

Employee moonlighting in the tech industry: Investigating dual job practices among IT professionals

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Abstract

This study delves into the various factors influencing side projects within the Information Technology (IT) industry. With the rapid evolution and expansion of the IT sector, professionals often engage in side projects alongside their primary roles. Understanding these influencing factors can shed light on the motivations, challenges, and benefits associated with IT side projects. Through a comprehensive analysis, this research aims to provide insights that can aid IT professionals, employers, and policymakers in fostering a conducive environment

Keywords: Information Technology (IT) Industry; Motivations; Challenges; Benefits; Professional Development; IT Professionals, Industry Growth

1. Introduction

Employee moonlighting, also known as double jobbing, involves individuals taking on part-time work or running a side business alongside their primary employment to supplement their income. This practice is often carried out without informing the employer. Research reveals various types of moonlighting, including Blue Moonlighting, where employees, dissatisfied with their current benefits, seek additional income through part-time work despite lacking necessary skills. (Ritu Tiwari, 2014) Quarter Moonlighting occurs when employees, facing increased financial responsibilities due to family needs, take on a second job to meet their expenses. Half Moonlighting involves individuals dedicating half of their leisure time to earning extra money, often aiming to accumulate savings or live luxuriously. Full Moonlighting describes a situation where professionals, feeling unfulfilled or underpaid, start their own businesses while maintaining their regular jobs, impacting both their social and financial status. This type of moonlighting entails managing two full-time roles simultaneously. (Source: Akanksha Bajpai, Nidhi Nirwan 2023) The IT industry has witnessed a shift towards greater flexibility, resulting in shorter job durations, heightened unemployment risks, and diminished loyalty between employees and employers. In response, individuals are increasingly seeking supplementary sources of income to secure stability in employment and enhance their earnings. With the rapid advancements in technology and the necessity for continual skill development, there's a growing emphasis on occupational mobility in today's labor markets. Consequently, a significant portion of the workforce has resorted to moonlighting—holding multiple jobs—to proactively cope with these challenges. needs (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Moonlighting offers not only financial relief but also ensures uninterrupted periods of employment and opportunities for career advancement by acquiring specialized skills. As the Indian IT market adapts to these changes, moonlighting has become more prevalent. Individuals engage in side gigs alongside their primary employment to augment their income, driven either by financial necessity or the desire for extra earnings. This practice involves taking on additional work outside regular business

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hours, which could include full-time jobs, part-time contracts, or freelancing opportunities. (Williams et al., 2020) However, stagnant wages and rising living costs have led to a significant portion of the workforce struggling to make ends meet, prompting the uptake of side jobs. (Davis & Thompson, 2019). Understanding the interplay between job mobility, moonlighting, and occupational experience is crucial for shaping future policies in the IT sector and comprehending income growth and career progression dynamics. Nevertheless, the practice of moonlighting can adversely affect employees' productivity, work-life balance, and health. Consequently, organizations must evolve their human resource strategies to accommodate this changing work culture and attract top talent. needs (Smith & Johnson, 2018). While some may resist change, embracing contemporary HR practices is essential for organizational survival. While one job may suffice for most individuals, some find themselves compelled to take on additional employment to meet their financial obligations. Moonlighting encompasses a spectrum, from blue moonlighting to full moonlighting, each with its implications for both employees and workplaces. Understanding this progression and its impact on organizations is imperative for effectively managing the modern workforce. (Williams et al., 2020)

Moonlighting, as observed, stems from various causes, including financial motivations. Individuals may resort to taking on additional employment due to inadequate earnings from their primary job caused by factors such as working hour laws, short-term employment contracts, or absence of minimum wage regulations. Financial hardships faced by individuals or their households, where primary earnings fall short of meeting target incomes, may exacerbate the need for supplemental income. (Martin & White, 2021).

Additionally, employees concerned about job loss may seek a second job to hedge against this risk and expand their options in the labor market. Rather than saving for a financial safety net, some individuals opt for a second job to alleviate immediate financial strains (Davis & Thompson, 2019). IT professionals may pursue secondary employment to acquire new skills, facilitating transitions into different career paths. (Martin & White, 2021). This concept, known as varied employment motive, emphasizes investment and career development over mere financial gain.

Furthermore, the notion of hour restrictions suggests a negative correlation between primary job earnings and the desire for additional work. However, individuals may engage in moonlighting for reasons beyond financial constraints, such as pursuing intrinsic fulfillment or exploring entrepreneurial ventures. While initial studies supported the idea of hour constraints driving moonlighting, (Davis & Thompson, 2019). it fails to account for individuals' ability to seek new primary employment over time, challenging the sole reliance on time-related motivations. (Pouliakas, Konstantinos, 2017). Moreover, there's little evidence to support the idea of moonlighting as a hedge against job insecurity. The assumption that employees moonlight solely due to time constraints overlooks the multifaceted nature of their motivations. Therefore, understanding moonlighting requires considering various factors beyond mere hours worked or income earned in primary employment. (Dr. A.Shaji George, 2022)

2. Literature review

Adelugba et al. (2022) highlighted a connection between moonlighting and job retention, emphasizing the need for human resource management policies that cater to employees' needs. Such policies can reinforce employees' commitment to their primary roles, thereby reducing moonlighting, especially among college and medical staff. Md Sabron & Abu Hassim (2018) identified both external and internal environmental factors influencing moonlighting. External factors like economy, politics, regulations, technology, geography, and climatic conditions, along with internal factors such as financial stability and organizational culture, play a role. However, individual behavioral factors were found to be less significant in influencing moonlighting decisions. Ashwini et al. (2017) explored motivations for moonlighting in the IT sector. They found that many individuals take up additional jobs primarily to address financial challenges or to meet family financial responsibilities. The decision to moonlight is often influenced by factors like total work hours, financial needs, and non-financial priorities. Demographic variables, such as marital status and work experience, also impact moonlighting intentions. Ara & Akbar (2016) determined that moonlighting significantly affects employees' job satisfaction. Employees reported higher job satisfaction when provided with a supportive environment that offers meaningful job roles, challenges, opportunities for growth, and feedback. Meeting salary and family needs also contributes to job satisfaction. Arora (2013) emphasized the importance for companies to establish clear policies regarding moonlighting. Companies should meticulously document their reasons for approving or denying moonlighting requests to ensure fairness. Approximately 40% of employees take up second jobs to fulfill financial obligations. The company's decision regarding moonlighting requests can influence employee behavior, absenteeism, performance, and turnover in their primary job. Research suggests that financial motivations are a primary driver for moonlighting among IT workers. With the rising cost of living and the competitive nature of the tech industry, many IT professionals seek additional income opportunities to meet their financial needs (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Moonlighting can also be a means for IT professionals to enhance their skills, gain diverse experiences, and broaden their professional network. Engaging in side projects or freelance work allows them to work on different technologies and methodologies,

contributing to their professional development (Williams et al., 2020). While moonlighting can offer financial benefits and skill enhancement opportunities, it can also lead to challenges related to work-life balance and job satisfaction. Balancing multiple jobs can be demanding and stressful, potentially leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction in the primary role (Martin & White, 2021). Several studies have found that moonlighting can have a positive impact on IT professionals' skills and performance in their primary job. Engaging in diverse projects outside of their regular job responsibilities can lead to skill transfer, improved problem-solving abilities, and increased creativity in the primary workplace (Davis & Thompson, 2019).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Problem statement

The IT industry's workforce is increasingly engaging in moonlighting, balancing secondary jobs with primary employment. While offering extra income and skill growth, moonlighting raises concerns about its impact on job performance and work-life balance. Despite its prevalence, there's limited research on factors driving this trend and its implications. This study aims to explore motivations, consequences, and challenges of moonlighting among IT professionals to offer insights for better management.

3.2. Objective of the study

- To identify and analyse the primary factors influencing employees to engage in moonlighting activities within the IT industry.
- To analyse impact of demographic variable on employees to engage in moonlighting activities within the IT industry.

3.3. Research Design

Descriptive research design has been used, which includes various types of fact finding and survey among IT professionals

3.4. Sampling Procedure

Non-probability convenience sampling technique has been used with 118 sample size of IT professionals

4. Data analysis and interpretation

Table 1 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.742	29

4.1. Cronbach's Alpha Value

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.742. The reliability test results suggest that the research instrument used in the study has a reasonably good level of internal consistency. This indicates that the items are measuring the intended constructs in a consistent manner. However, it's worth noting that while the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.742 is generally acceptable, striving for higher reliability (closer to 1.0) is always desirable to enhance the robustness of the research findings.

4.2. Kruskal Wallis Test**Table 2** Mann-Whitney

	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
P1- Are you Satisfied with your Primary job	351.500	541.500	-4.560	0.000
P2- do you feel your primary employment meets your financial needs	0.000	190.000	-7.121	0.000
P3- I perceive Sense of security at my primary employment	142.500	332.500	-6.928	0.000
P4-secondary job has positively affected my skills and abilities in my primary job	152.000	342.000	-6.149	0.000
P5- secondary job impacted my work-life balance in my primary employment	665.000	855.000	-2.151	0.031
P6-secondary job affected my overall performance in my primary job	689.000	879.000	-2.144	0.032
S1- My skills and abilities have positive impact on my secondary job	529.000	719.000	-4.164	0.000
S2- I feel that my secondary employer is aware about my secondary job activities	749.500	5699.500	-1.500	0.133
S3- I feel that I manage demand from primary and secondary job]	529.000	719.000	-4.164	0.000
S4- I had noticeable change in my productivity due to my secondary job]	705.500	895.500	-1.879	0.060
F1- I am dissatisfied with my current job profile and appraisal.	481.500	671.500	-3.466	0.001
F2- I feel frustrated due to delays in receiving promotions.	725.500	915.500	-1.617	0.106
F3- I feel motivated to excel in my job.	789.000	5739.000	-1.159	0.247
F4- I am passionate about the work I do.	619.500	809.500	-2.453	0.014
F5-I am eager to learn new skills to enhance my professional growth.	330.000	520.000	-4.743	0.000
F6- I believe there are sufficient opportunities for advancement in my organization.	853.500	1043.500	-0.687	0.492
F7- Factors unrelated to work significantly impact my job satisfaction.	790.500	5740.500	-1.152	0.250
F8- I feel that my compensation is lower than what I deserve.	546.500	736.500	-3.117	0.002
F9- I struggle with financial debts that affect my job satisfaction.	810.500	5760.500	-1.029	0.303
F10 - I engage in luxury spending that affects my financial situation.	607.500	5557.500	-2.642	0.008
F11- Meeting the educational needs of my children affects my financial stability.	750.500	5700.500	-1.522	0.128
F12- Personal expenses outside of basic necessities impact my financial well-being.	820.500	5770.500	-0.909	0.363

Grouping Variable: Gender

4.3. Job Satisfaction and Primary Employment

P1 (Primary job satisfaction) The difference in satisfaction levels between the two groups is significant ($Z = -4.560$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that there's a notable difference in job satisfaction between the two genders. P2 (Financial needs met by primary employment) Both groups show a significant difference in feeling their primary employment meets their financial needs ($Z = -7.121$, $p = 0.000$). This implies financial concerns might be pronounced in one group compared to the other. P3 (Sense of security in primary employment) There's a significant difference between the groups in perceiving job security ($Z = -6.928$, $p = 0.000$). One gender feels more secure in their primary job compared to the other. P4 (Secondary job benefits primary job skills) A significant difference exists in the perception of how a secondary job positively impacts primary job skills ($Z = -6.149$, $p = 0.000$).

4.4. Work-Life Balance and Secondary Employment

P5 (Work-life balance impact by secondary job) A significant difference exists in how secondary jobs impact work-life balance in the primary employment ($Z = -2.151$, $p = 0.031$). P6 (Overall performance affected by secondary job) The difference is significant regarding the impact of secondary jobs on overall performance in the primary job ($Z = -2.144$, $p = 0.032$).

4.5. Secondary Employment

S1 (Skills and abilities impact secondary job) There's a significant difference in the perception that skills and abilities positively impact the secondary job ($Z = -4.164$, $p = 0.000$). S2 (Secondary employer awareness) While there seems to be a difference, it is not statistically significant ($Z = -1.500$, $p = 0.133$). S3 (Managing demands from primary and secondary jobs) Significant differences exist in managing demands from both jobs ($Z = -4.164$, $p = 0.000$). S4 (Productivity change due to secondary job) The difference is not statistically significant but approaches significance ($Z = -1.879$, $p = 0.060$).

4.6. Job Satisfaction Factors

F1 to F12 Many factors like job profile dissatisfaction, frustration due to promotions, eagerness to learn, and feeling under-compensated show significant differences between the groups. Some factors like motivation to excel, factors unrelated to work impacting satisfaction, and financial struggles do not show significant differences.

4.7. Financial Factors

F8 (Compensation dissatisfaction) A significant difference exists in feeling under-compensated ($Z = -3.117$, $p = 0.002$). F10 (Luxury spending impact on financial situation): A significant difference is observed in luxury spending affecting financial situation ($Z = -2.642$, $p = 0.008$).

Table 3 Kruskal-Wallis

	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
P1- Are you Satisfied with your Primary job	74.297	3	0.000
P2- do you feel your primary employment meets your financial needs	96.262	3	0.000
P3- I perceive Sense of security at my primary employment	49.038	3	0.000
P4-secondary job has positively affected my skills and abilities in my primary job	38.595	3	0.000
P5- secondary job impacted my work-life balance in my primary employment	72.196	3	0.000
P6-secondary job affected my overall performance in my primary job	85.871	3	0.000
S1- My skills and abilities have positive impact on my secondary job	20.250	3	0.000
S2- I feel that my secondary employer is aware about my secondary job activities	10.322	3	0.016
S3- I feel that I manage demand from primary and secondary job]	20.250	3	0.000
S4- I had noticeable change in my productivity due to my secondary job]	44.777	3	0.000

F1- I am dissatisfied with my current job profile and appraisal.	17.541	3	0.001
F2- I feel frustrated due to delays in receiving promotions.	7.053	3	0.070
F3- I feel motivated to excel in my job.	13.088	3	0.004
F4- I am passionate about the work I do.	34.351	3	0.000
F5- I am eager to learn new skills to enhance my professional growth.	59.875	3	0.000
F6- I believe there are sufficient opportunities for advancement in my organization.	27.333	3	0.000
F7- Factors unrelated to work significantly impact my job satisfaction.	49.943	3	0.000
F8- I feel that my compensation is lower than what I deserve.	22.112	3	0.000
F9- I struggle with financial debts that affect my job satisfaction.	54.068	3	0.000
F10 - I engage in luxury spending that affects my financial situation.	81.065	3	0.000
F11- Meeting the educational needs of my children affects my financial stability.	34.356	3	0.000
F12- Personal expenses outside of basic necessities impact my financial well-being.	19.784	3	0.000

Kruskal Wallis Test; Grouping Variable: Annual Personal Income

4.8. Job Satisfaction and Primary Employment

P1 (Primary job satisfaction) There is a significant difference in job satisfaction across the four groups ($H = 74.297$, $p = 0.000$). P2 (Financial needs met by primary employment) A significant difference exists across the groups regarding the perception of primary employment meeting financial needs ($H = 96.262$, $p = 0.000$). P3 (Sense of security in primary employment) There's a significant difference in perceived job security across the four groups ($H = 49.038$, $p = 0.000$). P4 (Secondary job benefits primary job skills) Significant differences are observed in the perception of secondary jobs positively affecting primary job skills ($H = 38.595$, $p = 0.000$).

4.9. Work-Life Balance and Secondary Employment

P5 (Work-life balance impact by secondary job) Significant differences are observed in how secondary jobs impact work-life balance in the primary employment across the groups ($H = 72.196$, $p = 0.000$). P6 (Overall performance affected by secondary job) There's a significant difference in how secondary jobs affect overall performance in the primary job across the groups ($H = 85.871$, $p = 0.000$).

4.10. Secondary Employment

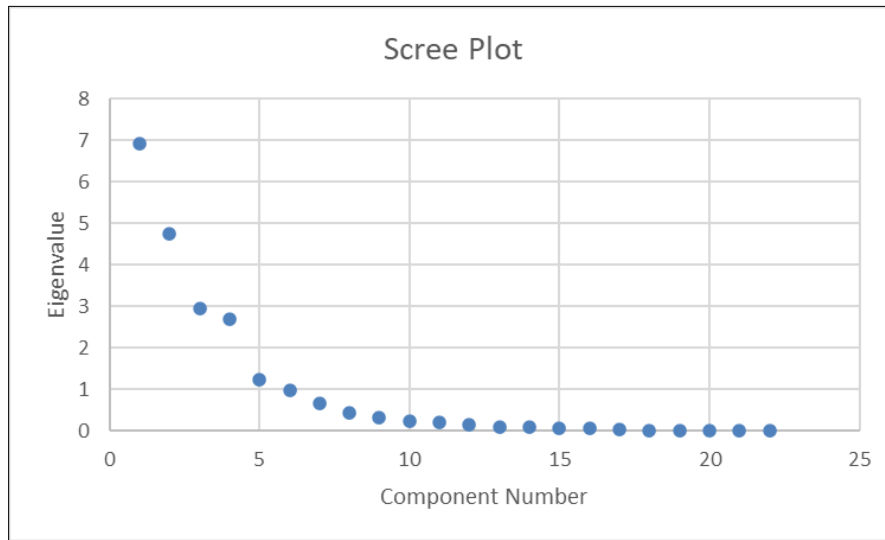
S1 (Skills and abilities impact secondary job) There are significant differences in the perception of skills and abilities positively impacting secondary jobs ($H = 20.250$, $p = 0.000$). S2 (Secondary employer awareness) There's a significant difference in the perception of secondary employers being aware of secondary job activities ($H = 10.322$, $p = 0.016$). S3 (Managing demands from primary and secondary jobs) Significant differences are observed in managing demands from both jobs across the groups ($H = 20.250$, $p = 0.000$). S4 (Productivity change due to secondary job): There's a significant difference in noticeable productivity changes due to secondary jobs ($H = 44.777$, $p = 0.000$).

4.11. Job Satisfaction Factors

F1 to F12: Many factors like job profile dissatisfaction, motivation to excel, passion for work, eagerness to learn, compensation satisfaction, financial struggles, luxury spending, and financial impacts of personal and educational needs show significant differences between the groups. Some factors like promotion delays and factors unrelated to work impacting satisfaction show differences but are not always statistically significant across all groups.

Table 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.740
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2884.798
	Df	66
	Sig.	0.000

**Figure 1** Scree Plot**Table 5** Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
P1- Are you Satisfied with your Primary job		0.092	
P2- do you feel your primary employment meets your financial needs		0.601	
P3- I perceive Sense of security at my primary employment	0.528		
P4-secondary job has positively affected my skills and abilities in my primary job		0.630	
P5- secondary job impacted my work-life balance in my primary employment	0.686		
P6-secondary job affected my overall performance in my primary job	0.785		
S1- My skills and abilities have positive impact on my secondary job	0.558		
S2- I feel that my secondary employer is aware about my secondary job activities		0.611	
S3- I feel that I manage demand from primary and secondary job]			0.733
S4- I had noticeable change in my productivity due to my secondary job]	0.686		
F1- I am dissatisfied with my current job profile and appraisal.		0.830	
F2- I feel frustrated due to delays in receiving promotions.		0.948	
F3- I feel motivated to excel in my job.			0.776

F4- I am passionate about the work I do.	0.289		
F5- I am eager to learn new skills to enhance my professional growth.			0.192
F6- I believe there are sufficient opportunities for advancement in my organization.	0.413		
F7- Factors unrelated to work significantly impact my job satisfaction.			0.613
F8- I feel that my compensation is lower than what I deserve.			0.627
F9- I struggle with financial debts that affect my job satisfaction.	0.722		
F10 - I engage in luxury spending that affects my financial situation.	0.808		
F11- Meeting the educational needs of my children affects my financial stability.			0.639
F12- Personal expenses outside of basic necessities impact my financial well-being.			0.859

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 6 Component Transformation Matrix

Component Transformation Matrix			
Component	1	2	3
1	0.794	-0.177	0.581
2	-0.055	0.931	0.360
3	0.605	0.318	-0.730

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

- Component 1: Job Satisfaction and Financial Well-being
- Component 2: Impact of Secondary Job on Primary Job and Skills
- Component 3: Personal Passion, Learning, and Development

These components provide a structured understanding of the underlying factors influencing job satisfaction, financial well-being, the impact of secondary employment, and personal development among respondents.

5. Conclusion

- **Gender Differences:** The data suggests significant differences between genders across various job satisfaction, financial well-being, and secondary job impact variables. These differences highlight disparities in experiences and perceptions related to primary and secondary employment between different gender groups.
- **Primary and Secondary Job Impacts:** The secondary job appears to have a substantial impact on primary job skills, work-life balance, and overall performance. This indicates the importance of considering secondary employment effects when evaluating primary job satisfaction and performance.
- **Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction and Financial Well-being:** Job satisfaction and financial well-being are influenced by various factors such as compensation, financial struggles, personal expenses, and luxury spending. These factors are critical in understanding overall job satisfaction and financial stability among individuals.
- **Personal Passion and Development:** Personal passion, motivation, and eagerness to learn are crucial aspects influencing job satisfaction and personal development. Opportunities for advancement and belief in one's abilities play a significant role in shaping these perceptions and experiences.

Compliance with ethical standards

Statement of Ethical Approval

The research was conducted in accordance with academic ethical standards. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires from professionals working in various industrial units in Surat. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no personal or sensitive information was collected. As the study does not involve clinical or sensitive human data, formal approval from an ethics committee was not required.

Statement of Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the research, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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