

Teamwork environments linked to white US employees going the extra mile

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The findings set the stage for further research that could inform employers' initiatives to boost worker effort. Credit: Nenad Stojkovic, Flickr, CC-BY 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

In an analysis of more than 5,000 people, frequently working in teams

was associated with a greater tendency for women and white men to put in extra effort at work, while other links between job conditions and effort varied between genders and ethnoracial groups. Wei-hsin Yu of the University of California, Los Angeles, U.S, and Janet Chen-Lan Kuo of National Taiwan University, Taiwan, present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on August 2, 2023.

Popular media has recently featured discussion of "quiet quitting," in which employees put the bare minimum of effort into their jobs without going the extra mile. Prior research on employee effort has primarily focused on how the responsibilities of family might impact workers' efforts. However, few studies have examined other job conditions that might influence discretionary effort.

To address that gap, Yu and Kuo examined data from 2,706 male and 2,621 [female participants](#) in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, which regularly gathers information on U.S. residents born in the 1980s. They assessed participants' reports on the amount of effort they exerted at work in the context of typical job conditions associated with their occupations.

Of all job conditions considered, workplace [social dynamics](#) stood out as a key condition associated with worker effort. Specifically, men and women with jobs involving frequent teamwork tended to report exerting extra effort. However, among men, this association only held up for white workers, with no such link seen for non-[white men](#).

Women who worked full time instead of part time and those whose employers provide paid [maternity leave](#) were more likely to exert extra effort. Women in male-dominated occupations or whose jobs necessitate confrontations with others were less likely to put in extra effort.

Additional differences between white and non-white workers were

apparent. For instance, the association between effort and time spent at work was weaker for Black women than for [white women](#).

These findings do not confirm any causal relationships between job conditions and work effort. However, they set the stage for further research that could inform employers' initiatives to boost worker effort and reduce "quiet quitting."

The authors add, "Our research suggests that interpersonal dynamics in the workplace are important to workers' motivation to put extra effort. Although this research does not directly observe changes in the workplace since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can imagine that the rise in remote working from home since then could have made the social interactions and comparisons that typically occur at work seem more distant and abstract, thereby having implications for workers' motivations and productivity."

More information: Yu W-h, Kuo JC-L , Going the extra mile at work: Relationships between working conditions and discretionary work effort, *PLoS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0288521](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0288521) , [journals.plos.org/plosone/arti ... journal.pone.0288521](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0288521)

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