

To Explore Moonlighting Intentions Among Young Indian Adults

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Abstract

Moonlighting, the practice of engaging in additional paid employment alongside a primary job, has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly within the IT sector. Factors such as rising living costs, career development needs, and flexible work arrangements have contributed to its growing prevalence. While moonlighting offers financial and skill-related benefits to employees, it also poses challenges for organisations in terms of productivity, job satisfaction, work environment, and employee retention. The present study aims to examine the extent of moonlighting among employees, identify the key factors motivating moonlighting, assess its impact on the organisational work environment, and analyse its relationship with employee job satisfaction. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire from over 100 employees working in the IT sector using convenience sampling. Secondary data were sourced from research articles, HR reports, and policy documents. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, Friedman ranking analysis, and average score analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study provide insights into the reasons behind moonlighting and its implications for employees and organisations. The study highlights the need for clear organisational policies and effective HR strategies to manage moonlighting practices while ensuring employee well-being and organisational performance.

Keywords: Moonlighting, Job Satisfaction, Work Environment, Employee Retention, IT Sector, Human Resource Management.

Introduction

Young Indian adults' intentions to moonlight have become a significant workforce phenomenon, shaped by changing career aspirations, rapid economic transformation, and technological advancement. Young professionals frequently face income instability, job insecurity, rising living expenses, and limited long-term career assurance in an increasingly competitive and uncertain labour market, all of which encourage them to look for additional sources of income outside of their primary employment. Moonlighting is seen as a strategic response to improve skills, obtain varied work experience, and preserve employability in a fast-paced workplace rather than just a financial coping mechanism. By lowering entry barriers and facilitating flexible work schedules, the growth of digital platforms, remote work opportunities, and gig-based employment has further normalised moonlighting. Simultaneously, young adults are encouraged to pursue parallel employment due to factors like boredom at work, a lack of meaningful engagement, and a mismatch between personal goals and organisational roles. Moonlighting plans, however, also give rise to worries about work-life imbalance, exhaustion, diminished job satisfaction, and possible conflicts of interest with employers. These intentions are further shaped by peer pressure, family obligations, and social expectations, especially in urban India, where economic pressures are severe. In general, young Indian adults' intentions to moonlight reflect a complex interplay of psychological needs, career development motivations, economic necessity, and structural labour market conditions, making it an important area for scholarly research and policy attention.

Review of Literature

Neha Shukla et al (2025)¹ In the article, the literature looks at moonlighting, which is the practice of young adult professionals in the Indian IT sector holding multiple jobs at the same time in the face of shifting labour and economic conditions. The goal is to examine how job security, financial benefits, skill development, and

boredom affect moonlighting behaviour. The methodology is based on earlier empirical research in the IT workforce that used primary data and causal and regression-based analytical techniques. The results show that while financial benefits, opportunities for skill development, and job boredom positively motivate secondary employment, low job security increases the intentions to moonlight. The review comes to the conclusion that moonlighting reflects both career aspirations and financial necessity, necessitating clear regulations and supportive organisational policies.

Devi Soumyaja and Kadeeja Nourah (2025)² In the article, the review of the literature presents moonlighting as a behaviour phenomenon that has developed from a perceived survival tactic to a sophisticated labour market practice influenced by social, technological, and economic change. With a focus on marital status, caregiving responsibilities, and alignment with sustainable development goals, the goal is to critically analyse gender-based disparities in moonlighting behaviour. The approach is based on a thorough analysis of important and recent research from various nations and eras. The results show that while women's participation is limited by informal caregiving and time poverty despite growing economic pressures, married men and single women are more likely to moonlight. The review comes to the conclusion that promoting fair, inclusive, and sustainable labour markets requires an understanding of gendered moonlighting patterns.

Biswabhusan Behera et al (2023)³ In the article examined the study presents moonlighting, a long-standing practice in which workers take on extra work outside of regular business hours to supplement their income and pursue personal interests. The goal is to comprehend the notion of moonlighting, its legal standing, and the dominant industry viewpoints in the Indian setting. The approach is non-empirical and relies on secondary data gathered from existing literature and online sources. According to the research, moonlighting can improve motivation, skills, and job satisfaction, but it can also lead to burnout, health issues, conflicts of interest, and threats organizational confidentiality. The study comes to the conclusion that, in the absence of a comprehensive legal framework in India, moonlighting is still conditionally acceptable based on employer policies, underscoring the need for balanced regulation based on clarity and trust engagement.

Akanksha Bajpai and Nidhi Nirwan (2023)⁴ In the article, the study highlights the growing prevalence of moonlighting in the flexible IT industry as a result of job insecurity, unstable income, and quick technological advancement. Understanding why IT workers take on multiple jobs and how this behaviour affects employee performance and organisational productivity is the primary goal. The approach is based on a descriptive research design that makes use of secondary sources and a thorough analysis of the body of current academic literature. The results show that while moonlighting promotes career mobility, skill development, and financial security, it may also raise stress levels, impair concentration, and violate employer compliance standards. The study comes to the conclusion that moonlighting is both a managerial issue and an economic necessity that calls for supportive strategies and well-balanced organisational policies.

R. Thamilselvan et al (2022)⁵ In the article, the study defines moonlighting as the practice of students taking on extra jobs in addition to their academic obligations as a result of financial and personal constraints. Examining the impact of moonlighting on undergraduate and graduate students is the primary goal. Using primary data gathered via a structured questionnaire from 416 students in the Chennai district chosen by simple random sampling, a descriptive research methodology was used. The results show that there is no discernible difference in the effects of moonlighting between genders or academic levels, but they do point to low energy, decreased focus, elevated stress, and poorer academic performance as the main issues. The study comes to the conclusion that while moonlighting helps with financial needs, it hurts students' academic focus and well-being.

Statement of the problem

Moonlighting, defined as employees engaging in additional paid work outside their primary employment, has become increasingly common due to rising living costs, career aspirations, and the availability of flexible work opportunities. While moonlighting may provide financial and professional benefits to employees, it also raises concerns for organisations regarding productivity, job satisfaction, work-life balance, organisational climate, and employee retention.

Many organisations lack clear policies to regulate moonlighting, leading to uncertainty about its impact on employee performance and workplace relationships. In some cases, moonlighting may contribute to employee fatigue, reduced commitment, and conflicts of interest, while in others it may enhance skills and job satisfaction.

Additionally, the extent and impact of moonlighting may vary across employees based on demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and work experience.

Despite its growing prevalence, there is limited empirical evidence examining how moonlighting influences job satisfaction, work environment, and employee retention, particularly at the organisational level. This study seeks to address this gap by systematically analysing the prevalence, motivations, and effects of moonlighting, as well as the demographic differences associated with it, thereby providing insights for organisations to better manage and respond to moonlighting practices.

Objective of the study

- To examine the extent of moonlighting among employees.
- To identify the key factors that motivate employees to engage in moonlighting.
- To assess the impact of moonlighting on the organisational work environment.
- To analyse the relationship between moonlighting and employee job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the prevalence of moonlighting, its motivating factors, and its impact on job satisfaction, work environment, and employee retention.

Data collection: Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire circulated online, targeting employees from the IT sector. Secondary data, including research papers, HR reports, and policy documents, supplemented the primary data.

Sample size: Convenience sampling was used due to ease of accessibility, resulting in over 100 valid responses.

Period of study: November 2025 to January 2026

A structured questionnaire will be used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire will include questions related to moonlighting practices, reasons for moonlighting, job satisfaction, work environment, retention, and demographic details.

Statistical Tools Used

The collected data will be analysed using appropriate statistical tools such as:

- Percentage analysis
- Fridman Ranking Analysis
- Average Score

Data Analysis & Interpretation

TABLE NO: 1
Personal outline of the respondent

Personal Profile	Particulars	No.of Respondents	Percent
Gender	Male	76	76
	Female	24	24
Age	19-22	5	5
	22-30	53	53
	31-35	25	25
	36-40	10	10
	40 above	7	7
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	7	7
	Postgraduate	15	15
	Professional qualification	32	32
	Others	46	46
Occupational status	Entrepreneur	44	44
	Freelancer/Contractor	15	15
	Full-time employee	6	6
	Part-time employee	31	31
	Other	4	4
Work Experience	Less than 2 years	4	4

	2-5 years	15	15
	6-10 years	21	21
	Above 10 years	62	62
Nature often engage in moonlighting activities	Full-time	6	6
	Part-time	82	82
	Contract	12	12
How often engage in moonlighting activities	Occasionally	9	9
	Regularly	75	75
	Frequently	16	16

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

From the above Table No.1, The Majority of the respondents are male (76%). The majority of the respondents have aged between 2 and -30 (53%). Most of the respondents have completed other educational qualifications (46%). Most of the respondents are in the specified occupational status (44%). The majority of the respondents have Work Experience above 10 years (62%). The majority of the respondents have part-time employment (82%). The majority of the respondents have engaged in Moonlighting activities regularly (75%).

TABLE NO: 2

Friedman ranking analysis

Key factors that motivate employees to engage in moonlighting

S.NO	FACTORS	Mean Rank	Rank
1	often engage in moonlighting activities	4.65	6
2	Pay off debts	4.53	5
3	Gain additional work experience	4.75	7
4	To spend more money	4.39	2
5	Pursue a career position	4.47	4
6	Combat boredom	4.12	1
7	Educational Qualification	4.41	3

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The above Table No.2 shows that, according to the analysis, getting more work experience is the biggest incentive for moonlighting, followed by doing secondary work on a regular basis. Financial requirements like debt repayment are also crucial. The factors that have the least impact on employees' motivation to moonlight are spending more money and decreasing boredom, while career advancement and educational qualifications have a moderate impact.

The majority of the respondents have ranked the lack of interaction among the neighbours as the main problem faced by them in the gated community.

TABLE NO:3

The impact of moonlighting on the organisation's work environment

S.NO	FACTORS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
1	Multi-Tasking pressure from two employers	11	11
2	Fatigue	5	5

3	Loss of main job	44	44
4	Low productivity	16	16
5	Lack of concentration	17	17
6	Legal complications	7	7
Total		100	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The above Table No:3, Reveals that the loss of the main job is the most significant impact of moonlighting (44%). Lack of concentration (17%) and legal complications (7%) are also major concerns. Low productivity (16%) indicates reduced work efficiency due to moonlighting. Overall, Moonlighting adversely affects employee performance and the organisational work environment.

CHART NO:1

Impact of moonlighting on workplace performance and stability

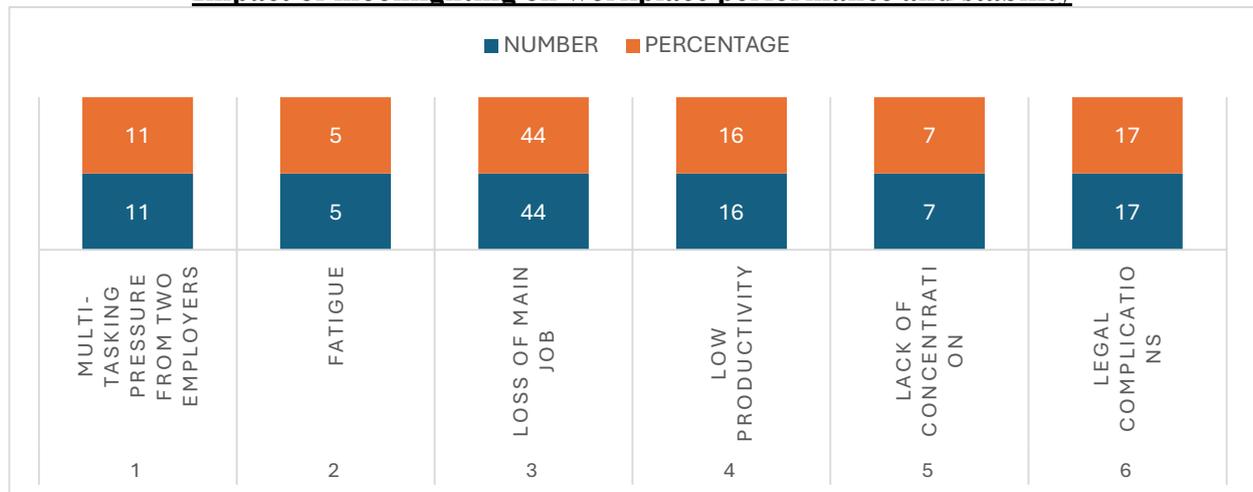


TABLE NO:4

The Relationship between Moonlighting and Employee Job Satisfaction

S.NO	FACTORS	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean
1	Nature of work	28	42	15	10	5	378	3.78
2	Work Life Balance	20	35	18	17	10	338	3.38
3	Supportive Environment	25	40	20	10	5	370	3.7
4	Communication support	22	38	24	11	5	361	3.61
5	Additional Income	45	35	10	7	3	412	4.12
6	Provides better career shift prospects	40	37	13	7	3	404	4.04
7	Reduces commitment strongly to the primary organisation.	30	32	18	12	8	364	3.64
8	Moonlighting improves overall job satisfaction	35	40	15	7	3	397	3.97

(SA-Strongly Agree A-Agree N-Neutral D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree)

Interpretation

The findings indicate that most employees have a positive opinion of moonlighting, particularly when it comes to opportunities for career shifts, extra money, and general job satisfaction. Positive reactions are also given to communication and a supportive work environment. Mixed opinions are evident, though, as worries about work-life balance and diminished dedication to the main organisation exist. In general, moonlighting increases satisfaction but presents problems with loyalty and balance.

Suggestion

To lessen the need for secondary employment, organisations should increase job security and offer clear career advancement. Financial pressures that encourage moonlighting can be addressed by competitive and equitable compensation plans. To lessen workplace boredom, employers should design stimulating work environments with meaningful roles, skill development opportunities, and learning pathways. Wellness programs and flexible work schedules can assist staff in juggling obligations without taking on too much work. Legal and ethical issues can be decreased by having clear organisational policies regarding moonlighting and conflict of interest guidelines. To safeguard both employers and employees, the government should establish explicit labour laws regarding moonlighting at the policy level. Programs that raise awareness about long-term career planning and work-life balance can also assist young adults in making well-informed decisions about moonlighting.

Conclusion

Young Indian adults' intentions to moonlight are a result of a complex interplay between workplace conditions, career goals, and economic pressures. The decision to take on secondary work is heavily influenced by factors like job insecurity, financial needs, the desire to improve one's skills, and boredom in one's primary job. Moonlighting has become more accepted as a practical tactic for stable income and career advancement due to the increasing availability of flexible and remote work opportunities. Unchecked moonlighting, however, can result in weariness, decreased productivity, and diminished organisational commitment. Therefore, in order to create supportive work environments, equitable compensation structures, and unambiguous regulatory frameworks, organisations and policymakers must comprehend the underlying motives. In the changing Indian labour market, addressing these issues can help strike a balance between personal career aspirations and organisational sustainability.

Reference

- Akinde et al. (2020) – Moonlighting is largely a survival strategy adopted by workers to cope with irregular salary payments. It highlights structural economic failures as a key driver of multiple job holding.
- Kisumano & Wa-Mbaleka (2017) – Moonlighting is an expanding phenomenon in higher education, largely motivated by economic pressure and institutional constraints.
- Ashwini et al. (2017) – IT employees' moonlighting intentions are influenced by career aspirations, skill utilisation, and financial motivation.
- Averett (2001) – Moonlighting is driven by multiple motives beyond income, with clear gender differences in participation and intensity of secondary work.
- Allen (1998) – Moonlighting decisions among unmarried men and women are shaped by family responsibilities and labour-market conditions rather than income alone.