

The Influence of Telecommuting on Emotional Exhaustion: Moderating Role of Intrinsic Motivation

K.I. Uresha^{1*}, A.K.L. Jayawardana²

¹Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

²Postgraduate Institute of Management, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Adjunct Senior Lecturer, University of New South Wales Canberra, Australia

**ishaniuresha@sjp.ac.lk*

Telecommuting has become the new normal after the outbreak of COVID-19 which was embraced by organizations around the globe. Telecommuting is identified as a work practice that involves members of an organization substituting a portion of their typical work hours to work away from a central workplace and working from home using technology to interact with others as needed to conduct work tasks. However, with the rise of telecommuting, mental health issues reported by teleworkers continuously increased highlighting the issue of emotional exhaustion. Although emotional exhaustion was reported by numerous teleworkers, literature claims that very few studies have focused on addressing emotional exhaustion of teleworkers. Existing literature claims that individuals who engage in telecommuting tend to experience a higher level of intrinsic motivation due to the inherent features of telecommuting such as flexibility. In addition, the literature reveals that when individuals possess high intrinsic motivation, they are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion. This study consists of two research questions, namely, “What is the influence of telecommuting on emotional exhaustion?”, and whether intrinsic motivation moderate the relationship between telecommuting and emotional exhaustion?”. Accordingly, two hypotheses were developed based on the literature. Data were collected from 389 respondents derived through a convenient sampling method using a survey that consisted of pre-validated scales for the variables, and data analysis was done using Smart PLS. The study reveals that telecommuting influences the emotional exhaustion of teleworkers, but when teleworkers possess greater intrinsic motivation the influence on emotional exhaustion can be altered by their strong sense of intrinsic motivation so the relationship between telecommuting and emotional exhaustion is moderated by intrinsic motivation. Hence, the findings of the study show that it is essential to review the influence of telecommuting on emotional exhaustion and internal personal characteristics of individuals when implementing telecommuting to ensure a win-win situation for all parties.

Keywords: Telecommuting, Emotional exhaustion, Intrinsic motivation