



“A STUDY ON MOONLIGHTING: ITS IMPACT ON CORPORATE EMPLOYEES”

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of moonlighting where employees take up additional employment or side job alongside their primary job and its implications for corporate employees. With the rise of the gig economy and remote work, moonlighting has become increasingly prevalent, raising questions about its effects on employee performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work-life balance. Using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews with corporate professionals across various industries, the research identifies key motivations behind moonlighting, such as financial necessity, skill development, and entrepreneurial aspirations. It also examines the challenges posed to employers, including potential conflicts of interest, reduced productivity, and legal and ethical concerns. The findings provide insights into how organizations can address moonlighting through clear policies and supportive work environments, while balancing employee autonomy and business interests.

Keywords: Moonlighting, Corporate employees, organizational commitment.

Introduction

The modern corporate landscape is evolving rapidly, with trends like remote work, flexible schedules, and the gig economy enabling employees to take on secondary jobs—a practice known as moonlighting. Once driven mainly by financial need, moonlighting now includes pursuits tied to passion, skill growth, and entrepreneurship. While supporters see it as a means to enhance income and personal fulfillment, critics warn of reduced productivity, divided focus, and potential ethical concerns. This study examines the causes, benefits, and challenges of moonlighting among corporate employees, analyzing its overall impact on both individual performance and organizational dynamics.

Review of Literature

1. **Ms. Manju, Dr. Punam Devi, Garima, Bhumika Samal (2024)** The study highlights that moonlighting gained attraction in the Indian workforce, especially post-pandemic, due to flexible work arrangements. Employees were seen engaging in secondary jobs mainly for financial support, skill development or personal fulfilment. The paper emphasizes how moonlighting blurs the line between personal and professional boundaries and suggests that organizations need to define ethical boundaries and formal policies to manage this rising trend effectively.
2. **Sathyanarayana S., Hema Harsha, Pushpa B. V. (2024)** This study reveals that Indian corporate professionals engage in moonlighting for multiple reasons such as creative satisfaction, financial security, and gaining diverse work experience. Interestingly, the researchers found a positive correlation between moonlighting and entrepreneurial tendencies. The study also noted that moonlighters are more likely to perceive work as a portfolio of diverse experiences rather than loyalty to a single employer, aligning with the concept of a "boundaryless career."

3. **Diksha Khara and Shiv Jaggarwal (2022)** This study highlighted the need for organizations and policymakers to understand the factors driving employees toward moonlighting in order to minimize its negative impact. Their study, based on a sample of 530 non-government employees in Haryana, found that workers engage in moonlighting to fulfill both financial and personal goals. The findings revealed that monetary benefits, career growth, skill development, job security, and efficient time management increase the likelihood of moonlighting. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic further pushed employees toward moonlighting due to financial and psychological stress. The study also emphasizes the importance of considering nonfinancial factors when shaping HR policies to reduce the need for moonlighting.
4. **Panchal, S. (2019)** This study explores how rapid automation and technological advancements in the IT industry have led to job redundancies, prompting professionals to seek additional employment opportunities. The research identifies that employees are engaging in moonlighting to diversify skills, pursue entrepreneurial ventures, and enhance job security. The author emphasizes the need for organizations to recognize these trends and adapt their human resource strategies accordingly.
5. **Behera, B., Kapoor, A., Nayak, P. K., Usmani, A., & Vadi, V. R. (2018)** This research examines the increasing prevalence of moonlighting in India, attributing it to factors such as job dissatisfaction, financial needs, and the desire for skill enhancement. The study highlights that organizational commitment plays a mediating role between job satisfaction and moonlighting intentions. It suggests that higher job satisfaction leads to increased organizational commitment, which in turn reduces the likelihood of employees engaging in moonlighting.

Research Gap

Although several studies have explored the concept of moonlighting, most of them have primarily focused on its prevalence in sectors such as education, healthcare, and government services. There remains a significant gap in understanding the motivations, implications, and organizational responses to moonlighting specifically within the corporate sector, especially in rapidly growing urban workspaces. The corporate environment, marked by high performance expectations, competitive culture and increasing financial aspirations, presents a unique context for moonlighting that is underrepresented in current academic literature. While prior research has often addressed moonlighting from a legal or ethical standpoint, limited empirical data is available on how it impacts employee well-being, job performance, organizational loyalty, and overall productivity in corporate settings. Additionally, there is a lack of region- specific studies that analyse moonlighting behaviours and trends in cities experiencing rapid economic development and urbanization. Furthermore, most existing literature does not sufficiently differentiate between various forms of moonlighting—such as freelancing, entrepreneurship, or second jobs—and their respective impacts. There is also a need to explore how organizational policies, work culture, and managerial attitudes influence or discourage moonlighting among corporate employees. This study aims to bridge these gaps by offering a deeper understanding of the factors driving moonlighting and its multifaceted effects on corporate professionals and their organizations.

Need for the study

In today's dynamic corporate environment, the traditional notion of single employment is being increasingly challenged by the rise of moonlighting, where employees engage in secondary jobs or freelance work outside of their primary employment. The phenomenon has gained momentum with the advent of digital platforms and flexible work arrangements, especially post-pandemic, which have enabled professionals to explore alternative income sources and personal interests alongside their corporate roles. Understanding the impact and consequences of moonlighting is crucial for several reasons. Moonlighting can have both positive and negative effects it may enhance skill development, financial stability, and job satisfaction for employees but can also lead to reduced productivity, increased burnout, conflicts of interest, and ethical concerns for organizations. Despite its growing prevalence, there is limited structured research analysing how moonlighting impacts corporate employees' performance, mental well-being, loyalty to their primary employer, and overall career growth. This study is essential for HR professionals, corporate leaders, and policymakers to evaluate the underlying motivations for moonlighting and its broader organizational implications. It also helps identify whether current company policies and work cultures support or discourage such practices. Additionally, the study aims to explore how different demographics such as age, role, income level, and work experience influence moonlighting tendencies. By addressing these questions, this research contributes to a more informed discourse on employee engagement, work-life balance, and corporate governance, thereby helping organizations develop appropriate strategies to manage moonlighting constructively. The COVID-19

pandemic further accelerated this trend as individuals realized the importance of financial diversification. The study aims to assess how employees manage dual work commitments and the potential risks and benefits associated with moonlighting. Understanding these aspects will help organizations create policies that balance employee flexibility while ensuring ethical workplace practices.

Objectives

1. To understand the effect of moonlighting on employee efficiency.
2. To identify the reasons for moonlighting by employees in the corporate sector.

Limitations of the study

1. The study may have been conducted with a limited number of respondents, which might not represent the entire corporate workforce.
2. Data collected may be restricted to a particular only Hyderabad, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other areas.
3. The study relies on self-reported information from participants, which could be influenced by bias, dishonesty, or memory recall issues.
4. Some employees may be reluctant to disclose moonlighting doing by them.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Age

AGE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
18-25	64	68.8%
26-35	15	16.1%
36-55	11	11.8%
46-55	3	3.2%
56 and above	NA	NA
Total	93	99.9%

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and figure, it is evident that the majority of respondents (68.8%) are aged between 18 to 25 years, followed by 16.1% in the age group of 26 to 35 years. The remaining respondents are distributed among other age groups, with no participants aged 56 and above.

Gender

GENDER	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Male	53	57%
Female	40	43%
Total	93	100%

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and figure, the male respondents constitute 57% of the total, while female respondents make up 43%. This indicates a fairly balanced representation with a slight male majority.

Type of Moonlighting you engage in

TYPES OF MOONLIGHTING	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Freelancing/Consulting	22	23.7%
Part-time job in another company	26	28%
Own/business startup	39	41.9%
Gig economy work	6	6.4%
Total	93	100

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and figure, it is clear that the majority of respondents (41.9%) engage in moonlighting by running their own business or startup. Additionally, 28% of respondents take up part-time jobs in another company, while 23.7% are involved in freelancing or consulting. A smaller percentage (6.4%) participate in gig economy work.

Reasons for engaging in moonlighting

REASONS FOR ENGAGING IN MOONLIGHTING	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Insufficient income from primary job	17	18.3%
Passion for a different field	16	17.2%
Carrer growth and skill development	20	21.5%
Personal financial obligations	40	43%
Total	93	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and figure, it is evident that the majority of respondents (43%) engage in moonlighting due to personal financial obligations. Career growth and skill development motivate 21.5% of respondents, while 18.3% seek additional income due to insufficient earnings from their primary job. Lastly, 17.2% of respondents engage in moonlighting out of passion for a different field.

Moonlighting affect your main job

AFFECT OF MOONLIGHTING	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
YES	32	34.4%
NO	61	65.6%
Total	93	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and figure, it is clear that the majority of respondents (65.6%) believe that moonlighting does not affect their main job. However, 34.4% of respondents feel that moonlighting does have an impact on their primary employment.

Stressed of moonlighting

STRESSED OF MOONLIGHTING	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	45	48.4%
No	48	51.6%
Total	93	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The above figure and table reveals that moonlighting leads to stress for almost half of the respondents (48.4%), while a slight majority (51.6%) do not feel additional stress. This indicates that moonlighting can be both a burden and a manageable activity depending on individual work-life balance and workload.

Satisfaction with work during moonlighting

JOB SATISFACTION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	68	73.1%
No	25	26.6%9
Total	93	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above fig it is clear that a significant majority (73.1%) of respondents feel that moonlighting increases their job satisfaction, while 26.9% do not share the same sentiment. This suggests that, for most people, moonlighting provides fulfilment—perhaps due to financial stability, skill development, or pursuing a passion.

Hours spent on moonlighting

HOURS SPENT ON MOONLIGHTING	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 5 hours	42	45.2%
5-10 hours	38	40.9%
11-20hous	11	11.8%
More than 20 hours	2	2.1%
Total	93	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The above table and figure indicate that most respondents (45.2%) spend less than 5 hours per week on moonlighting activities. Another 40.9% spend between 5 to 10 hours, while 11.8% dedicate 11 to 20 hours. Only a small fraction (2.1%) engage in moonlighting for more than 20 hours per week. This suggests that moonlighting is mostly a supplementary activity rather than a full-time commitment for most respondents.

Informing primary employer about moonlighting activities

INFORMING PRIMARY EMPLOYER ABOUT MOONLIGHTING	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	35	37.6%
No	58	62.4%
Total	93	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The data reveals that the majority of respondents (62.4%) have not informed their primary employer about their moonlighting activities, while 37.6% have disclosed it. This suggests that a significant number of employees prefer to keep their secondary work private, possibly due to company policies, fear of repercussions, or personal reasons.

Challenges faced while managing both jobs

CHALLENGES FACED WHILE MANAGING BOTH JOBS	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Lack of time for personal life	41	44.1%
Increased fatigue and burn out	18	19.4%
Conflict of interest with primary job	10	10.8%
No significant challenges	24	25.8%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

According to the table and figure, nearly half of the respondents, 44.1% (about 41 out of 93), feel that managing two jobs significantly reduces the time they have for their personal lives. This suggests that balancing work and personal time is a major struggle for many. Few respondents, 25.8% (roughly 24 out of 93) report that they don't face any significant challenges while managing two jobs. This group seems to handle the dual workload relatively well. 19.4% Around (18 out of 93) respondents feel that managing two jobs leads to increased fatigue and burnout. This indicates that the physical and mental toll of working multiple jobs is a notable challenge for a significant portion of people. 10.8% About (10 out of 93) respondents find that managing two jobs creates a conflict of interest with their primary job. This could mean scheduling conflicts, divided loyalties, or competing demands between the two roles.

Prohibited Moonlighting

PROHIBITED MOONLIGHTING	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Quit moonlighting	27	29%
Continue moonlighting	15	16.1%
Look for a new job that allows it	23	24.7%
Not sure.	28	30.1%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above pie chart, we can observe that most of the respondents are not sure about (28 out of 93) 30.1% this suggests that many employees haven't thought about this scenario or are unclear about how they'd respond. It could reflect a lack of experience with such a policy or hesitation about its implications. Quit Moonlighting (about 27 out of 93) 29% this indicates that respondents would follow their employer's rules and stop moonlighting, showing a willingness to prioritize their primary job. Look for a new job that allows it (about 23 out of 93) 24.7% would like moonlighting be important enough to influence their employment decisions. They might rely on the extra income or value the flexibility it provides. Continue moonlighting (about 15 out of 93) 16.1% would continue moonlighting, This suggests that a minority are either willing to risk their current job or believe they can manage both without consequences.

Encouraged Moonlighting in your industry

ENCOURAGING MOONLIGHTING	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Yes	63	67.7%
No	30	32.3%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above pie chart, around (63 out of 93) 67.7%; of respondents are in favour of encouraging moonlighting, This strong support suggests that many in the industry see benefits in allowing or promoting extra work outside their primary job. These benefits may include additional income and opportunities to develop new skills. Around (30 out of 93) 32.3% are against encouraging moonlighting in their industry, they may be concerned about issues like conflicts of interest and a loss of focus on their main job.

Impact on personal relationships and social life

IMPACT ON SOCIAL LIFE	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Yes, Negatively	23	24.7%
Yes, Positively	42	45.2%
No, Impact	28	30.1%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

According to the table and pie chart, we can observe that yes positively, around (45 out of 93) 45.2% of respondents believe moonlighting enhances their personal relationships and social life. This could stem from benefits like extra income, which might ease financial pressures and improve well-being, or new opportunities for networking and social interaction. And no impact around (28 out of 93) 30.1%; respondents feel moonlighting neither helps nor harms their relationships and social life. This suggests they manage to balance their extra work with personal commitments, keeping it separate from their social life. And yes negatively, around (23 out of 93) 24.7% of respondents indicated that moonlighting may strain their personal relationships or limit social time. This could be due to the extra time and energy required, leaving less availability for family, friends, or relaxation.

Flexibility to employees to allow moonlighting

FLEXIBILITY TO EMPLOYEES	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Yes	68	73.1%
No	23	24.7%
Others	2	2.2%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above pie chart and table, we can observe that 73.1% (around 68 out of 93) of respondents favour companies offering more flexibility for employees to moonlighting. And 24.7% (around 23 out of 93) of respondents say that no flexibility for moonlighting should be given to the employees that may reduce focus on the primary job, conflicts of interest, or employee burnout. Only 2.2% (around 2 out of 93) of respondents are undecided.

Employment type

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Full-time	53	57%
Part-time	35	37.6%
Contractual	5	5.4%

Source: primary data

INTERPRETATION

According to the table and pie chart most of the respondents, 57% (around 53 out of 93) are from full-time positions, making it the most common employment type. Part-time 37.6% (around 35 out of 93) respondents are part-time they work usually fewer hours than full-time roles and may get flexibility, such as students. Only 5.4% (around 5 out of 93) of respondents from contractual employment are typically working under a specific contract for a set period or project.

Job Level

JOB LEVEL	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Entry-level	35	37.6%
Mid-level	33	35.5%
Senior-level	17	18.3%
Managerial	8	8.6%

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and pie chart, we can observe that the majority of job levels are entry-level: 37.6% (around 35 out of 93) of respondents are in entry-level positions. This suggests a significant portion of the group is at the beginning of their career. Mid-level 35.3% (around 33 out of 93) respondents are from the mid-level; it is very close to entry-level. Indicating a strong presence of employees with some experience but not yet in advanced positions. Senior level 18.3% (around 17 out of 93) of respondents from the senior level. This reflects a moderate number of respondents who have achieved higher positions. Managerial level only 8.6% (around 8 out of 93) of respondents from the managerial level. This suggests that very few respondents hold leadership or management positions.

Time Management Between Primary job and Moonlighting

TIME MANAGEMENT	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Strictly follow a schedule	38	40.9%
Prioritize one over the other based on urgency	23	24.7%
Work on moonlighting only during weekends	23	24.7%
struggle to balance both	9	9.7%

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

According to the table and pie chart, we can observe that the majority of the respondents strictly follow a schedule 40.9% (around 38 out of 93) of respondents rely on a strict schedule to manage their time between their primary job and moonlighting. And prioritize one over the other based on urgency, 24.7% (around 23 out of 93) of respondents manage their time by prioritizing either their primary job or moonlighting based on which has more urgent demands. Similarly work on moonlighting only during weekends, 24.7% (around 23 out of 93) of respondents dedicate their weekends exclusively to moonlighting. Struggle to balance both only 9.7% (around 9 out of 93) of respondents who find it difficult to balance their primary job and moonlighting.

Quit moonlighting if your employer increases your salary.

INCREASED SALARY	NO.OF RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES
Yes	29	31.2%
No	34	36.6%
Depends on the increase	30	32.3%

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table and pie chart, we can observe that the majority of respondents, 36.6% (around 34 out of 93) of respondents, would continue moonlighting regardless of a salary increase from their primary employer, This suggests they are not only moonlighting for the reason of financial compensation; they are likely to get job satisfaction, skill development, and enjoyment of the secondary job. And YES, 31.2% (around 29 out of 93) of respondents would quit moonlighting if their employer increases their salary.

93) of respondents indicated they would quit moonlighting if their employer increased their salary. For these individuals, the primary motivation for moonlighting seems to be financial. Depends on the increase 32.2% (around 30 out of 93) of respondents. These individuals are open to quitting moonlighting, but their decision hinges on the size of the salary increase. For this group, financial considerations are important, and they are likely weighing the extra income or benefits from moonlighting against their primary job.

FINDINGS

- Majority of respondents (68.8%) are aged between 18 to 25 years, followed by 16.1% in the age group of 26 to 35 years, from 93 respondents.
- Most of the respondents are males (57%) out of 93 respondents.
- 63 respondents are aware of moonlighting (holding a second job or side business).
- Most of the respondents i.e., 41.9% engage in moonlighting by running their own business or startup.
- 43% of respondents stated that personal financial obligations is the main reason for engaging in moonlighting.
- 61 respondents responded that moonlighting does not affect their main job.
- Majority of the respondents opined that moonlighting can be both a burden and manageable activity depending on work load.
- 73.1% of respondents feel that moonlighting increases their job satisfaction.
- Most respondents (45.2%) spend less than 5 hours per week on moonlighting activities followed by 40.9% spend between 5 to 10 hours.
- More than half of the respondents disclosed that they have not informed their primary employer about their moonlighting activities.
- About 41 respondents feel that managing two jobs significantly reduces the time they have for their personal lives. managing two jobs leads to increased fatigue and burnout. This indicates that the physical and mental toll of working multiple jobs is a notable challenge for a significant portion of people.
- Majority of 67% respondents are in favour of encouraging moonlighting, This strong support suggests that many in the industry see benefits in allowing or promoting extra work outside their primary job.
- Most of the respondents, 57% (around 53 out of 93), are from full-time positions, making it the most common employment type.
- Majority of the respondents strictly follow a schedule 40.9% (around 38 out of 93) of respondents rely on a strict schedule to manage their time between their primary job and moonlighting.

CONCLUSION

The collective findings of the report and related studies highlight a significant and persistent challenge for corporate employees in managing the implications of moonlighting on their professional and personal lives. This challenge is intensified by long work hours, increased performance expectations, financial pressures, and limited organizational support, which can contribute to mental fatigue, decreased job satisfaction, and potential burnout. The surveyed corporate employees, particularly those in demanding roles and with familial responsibilities, illustrate these struggles often engaging in secondary jobs to meet financial needs while managing primary work obligations. The data consistently underscores the critical need for organizational awareness and adaptive policies that address the root causes driving employees to moonlight. Introducing supportive frameworks such as transparent communication channels, employee wellness programs, fair compensation, and opportunities for internal career growth is essential. Furthermore, fostering a workplace culture that encourages work-life harmony and recognizes the diverse needs of employees can mitigate the negative outcomes associated with moonlighting. Ultimately, addressing these issues will not only enhance

employee well-being and retention but also contribute to a more sustainable and efficient corporate environment for all.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Introduce flexible work schedules, remote work options, or compressed workweeks to help employees better manage time between primary employment and personal obligations.
2. Promote financial wellness programs and salary reviews to reduce the economic pressures that lead employees to seek secondary jobs.
3. Establish clear organizational policies on moonlighting that balance employee freedom with performance accountability and transparency.
4. Provide access to mental health support, stress management workshops, and burnout prevention programs to help employees cope with the additional load of moonlighting.
5. Foster open communication channels and regular one-on-one meetings to understand employee concerns, motivations for moonlighting, and to offer tailored support.
6. Encourage team-building and mentorship initiatives that build trust and reduce isolation, helping employees feel more supported in their primary roles.
7. Create an anonymous feedback system to gather insights on moonlighting trends and potential areas of intervention within the corporate structure.
8. Recognize and reward employee contributions through performance incentives and professional growth opportunities to reinforce commitment to the primary job.

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