting, Firing and Hiring

Characteristics	*M(DP)*	Minimum[a]	Maximum[a]
Quiet Quitting	29.15(12.53)	13.00	64.00
Quiet Firing			
Dissatisfaction/Dropout	16.94(7.92)	7.00	34.00
Professional Isolation	7.42(3.90)	4.00	19.00
Impediment to Professional Development	6.45(3.34)	3.00	15.00
Quiet Hiring	29.51(8.75)	10.00	49.00

Note. [a]Minimum and maximum possible, considering the response scale of the instruments

DISCUSSION

The current state of the art has extensively demonstrated and documented the influence of numerous factors on workplace performance, as indicated in many studies (Assens-Serra et al., 2021; Pinheiro et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2022). However, the effects of emerging phenomena like Quiet Quitting (QQ), Quiet Hiring (QH), and Quiet Firing (QF) on labor performance remain largely unexplored to date. There is an urgent need for the development of assessment instruments capable of assessing the prevalence of these phenomena. This will enable subsequent investigations into their potential impact on work performance.

Considering this need, the present study details the development and testing of three scales and evaluates their properties, specifically validity and reliability. This research focuses on a sample of professionally active adults from the Portuguese population, aiming to contribute to our understanding of these emerging workplace phenomena.

The QQ scale initially comprised two factors. Upon closer examination of these items, it became apparent that they all pertained to the characterization of the QQ concept, involving behaviors such as "…I do not dedicate extra time to my work beyond the hours specified in my contract." "…I do not volunteer to do work that is outside of my professional responsibilities" without a manifest difference from the first factor, which included convergent items "…I do not participate in work-related activities that are not mandatory (e.g., meetings, training sessions, *team-building* events)" and "…my sole motivation for working is the monthly remuneration.". Given the absence of theorical differences of items in both factors and the observation that one factors eigenvalue was approximately one, a decision was made to consolidating all items into a single factor. This adjustment was made to ensure a more coherent and parsimonious representation of the QQ concept in the scale. This aligns with the definition put forth by other authors, who assert that QQ represents a realignment of workers' priorities and time, achieved by striking a perceived balance between workers' earnings and their investment (e.g., tasks performed) (Anand et al., 2023).

In the revised scale structure, the items still maintain strong factor weights and exhibit good psychometric sensitivity. Among the items, the one who has the higher factor weight is item 6, "…I

do not exert more effort than strictly necessary to fulfill my duties." This item aligns well with the definition of the QQ concept and accurately reflects its practical manifestation (Hamouche et al., 2023). It should be noted that the present structure maintains convergent evidence and excellent composite reliability (Marôco, 2021).

The QF scale was structured into three factors: Insatisfaction /Dropout, Professional Isolation, and Impediment to Professional Development. In the first factor, all items demonstrated strong factor weights, particularly item 13, "…I am dissatisfied with the work tasks assigned to me". This factor reflects workers' dissatisfaction with the unrealistic expectations conveyed regarding the tasks they perform (Anand et al., 2023).

The second factor sheds light on the day-to-day practice of QF, especially item 7, which states, "…I feel like I am being pushed out the door". Without a change in these practices, employees may experience increased feelings of isolation and reduced recognition, potentially leading to elevated levels of distress. The literature states that prolonged periods of high distress, coupled with a poor perception of social support (e.g., support from management and colleagues), can result in reduced productivity, lower self-esteem, and, in extreme cases, burnout (Anand, et al., 2023; Bourbonnais et al., 1998). Furthermore, such circumstances can motivate employees to explore new job opportunities and, in some cases, lead to resignations, as emphasized in the Gallup report (2023).

Lastly, the Professional Development Impediment factor features item 2, "…my management does not allow me to participate in projects beyond those already assigned to me". This factor portrays another dimension of the QF concept. Alongside the attitude, it is common for managers to hinder their subordinates from pursuing new projects or even from securing raises or bonuses in remuneration (Consorte, 2022). This behaviour can leave employees feeling undervalued, demotivated, and disconnected from their teams. The visible consequences can include decreased productivity and a higher likelihood of employees seeking new opportunities, ultimately impacting an organization's profitability (Mahand et al., 2023).

The scale demonstrated good psychometric characteristics, namely, evidence based on Relations to Other Variables, reliability, and sensitivity (Marôco, 2021).

The QH scale, in its initial structure, consisted of two factors. However, the second factor was composed of only two items: item 1 "…the recruitment methods used contribute to an improvement in the organization" and item 10 "…there is low turnover among employees (i.e., employees tend to stay with the organization for an extended period)". After analysing the items, it was possible to conclude that the items mentioned above were not theoretically distinct from the items in the first factor, both factors pointing to one construct defined as the method for identifying employees who consistently surpass their goals and demonstrate commitment to the organization, as found in other studies (Houghton, 2022).

In the unifactorial structure of the scale, the items have good psychometric sensitivity and factor weights, apart from item 2 "…there is a department dedicated to employees' career planning (e.g., helping them find the best role based on their motivations and skills)" and item 10 "…there is low turnover among employees (i.e., employees tend to stay with the organization for an extended period)." Even so, the items were maintained because its weights weren't much below 0,50 and were pertinent to the characterization of the QH experience. The item with higher factorial weight on the scale was item 9 "…employees who consistently exceed their job goals are recognized and appreciated", as it represents the practice of QH. It should be noted that the present structure continues to have good convergent evidence, and excellent composite reliability. Regarding the discriminant criteria evidence only one pair of factors (Impediment to Professional Development - Professional Isolation) showed to be discriminant (Marôco, 2021).

As outlined, the scales have proven to be valid and reliable instruments for assessing the daily manifestations of the QQ, QF, and QH concepts. These tools hold value in both organizational and research contexts, particularly in the realms of worker well-being and job performance assessment.

It is worth noting several strengths of the current study. Firstly, it marks the pioneering effort in developing scales tailored to evaluate QQ, QF, and QH specifically with a Portuguese sample. While the study involved only one Exploratory Factor Analysis of the instruments, it has showcased good psychometric qualities. Additionally, the scales were meticulously crafted based on existing literature, ensuring a thorough assessment of the behaviors that typify QQ, QF, and QH.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged in the present study. Firstly, the data collection process relied on a sample collected online, which might have introduced biases. Participation was limited to individuals with access to technology and sufficient digital literacy, potentially skewing the results and hindering the ability to address any uncertainties. Secondly, it's essential to recognize that the results are not representative of the Portuguese population, given the non-probabilistic nature of the sample. Additionally, the study's sample size was limited and insufficient to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis, highlighting the need for future research to validate the results expressed here.

Given that this study represents the initial development of these scales, it is imperative for future research to further explore the psychometric properties of the instruments and validate their suitability for bigger samples. Furthermore, it would be valuable to explore how various organizational characteristics, such as organizational culture and leadership, might influence the prevalence of QQ, QF, and QH procedures.

Additionally, it is worthwhile to investigate whether certain demographic factors, such as age and life cycle stages (e.g., young adulthood, middle-age), are associated with higher likelihoods of engaging in QQ and QF behaviors. These areas of research can shed more light on the nuanced dynamics of these workplace phenomena and provide valuable insights into their impact on different groups of employees.

In conclusion, this study focused on analyzing the psychometric properties of the QQ, QF, and QH scales within a sample of working professionals in Portugal. Despite the acknowledged limitations, the findings demonstrate promising indicators of validity and reliability for these instruments. It is crucial to note that further research is necessary to rigorously test and validate the proposed models, ensuring their relevance and applicability in various contexts.

These scales offer valuable tools for evaluating the phenomena of QQ, QF, and QH, and they can aid in assessing the possible impact of these behaviors on both job performance and the well-being of workers. As research in this area continues to evolve, these instruments may play a pivotal role in understanding and managing workplace dynamics in Portugal.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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