

# Embracing Moonlighting: Exploring the Organizational Perspective

Prof. Somesh Kumar Shukla<sup>1</sup>, Anjali Rai<sup>2</sup>, Nidhi Mishra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Lucknow.

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar Department of Commerce, University of Lucknow.

---

## Abstract

*Moonlighting is the practice of working on a secondary job alongside one's main employment, often done secretly. The study aims to explore organizational perspectives on moonlighting by addressing specific questions. It delves into employees' intentions for moonlighting and the resulting organizational consequences. The study concludes that the debate should focus on embracing moonlighting rather than debating its benefits or drawbacks for organizations. It suggests that employers should develop strategies to manage moonlighting instead of outright prohibiting it. Furthermore, employees are encouraged to seek formal approval from their employers for secondary employment, eliminating concerns related to unauthorized work. This research offers valuable insights for both employees and employers shedding light on the importance of managing moonlighting productively and collaboratively.*

**Keywords:** Employee intention, Moonlighting, Organizational Perspective.

---

Date of Submission: 01-02-2026

Date of acceptance: 10-02-2026

---

## I. Introduction

Industry volatility has recently resulted in less loyalty among employee and their employer, increased layoffs, and shorter job tenures. People must look for new techniques as a result of these uncertainties in order to guarantee their work stability and a steady supply of greater revenue. The need for ongoing skill upgrading and the quick pace of technology development have made occupational mobility more crucial in today's employment market. Many workers have developed an active strategy of working numerous jobs or moonlighting to cope with the aforementioned instability. Additionally easing financial concerns, holding many jobs might guarantee continuous work periods and present a chance for additional professional growth by building up occupation-specific experience (George & George, 2022).

Holding multiple jobs or Moonlighting (MoL) refers to working on a secondary job along with your primary employment. In other words, it is a practice of doing more than one job secretly. Employees who moonlight might detach their interests from their primary employment (Ashwini et al., 2017). This practice has grown to such a point that it requires the Human resource function to make needful changes to ensure work efficiency of employers as well as give them flexibility for personal growth (Seema et al., 2021).

In the HRM functions, new titles have been developed to handle such employment practices from both the organisational and employee perspectives. The largest technology company, Microsoft, created the first gig economy manager, Mr. Liane Scult, who is currently employed by the most popular online freelance marketplace, Upwork. There will be a large number of additional such responsibilities in the HRM area given the present scenarios' quick alterations to socio-economic systems. Among them are those with titles like "second-act coach," "future of work manager," and "gig economy strategist" (Seema et al., 2021).

There are various underlying motives that employees are inclined towards moonlighting. These motives can be bifurcated as financial and non-financial motives. Financial motives may include moonlighting done for extra income, or paying off loans while non-financial motives may include moonlighting done for skills acquisition, achievement of passion, and creativity. However, organizations have no motives or less motives for allowing their employees to moonlight. Hence, conflict of interest becomes an issue.

Although working a second job may be advantageous for individuals, employers often object to this practice. While some CEOs maintain that doing two jobs at once is "cheating," others argue that employees should get authorization beforehand. The initial response of organizations may be to prohibit moonlighting practices. This is perhaps not the most effective course of action to deal with the situation, however, it may have negative effects on organizational commitment, relations, and retention. Instead, you might want to adopt a moonlighting policy that simply discourages outside employment.

The trend of employees moonlighting is getting more widespread. Changes in working policies and flexibility have given a boost to this practice. Although it is advantageous to employees in every manner,

organizations are hesitant to adopt it. Numerous debates have been held that represent the advantages and difficulties employees face. The moment has come to discuss the organizational perspectives toward MoL. In light of this, the purpose of the study is to address a few questions that answer the organizational views on MoL. Additionally, it discusses moonlighting intentions(reasons) of employees and organizational consequences.

## **II. Discussion**

### **Antecedents of MoL**

Different individuals have different reasons to take up side jobs. This practice was never a consideration earlier among employees. It is the aftermath of flexible working and remote working that it is becoming popular among employees. People want to utilize their time more wisely. Researchers have found organizational learning can explain the occurrence of MoL. For instance, moonlighting involves individuals working several jobs, if employees work for multiple employers, they will be exposed to various organisational cultures and have a deeper understanding of their organisations (Shaik & Salunkhe, 2023). (Sabu, 2022) discusses the various motives of MoL. These motives include: i. pecuniary motivation for instance, the job market is getting worse as a result of financial forecasts by analysts of an impending recession. Many people use moonlight to pay off their debt. ii. An Opportunity to follow your passion as well as maintain a stable income. iii. Personal reasons like change in career path iv. Job related for example promotion and employment security. According to (Lambert & Hogan, 2008) MoL is a financial gluttony, however they state that this is not only the primary reason for doing a secondary job. Moreover, (Ara & Akbar, 2016) claim that job satisfaction is a key factor in explaining the prevalence of moonlighting. For instance if a worker is not satisfied with the current pay package he may likely switch to MoL.

Additionally, Economic downturns have become so frequent resulting in sudden layoffs. Employees are running after job security and therefore involve themselves in side jobs (Tettey, 2006). Decisions to moonlight are often influenced by financial considerations. Employees with only one job are urged to moonlight in order to supplement their earnings if their primary job pays less. However, employees with multiple jobs are less likely to moonlight since they would be satisfied with the number of jobs they are working. Overall, this suggests that those who perform lower-paying occupations are more likely to moonlight. While the prospect of more money is always alluring, this is not the only factor driving people to search for different job options. Some engage in it out of boredom, while others do it out of enthusiasm. Higher degrees of employment security can be used to force people to remain in one position, but once they switch to multiple jobs, granting them employment security encourages them to moonlight even more. Additionally, those who work fewer hours at their primary job are more inclined to have several occupations (Nunoo et al., 2017).

### **Organization Opposition and Consequences**

Organisations concern that having people work two jobs at once will lower their efficiency and quality of work. Additionally, there is a chance that two timelines may cause more stress than one, which could result in a smaller or lower-quality product. Another side effect of a side gig is fatigue, which can cause negligence and diversion.

Employers are often concerned about data and confidentiality breaches, particularly if an employee collaborates with a direct rival. Another issue is the possibility that employees would exploit corporate resources for a side job. Several companies have already stepped up their opposition like Wipro, HCL, and Infosys. Rishad Premji, chairman of Wipro, disclosed that approximately 300 workers of the business were laid off because they decided to work a second job for a competing company while still being paid by Wipro. He described working a second job as "cheating." (George J. K., 2022). While working two or more jobs simultaneously might be a clever strategy to generate more money, tech workers who do this risk their physical and mental health since they must put in more time to complete the responsibilities of two jobs. Dual employment is not encouraged by IT businesses, who refer to it as cheating.

It is more crucial to consider the extent of two employments can either support or compete with one another because there are often two possible outcomes. Firstly, role enrichment, which occurs when a worker's efforts in one position ultimately assist the other job. An employee may have the opportunity to gain talents through moonlighting that they may then use in their primary position and the second possible result, Role depletion is less desirable. When an employee puts all of their effort and resources into one task, the other work declines (Banerjee, 2012). One of the reasons for organizational resistance may be organizational commitment. The idea of organizational commitment has always been pertinent. Evidence supports the notion that greater organisational commitment results in higher economic benefits (Mowday, 1988). Non-moonlighters show significantly more organisational commitment than moonlighters. As a result, moonlighters are often less devoted to their main organisations when working at their additional occupations (Jamall, 1986). Without active retaining rewards, experienced and devoted staff members lose interest in the organisation and take on second jobs to accomplish their own goals (Ashwini et al., 2017).

Below are various consequences that organizations might face during the practice of MoL which can serve as reasons for organization resistance:

#### **Proposed Consequences of MoL**

**Reputational damage** - If a worker's secondary employment or entrepreneurial efforts reflect negatively on the organisation or are inconsistent with its ideals, it may be detrimental to the company's prestige. Moonlighting may be prohibited by organisations to prevent employees' extracurricular activities from harming their brand's reputation or raising possible issues with clients.

**Issues about intellectual property** - In some professions, employees' main job may include working on tasks or creating intellectual property. Moonlighting may be prohibited by organisations in order to avoid any potential disputes over who owns intellectual property or the unauthorized use of company assets or expertise in unrelated pursuits.

**Legal and ethical issues** - Certain sectors have severe rules and ethical requirements that forbid or restrict employees from working for someone else outside of their company. For instance, due to client privacy, conflicts of interest, or potential client damage, professionals like doctors, lawyers, or financial advisors may encounter legal or ethical restrictions on taking up additional occupations.

**Double workload-** Double workload decreases worker efficiency at both companies and makes it challenging for them to achieve goals in either employment. Dual employment can decrease the productivity of employees and affect their health.

**Conflict of Interest-** Moonlighting can lead to conflicts of interest between a worker's main employment and their multiple jobs. An employee may be in contradiction with the organization's goals if their secondary job requires them to work for a rival company, a client of their primary firm, or to do similar operations.

**Lower productivity and commitment** - A moonlighting lifestyle can lead to decreased productivity and dedication to one's primary profession. Employees who take on additional work may get exhausted and distracted, which may affect their performance and commitment to their primary obligations. As a result, this can negatively impact the organization's overall efficiency and the caliber of the work that is generated.

**Burnout and Health Issues** - Juggling numerous jobs increases the likelihood of burnout and health problems, which can negatively impact an employee's overall health and professional performance. Due to the long-term effects of burnout, organizations may ban multiple jobs to ensure the welfare and wellness of their workers.

**Disputes in availability and schedule** - Moonlighting can affect employees availability and schedule. An employee's capacity to perform their duties during regular working hours or be accessible for essential or time-sensitive activities may be impacted if they devote a large amount of time to a side job. Workflow and teamwork inside the company may be affected by this.

#### **Organizational Negotiation**

The most significant stakeholder of an organization is its workforce. Since they can be influenced by their organization and can influence the organization's success or failure (Azim, 2016). In this regard, Social Exchange Theory (SET) becomes relevant which clearly explains the relationship between employee and organization. This is the most popular theoretical framework for analyzing the relationship between employees' behavioral responses to organizational policies (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employees are more likely to support their company as a mutually beneficial transaction when they are satisfied with their work. This is how SET offers a significant theoretical justification for reflecting the occurrence of employee engagement within an organisation (Saks, 2006). According to the explanation of SET, when organisations fulfill the requirements of the workforce, workers instinctively feel passionate about their job duties and attitudes, which manifests as higher levels of organisational commitment and employee engagement (Organ & Andreas Lingl, 1995). Thus, it can be inferred when organizations meet the expectations of their employees this results in higher organizational commitment and engagement which will increase job satisfaction among employees. Higher organizational commitment, employee engagement and satisfaction will lower the intention of MoL (Seema et al., 2021).

It is true to believe that moonlighting or multiple jobs may be beneficial for employee growth. However, policymakers must take into account its effects on the safety and wellness of their employee as well as their balance between personal and professional lives. It has been discovered that having numerous occupations increases your chance of suffering an accident at work. Absenteeism may increase. This is most often caused by increased tiredness, insufficient sleep, or added physical and mental stress from being exposed to chaotic or irregular work settings and schedules (Pouliakas, 2017).

Changing workplace patterns and flexibility in work are encouraging more and more employees to moonlight. There is no legal framework that restricts employees from moonlighting however it depends on the organization or the employer to allow his employees for multiple jobs. Workers who are working from home are able to moonlight, taking on stints and even long-term projects with other companies. This phenomenon is pervasive in the consultancy and knowledge sectors, including IT/ITeS. There is no legal framework that permits dual employment but employment contracts that upheld this prohibition and eliminated people resulted in a greater

loss of skilled workers. Higher attrition is the outcome of workers being satisfied to quit the company for less flexibility or constraining work settings. This is a challenge for the organization to whether to outlaw moonlighting through stringent contracts and employee surveillance or to legalise it by declaring moonlighting it as "ethical" (Sahu & Dutta, 2023).

### **Favourable aspects of MoL**

As the working patterns are gradually changing it is beneficial for organization accept these changes. Employers can gain maximum from their employees when their employees are highly motivated and satisfied with their jobs or when they are willing to work more and more for their organizations.

This portion of the discussion highlights various reasons that MoL will be beneficial to organizations.

- Working a second job might give people the chance to enhance their knowledge outside their primary position. Through their side jobs or business endeavors, they might pick up useful information, viewpoints, and experiences. Employees who return to their core roles with their newly acquired abilities and insights can help the organisation.
- Multiple job holding can encourage an innovative culture within the company. When it comes to solving issues and making choices, employees who have a variety of professional expertise beyond their main position can offer new insights, inventive solutions, and fresh ideas. The innovation that results from this idea-cross-pollination could help the organisation expand.
- Working a second job can introduce people to new connections, acquaintances in the business world, and potential partnerships. Employees may offer the company significant external resources, collaborations, or business prospects by making connections with people in various businesses or sectors. This enlarged network has the potential to increase the organization's exposure and present new opportunities.
- Taking up side jobs might help individuals develop an entrepreneurial perspective. As a result, they may become more motivated, act proactively, and feel a sense of ownership over their work. Employees who engage in side projects may show a stronger readiness to take chances, think creatively, and exercise initiative. These traits can help the organisation be more flexible and entrepreneurial.
- Permitting moonlighting can help with these two factors. Employers who support their employees' objectives outside of the workplace show flexibility, trust, and commitment to their development both personally and professionally. This can enhance productivity, boost morale among staff members, and develop a sense of commitment to the company. Sixthly, companies that allow moonlighting may have a benefit in luring top talent. Candidates with a variety of interests and a willingness to take risks may be more likely to join a company that supports and encourages their extracurricular activities. As a result, the organisation may be able to recruit people with an array of abilities and expertise.

### **III. Conclusion**

The discussion about moonlighting should not revolve around whether it's beneficial or unfavourable to the organizations but the debate should be how to successfully embrace it. Well, it appears that neither workers nor the organizations appear to be entirely rational in this dispute. Employers must realize that disciplining or terminating staff would not resolve the problem. This move will only waste time, effort, and cost of the organization. It is preferable if employers develop strategies to properly handle moonlighting as opposed to outright prohibiting it. Employers must take an aggressive approach when handling employee side jobs. Employers' biggest concern is that moonlighting shouldn't affect their organization's functioning.

Organisations should adapt their policies to the evolving nature of the workplace. An employer should interrogate their employees if they do side jobs if yes instead of firing them they should proceed with asking questions such as: how are they able to manage two jobs or any specific issue they deal with while working side jobs? what is the reason for MoL? Accordingly, the employer should try to solve or minimize the reasons for MoL. However, the problem may be managed with stringent legal contracts that instruct employees to accept freelancing assignments that do not infringe on the company's information confidentially. Additionally, employees should get permission from their employer for side jobs removing the fear of being discovered.

Not much research is available to conclude whether MoL is beneficial for employees or organizations. There is a large gap when it comes to highlighting the consequences and antecedents.

### **References**

- [1]. Ara, K., & Akbar, A. (2016). A Study of Impact of Moonlighting Practices on Job Satisfaction of the University Teachers. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 38(1), 101-116. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1210332.pdf>
- [2]. Ashwini, A., Mirthula, G., & Preetha, S. (2017). Moonlighting Intentions of Middle Level Employees. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics of Selected IT Companies*, 213-223. Retrieved from <http://acadpubl.eu/jjsi/2017-114-7-ICPCIT-2017/articles/12/24.pdf>
- [3]. Azim, M. T. (2016). Corporate Social Responsibility and employee behavior: mediating role of organizational commitment. *Review of Business Management*, 18(60), 207-225. <https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v18i60.2319>

- [4]. Banerjee, S. (2012). Effect of Employee Moonlighting: A Challenging task for Manager and Organization. *International Journal of Management Research and Business Strategy*, 1(1), 95-100. Retrieved from <http://www.ijmrbs.com/currentissue.php>
- [5]. Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874-900. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063052796>
- [6]. George, A. S., & George, H. A. (2022). A Review of Moonlighting in the IT Sector And its Impact. *Partners Universal International Research Journal*, 1(3), 64-73. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7114049>
- [7]. George, J. K. (2022, October 16). Moonlighting: Why employees do it? Why companies oppose it? *The week*. Retrieved from <https://www.theweek.in/news/biz-tech/2022/10/16/moonlighting-reasons-benefits-laws-in-india-sacking-employers-upset-ideas-moonlight.html#:~:text=Companies%20worry%20that%20dividing%20time,diminished%20or%20inferior%20quality%20output.>
- [8]. Jamall, M. (1986). Moonlighting: Personal, Social, and Organizational Consequences. *Human Relations*, 39(11), 977-990. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/001872678603901102>
- [9]. Lambert, E., & Hogan, N. (2008). The Importance of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment in Shaping Turnover Intent: A Test of a Causal Model. *Criminal Justice Review*, 34(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016808324230>
- [10]. Mowday, R. T. (1988). Reflections on the Study and relevance of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 8(4), 387-401. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822\(99\)00006-6](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822(99)00006-6)
- [11]. Nunoo, J., Darfor, K. N., Koomson, I., & Arthur, A. (2017). Employment security and workers' moonlighting behavior in Ghana. *Journal of Economic Studies*, 45(1), 144-155. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JES-04-2016-0074>
- [12]. Organ, D. W., & Andreas Lingl. (1995). Personality, Satisfaction, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 135(3), 339-350. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1995.9713963>
- [13]. Pouliakas, K. (2017). Multiple job-holding: Career pathway or dire straits? *IZA World of Labor*, 356. <https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.356>
- [14]. Sabu, A. (2022, March). A STUDY ON ANTECEDENTS OF MOONLIGHTING ADOPTION AMONG PROFESSIONALS. THRIKKAKARA : Master Dissertation Mahatma Gandhi University.
- [15]. Sahu, A., & Dutta, D. (2023). *The Industry Dilemma: Allow Ethical Moonlighting Or Lose To Gig Working?* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://store.hbr.org/product/the-industry-dilemma-allow-ethical-moonlighting-or-lose-to-gig-working/IMB947>
- [16]. Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600-619. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940610690169>
- [17]. Seema, Choudhary, V., & Saini, G. (2021). Effect of Job Satisfaction on Moonlighting Intentions: Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 27(1), 100137. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2020.100137>
- [18]. Shaik, S., & Salunkhe, H. (2023). Antecedents of Organizational Learning leading to Employee Performance: A Moonlighting Mediated Model. *SSRN*. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4424443>
- [19]. Tetley, W. J. (2006). *STAFF RETENTION IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES: ELEMENTS OF A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY*. The World Bank.