



# FEELING REMOTE: FACTORS INFLUENCING ISOLATION IN REMOTE WORKERS



Chelsea Bell, Judith Van Hein  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

## INTRODUCTION

Although the adoption of remote programs is on the rise, organizations like Yahoo, Best Buy, Reddit, and Aetna have pulled the plug on their programs, citing a need for innovation and collaboration they felt wasn't possible while working remotely (Wilkie, 2019; Miller, Rampell, 2013; Truong, 2014; Lee, 2013; Quartz, 2017). Google employees have mirrored this concern, citing relationship building and schedule coordination as common issues while working with their remote counterparts (Gilrane, 2019).

This study aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the benefits and drawbacks of remote work programs. We propose communication and task interdependence as variables that influence the levels of isolation perceived by remote workers. Remote workers are especially vulnerable to feelings of isolation in the workplace (Cooper & Kurkland, 2002; Elst et al., 2017; Dekker & Rutte, 2007; Golden, Viega & Dino, 2008), which can lead to decreased job performance (Golden et al., 2008), impede professional development (Cooper & Kirkland, 2002), and lead to negative work-related well-being (Elst et al., 2017).

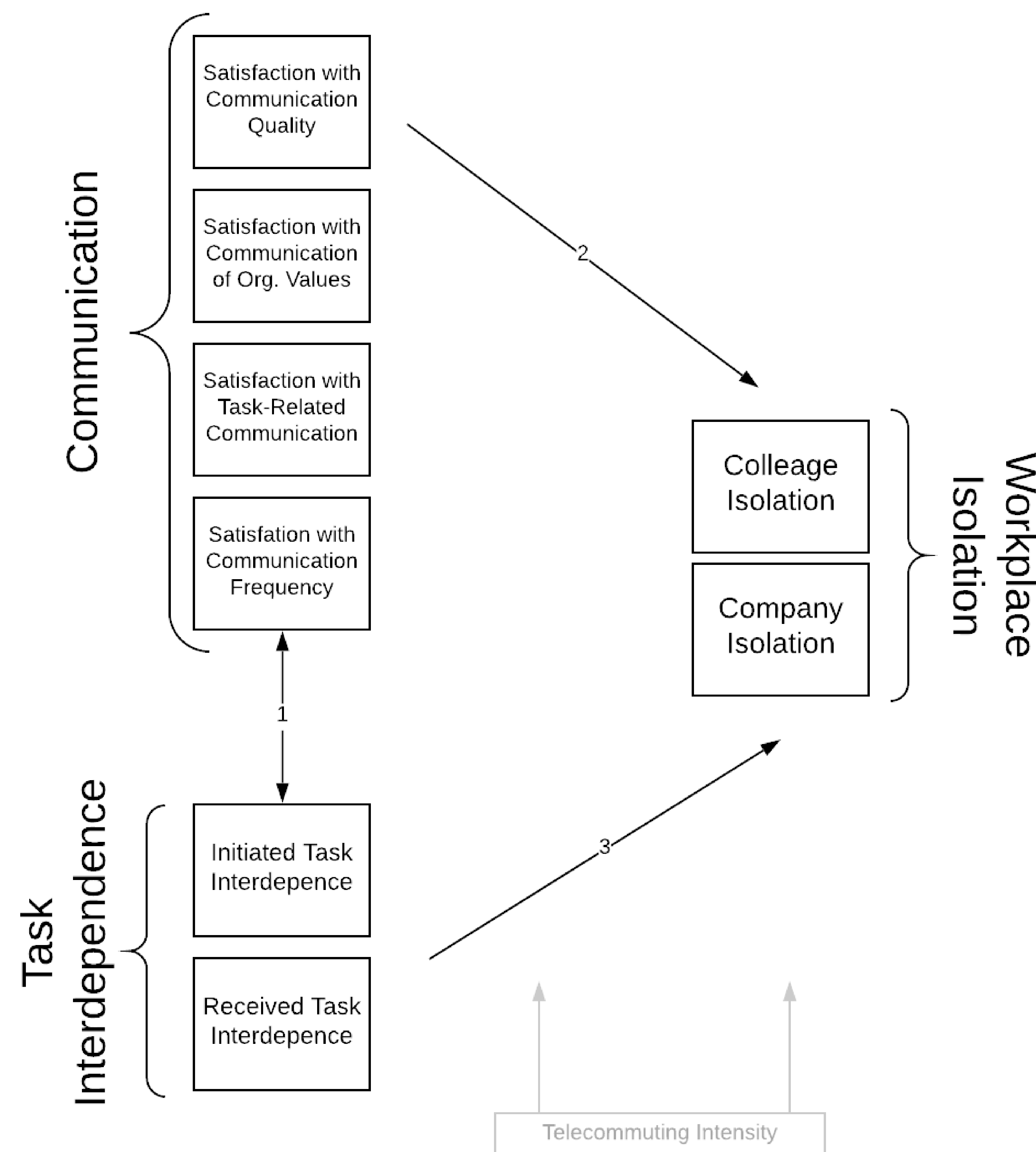
## MEASURES

Survey items will be included for each dimension of communication, task interdependence, and workplace isolation. These items were adapted from their original scales to better suit the context of this study. Communication items were created by the principal investigator as these study variables lacked a pre-existing or reliable scale. A full listing of all items can be found by scanning the QR code at the top of the poster.

## CONTACT INFO

**Chelsea Bell**  
cjb7m@mtmail.mtsu.edu  
**Judith Van Hein**  
judith.vanhein@mtsu.edu

## MODEL



## PARTICIPANTS

This study focuses on the population of full-time adult employees in the United States. Participants must be 18+ years of age, employed in the United States, and working 30 or more hours per week to participate. The sample will be stratified to include representation for both remote workers and office workers.

## PROCEDURES

This study implements an online survey, and participants will be recruited through three methods: email, MTurk, and social media. Participants in each recruitment method will be provided a brief description of the study and a link to the survey if they would like to participate. Participants will be asked to rate their agreement with items measuring each of the variables of interest.

## ANALYSES

This study proposes:

- Hypothesis 1:** Task Interdependence is related to Workplace Isolation
- Hypothesis 2:** Communication is related to Workplace Isolation
- Hypothesis 3:** There is an interaction between Task Interdependence and Communication
- Hypothesis 4:** Telecommuting Intensity moderates each of the above relationships

Confirmatory factor analysis will be performed on the communication variables to see if "communication" can be treated as one overarching factor in our analyses. Correlations will be performed to begin exploration of hypotheses 1-3. Task interdependence and communication variables will be entered into a regression analysis predicting workplace isolation. Finally, moderation analysis will be used to explore hypothesis 4.