



## Trends in Work-Behaviors: Addressing Work-Related Stress in the Thai Workforce

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### Abstract

The evolving work landscape has drawn attention, and the World Economic Forum highlights trends impacting the workforce. This study explores five work behavior patterns: quiet quitting, bailan, quiet firing, frugality, and boomerang employees. Quiet quitting involves disengagement, resembling a silent resignation. Bailan reflects deteriorating work and life due to diminished motivation. Quiet firing employs strategies inducing dissatisfaction for cost-saving resignations. Frugality prioritizes work-life balance over excessive wealth. Boomerang employees return to former organizations.

To assess prevalence and factors in Thailand, we conducted a survey with 400 employees aged 18-35. Regression analysis revealed stressors influencing negative work patterns. Quiet quitting resulted from mismatched job assignments, unclear evaluation criteria, limited autonomy, and conflicting ideologies. Bailan was influenced by misaligned tasks, monotonous work, isolation, criticism, and unsuitable environments. Quiet firing correlated with excessive workloads, mismatched tasks, isolation, criticism, neglect, unfair treatment, and conflicting ideologies. Frugality factors included unclear job scope, restricted autonomy, isolation, incongruent ideologies, and insufficient resources. Boomerang employees were affected by misaligned tasks and an unsupportive atmosphere.

The study found moderate to low levels of negative work behaviors among Thai employees. Organizations can mitigate these by addressing stress factors, refining job assignments, establishing clear criteria, fostering autonomy, promoting open communication, and nurturing supportive environments. These measures not only curb negative behaviors but also align with SDG 8, fostering decent work and sustainable economic growth.

### Keywords

Quiet quitting, Bailan, Quiet firing, Frugality, Boomerang employees

## **Introduction**

The 21st century has marked an era of transformative changes in work patterns globally, spurred by the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As organizations and individuals worldwide adapted to the new normal, work behaviors underwent a profound shift, reshaping the landscape of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. The impact of the pandemic transcended borders, prompting governments across diverse countries to implement strict lockdowns and social distancing measures. Traditional work settings underwent rapid transformation, with remote work and virtual collaboration becoming the norm, showcasing the universality of these changes.

This global shift towards remote work and flexible arrangements, triggered by the pandemic, has significant implications for workforce dynamics. The World Economic Forum (WEF) conducted a survey in 2022, examining the impact of these changes on work behaviors across diverse countries. The findings revealed a common trend of increased disengagement in the workforce, marked by behaviors such as quiet quitting, bailan, quiet firing, frugality, and boomerang employees. These behavioral patterns, particularly prevalent among the younger generation, have led to a surge in resignations, reshaping the employer-employee dynamic on a global scale. As economies globally began to recover in 2021, the workforce faced new uncertainties with geopolitical tensions and rising inflation rates. This scenario prompted employees to delay resignations and adopt the aforementioned work behaviors as coping mechanisms, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive examination of work-related stress on an international scale.

In the specific context of Thailand, the pandemic's influence on work behaviors mirrored these global trends. The country experienced a significant shift towards remote work and flexible arrangements to combat the spread of the virus, creating both opportunities and challenges for the workforce. Work-related stress emerged as a pressing concern, affecting employee well-being and performance, echoing the concerns seen in workplaces around the world. By placing the study within this broader global context, this research aims to not only delve into the manifestations and contributing factors of negative work behaviors in Thailand but also contribute to the understanding of a broader, international phenomenon. Through the exploration of work-related stress, job nature, work management, workplace relationships, and the work environment, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for employers worldwide to mitigate stress, enhance employee job satisfaction, and promote more meaningful work behaviors, aligning with the objectives of SDG 8 on a global scale.

In this paper, we proceed to examine the impact of work-related stress on emerging work behaviors among the younger generation of workers in Thailand. After presenting the conceptual framework and study methodology, we delve into the analysis of the data

collected from a sample group of 400 workers aged 18 to 35. The study employs OLS regression analysis to explore the relationship between work-related stress factors, socioeconomic pressures, and the five identified work behaviors: quiet quitting, bailan, quiet firing, frugality, and boomerang employees. Furthermore, we provide insights into the implications of these findings for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and discuss practical recommendations for employers to mitigate work-related stress and foster a conducive work environment, promoting meaningful work experiences and economic growth.

## **Literature Review**

The literature review examines the meaning and theories that explain the emergence of novel work behaviors along with the associated work-related stress.

Quiet quitting refers to a work behavior characterized by strictly adhering to assigned job responsibilities and refraining from going beyond the call of duty, declining additional tasks, and avoiding exerting extra effort to impress superiors. Gandhi and Robison. (2021) reported that 32% of employees in the United States remained engaged, while 18% were disengaged, leading to the lowest employee engagement ratio in a decade. This decline in engagement aligns with the concept of quiet quitting, particularly prevalent among Generation Z and younger individuals.

Bailan (摆烂) denotes a behavioral disposition of accepting circumstances, not merely performing at the minimum acceptable standards but genuinely surrendering to the present fate and social system. This conduct surfaced in Chinese online media, reflecting resistance to a high-intensity work culture and a structural challenge that necessitates policy-driven solutions (Ni, 2022). Such behaviors potentially impact China's already declining economy.

Quiet firing pertains to employees emotionally disengaging from an organization due to perceived neglect by the employer. Castrillon (2022) highlighted the role of inadequate provisions of training, support, and career development opportunities in fostering unfavorable work environments and diminished employee self-worth. Gallup's survey in June 2022 found that engaging in conversations with employees could reduce workplace stress and fatigue and help employees reach their performance goals (Wigert, 2022).

Frugality means reducing work hours even if it means receiving lower compensation but finding more happiness in increased leisure time. Kantor (2022) emphasized that while good salaries are essential, non-monetary benefits, such as work-life balance and overall well-being, are increasingly important to employees.

Boomerang employees are individuals who voluntarily resign from their former organization to explore new job opportunities or career paths but later opt to return due to the

unsatisfactory outcome of their transition. Meenu (2017) highlighted the advantages of boomerang employees, including their familiarity with the organization's dynamics and augmented knowledge and experience.

Rosalsky and Selyukh (2002) use the principal-agent problem economic theory to explain the emerging work behaviors. This model involves the principal (employer) engaging an agent (employee) for a specific task, yet lacking complete insight into the agent's activities or productivity. Consequently, the principal must devise strategies to incentivize and monitor the agent's actions. The upheavals in office dynamics and the widespread adoption of remote work following the Covid-19 pandemic have posed challenges for managers seeking to effectively supervise and motivate their staff.

Rosolino (2022) contended that drawing from the ideas of Hutt (1977) and Alchian (1969), work behaviors might not merely involve labor as an idle resource but could encompass active exploration of alternative job opportunities. This aligns with the perspective of Harter (2023), who noted that disengaged employees often seek new employment, and Derek (2022), who observed that people were not primarily leaving for retirement but to transition to new positions. Notably, Rosolino (2022) argued that the reduced cost of obtaining information about alternative job prospects has empowered workers to discreetly seek new employment opportunities while retaining their current positions. Instead of undergoing temporary wage cuts through unemployment for the sake of job search, the reduction in wages takes the form of missed investments in human capital specific to their ongoing roles.

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) introduced the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which focuses on the interplay between job demands and resources as contributors to work-related stress. It discusses how high job demands and low job resources can lead to burnout and other negative outcomes. Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006) explored the concept of work engagement and its relationship to work-related stress. They outline how engagement (characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption) can serve as a protective factor against stress and burnout. Barling, Kelloway, and Frone (2005) covered various aspects of work-related stress, including its sources, consequences for employee health, and potential interventions. Their research provides insights into the multidisciplinary nature of stress research.

Derived from the literature review, this study concludes that work-related stress is caused by an overwhelming workload and tight deadlines. Second, job features such as extensive responsibility, decision-making, repetitive and tedious activities, and high-risk employment can all contribute to stressful work environments. Third, role conflict and ambiguity involve unclear role boundaries and responsibilities, as well as conflicting tasks, leading to psychological distressing symptoms. Fourth, organizational characteristics can be

linked to organizational culture, management style, and internal structure, including limited employee participation in decision-making, deficient communication, and inadequate organizational policies. Fifth, poor interpersonal relationships lead to mistrust, lack of task delegation, and intense competition among individuals, causing psychological stress. Sixth, workplace environment such as fluctuating temperatures, excessive noise, inappropriate lighting, remote locations, and inadequate amenities contribute to employee stress and discomfort.

### **Conceptual Framework and Study Methodology**

The study aims to investigate the impact of work-related stress on emerging work behaviors among the younger generation of workers, including workload and tight deadlines, job characteristics, role conflict and ambiguity, organizational characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and workplace environment. Work-related stress often serves as a catalyst for various work behaviors. Individuals respond to stressors by adopting coping mechanisms or behavioral patterns that help them navigate challenging situations. Work behaviors emerge as adaptive responses to manage or alleviate the stress experienced in the workplace. Certain work behaviors can be seen as coping mechanisms employed by individuals to deal with stressors. For example:

**Quiet Quitting:** When faced with overwhelming tasks or unclear job evaluation criteria, employees may adopt a disengaged approach as a way to cope with stress.

**Bailan:** Individuals may accept circumstances without striving for higher goals when faced with excessive workload or criticism, acting as a coping strategy.

**Quiet Firing:** High workloads, inadequate recognition, and feelings of isolation may lead employees to emotionally disengage from the organization as a response to stress.

**Frugality:** Prioritizing work-life balance over financial gain can be a response to stressors like unclear performance evaluations or conflicting ideas with the organization.

**Boomerang Employees:** Seeking opportunities elsewhere and later returning to a familiar environment may be driven by dissatisfaction and stress in the current workplace.

Organizational characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and workplace environment contribute to stressors and subsequently influence work behaviors. A negative organizational culture or poor interpersonal relationships can elevate stress levels, leading to the manifestation of specific work behaviors. Individuals may respond differently to similar stressors based on their coping strategies and personal resilience. Some may exhibit adaptive behaviors, while others may resort to more maladaptive responses, influencing the overall work dynamics.

Besides work-related stress, the study also considers the backdrop of socioeconomic pressures characterized by higher competition and pressure but limited opportunities compared to previous generations. The current young generation faces higher

competition, increased pressure, and limited opportunities compared to their predecessors, which contributes to feelings of hopelessness and reduced enthusiasm towards work. To assess the impact of socioeconomic pressures, we divided our sample into two age groups: 18-23 and 24-35. We expect that the 18-23 age group would exhibit behaviors more aligned with the prevailing work trends compared to the 24-35 age group, reflecting the influence of these socioeconomic challenges.

The researchers designed the questionnaire based on the definitions of work behaviors and work-related stress to assess their prevalence among the sample group. Steps were taken to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability of the instrument. A pilot test was undertaken involving a group of 30 individuals, within the age range of 18 to 35 years. Experts in organizational psychology, human resources, and survey methodology, were consulted to enhance the questionnaire's content validity and ensure that it effectively measured the intended constructs. The study selected a sample of 400 workers aged 18 to 35, predominantly through various social media channels. The researchers acknowledge the potential limitation of digital technology accessibility, which may introduce bias toward a more educated demographic due to their greater familiarity and access to digital technologies. Efforts to diversify recruitment channels or target specific industries and regions might have been considered to enhance representativeness. The survey was administered online, and participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements related to the work behaviors on a 5-point scale. The researchers collected information on demographic variables, including age, gender, education, marital status, region, salary, occupation, work experience, and job changes.

The regression model includes the demographic variables as control variables and the work stress factors as explanatory variables. This analysis aims to determine the significant impact of work-related stress on the emergence of specific work behaviors among young workers in Thailand and their implications for the younger generation in the context of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

The model includes the following variables:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y_i^j = & \alpha_j + \beta_1^j Age_i + \beta_2^j Women_i + \beta_3^j LGBTQ_i + \beta_4^j Edu_i + \beta_5^j Status_i \\
 & + \beta_6^j North_i + \beta_7^j BKK_i + \beta_8^j Salary_i + \beta_9^j Occ_i + \beta_{10}^j Exp_i \\
 & + \beta_{11}^j No\_work_i + \beta_{12}^j X_{11i} + \beta_{13}^j X_{12i} + \beta_{14}^j X_{13i} + \beta_{15}^j X_{21i} \\
 & + \beta_{16}^j X_{22i} + \beta_{17}^j X_{31i} + \beta_{18}^j X_{32i} + \beta_{19}^j X_{33i} + \beta_{20}^j X_{41i} \\
 & + \beta_{21}^j X_{42i} + \beta_{22}^j X_{43i} + \beta_{23}^j X_{44i} + \beta_{24}^j X_{51i} + \beta_{25}^j X_{52i} \\
 & + \beta_{26}^j X_{53i} + \beta_{27}^j X_{54i} + \beta_{28}^j X_{55i} + \beta_{29}^j X_{56i} + \beta_{30}^j X_{61i} \\
 & + \beta_{31}^j X_{62i} + \varepsilon_i^j
 \end{aligned}$$

where:

$Y^j$  represents the work behavior  $j$  including quiet quitting, bailan, quiet firing, frugality, and boomerang employees.

$Age = 1$  if respondent is 18-23 years old ; 0 if respondent is 24-35 years old.

$Women = 1$  if respondent is a woman; 0 otherwise.

$LGBTQ = 1$  if respondent is a LGBTQ; 0 otherwise. .

$Edu$  represents education categorized into three groups: below bachelor's degree was assigned the variable value of 1, bachelor's degree was assigned the value of 2, and above bachelor's degree was assigned the value of 3.

$Status = 1$  if respondent is married/widowed/divorced/separated; 0 if respondent is single.

$BKK = 1$  if respondent works in Bangkok; 0 otherwise.

$North = 1$  if respondent works in northern region; 0 otherwise.

$Salary$  represents salary categorized into five groups based on income: below 15,000 baht/month, 15,001-25,000 baht/month, 25,001-35,000 baht/month, 35,001-45,000 baht/month, and above 45,000 baht/month. The assigned values were equal to the logarithm of the mid-income range. For participants with an income above 45,000 baht/month, a value of 50,000 was used.

$Occ = 1$  if respondent works as professions (doctors, nurses, accountants, engineers, programmers, architects, and others); 0 otherwise.

$Exp$  represents work experience categorized into four groups based on years of experience: less than 1 year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and more than 5 years. The assigned values were equal to the mid-year range.

$No\_work = 1$  if respondent changed jobs at least once; 0 otherwise.

$X_{kl}$  represents work stress variables in  $k$  dimensions including workload and tight deadlines  $X_{1l}$ , job characteristics  $X_{2l}$ , role conflict and ambiguity  $X_{3l}$ , organizational characteristics  $X_{4l}$ , interpersonal relationships  $X_{5l}$ , and workplace environment  $X_{6l}$ . Each dimension includes sub dimension  $l$  as shown in Table 2. Each sub dimension is rated on a 5-point scale (1 to 5) by the participants.

## **Results**

### **General Information of the Sample Group**

As shown in Table 1, the sample group consisted of 323 individuals, aged between 24 and 35 years, accounting for 80.75%. Additionally, there were 77 individuals aged between 18 and 23 years, accounting for 19.25%. The majority of the sample group were female, totaling 274 individuals, or 68.50%. There were 90 male individuals, accounting for 22.50%, and 36 individuals who identified as LGBTQ+, representing 9% of the sample.

Regarding education levels, most of the participants had completed a bachelor's degree or equivalent (302 individuals, 75.50%), followed by 53 individuals (13.25%) with postgraduate degrees, and 45 individuals (11.25%) with education levels below a bachelor's degree. Concerning marital status, the majority were single (371 individuals, 92.75%), followed by 27 individuals (6.75%) who were married and 2 individuals (0.50%) who were widowed, divorced, or separated.

As for their current residence, 168 individuals (42%) lived in Bangkok, while 117 individuals (29.25%) were from the Northern region, 43 individuals (10.75%) from the Central region, 39 individuals (9.75%) from the Northeastern region, and 33 individuals (8.25%) from the Southern region.

Regarding monthly income, 160 individuals (40%) earned between 15,001 and 25,000 baht, 93 individuals (23.25%) earned between 25,001 and 35,000 baht, 72 individuals (18%) earned less than 15,000 baht, 40 individuals (10%) earned more than 45,000 baht, and 35 individuals (8.75%) earned between 35,001 and 45,000 baht.

The majority of the sample group were engaged in various professions, with 165 individuals (41.25%) in professional occupations, 61 individuals (15.25%) as artisans and service workers, and 25 individuals (6.25%) as legal professionals or senior government officials. Additionally, there were 21 individuals (5.25%) working as technicians and related workers, 16 individuals (4%) working in agriculture and fisheries, 15 individuals (3.75%) as factory workers, 13 individuals (3.25%) in elementary occupations (labourers), 12 individuals (3%) in various military roles, and 11 individuals (2.75%) working as skilled manual laborers.

Most of the participants had less than 1 year of experience in their current workplace (138 individuals, 34.50%), followed by 121 individuals (30.25%) with 1-3 years of experience, 75 individuals (18.75%) with over 5 years of experience, and 66 individuals (16.50%) with 3-5 years of experience. In terms of the number of jobs held, 189 individuals (47.25%) were currently in their first job, 122 individuals (30.50%) were in their second job, 59 individuals (14.75%) were in their third job, and 30 individuals (7.50%) were in their fourth job or more.

**Table 1** General Information of the Sample Group

<b>Aged</b>	18-23 years	77 (19.25%)
	24-35 years	323 (80.75%)
<b>Sex</b>	Male	90 (22.5%)
	Female	274 (68.5%)
	LGBTQ+	36 (9%)
<b>Education levels</b>	Below a bachelor's degree	45 (11.25%)
	Bachelor's degree or equivalent	302 (75.5%)
	Postgraduate degrees	53 (13.25%)
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	371 (92.75%)
	Married	27 (6.75%)
	Widowed, divorced, or separated	2 (0.5%)
<b>Residence</b>	Bangkok	168 (42%)
	Northern region	117 (29.25%)
	Central region	43 (10.75%)
	Southern region	33 (8.25%)
	Northeastern region	39 (9.75%)
<b>Monthly income</b>	Less than 15,000 baht	72 (18%)
	15,001-25,000 baht	160 (40%)
	25,001-35,000 baht	93 (23.25%)
	35,001-45,000 baht	35 (8.75%)
	More than 45,000 baht	40 (10%)
<b>Professions</b>	Legislators, senior officials and managers	25 (6.25%)
	Professionals	165 (41.25%)
	Technicians and associate professionals	21 (5.25%)
	Clerk	61 (15.25%)
	Service workers and shop and market sales workers	61 (15.25%)
	Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	16 (4%)
	Craft and related trades workers	11 (2.75%)
	Stationary-plant and related operators	15 (3.75%)
	Elementary occupations	13 (3.25%)
	Armed forces	12 (3%)

**Table 1** General Information of the Sample Group (continued)

<b>Experience</b>	Less than 1 year	138 (34.5%)
	1-3 years	121 (30.25%)
	3-5 years	66 (16.5%)
	Over 5 years	75 (18.75%)
<b>Number of jobs held</b>	First job	189 (47.25%)
	Second job	122 (30.5%)
	Third job	59 (14.75%)
	Fourth job or more	30 (7.5%)

### Work-related Stress Data of the Sample Group

Overall, work-related stress among Thai workers ranged from moderate to low as shown in Table 2. Based on a scale of 1 to 5, the highest levels of stress were related to workload and tight deadlines, with a score of 3.37, followed by job characteristics at 3.33, role ambiguity and role conflict at 2.86, work environment at 2.50, organizational characteristics at 2.44, and workplace relationships at 2.02. The highest stress was observed in jobs that required high levels of responsibility (4.20), followed by repetitive and monotonous tasks (3.57), while the lowest stress was associated with conflicts with colleagues and supervisors (1.80). Negative aspects of the workplace, such as frequent criticism (1.90) and an unfriendly organizational atmosphere (1.99), were less likely to cause stress.

**Table 2** Work-related Stress

Work-related Stress	Mean	Scale
1) Workload and tight deadlines ( $X_{11}$ )	3.37	neutral
1.1 You feel that your workload is excessive and overwhelming. ( $X_{11}$ )	3.30	neutral
1.2 Your work tasks are well-matched with your abilities and skills. ( $X_{12}$ )	2.61	neutral
1.3 You frequently handle high responsibility tasks in your job. ( $X_{13}$ )	4.20	strongly agree
2) Job characteristics ( $X_{21}$ )	3.33	neutral
2.1 You often find yourself performing repetitive and monotonous tasks at work. ( $X_{21}$ )	3.57	agree
2.2 Your job involves tasks that have a significant impact on safety and health. ( $X_{22}$ )	3.08	neutral
3) Role conflict and ambiguity ( $X_{31}$ )	2.86	neutral
3.1 You frequently experience unclear job scope and responsibilities in your role. ( $X_{31}$ )	2.78	neutral

**Table 2** Work-related Stress (continued)

Work-related Stress	Mean	Scale
3.2 You have received instructions or tasks beyond your job duties. ( <i>X<sub>32</sub></i> )	2.97	neutral
3.3 You find it challenging to understand the performance criteria set for your job. ( <i>X<sub>33</sub></i> )	2.84	neutral
4) Organizational characteristics ( <i>X<sub>41</sub></i> )	2.44	disagree
4.1 You perceive an unfair distribution of responsibilities within your organization. ( <i>X<sub>41</sub></i> )	2.50	disagree
4.2 You are given limited autonomy in decision-making within your role. ( <i>X<sub>42</sub></i> )	2.71	neutral
4.3 You feel that the organization does not value its employees adequately, such as not addressing their concerns or issues. ( <i>X<sub>43</sub></i> )	2.40	disagree
4.4 You have experienced unfair treatment from your supervisors. ( <i>X<sub>44</sub></i> )	2.16	disagree
5) Interpersonal relationships ( <i>X<sub>51</sub></i> )	2.02	disagree
5.1 Conflicts with colleagues or supervisors occur frequently in your workplace. ( <i>X<sub>51</sub></i> )	1.80	strongly disagree
5.2 You often feel isolated or disconnected from your colleagues at work. ( <i>X<sub>52</sub></i> )	2.07	disagree
5.3 There is a lack of cooperation in work tasks among team members. ( <i>X<sub>53</sub></i> )	2.02	disagree
5.4 You frequently receive criticism from colleagues or supervisors. ( <i>X<sub>54</sub></i> )	1.90	disagree
5.5 You encounter conflicting ideas within the organization. ( <i>X<sub>55</sub></i> )	2.34	disagree
5.6 Your workplace has an unfriendly atmosphere. ( <i>X<sub>56</sub></i> )	1.99	disagree
6) Workplace environment ( <i>X<sub>61</sub></i> )	2.50	disagree
6.1 You face challenges due to insufficient tools and equipment to support your work. ( <i>X<sub>61</sub></i> )	2.75	neutral
6.2 Your work environment is inadequate, with issues such as noise or overcrowding affecting your productivity. ( <i>X<sub>62</sub></i> )	2.25	disagree

### Work Behavior Data of the Sample Group

The behavior data shown in Table 3, based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 indicated strongly agree, revealed that the highest-rated work behavior was engaging in frugality (3.14), followed by quiet quitting (2.92), boomerang employee (2.54), bailan (2.21), and quiet firing (2.19). Overall, the work behavior of Thai

workers ranged from moderate to low. Specific behaviors that received scores above 3 included believing that work is not everything in life (3.82), doubting that working hard leads to success (3.59), expecting better compensation if returning to the previous workplace (3.25), willingly reducing work hours for more personal time (3.18), and working only when necessary (3.07). On the other hand, behaviors that received scores below 2 included being unwilling to take responsibility for job completion (1.54), believing that life cannot be successful (1.80), wanting to return to a previous job they resigned from (1.85), feeling worthless at work (1.86), and receiving little attention from supervisors (1.92). This suggests that these problems are less likely to occur and have less impact on the stress levels of Thai workers.

**Table 3** Work Behavior

Work Behaviors	Mean	Scale
1) Quiet quitting	2.92	neutral
1.1 You do not believe that working hard will lead to success.	3.59	agree
1.2 You do not fully commit to work.	2.18	disagree
1.3 You only do what is within your scope and responsibilities.	2.86	neutral
1.4 You work according to the necessary time and tasks only.	3.07	neutral
2) Bailan	2.21	disagree
2.1 You feel bored with life.	2.93	neutral
2.2 You lack goals in work and life.	2.57	disagree
2.3 You believe that you cannot be successful in life.	1.80	strongly disagree
2.4 You feel hopeless about work and lack responsibility for its success.	2.23	disagree
2.5 You are unwilling to take responsibility for job completion.	1.54	strongly disagree
3) Quiet firing	2.19	disagree
3.1 You are pressured at work by your supervisors.	2.07	disagree
3.2 You feel unimportant or receive little attention from your supervisors.	1.92	disagree
3.3 You are given tasks that are beyond your capabilities.	2.37	disagree
3.4 You feel like quitting your current job.	2.72	neutral
3.5 You feel worthless at work.	1.86	disagree
4) Frugality	3.14	neutral
4.1 You are happier with having more free time even if it means earning less income.	2.99	neutral
4.2 You are willing to live a frugal life in exchange for working less.	2.55	disagree

**Table 3** Work Behavior (continued)

Work Behaviors	Mean	Scale
4.3 You are willing to work less to have more personal time.	3.18	neutral
4.4 You believe that work is not everything in life.	3.82	agree
5) Boomerang employees	2.54	disagree
5.1 You want to return to work in the same organization you resigned from.	1.85	disagree
5.2 You want to return to your previous company with the goal of securing a higher position than the one you held previously.	2.92	neutral
5.3 You have found that the new organization does not meet your expectations as the previous one did.	2.15	disagree
5.4 You expect to receive higher compensation if you return to your previous organization.	3.25	neutral

#### **Regression Analysis Results: Factors of Work-Related Stress and Their Impact on Various Work Behaviors**

The assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and independence have been thoroughly diagnosed in the regression analysis, and the results indicate no critical problems with these assumptions. As shown in Table 4, the study did not find sufficient evidence to suggest that workers aged 18-23 exhibit more negative work behaviors in all five aspects compared to workers aged 24-35. This may imply that the Thai social structure may not experience higher competition and work pressure, or there might be long-standing effects that have influenced the 24-35 age group. However, it is worth noting that the study's exclusion of workers above 35 years old hinders the assessment of potential long-term changes that might have occurred in that age group. The results of the regression analysis indicate significant associations between work-related stress factors and specific work behaviors:

#### **Quiet Quitting**

Quiet quitting behavior was significantly evident when workers received tasks beyond their abilities, had unclear work evaluation criteria, lacked decision-making autonomy in their tasks, or had conflicting work ideas with the organization. The statistical analysis showed that the frequency of quiet quitting was lower when workers received tasks beyond their scope and were more criticized for their work. One possible reason might be that when workers are assigned tasks beyond their scope, some of them feel proud of the trust placed in them by their superiors. Single workers, higher income workers and various professions like doctors, nurses, engineers, architects, accountants, and programmers or those with less

work experience, tended to exhibit quiet quitting behavior more than married/widowed/divorced workers, lower-income workers, workers in other professions, or those with more work experience. Single workers may show less dedication to work because they have fewer financial responsibilities compared to married workers. On the other hand, high-income workers may feel content with their earnings and may not feel compelled to strive for further success. Individuals in certain professions might receive fixed incomes relative to other occupations, leading to a lack of incentive to work harder or take on additional responsibilities. Moreover, less work experience might indicate someone is young, and younger individuals often face higher pressure and competition, which could result in a reduced willingness to exert extra effort to achieve success.

### **Bailan**

Bailan behavior was found to be significantly present when workers were assigned tasks beyond their abilities, engaged in repetitive tasks, experienced isolation at work, faced more criticism for their work, or worked in unsuitable environments like noisy and crowded places. Interestingly, the statistical analysis revealed that the frequency of bailan behavior decreased when workers received an excessive workload. One possible explanation for this observation is that these workers might possess higher potential, leading to being assigned numerous responsibilities. However, it is worth noting that workers in this group also had a higher likelihood of career advancement, which may contribute to their reduced tendency to exhibit bailan behavior. They may highly value their work, even if it presents challenges. Statistically, it has been observed that female workers or single individuals tend to display bailan behavior more frequently. One possible explanation for this trend is that women often shoulder additional responsibilities at home alongside their professional careers, which might lead them to perceive work achievement as not being the ultimate goal. Additionally, they may experience higher levels of pressure and competition in the workplace compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, single workers might experience a greater sense of life being mundane or lacking in meaningful goals compared to married workers. Married individuals may have the support of a spouse, who can help alleviate feelings of mundanity and provide a sense of purpose.

### **Quiet Firing**

Workers who are assigned an excessive workload, tasks that do not match their abilities, repetitive and monotonous tasks, experience feelings of being valued inadequately, encounter unfair treatment from supervisors and isolation in their work, receive frequent criticism, and work in unsuitable environments like noisy and crowded places, exhibit quiet firing behavior significantly. Furthermore, it was observed that LGBTQ workers tended to

display quiet firing behavior less frequently compared to other sexes. However, the reasons underlying this particular statistical finding remain unclear and would require further investigation and analysis to gain a deeper understanding.

### **Frugality**

When workers receive instructions beyond their designated tasks, encounter unclear performance evaluations, lack decision-making autonomy, experience isolation at work, hold conflicting ideas with their employer, and have insufficient tools and resources to support their work, it results in a significant manifestation of frugality behavior. On the other hand, when the scope and responsibilities are unclear, and task assignments are inequitable, workers tend to exhibit frugality behavior less frequently, and this difference is statistically significant. This pattern may be attributed to the hindrances caused by unclear roles and unfair task allocation, which prevent workers from displaying frugality behavior at work by reducing their work efforts in exchange for reduced income, more leisure time or the opportunity to engage in other activities. Moreover, the specific reasons for the lower incidence of frugality behavior among workers in northern Thailand compared to other regions of the country remains unknown.

### **Boomerang Employees**

Statistical evidence indicates that workers who are assigned tasks outside their skill set and face an unfriendly organizational atmosphere are more likely to exhibit significant boomerang employee behavior. Surprisingly, it was observed that when leadership maintains an unfair workplace, employees tend to display less boomerang behavior, which is also statistically significant. However, the specific reasons behind this contrasting result remain unexplained and do not align with the initial expectations. Furthermore, highly educated workers are more prone to displaying boomerang employee behavior compared to their less educated counterparts. This could be attributed to the awareness among highly educated workers of their high demand and value in the job market, making them more inclined to return to their former organizations. On the other hand, workers who rarely switch jobs tend to show more boomerang employee behavior than those who frequently change jobs. This could be because infrequent job changers experience greater job satisfaction in their previous organizations, leading them to consider returning to those positions.

These findings shed light on the factors of work-related stress and their impact on emerging work behaviors among young Thai workers. Further investigation is needed to understand the underlying reasons behind some of the statistical observations, but the study provides valuable insights for organizations to address work-related stress and promote positive work behaviors.

**Table 4** Factors of Work-Related Stress and Their Impact on Work Behaviors

Variables	Quiet quitting	Bailan	Quiet firing	Frugality	Boomerang employees
age	-0.03 (0.12)	-0.02 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.14)	-0.19 (0.25)
women	-0.07 (0.11)	0.17* (0.10)	-0.03 (0.08)	-0.18 (0.12)	0.03 (0.18)
LGBTQ+	-0.13 (0.17)	0.07 (0.16)	-0.23* (0.13)	-0.00 (0.19)	0.36 (0.26)
edu	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.05 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.02 (0.10)	0.30** (0.14)
status	-0.28* (0.17)	-0.46*** (0.16)	-0.11 (0.13)	-0.10 (0.19)	-0.03 (0.26)
north	-0.01 (0.11)	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.11 (0.09)	-0.24* (0.13)	-0.26 (0.19)
BKK	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.17 (0.12)	0.02 (0.18)
income	0.15* (0.09)	-0.06 (0.08)	0.10 (0.07)	0.13 (0.10)	-0.17 (0.15)
occ	0.24*** (0.09)	0.10 (0.09)	0.04 (0.07)	0.10 (0.10)	0.23 (0.15)
exp	-0.04* (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
no_work	-0.07 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.51*** (0.14)
x11	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.11** (0.04)	0.08** (0.04)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.08)
x12	0.16*** (0.04)	0.12*** (0.04)	0.06* (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	0.21*** (0.06)
x13	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.06)	0.01 (0.08)
x21	0.05 (0.04)	0.10*** (0.04)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.05)	0.01 (0.07)
x22	-0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)	0.06 (0.04)	0.07 (0.06)
x31	-0.02 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.05 (0.03)	-0.10** (0.04)	-0.07 (0.06)

**Table 4** Factors of Work-Related Stress and Their Impact on Work Behaviors (continued)

Variables	Quiet quitting	Bailan	Quiet firing	Frugality	Boomerang employees
x32	-0.13*** (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.00 (0.03)	0.07* (0.04)	-0.02 (0.06)
x33	0.10** (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.15*** (0.050)	0.10 (0.07)
x41	-0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.11* (0.06)	0.08 (0.09)
x42	0.09** (0.04)	0.04 (0.05)	0.04 (0.03)	0.15*** (0.05)	0.01 (0.07)
x43	0.03 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)	0.13*** (0.04)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.06 (0.07)
x44	0.019 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.13* (0.040)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.25*** (0.09)
x51	-0.06 (0.05)	0.00 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.06)	0.04 (0.08)
x52	0.07 (0.05)	0.21*** (0.04)	0.16*** (0.04)	0.11** (0.05)	-0.02 (0.07)
x53	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.06)	0.11 (0.08)
x54	0.07 (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.21*** (0.04)	0.04 (0.06)	0.01 (0.09)
x55	0.14*** (0.05)	0.00 (0.05)	0.08** (0.04)	0.10* (0.050)	0.08 (0.070)
x56	-0.02 (0.05)	0.07 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.05)	0.20** (0.08)
x61	0.06 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.10** (0.04)	-0.07 (0.07)
x62	0.03 (0.05)	0.09** (0.04)	0.08** (0.04)	0.04 (0.050)	-0.06 (0.07)
Log Likelihood	-476.25	-434.22	-363.70	-520.83	-269.39
LR chi2(34)	131.59	255.43	428.82	115.66	81.56
Prob > chi2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.12	0.23	0.37	0.10	0.13

Note: Standard errors in parenthesis. \*\*\* p<0.01 \*\* p<0.05 \* p<0.10

## **Conclusions**

The changing work patterns identified in the 2022 World Economic Forum (WEF) survey have had significant implications for work behaviors worldwide. This study explored the prevalence of five distinct work behaviors among employees aged 18 to 35 in Thailand, namely quiet quitting, bailan, quiet firing, frugality, and boomerang employees. These behavioral patterns have emerged as a response to the evolving work landscape, particularly in the digital realm, with a growing emphasis on work-life balance and meaningful work.

The research findings revealed that work-related stress, arising from factors such as excessive workload, job characteristics, role conflict and ambiguity, organizational characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and workplace environment, significantly influenced work behaviors. However, Thai workers displayed moderate to low levels of work-related stress, and their work behaviors ranged from moderate to low as well. The cultural context in Thailand may contribute to the observed moderate to low levels of work-related stress and work behaviors among Thai workers. Thai society is characterized as a collectivist culture, placing importance on harmony within the group. This emphasis on collective achievement over individual success has the potential to reduce the intensity of workplace competition, subsequently lowering work-related stress levels among Thai workers.

Quiet quitting behavior was prevalent when workers faced tasks beyond their abilities, had unclear work evaluation criteria, lacked decision-making autonomy in their tasks, or had conflicting work ideas with the organization. bailan behavior was more likely when workers were assigned tasks beyond their abilities, engaged in repetitive tasks, experienced isolation at work, faced more criticism for their work, or worked in unsuitable environments like noisy and crowded places. Quiet firing behavior was observed when workers experienced high workloads, tasks that did not match their abilities, performed repetitive and monotonous tasks, experienced feelings of being valued inadequately, received unfair treatment from supervisors, felt isolation in their work, received frequent criticism, had conflicting work ideas with their employer, or worked in unsuitable environments like noisy and crowded places. Frugality behavior was prominent when workers received instructions beyond their designated tasks, encountered unclear performance evaluations, lacked decision-making autonomy, experienced isolation at work, held conflicting ideas with their employer, or had insufficient tools and resources to support their work. Boomerang employees were more likely to emerge when workers were assigned tasks outside their skill set, or faced an unfriendly organizational atmosphere.

The study also explored the impact of demographic factors on work behavior. Single workers tended to display more quiet quitting and bailan behaviors, while highly educated individuals were more likely to be boomerang employees. Moreover, those with less work experience were more likely to exhibit quiet quitting.

The study offers several recommendations to help employers in Thailand mitigate negative work behaviors and foster sustainable economic growth.

- Providing clear and achievable job responsibilities, offering support and feedback to employees, and promoting a positive work environment can help reduce quiet quitting and quiet firing behaviors.
- Organizations should foster a culture that values employees' contributions and promotes work-life balance to mitigate bailan behavior.
- Encouraging open communication and employee involvement in decision-making can help reduce work-related stress and improve overall job satisfaction, which may decrease the inclination toward frugality. However, although frugality may lead to a reduction in the production of goods and services, maintaining a balance between life and work can contribute to happiness, which is a crucial aspect of life and might enhance long-term productivity.
- Organizations can focus on creating a supportive and inclusive work environment to reduce the likelihood of employees seeking opportunities elsewhere and becoming boomerang employees. Boomerang employees could have an impact on new employers, potentially resulting in employee loss during the transition. However, this transition may represent a return to previous employers who are a better fit.

Overall, by taking a proactive approach to understand and address work-related stress and negative work behaviors, employers can foster a healthier and more engaged workforce. Implementing strategies that prioritize employees' well-being, work-life balance, and meaningful work can lead to improved job satisfaction, increased productivity, and ultimately contribute to achieving SDG 8: decent work and economic growth. As the world continues to evolve, it is essential for organizations to adapt their policies and practices to meet the needs and expectations of the new generation of workers, ensuring a sustainable and thriving future for both employees and the economy.

While this study provides valuable insights into the work behaviors of the young Thai workforce, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations that may influence the generalizability of the findings. One notable limitation is the issue of sample representativeness. The sample group used in this study was obtained through online surveys distributed across various social media channels. As a result, the sample is likely to be biased towards individuals who are more technologically inclined. This potential bias may lead to an overrepresentation of younger, more educated, and single individuals who are more likely to engage with online surveys. Consequently, the findings may not fully reflect the broader demographic characteristics and work behaviors of the entire Thai workforce.

Another limitation of this study is the exclusion of older workers from the sample group. By focusing solely on employees aged 18 to 35, the study misses valuable insights

into the work behaviors of older workers, who may have different perspectives and experiences in response to work-related stress. Older workers could provide valuable insights into long-term trends and how work behaviors may evolve with increasing work experience and age. By not considering this age group, the study is limited in its ability to capture potential variations in work behaviors across different age cohorts within the workforce.

Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces a potential source of bias and measurement error. Participants' responses to the questionnaire may be influenced by factors such as social desirability bias or recall bias, leading to inaccuracies in the reported work behaviors and stress levels. While efforts were made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, these inherent biases in self-reporting may still impact the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study hold implications beyond the context of Thailand. Work-related stress and negative work behaviors are prevalent issues in workplaces worldwide, especially with the evolving work landscape and the changing expectations of the workforce. While this study focuses on the Thai workforce, the insights gained here may be relevant to other countries facing similar challenges. In fact, it is plausible that some countries might experience even higher levels of work-related stress and negative work behaviors due to unique socio-economic factors or specific labor market conditions. Thus, the findings of this study could serve as a valuable reference and provide a basis for further exploration and comparative analysis in diverse international contexts.

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