

Cross-Industry and Demographic Analysis of Moonlighting Behavior

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Abstract:

'Moonlighting', is a term that is used to define the action of an employee who deems to seek or work in an additional or part-time job, Whilst currently employed by his primary employer. It is referred to as moonlighting; as the nature of the secondary job undertaken is usually post the actual job timings, after sunset. Even though, the act of moonlighting had increased predominantly in the recent past, there is enough evident data that the behavior has been prevalent in employees for a very long time. However, the exact time frame for the first event of moonlighting is unclear. Although the precise period is clouded, it has existed at least post industrialization in the modern world. The reasons for such behavior that many claim to be unethical cannot be determined or concluded by a single factor. As the reasons are usually independent to the person and are highly subjective in nature, the similarity or differences in the opinions of employees and employers about moonlighting might vary even within demographics.

1. Introduction

As the world has been slowly recovering from the setbacks in various social, economical, political and other aspects, the corporate world is no exception. Employees have been facing quite the trying times since the pandemic hit in the early 2020 as the world went into an indefinite hibernation. Industries has been shut down, educational institutions closed, businesses taking a hit, demand dropping to dangerous levels posing high threats to almost every sector, as the impact of the SARS- Corona virus was spreading at an incognizable rate. Although, with the scale of technological advancements the world has made, there was an indisputable access to high-speed internets in most of the metropolitan cities worldwide. This was one of the positives that led to a quick recovery of the corporate world and its functions. Most employers had gone with work from home scenarios and the workers were given compensation for staying at home during the pandemic that worked well for both the parties. Soon every industry adopted such remote working methodologies especially, the educational and the IT sector. The employees were put in the comfort of their homes, with better flexibility in their work hours for a similar range of pay. The need for going to an office environment got redundant. However, it was still an exaggerating statement to conclude that the world has returned to normalcy

2. Objective

The fundamental objective of this research is to understand the practice of moonlighting, its types and to distinguish the factors that give rise to such behavior in employees across industries. While the ancillary objective is to identify such factors and its predominance across demographics. In addition to the two fold objectives, suggestions are also to be made at the end of the research on the basis of previous literature, personal perspectives and pertinence of the statements made.

3. Literature Review

An article from WION states that Moonlighting is highly adopted by most employees, as they think it's a better use of their time and talents to the fullest. The jobs take up by the employees may or may not be in the similar field. However, the employers say otherwise. They claim that, moonlighting behavior may not a healthy approach and affects the employee's productivity as well as reduces their affinity towards the organization (Team, 2022).

There have been many claims in recent times by professionals especially from the IT sector, stating their opinions on moonlighting behavior, while few of them agreed that there needs to be a change and disruptions in the methods of work, a vast majority of the employers found that opting for other jobs while currently being employed with a primary

company is much closer to cheating and disloyal to the organization. Information Technology giant, Wipro's chairman, Mr. Rishad Premji has had similar claims in the recent past. The former director of Infosys, Mr. Mohandas Pai had mentioned that the reason for employees opting for secondary gigs, is keenly due to the low entry level compensations for freshers in the tech field. Pai had also estimated that the number of moonlighting employees share has recent to over 6-8% from the previous share of a mere 1-2%. On the other hand, Mr. Harpreet Singh Saluja, president of NITES, a Pune based IT union had mentioned that, "After office hours what the individual does is their own prerogative." (PTI, 2022).

In regard of the legality aspect, it is permissible for an employee to work more than one job without having to break the law. However, when an employee tends to work more than one job, with the secondary job in a very similar field with the first one, it raises concerns of the primary employers in terms of business information confidentiality (LiveMint, 2022).

Types of Moonlighting Behavior

Moonlighting behavior in employees can be divided into four major classifications with the amount of time spent on the secondary jobs as a key factor,

1. **Blue Moonlighting**: When the employee is dissatisfied with the job and seeks a part-time opportunity outside the primary work field.
2. **Quarter Moonlighting**: When the employee undertakes a secondary part-time job and dedicated approximately 25% of the time spent on the primary job.
3. **Half Moonlighting**: When the employee takes up a part-time job and spends at least 50% of the time on the secondary job that is usually spent on the primary.
4. **Full Moonlighting**: When the employee commits 100% of his time to the secondary job and is only a reactive member in his/her primary job (Kumaresh & Devi, 2020).

Reasons for Moonlighting

As prevalent as moonlighting is across industries, the motivation for employees to adopt such measures of dual job holding might not be the same. Few of the motivating factors have been mentioned further,

1. **Economic factors**
This happens when an employee is unable to work the required hours in their primary job, due to various constraints. This helps the individual achieve a particular amount of income that they desired, but could not make with their primary jobs. However, moonlighters usually earn lesser on their second job than on the primary job
2. **Non-economic factors**
These are factors that affect the decisions of a moonlighter, such as the worker wanting heterogeneity in the nature of work. When the employee tends to find the job monotonous and rather uninteresting, one tries to opt for other choices available, even if it is significantly a less paying job.
3. **Job-risk related factors**
When an employee fears the possibility of losing the job due to various circumstances. The uncertainty of the primary job leads to such risk-averse workers who seek out secondary jobs to secure their interests especially the economical aspects.
4. **Gender specific factors**
Although a lot of literatures have theorized that the presence of the female work force in the labor market is lesser in comparison to the male counterparts, the number of female workers moonlighting have been increasing over the years. There is enough evidence that demonstrates that the actual participation rates between men and women if children are incorporated in the equation. It suggests that when children are introduced, the moonlighting pattern takes a hike in men, but decreases with women correspondingly (Ahuja, 2020).

Impacts of Moonlighting

According to a previous study, Moonlighting tends to have a series of negative impacts on the organization as well as its culture. Its paves way to discrepancies such as Mental fatigue in employees that arise due to the stress of holding two parallel jobs. The research had also suggested that it might cause physical weariness in the employees. Other factors include, tiredness due to excess commuting, lack of sleep, poor attention span, all of which can negatively impact the organization’s efficiency and competence. However, it also claims that there was an upside to this moonlighting behavior of the employees. Few such pros are, better employee retention, meeting seasonal requirements and so on (Ahuja, 2020).

In a study conducted to analyze the moonlighting behavior in teachers, it was concluded that the ones who practiced moonlighting was relatively less satisfied with their primary employer and have also reported higher levels of on-the-job stress. It was also found that the same cadre of teachers were also less content with their salary. However, it was found that they had better attitude towards the organization’s administration. It had revealed that Male teachers tend to moonlight than their female counterparts and about 21% of them had also reported that they would still continue the same even if they had a significant increase intheir salary (Pearson, 1994).

On the contrary, Deborah Sussman in her research had claimed that it was usually women who tend to moonlight more than themen despite being only 45% of the workforce. Figure 1, depicts the graphical representation of the trend of moonlighting behavior based on gender over the years. It was 6% in women and 5% in men on an average out of the total workforce surveyed. In the 1997 Labor Force Survey in the United States, states that the reasons for dual job holding were usually to meet household expenses, about 18% of paid workers had mentioned that they took up second jobs because it was enjoyed more thantheir primary employment.

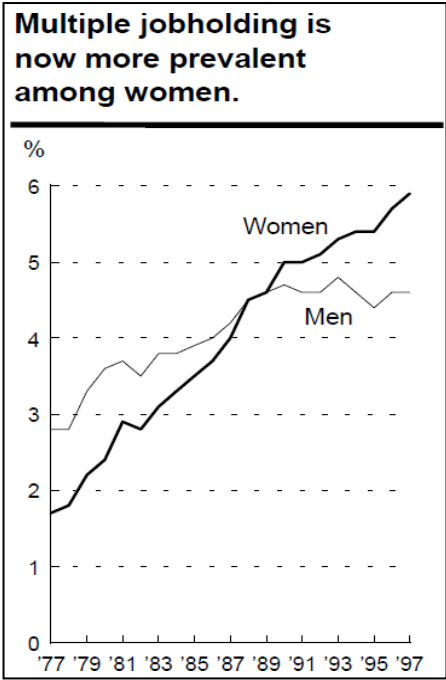


Figure 1: Moonlighting behaviour gender comparison

Multiple jobholding rates by industry, 1997		
	United States	Canada
	%	
All industries	6.1	4.6
Primary	4.9	5.2
Manufacturing	4.5	2.6
Construction	4.4	2.6
Transportation and storage	5.3	3.8
Communication	5.0	4.4
Utilities	5.8	4.0
Trade	5.4	4.5
Wholesale	5.3	3.8
Retail	5.4	4.8
Finance, insurance and real estate	5.9	3.1
Business services	5.7	3.4
Government services	8.7	4.8
Educational services	9.6	7.1
Health and social services	8.0	7.8

Table 1: Dual job holding rates in the US, 1997 (Sussman, 1998)

In Table 1, it clearly separates the moonlighting behavior of employees across various industries. It was evident from the 1997 LFS that workers in the educational sector had the highest share of the moonlighting workers in the labor force closely followed by, Governmental Services,Health care and Social Services (Sussman, 1998).

In an interview process involving over a dozen fact-checkers from glossy magazines, E Cohen had laid out the scenarios where the employee’s staying-moving conundrum was answered. Firstly, the research stated that employees

with a shorter tenure period who are currently employed in young organizations, may be motivated rather intrinsically than by any external sources. Hence, although while holding secondary jobs, they are more likely to stay with their primary employer. Secondly, employees in older organizations with higher tenure may be trying to create better opportunities outside the company with a stronger intent of leaving the primary employer for various reasons (Cohen, 2020).

Occupation	Primary Job	Secondary job
Managers & Administration	17.9%	6.94%
Professional	10.55	10.62%
Assoc. professional and technical	10.7%	21.92%
Clerical & Secretarial	9.7%	3.83%
Craft related	18.6%	18.09%
Personal and protective service	6.5%	18.33%
Sales	4.6%	3.32%
Plant and Machine operatives	14.7%	5.31%
Other	6..9%	11.6%

Table 2: Summary of Primary and Secondary Jobs (Panos, Pouliakas, & Zangelidis, 2012)

A study conducted on the moonlighting patterns and its impacts on the job mobility of employees, using the fifteen wave BHPS (British Household Panel Survey [1991- 2005]), states that multiple job holding is also one of the main reasons for job mobility. The table was partially extracted from the Panos, Pouliakas & Zangelidis research. It is clear that moonlighting behavior was observed more predominantly in employees working in the Crafts and other art industries followed by the employers in managerial and administration levels as their primary jobs, which is quite the irony (Panos, Pouliakas, & Zangelidis, 2012).

4. Conclusion

To draw a distinct conclusion from the secondary study, on the moonlighting behavior of employees across demographics would be close to impossible without enough evidence to back it up. Hence, this paper tries to conclude the study in a fair way possible with the limited resources in hand. It does not experiment on the behavioral statistics of the employees especially across various demographics as it is highly subjective innature.

As different arguments have been placed on behalf of various corporate experts and leaders, there still exists an ethical conundrum on the concept of 'Moonlighting.' Claims have been made that it improves skill sets and is deemed to be more productive for the employee in terms of using the leisure time available as well as an added advantage in an economical aspect. It was found that a majority of moonlighters from the working population were found to be women in the case of the 1997 USA's Labor Force Survey. The numbers tend to change when there is a child involved in the

female relationship where mother hood has led to a decrease in moonlight practices due to increased maternal responsibilities within the household. It was quite the opposite for the male counterpart. From the same survey, it was also found that the teaching as well as the government sectors had the highest share of dual job holding employees in the United States labor force on record. The discussion on the pros and cons of 'Moonlighting' behavior will last for decades to come. There however seems to be a slow shift in the balance as the scales have started to shift slowly towards the favor of the employee.

5. Suggestions

As the study reviewed literatures from the past work of researchers, it has revealed a fact that the practice of 'Moonlighting' has been prevalent for long periods of time and has only been increasing steadily over the period of time. Owing to the gig economy that the world is currently stepping into, where free lancing and short-term contracts are often preferred by both employees and the managers for various reasons of their own. The need of the hour is constantly changing and the employers must be more flexible in their employee relationship management as the company should try to understand the needs of the employee, rather than blatantly focusing on the organization's goals. This will in turn instill a sense of trust and loyalty towards the organization. However, it is suggested that major corporates that employ relatively large of employees, pay heed to the employee's interests and encourage taking up secondary jobs as it helps the employee achieve their economic necessities as well as helping them gain an external experience. Nevertheless, the employers must also ensure that he secondary job practices does not interfere with their primary jobs and that it does not tamper with the confidentiality and credibility of the primary organization. With all these in mind the modern economy surely demands ramifications in the conventional methods of employability, contracts laid, employee relations and retention policies and so on. This might be a huge challenge for the HR managers and policy makers in any industry.

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