

Motivational Factors that Induce Sri Lankan IT Undergraduate to Engage in E-Lancing

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E-Lancing is a self-employment arrangement emerged with the new internet developments in the 21st century. Interested Individuals are being hired by the clients who are looking for such individuals and work remotely through a networked online platform called e-Lance marketplace. Such platforms create a global pool of human and intellectual capital for internet-based problem-solving, economic production and service delivery. Information Technology (IT) sector has a high demand and benefits potential with the current global e-Lancing trends. As a developing country, Sri Lanka has a fierce potential to boost the economy while reducing the unemployment by promoting e-Lancing in the university scales, especially focusing on IT sector. Better understanding why individuals engage in e-Lancing is imperative not only to devise strategies to achieve it but also to explore new applications of the concept. This study aims to address that deficiency with the objective of finding out the motivational factors that induce IT undergraduates to engage in e-Lance activities. In order to achieve it, this study was designed using a qualitative approach. A sample of 20 IT undergraduates who are already engaged in e-Lancing was selected utilizing snowball sampling method representing both government and non-government universities. The qualitative data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. The interview transcripts were analyzed to identify patterns using thematic analysis techniques with the support of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software. This study came up with fourteen motivational factors that include the followings; Financial incentives, Financial emancipation; Higher Returns; e-money for e-purchases; Opportunity to develop skills and Knowledge; Freedom and Flexibility; Marketplace Reputation; Experience; Trust of payment; Peer success and support; Career opportunities; Passion and Enjoyment; Recognition; and international customer relations. Results of this study add rich qualitative data to the e-Lancing literature as well as to the other social and managerial implications.

Keywords: E-Lance, Motivations, E-Lance marketplace, IT undergraduates, Online freelancing