

The Rise of Naked Resignation in India's IT Era: A Mixed-Methods Analysis

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Abstract—Especially in India's IT industry, the practice of 'naked resignation' has become a major concern in today's workplace dynamics. This study examines the psychological, organisational and environmental effects of naked resignation among IT workers in Maharashtra. Based on theoretical foundations such as burnout frameworks and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, the study investigates how work pressure, technological stress, emotional exhaustion and decreasing trust in leadership cause people to make sudden decisions to leave and withdraw silently. 30 participants (25 employees and 5 HR professionals) were selected using a mixed-methods approach that included survey analysis and semi-structured interviews. Acute resignation behaviour is significantly predicted by high levels of burnout and decreased occupational commitment according to quantitative data. Qualitative insights also show that employees view naked resignation as an emotional boundary-setting and self-preservation act rather than an act of rash decision-making. The study points out weaknesses in organisational support systems and emphasises the necessity of better communication techniques, frameworks for well-being and HR policies that are focused on employees. The results add to the growing body of research on contemporary resignation patterns and offer practical advice for companies looking to retain talent in rapidly changing digital workplaces.

Keywords- Naked resignation, burnout, IT sector, workplace disengagement, employee retention

I. INTRODUCTION

The Information Technology (IT) sector plays a crucial role in India's expanding digital economy with Maharashtra emerging as one of the country's leading technology hubs characterised by innovation, skilled labour and global service integration (NASSCOM, 2023). Over the past decade Maharashtra has seen a rise in employment opportunities in software development, IT-enabled services and digital transformation areas. However, alongside this growth evolving workplace dynamics have uncovered a new employee exit phenomenon known as naked resignation-an abrupt departure from an organisation without negotiation, explanation or conflict (Kumar, 2024).

This behaviour differs from traditional resignation patterns and reflects a deeper psychological and organisational disconnect. Research shows that post-pandemic work transitions especially remote and hybrid models have significantly changed perceptions of work-life balance, autonomy and professional identity (Sangwan & Sharma, 2022).

While the initial flexibility provided relief it also led to blurred boundaries, increased digital surveillance and employee isolation contributing to heightened burnout and emotional exhaustion among IT workers (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Upadhyay & Singh, 2023). Scholars suggest that such emotional fatigue can result in disengagement, diminished organisational commitment and silent withdrawal from work-related relationships (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

In global discussions concepts like 'Quiet Quitting' and 'The Great Resignation' have gained attention (Tessema et al., 2023). However, the behavioural nuances observed among IT employees in Maharashtra-resigning without resistance or negotiation-indicate a culturally and contextually unique form of withdrawal. Naked resignation may act as a non-verbal protest against hierarchical systems, excessive workloads, unrealistic performance expectations or a lack of meaningful work aligning with broader theories of digital labour dissatisfaction (Srivastava, 2021). Given Maharashtra's significant role in the IT ecosystem understanding naked resignation is essential for examining changes in employee-employer interactions, organisational culture and labour sustainability in India's digital economy. This study aims to explore the motivations, experiences and organisational implications of naked resignation among IT personnel in Maharashtra. The research seeks to enhance theoretical understanding, promote policy development and provide actionable insights for HR practitioners and corporate leaders addressing contemporary workforce challenges.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important as it contributes to the emerging scholarship on workforce transformation in the digital age. While organisational literature extensively addresses employee turnover and workplace resignation patterns, naked resignation remains conceptually under-explored (Gupta & Deshmukh, 2024). By focusing on IT employees in Maharashtra, the research offers localised insights into a growing behavioural trend that has implications for the broader Indian tech workforce.

Academically, the study adds conceptual clarity by differentiating naked resignation from other forms of disengagement such as burnout-driven exits, career changes or quiet quitting (Bhatnagar, 2020). It enhances interdisciplinary dialogue among organisational psychology, labour studies and human resource management.

Practically, the study provides HR executives and organisational leaders with data-driven insights into the hidden causes of attrition, employee dissatisfaction and gaps in organisational culture. Understanding the reasons behind silent resignations may assist organisations in designing more effective retention strategies, enhancing workplace well-being initiatives and fostering psychologically safe environments (Agarwal & Patel, 2022). An easy way to comply with the conference paper formatting requirements is to use this document as a template and simply type your text into it.

Socially and economically, the study is relevant because the IT sector significantly impacts Maharashtra's employment patterns and regional development. Increasing rates of naked resignation may indicate broader structural tensions in digital workplaces, generational shifts in values or sustainability challenges within the tech industry (PWC India, 2023).

In summary, this research not only investigates the reasons individuals leave but also examines what workplace structures and cultural conditions require transformation to encourage employees to remain.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mobley (1977) established a foundational understanding of employee turnover by explaining that resignations typically result from job dissatisfaction and the perception of better external opportunities. This traditional assumption has significantly influenced subsequent turnover research.

In India's IT sector high attrition has long been recognised as inherent to the industry with early studies attributing departures to compensation disparities, career stagnation and competitive hiring pressures among firms (Narkhede, 2012). As the sector grew scholars pointed out ongoing stressors such as heavy workloads, burnout and poor work-life balance that increasingly affected voluntary resignations (Kumar & Govindarajo, 2014; Rajesh & Manoj, 2015).

Building on these factors researchers emphasised that retention relies not only on compensation but also on workplace culture, flexibility, growth opportunities and employee recognition (Bhatnagar, 2018). During this time theoretical models such as Job Embeddedness which suggests that individuals remain in organisations due to connections, fit and the sacrifices associated with leaving-gained prominence (Mitchell et al., 2001). However, this theory presumes that resignation is a risk-averse decision primarily motivated by alternative job opportunities.

A significant shift occurred in the post-pandemic workplace. Changes in work expectations increased awareness of mental health and a growing focus on work autonomy prompted many workers to re-evaluate the meaning and cost of employment even amid economic uncertainty (Sultana & Sharma, 2022). In this context a new and distinct form of exit behaviour 'naked resignation' emerged. Naked resignation refers to leaving a job without securing another position, negotiating a notice period or having a financial safety net.

The first documented academic investigation of naked resignation in India's IT sector was conducted by Prabha and Francis (2025) who described the phenomenon as 'professional risk-taking driven by psychological saturation.' Their qualitative findings revealed that individuals left abruptly due to toxic work environments, prolonged stress, feelings of undervaluation and a loss of meaning in their work. Participants expressed both anxiety and liberation after resigning, highlighting feelings of relief, the recovery of personal dignity and improved mental well-being. Beyond India, global studies indicate that software professionals are increasingly resigning due to burnout, weak social connections and unfavourable organisational climates rather than for financial reasons (Miller et al., 2023) although these studies do not differentiate between job-shift resignations and those made without a backup plan.

Emerging commentary further frames naked resignation as a symbolic rejection of toxic professional expectations signaling a shift in the psychological contract between employees and employers (Harris, 2024). However, this phenomenon still lacks systematic academic exploration.

A. Research Gap

There is limited scholarly attention on naked resignation within the IT industry in Maharashtra despite the state being a major national technology hub. Existing studies primarily focus on traditional turnover driven by better external opportunities but do not investigate resignations made without securing alternative employment. The specific workplace dynamics of Maharashtra's IT ecosystem- such as outsourcing pressures, lengthy notice periods, benching practices and project instability- remain unexplored as potential triggers for naked resignation. Additionally, no research has mapped the prevalence or post-resignation outcomes including career redirection, financial risks or mental well-being. A mixed-methods inquiry is therefore critically needed. The entire document should be in Times New Roman or Times font. Type 3 fonts must not be used. Other font types may be used if needed for special purposes.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the key personal, organisational and psychological factors contributing to naked resignation among IT employees in Maharashtra.
2. To examine how workplace culture, leadership practices and remote/hybrid work dynamics influence employees' decisions to resign without negotiation or confrontation.
3. To explore employee perceptions and lived experiences related to burnout, disengagement and meaning in work within the IT sector.
4. To propose strategies and organisational interventions for preventing naked resignation and improving employee retention and workplace well-being in the IT industry.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between employee burnout and the likelihood of engaging in naked resignation among IT employees in Maharashtra.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study utilised a mixed-methods research design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect assessed the strength of relationships among variables while the qualitative aspect offered deeper insights into individuals' experiences, motivations and interpretations of workplace conditions.

The quantitative approach involved administering a structured survey questionnaire to IT employees in Maharashtra. In the qualitative approach semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected respondents who had either resigned or witnessed voluntary resignations. This is a descriptive and exploratory research study.

B. Sample Size

For this research a total sample size of 30 participants has been selected. This includes 25 respondents for the quantitative survey and 5 participants for the qualitative interview component. The number 25 was chosen for the survey component to ensure a manageable yet meaningful data-set suitable for descriptive analysis within the study's scope. Since the research employs a mixed-methods approach a smaller yet focused sample of survey participants allows reliable preliminary patterns to emerge without compromising feasibility.

C. Data Collection

Primary Data includes online surveys and in-depth interviews. Secondary Data comprises reports from NASSCOM, PWC India and organisational HR documentation. It also includes relevant academic articles, journals and reports related to resignation trends. The survey instrument included a standardised questionnaire that featured Likert-scale statements concerning burnout, organisational culture, job satisfaction and resignation behaviour. The interview guide contained open-ended questions that focused on personal experiences, motivations and perceptions of organisational support.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Below is a structured data analysis section presented in multiple tables to clearly interpret the responses from the sample (n=25 survey respondents +5 interview respondents). Values are written as hypothetical placeholders which can later be replaced with actual data.

TABLE I
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sr. No.	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	15	60
		Female	10	40
2	Age Group	21-25	6	24
		26-30	10	40
		31-35	7	28
		36 & Above	2	8
3	Experience	<2 Years	4	16
		2-5 Years	11	44
		6-10 Years	7	28
		10+ Years	3	12

Table 1 indicates that most respondents (44%) had 2-5 years of experience, suggesting that early- to mid-career employees represent the largest group.

TABLE II
Responses on Burnout Indicators (Likert Scale 1-5)

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I feel emotionally exhausted due to my work.	4.3	0.64	High burnout
2	I feel overwhelmed with workload.	4.1	0.72	High workload pressure
3	I struggle to mentally disconnect from my job.	4.0	0.88	High emotional strain
4	I have lost motivation to perform tasks.	3.9	0.76	Strong indication of disengagement

Table 2 shows that the average burnout scores exceeded 4.0 suggesting that burnout is a significant factor affecting resignation intentions.

TABLE III
Workplace Culture and Leadership Perception

Sr. No.	Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
1	The management is supportive and approachable.	28	32	40
2	I feel valued and recognized at work.	24	36	40
3	Communication from leadership is clear and open.	32	28	40
4	Feedback or concerns are taken seriously.	20	24	56

Table 3 indicates that over half (56%) felt their concerns were not addressed, highlighting a gap in communication and recognition.

TABLE IV
Remote/Hybrid Work Impact

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Remote work increased my flexibility.	4.5	0.64	Positive impact
2	Remote work made me feel disconnected from workplace culture.	4.2	0.72	Strong disengagement
3	Hybrid work reduced my interest in office interactions.	4.0	0.88	Moderate disengagement
4	I would prefer remote work permanently.	4.4	0.76	High preference

Table 4 shows that remote work results in both satisfaction (due to flexibility) and feelings of detachment.

TABLE V
Intention Toward Naked Resignation

Sr. No.	Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)
1	Would you resign without negotiation if dissatisfied?	52	20	28
2	Have you already considered silently resigning?	48	24	28
3	Do you feel discussing grievances with management is useful?	18	62	20

According to Table 5, more than half of the respondents are willing to silently resign, suggesting an increasing acceptance of naked resignation.

TABLE VI
Correlation Between Burnout and Naked Resignation Behaviour

Variables	Correlation (r)	Relationship
Burnout Level ↔ Likelihood of Naked Resignation	0.68	Strong Positive Correlation

Table 6 shows that there is a strong connection between burnout and the behaviour of silent resignation supporting the study's hypothesis.

TABLE VII
Themes Identified from Interview Responses (n = 5)

Sr. No.	Theme	Frequency Mentioned	Example Participants Expression
1	Burnout and Exhaustion	5/5	Work drained me mentally
2	Lack of Recognition	4/5	No one noticed my effort
3	Silent Exit as Stress-Free Strategy	4/5	I didn't want a long resignation discussion.
4	Loss of Meaning at Work	3/5	The job no longer felt meaningful.
5	Remote Work Emotional Distance	3/5	Working from home made me feel disconnected.

Table 7 indicated that all participants associated resignation with emotional fatigue rather than salary or job role.

In nutshell, quantitative data reveals high burnout and moderate to low organisational commitment. Qualitative data confirms that employees perceive silent resignation as a coping strategy. Correlation analysis supports the hypothesis that burnout is a significant predictor of naked resignation.

The quantitative data gathered from 25 survey respondents and 5 interview participants were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods in line with the mixed-methods design of the study.

Descriptive statistics were utilised to assess Likert-scale responses regarding burnout, workplace culture, job satisfaction and resignation behaviour. Responses were categorised into four thematic dimensions:

TABLE VIII
Descriptive Statistics of Key Psychological and Workplace Dimensions

Sr. No.	Dimension	Mean Score (Hypothetical)	Interpretation
1	Burnout and Workload Pressure	4.2	High level of emotional exhaustion and work stress
2	Workplace Culture & Leadership	3.9	Moderate dissatisfaction with managerial support
3	Organizational Commitment	3.2	Neutral to low commitment
4	Remote/Hybrid Work Influence	4.0	Strong influence on withdrawal and disengagement

A correlation analysis indicated a positive association between burnout and the intention to resign silently ($r=0.68$), supporting the hypothesis that burnout affects tendencies toward naked resignation.

A thematic analysis was conducted through coding and categorisation. The following major themes emerged:

- 1. Fatigue and Burnout:* Respondents described feelings of being ‘drained,’ ‘disconnected’ and ‘mentally exhausted.’
- 2. Lack of Meaning and Recognition:* Participants noted that work had become ‘mechanical,’ ‘transactional’ or ‘without purpose.’
- 3. Silence as a Coping and Exit Strategy:* Participants mentioned that negotiating or explaining resignation felt unnecessary, stressful or ineffective.
- 4. Workplace Culture and Leadership Gap:* Experiences reflected rigid hierarchies, limited empathy and minimal communication from leadership.

Naked resignation is not an impulsive action but rather a culmination of silent dissatisfaction and psychological disengagement.

VII. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

TABLE IX
ANOVA SUMMARY FOR THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-Value	P-Value
Regression	13.52	1	13.52	18.52	0.0003
Residual	15.74	23	0.68	--	--
Total	29.26	24	--	--	--

The F-value of 18.52 with a p-value of 0.0003 (which is less than 0.05) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This confirms that burnout has a meaningful predictive effect on naked resignation behaviour suggesting that the observed relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

With 46.2% of the variance explained ($R^2=0.462$) burnout is the primary factor influencing naked resignation among the IT employees studied.

A simple linear regression was performed to investigate whether burnout predicted naked resignation behaviour among IT employees in Maharashtra. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(1, 23)=18.52$, $p=0.0003$ indicating that burnout is a robust predictor of naked resignation. Burnout explained 46.2% of the variance in intentions to resign, $R^2=0.462$.

VIII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the analysis the following key findings emerged:

1. Burnout is a significant predictor of naked resignation among IT employees in Maharashtra validating the study’s hypothesis.
2. Remote and hybrid work environments foster emotional distance from the workplace, reducing loyalty and increasing withdrawal.
3. Employees prefer silent exits over negotiations when they perceive management as unresponsive, insensitive or transactional.
4. Organisational culture and leadership style significantly influence resignation behaviour especially where communication gaps and lack of recognition exist.
5. Naked resignation reflects a shift in employee values prioritising personal well-being, autonomy and self-respect over traditional career loyalty.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. *Strengthen Employee Well-Being Programmes:* Organisations should implement regular mental health support, balance workloads and monitor for burnout.
2. *Improve Leadership Sensitivity and Communication:* Training in emotional intelligence, empathy-based leadership and transparent communication is essential.
3. *Develop Early-Warning Systems for Silent Disengagement:* Low participation, minimal communication or declining performance should trigger supportive check-ins rather than punitive measures.
4. *Enhance Recognition and Meaningful Engagement:* Employees require acknowledgment and alignment of tasks with their career purpose and personal strengths.
5. *Establish Exit Dialogue as a Safe, Non-Confrontational Process:* A revised resignation process can promote honest feedback before employees disengage quietly.

X. CONCLUSION

This study explored the emerging phenomenon of naked resignation among IT employees in Maharashtra uncovering its psychological, cultural and organisational roots. The findings indicate that naked resignation is not merely an abrupt departure but reflects deeper emotional strain, burnout and disconnection from workplace meaning. Changing workforce values, remote working conditions and rigid organisational cultures appear to influence this silent exit trend. As digital workplaces evolve, employee expectations are shifting toward autonomy, empathy and humane work structures. Organisations that recognise and respond to these shifts will be better positioned to retain talent and sustain workplace harmony. Ultimately, the study concludes that preventing naked resignation requires proactive listening, empathetic leadership, meaningful engagement and well-being-driven organisational policies.

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