

THE ROLE OF JOB RESOURCES AND GRIT IN PREVENTING QUIET QUITTING AMONG E-COMMERCE DELIVERY WORKERS

¹ Dr. MUNAGA RAMAKRISHNA MOHAN RAO

PRINCIPAL

PROFESSOR

SIDDHARTHA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCES
HYDERABAD
INDIA

ABSTRACT

Quiet quitting has emerged as a significant issue within the workforce, particularly in physically demanding and high-pressure environments such as e-commerce delivery. This study explores the role of job resources and employee grit as key moderators in preventing quiet quitting among e-commerce delivery workers. Job resources, including autonomy, social support, and career development opportunities, can foster a sense of empowerment and engagement, potentially reducing the likelihood of employees disengaging. Simultaneously, employee grit—characterized by perseverance and passion for long-term goals—serves as an internal resource that can enhance resilience against burnout and disengagement. Through a symbolic interaction approach, this research examines how the interplay between external job resources and internal grit influences workers' emotional and behavioral responses to job stressors, ultimately impacting their commitment and performance. The findings suggest that e-commerce delivery workers with higher levels of job resources and grit are less likely to experience quiet quitting, as these factors contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and resilience. The study provides practical insights for e-commerce organizations, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive work environment and cultivating employee grit to maintain engagement and reduce turnover.

Keywords: Quiet Quitting, Remote Workers, Burnout, Passion, Grit, Supervisor Communication, Job Demands, Digital Business.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the e-commerce industry has brought significant changes to how consumers interact with businesses, particularly in the realm of home deliveries. This shift, amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to a surge in demand for delivery workers, making it a key area of focus for research in service management, consumer behavior, and employee well-being (Serenko, 2024). Despite the growth of the e-commerce sector, literature addressing the specific challenges faced by delivery workers is limited, especially in the context of their work environment, job stress, and disengagement issues such as quiet quitting (QQ). E-commerce delivery workers occupy a unique position in the service domain, a sector traditionally dominated by human interaction (Wu & Wei, 2024). As these workers are often responsible for providing last-mile delivery services for platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and TataCliq, their roles are vital for customer satisfaction. The evolution of technology and the increasing use of mobile applications have made online shopping more accessible, changing consumer consumption patterns (Chai & Yat, 2019). However, the reliance on delivery workers to meet the growing demand has also highlighted critical issues related to job stress, engagement, and employee motivation. Quiet quitting (QQ) has emerged as a significant issue in the workplace, particularly in low-skill, high-turnover sectors like e-commerce delivery. Employees who quietly quit demonstrate disengagement by doing the bare minimum required to keep their jobs, reducing their overall productivity and contribution to organizational success (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). In the context of delivery work, QQ is exhibited in subtle behaviors such as not going above and beyond basic job duties, avoiding overtime, or failing to engage in team efforts (Hamouche et al., 2023). As a result, organizations may face challenges in maintaining service quality and fostering a motivated workforce. There are several factors contributing to the rise of QQ, particularly among delivery workers. Many workers in this sector have limited qualifications and little prior training in customer service or other critical skills (Chai & Yat, 2019). Consequently, low job satisfaction, lack of career advancement opportunities, and high levels of job stress can lead to burnout, disengagement, and QQ (Zenger & Folkman, 2022). The demanding nature of delivery work, coupled with long hours and low wages, further exacerbates feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Studies have also indicated that employees experiencing QQ exhibit reduced motivation and a negative attitude toward their work, which significantly impacts organizational performance (Carmichael, 2022; Wade, 2022). Job resources, such as social support, autonomy, and skill development, play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of QQ. Research suggests that employees with access to sufficient job resources are more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and resilient in the face of job stress (Gallup, 2022). In particular, supervisors and managers play a pivotal role in fostering a positive work environment, with Gallup (2022) reporting that 70% of team engagement is directly influenced by leadership. In the case of e-commerce delivery workers, providing resources such as flexible scheduling,

recognition, and career development opportunities could help reduce QQ by addressing key employee needs and enhancing motivation. Employee grit, which refers to perseverance and passion for long-term goals, has also been identified as a key factor in preventing QQ.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job demands imply the physical, mental, social, or organizational aspects of a job that demand sustained effort or skills, leading to certain physical or mental costs (Bakker et al., 2004). Symbolic interaction involves the interpretation of actions because symbolic meanings can vary among individuals. The key prerequisite for the formation of meaning is the occurrence of an event. As emphasized by Blumer (1969), "the meaning of things guides action". Symbolic interaction studies the meanings which emerge from individuals interacting in a social environment (Aksan et al., 2009). To comprehend human behaviours, it's imperative to grasp the definitions, meanings, and processes constructed by humans. Elements such as social roles, rules, and structures offer the necessary material for individuals to formulate definitions. In this context, symbolic interaction underscores the importance of social interaction, and the assumption of empathetic roles among people. Symbolic interaction thus forms the backdrop of motivating as well as demotivating interactions between the employee and their supervisor. Within the workplace, employees encounter diverse job demands, including exposure to hazards and tasks that require significant cognitive and physical effort. The JD-R model, presented by Demerouti et al. (2001), posits that the working environment's conditions, perceived as job demands (JD), can lead to EBO and various health concerns. Burnout affects a significant population of employees (Fisher et al., 2023). Most of the research on EBO has focused on mental health (Gribben and Semple, 2021). Comparatively, less focus has been on how employees cope with EBO. In recent years, changes in the work-place landscape, such as work from home, remote jobs, and hybrid roles offer employees a better perceived work-life balance. However, the blurring between work and non-work demands have made the employees feel that they need to be available for work all the time (Dr.Naveen Prasadula., 2025). Literature shows that EBO is associated with lower satisfaction with work-life balance (Boamah et al., 2022).

ROLE OF JOB RESOURCES AND GRIT

Job Resources

Schaufeli and Taris (2014) provided a definition for job resources (JR) as "positively valued aspects of the job, including physical, psychological, social, or organizational elements that aid in achieving work objectives, reducing JD, or fostering personal growth and development." JR are components within a job that facilitate professional advancement, enhance work engagement, and promote commitment to the organization (Demerouti and Bakker, 2011). The workplace provides avenues for employees to learn, grow, and achieve their objectives through JR, such as fostering a positive work environment, receiving support from supervisors and colleagues, and having autonomy in their roles (Crawford et al., 2010). JR aid employees in meeting their needs and shielding themselves from the strain imposed by certain JD. If workers do not have the required resources, they are not able to cope with the pressing demands, and they would finally fail to achieve the goal. Demerouti et al. (2001) posited that EBO has two elements. The first one refers to the demands of work, which include workload, time related deadlines, contact with recipient, and the physical environment leading to exhaustion. The second element refers to absence of shortage of JR, such as timely feedback from supervisor, job security, autonomy, rewards, participation, and support from supervisor, leading to disengagement. The JD-R model proposes that JD are responsible for EBO, and that JR drives inspiration. This has been verified empirically (Demerouti et al., 2011). Supervisors play a key role in providing JR to their team members and thus play an important role in mitigating EBO. This study uses the symbolic interactions between supervisors and e-commerce delivery workers as an enabler of JR and examine JR's moderating impact on the relationship between JD and EBO, as well as on the relationship between EBO and QQ.

Thus the first two hypotheses of this study are:

H₁: Job Resources negatively moderates the relationship between Job Demands and Burnout.

H₂: Job Resources negatively moderates the relationship between Burnout and Quiet Quitting.

Grit

In their examination of workplace deviance among front-line hospitality employees,

Wu and Wei (2024) investigated the role of employee grit as a moderator. Previous studies have linked traits such as grit and hardiness (Frydenberg, 2017) to coping mechanisms in resilience research. Employee grit has been shown to impact job attitudes and performance (McGinley et al., 2020). Grit refers to a personality trait characterized by perseverance and passion, which drive individuals' determination and motivation to pursue long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). It is a critical factor for individuals to achieve positive outcomes in resilience contexts (Frydenberg, 2017). Individuals with grit tend to persist in goals they are highly passionate about while abandoning those with low passion (McGinley et al., 2020). In the realm of sales and marketing, Schepker and Good (2022) discovered that salespeople with grit are less prone to job stress because they interpret stress induced by stressors as industrious rather than

debilitating. Passion towards the workplace can be developed in employees by their supervisors and leaders by rewarding favourable behaviour and timely feedback (Ho and Astakhova, 2018, 2020; Xiao et al., 2021). In this study, we use the symbolic interactions between the supervisors and e-commerce delivery workers as enablers of passion and thereby study the moderating effect of grit as a comprehensive construct on the relationship between JD and EBO, as well as on the relationship between EBO and QQ.

Thus, the next two hypotheses of this study can be written as:

H₃: *Grit negatively moderates the relationship between Job Demands and Burnout.*

H₄: *Grit negatively moderates the relationship between Burnout and Quiet Quitting.*

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Symbolic Interaction Theory

The theory of symbolic interaction has evolved with the contributions of thinkers such as Dewey (1930), Cooley (1902), and Mead (1934). While symbolic interactionists may differ in their perspectives, they unanimously agree that human interaction serves as the primary source of data. Additionally, there is a consensus among symbolic interactionists that perspectives and the ability to empathize are central to understanding symbolic interaction (Stryker & Vryan, 2003). The principal figure in the symbolic interactionist school is George Herbert Mead, a pragmatist and anti-dualist philosopher. Mead posits that the mind and ego are products of society, and he asserts that symbols are instrumental in the development of the mind and serve as tools for thought and communication (Ashworth, 2008). Mead's focus lies in examining how people engage in everyday interactions through symbolic means and how they establish order and significance in their lives (Korgen & White, 2008).

The symbolic interactions may signal the provision of additional JR for the employee which in turn, may impact the relationship between JD and EBO, as well as EBO and QQ. The presence of symbolic interactions provides a high degree of motivation to the employee which in turn facilitates in enhancing the employee's passion towards the workplace and therefore enhance grit, which in turn, may moderate the relationship between JD and EBO, as well as the relationship between EBO and QQ (Figure 1).

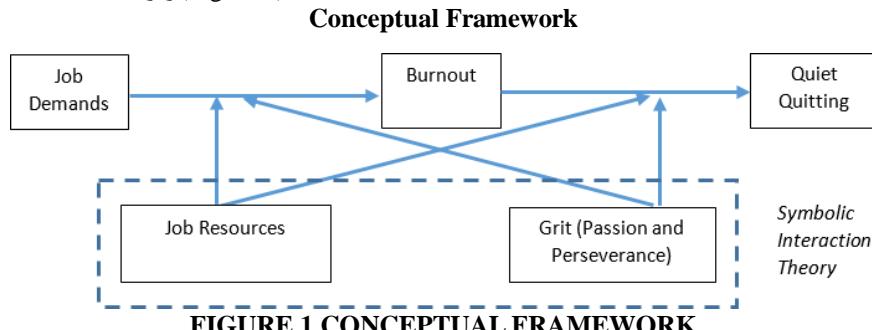


FIGURE 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

METHODOLOGY

Measures

To assess the workload aspects of job demand construct, the scale given by Pelfrene et al. (2001) was adapted, and to evaluate the emotional aspects of job demand, the scale provided by Aiello and Tesi (2017) was adapted for this study. To measure the time pressure related and work environment related JD, a scale given by Demerouti et al. (2001) was adapted. The scale given by Iwankicki and Schwab (1981) was adapted to measure EBO and a scale by Karrani et al. (2024) was adapted to measure QQ. JR was measured by using scales adapted from Cheung et al. (2021) and Demerouti et al. (2001). The scale provided by Wu and Wei (2024) was adapted to measure employee grit. Response categories followed a 5-point Likert scale in which 5 represented "Strongly Agree", and 1 represented "Strongly Disagree". The Likert scale was used to understand the degree to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with the items in the instrument.

Sampling and Data Collection

A survey was conducted across six weeks by circulating the instrument using WhatsApp to known individuals, who administered the survey. An orientation and training session was conducted for all the questionnaire administrators using zoom, for a duration of 40 minutes each. Some of the administrators were grouped together in one video session, while a few had to be instructed individual due to their specific availability at certain times of the day and certain days of the week. These known individuals acted as facilitators and presented the survey to the delivery workers and recorded their responses. The target delivery workers included those who deliver groceries and wearables such as apparel, footwear, and accessories, for various platforms such as Amazon, Myntra, Flipkart, Ajio, TataCliq, BigBasket, and Blinkit among others. The facilitators were authorised to provide a small tip or incentive not more than 50 cents or

INR 40 to the delivery workers for participating in this survey. The survey was administered to 431 e-commerce delivery workers, out of which 419 complete responses were received.

Non-food delivery workers from e-commerce were chosen for the sample, as this study had the context of e-commerce and food-delivery workers are generally perceived to be on the delicate intersection of e-commerce and hospitality

RESULTS

The Data was analysed using SmartPLS 4. EFA was not required since the constructs were taken from literature Table

The demographic profile of respondents is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS				
		N	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Age	Less than 20 years	75	17.9	17.9
	21 to 25 years	155	37.0	54.9
	26 to 30 years	105	25.1	80.0
	31 to 35 years	52	12.4	92.4
	More than 35 years	32	7.6	100.0
Gender	Female	26	6.2	6.2
	Male	393	93.8	100.0
Education level	Up to 10th standard	21	5.0	5.0
	Up to 12th standard	152	36.3	41.3
	Diploma	78	18.6	59.9
	Graduate	146	34.8	94.7
	Post Graduate	22	5.3	100.0
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	26	6.2	6.2
	Between 1 to 2 years	191	45.6	51.8
	Between 2 to 4 years	82	19.6	71.4
	Between 4 to 6 years	101	24.1	95.5
	More than 6 years	19	4.5	100.0

Measurement Model Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was utilized to assess convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs. The reliability of the constructs was identified by observing the factor loadings of all the constructs. A factor loading of 0.7 is considered acceptable (Kamboj & Rana, 2021) (Table 2).

Table 2 FACTOR LOADINGS					
	EBO	GP	JD	JR	QQ
EBO1	0.76				
EBO3	0.91				
EBO4	0.73				
GPA1		0.95			
GPA2		0.93			
JDE1			0.72		
JDT1			0.81		
JDT2			0.80		
JDW2			0.76		
JRC1				0.84	
JRC3				0.86	
QQ5					0.81
QQ6					0.90
QQ9					0.92

As per the results presented in Table 2 above, all the factor loadings obtained were greater than 0.7, indicating their dependability. Before performing the structural analysis, the collinearity was evaluated leveraging the variance inflation factors (VIF) as suggested by (Hair et al., 2021). The results obtained for VIF metrics has been presented in Table 3.

Table 3 COLLINEARITY STATISTICS (VIF) – OUTER MODEL	
	VIF
EBO1	1.512
EBO3	2.115
EBO4	1.511
GPA1	2.452
GPA2	2.452
JDE1	1.425
JDT1	1.573
JDT2	1.503
JDW2	1.563
JRC1	1.241
JRC3	1.241
QQ5	1.748
QQ6	2.478
QQ9	3.063

As can be observed from the results presented in Table 2, multi-collinearity among the constructs was ruled out since the VIF values for the constructs were less than 4.

Structural Model Analysis

Following validation of the measurement model, the four hypotheses of this study were tested by examining the structural model.

The convergent validity of the measure was established. The discriminant validity assessment was established using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, as given in Table 4 below. The values show that discriminant validity holds for this model.

Table 4 FORNELL AND LARCKER CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY					
	EBO	GP	JD	JR	QQ
EBO	0.804				
GP	0.201	0.940			
JD	0.726	0.222	0.770		
JR	-0.680	-0.170	-0.690	0.849	
QQ	0.505	0.456	0.444	-0.620	0.880

The R square values show that 60.3 percent of variation in EBO is explained by the model and that 56.9 percent of the variation in QQ is explained by the model (Table 5).

Table 5 R SQUARE OVERVIEW		
	R-square	R-square adjusted
EBO	0.603	0.598
QQ	0.569	0.564

The construct reliability and validity is explained in Table 6 below. The Cronbach's alpha for EBO, Grit, JD, and QQ are reported above 0.7, which indicates that the items are sufficiently consistent to indicate that the measures are reliable (Shemwell et al., 2015). Griethuijsen et al. (2014) posited that Cronbach's alpha values of 0.6 are also acceptable, therefore JR as a measure is also considered reliable.

Table 6 CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY				
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EBO	0.722	0.749	0.845	0.647
GP	0.870	0.906	0.938	0.883
JD	0.773	0.786	0.853	0.593
JR	0.612	0.613	0.837	0.720
QQ	0.850	0.875	0.909	0.769

As the validity of the constructs was established, the structural model of this study was assessed to evaluate the hypotheses proposed in this study.

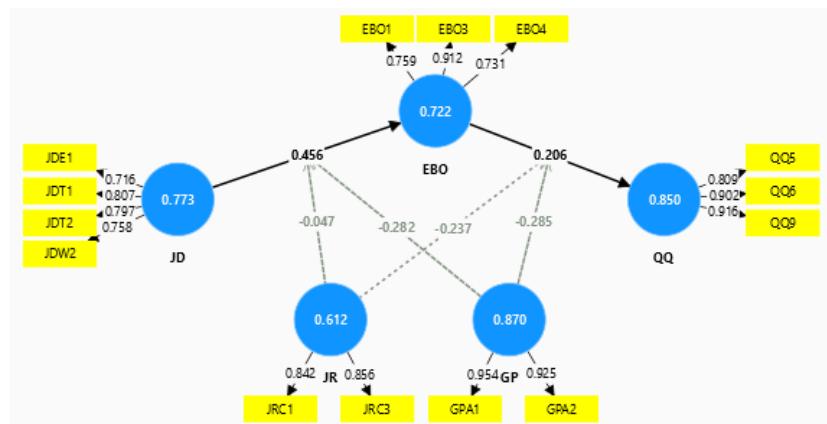


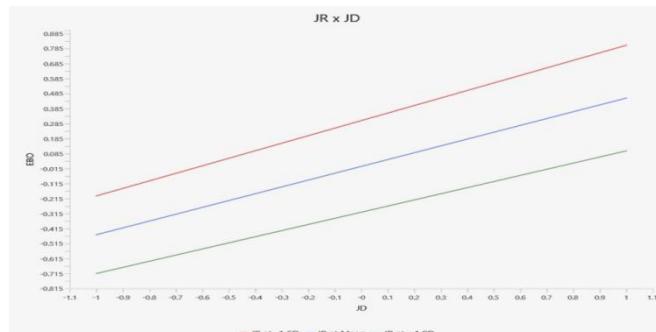
FIGURE 2

SMARTPLS4 USED TO DEPICT MODEL

Cronbach's alpha for the constructs was > 0.7 which depicted high internal consistency and therefore adequate reliability of the model. The factor loadings have revealed the items of each construct clearly. Items EBO1, EBO3, and EBO4 were clearly loaded with favourable values in the construct EBO. GPA1 and GPA2 had favourable loadings for Grit. The items JDE1, JDT1, JDT2, JDW2 were loaded in the construct JD. Items JRC1, JRS2, and JRS3 were loaded in favour of JR. Items QQ5, QQ6, and QQ9 were loaded in favour of the construct Quite Quitting. These items were then taken for creating the structural model in SmartPLS4. Structured equation modelling revealed the construct validity and reliability. Cronbach's alpha for all constructs was > 0.7 , as can be seen in Figure 1, which showed that there exists a high internal consistency in the model.

Moderation Analysis

A slope analysis was conducted using the moderators, JR and Grit, to view their influence on the relationship between Job Demand and EBO as well as between EBO and QQ. The slope analysis showed the direction of influence on the relationship between these constructs and also depicted the direction and strength with which the relationship would be modified, if any influence was visible. These influences can be seen in Figures 2- 6. A simple slope analysis is useful in



investigating and interpreting significant interactions. Since this study is striving to understand the moderations effect of JR and Grit on the relationship between JD and EBO as well as the relationship between EBO and QQ, the simple slope analysis is a useful method for this study.

FIGURE 3 JR X JD

The moderation effect of JR on the relationship between JD and EBO was examined using the slope analysis. Figure 3 shows that the mean relationship between JD and EBO is a significantly positive one. This relationship is mildly reduced when the relationship is moderated by JR. This implies that JR has a mildly negative moderating effect on the relationship between JD and EBO. Thus, H1 hypothesis is proved.

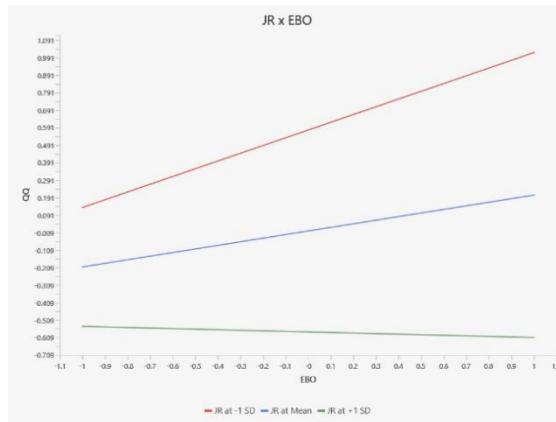


FIGURE 4 JR X BURNOUT

The moderation effect of JR on the relationship between EBO and QQ was examined using the slope analysis. Figure 4 shows that the average relationship between EBO and QQ is a moderately positive one. This relationship is moderated by JR. This implies that when JR are increased, the impact of EBO on QQ decreases. However, we observe that when the JR are decreased, the impact of EBO on QQ increases significantly. Thus, H2 hypothesis is proved.

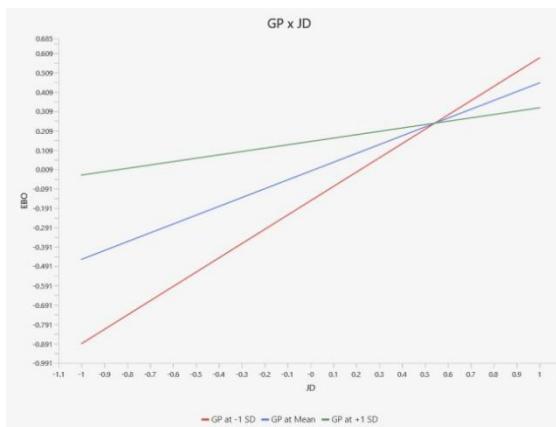


FIGURE 5 GRIT X JD

The moderation effect of Grit on the relationship between JD and EBO was examined using the slope analysis. Figure 5 show that the mean relationship between JD and EBO is a significantly positive one. Grit has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between JD and EBO. Thus, H3 hypothesis is proved.

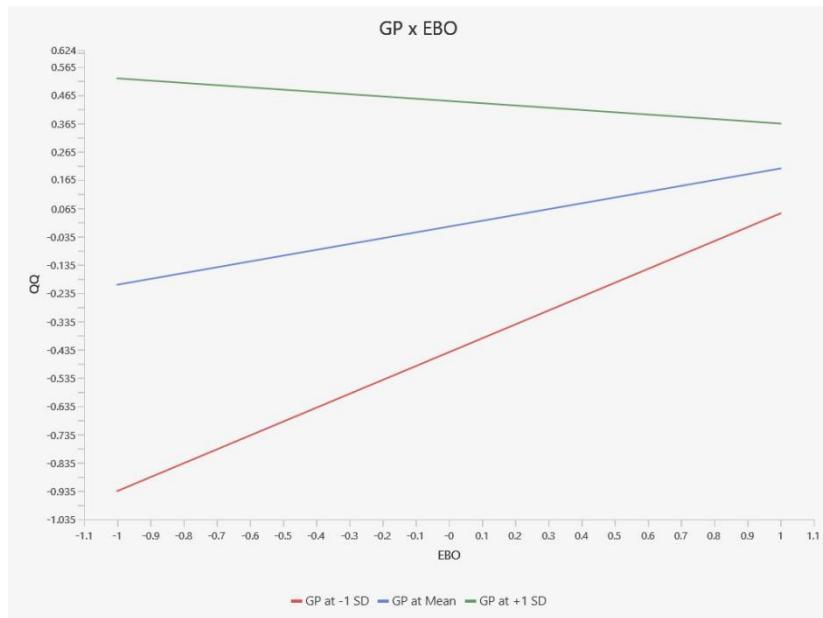


FIGURE 6 GRIT X BURNOUT

The moderation effect of Grit on the relationship between EBO and QQ was examined using the slope analysis. Figure 6 shows that the average relationship between EBO and QQ is a moderately positive one, when moderated by Grit. This relationship is moderately reduced when the relationship is moderated by Grit. This implies that when Grit, comprising of passion and perseverance are increased, the impact of EBO on QQ may reduce. However, we observe that when the employee Grit is reduced, the impact of EBO on QQ is significant. Thus, the absence or reduction in employee Grit leads to higher instances of QQ. Thus, H4 hypothesis is proved.

CONCLUSION

This study has successfully examined the relationships between Job Demands (JD), Emotional Burnout (EBO), and Quiet Quitting (QQ) within the context of e-commerce delivery workers. By leveraging existing literature, the study explored how job demands can lead to emotional burnout, and how burnout, in turn, influences the occurrence of quiet quitting. The research also proposed and tested the moderating effects of Job Resources (JR) and Employee Grit on these relationships. Using SmartPLS 4 to empirically analyze survey responses from e-commerce delivery workers, the study found several key insights. First, it was revealed that the relationship between JD and EBO is moderately influenced by the presence or absence of JR. When job resources, such as supervisor support and peer relationships, are available, they help mitigate the negative effects of high job demands on emotional burnout. However, the absence of these resources significantly exacerbates the burnout, making it more likely for employees to experience disengagement. Similarly, the relationship between EBO and QQ was found to be moderately influenced by the availability of job resources. With adequate support, the transition from burnout to quiet quitting was less pronounced, although the absence of resources led to a significant increase in the likelihood of quiet quitting. Furthermore, the study revealed that employee grit plays a crucial role in moderating both the JD-EBO and EBO-QQ relationships. Employees who possess higher levels of grit—defined as passion and perseverance for long-term goals—are better able to withstand the stress induced by high job demands. Grit significantly mitigates the negative effects of burnout and helps reduce the incidence of quiet quitting, regardless of the availability of job resources. These findings highlight the importance of developing resilience and perseverance in employees to combat burnout and maintain engagement. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the moderating effects of both job resources and employee grit in the relationships between job demands, emotional burnout, and quiet quitting. The practical implications of the study suggest that organizations should focus on enhancing both job resources and employee grit to reduce burnout and prevent quiet quitting. In particular, fostering an environment that promotes grit, through training, development programs, and a supportive work culture, can help mitigate the adverse effects of job stress and enhance employee motivation.

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