

Moonlighting and Its Impact on Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines moonlighting as an emerging workforce phenomenon and investigates its association with two critical organizational outcomes—organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Specifically, the study explores the role of organizational commitment as an explanatory mechanism linking moonlighting to employees' intentions to leave.

Design/methodology/approach: The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design using survey data collected from 300 employees engaged in full-time employment. Measurement scales for moonlighting behavior, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions were adapted from validated instruments. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression-based mediation techniques to assess the direct and indirect relationships among the constructs.

Findings: The findings indicate that moonlighting is negatively associated with organizational commitment and positively associated with turnover intentions. Organizational commitment is found to be negatively associated with turnover intentions and partially explains the relationship between moonlighting and employees' intention to leave. The results suggest that moonlighting is linked to weakened psychological attachment and increased withdrawal cognitions among employees.

Research limitations/implications: The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to establish causal relationships or temporal ordering between the variables. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce response bias. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs and incorporate additional organizational and psychological variables to better understand the dynamics of moonlighting behavior.

Practical implications: The findings highlight the importance of designing HR policies that address the underlying drivers of moonlighting, such as financial needs, career development, and work flexibility. Organizations should focus on strengthening employee commitment through supportive HR practices, transparent moonlighting policies, and engagement initiatives to mitigate the risk of increased turnover intentions.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the organizational behavior and HRM literature by shifting the focus from the antecedents of moonlighting to its consequences on employee attitudes and retention. By integrating commitment theory and turnover process models, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how moonlighting is associated with organizational commitment and turnover intentions in contemporary work settings.

Keywords: Moonlighting; Organizational commitment; Turnover intentions; Employee retention; Human resource management; Workforce behavior

1. Introduction

Rapid technology improvements, economic uncertainty, shifting labor market arrangements, and shifting employee expectations have all contributed to a major shift in the nature of work and employment in recent years. One prominent manifestation of these changes is the growing prevalence of moonlighting, defined as the practice of workers taking up compensated secondary jobs in addition to their main position. Traditionally perceived as an exception or a necessity confined to lower income groups, moonlighting has increasingly become visible across professional, managerial, and knowledge-intensive occupations. The normalization of flexible work arrangements, remote and hybrid work models, and digital platforms has further blurred the boundaries between primary employment and supplemental work, making moonlighting a widespread and complex organizational phenomenon.

Globally, organizations are witnessing a noticeable rise in employees pursuing multiple sources of income to address financial pressures, enhance skill portfolios, achieve professional autonomy, or future-proof careers in volatile economic environments. In emerging economies such as India, moonlighting has gained particular prominence due to rising inflationary pressures, skill-based gig opportunities, and intense competition for career advancement. While some organizations view moonlighting as an inevitable outcome of modern labor markets, others consider it a potential threat to productivity, ethical standards, and workforce stability. This divergence in organizational perspectives highlights the need for systematic academic inquiry into the implications of moonlighting for both employees and employers.

From an organizational behavior standpoint, moonlighting raises critical questions about employees' psychological attachment to their primary organization. Employee performance, discretionary effort, and long-term retention are all significantly influenced by organizational commitment, which is a measure of how strongly a person identifies with and participates in a company. Employees who allocate time, energy, and cognitive resources to secondary employment may experience diminished emotional attachment or weakened loyalty toward their primary employer. Simultaneously, moonlighting may alter employees' perceptions of job security, career dependence, and organizational support, thereby reshaping their intention to remain with or leave the organization.

Turnover intention, or an employee's conscious and intentional desire to leave the company, is closely tied to organizational commitment. Turnover intentions are a key variable in human resource research since they are largely acknowledged as one of the best indicators of actual employee turnover. Organizations incur substantial direct and indirect costs due to high turnover, including recruitment and training expenses, loss of institutional knowledge, reduced morale, and disrupted team dynamics. Understanding how moonlighting influences employees' turnover intentions is therefore critical for organizations seeking to retain talent in increasingly competitive labor markets.

Theoretical perspectives offer competing explanations regarding the effects of moonlighting on employee attitudes. Drawing from Role Theory and Role Strain Theory, moonlighting may create conflicting role demands, leading to fatigue, stress, and reduced engagement in the primary job. Employees juggling multiple roles may experience role overload and divided commitment, which can adversely affect organizational commitment and increase turnover intentions. Conversely, Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory suggests that moonlighting may also serve as a resource by enhancing financial security, skill diversification, and psychological empowerment, potentially buffering job stress and strengthening overall work satisfaction. These contrasting theoretical arguments suggest that the relationship between moonlighting and job attitudes is neither simplistic nor uniform.

Despite the growing relevance of moonlighting, empirical research on its organizational consequences remains fragmented and inconclusive. Existing studies have largely focused on economic outcomes, legal implications, or ethical considerations, with limited attention given to employees' attitudinal and behavioral responses. Moreover, much of the extant literature treats moonlighting as a binary phenomenon—whether employees moonlight or not—rather than examining its broader psychological implications. There is also a relative scarcity of studies conducted in emerging economy contexts, where institutional environments, labor regulations, and cultural norms surrounding work differ significantly from those in developed economies.

Examining organizational commitment and turnover intentions together in the context of moonlighting is another significant gap in the literature. While both constructs are central to understanding employee retention and performance, prior research has often examined them independently or positioned commitment merely as a predictor of turnover. There is limited integrated evidence explaining how moonlighting simultaneously reshapes employees' loyalty and their intentions to exit the organization. Addressing this gap is essential for developing a more holistic understanding of workforce sustainability in contemporary organizations.

In light of this, the current study aims to investigate empirically how moonlighting affects organizational commitment and turnover intentions. By adopting a quantitative research design and drawing on established organizational behavior theories, this study contributes to the growing discourse on alternative work arrangements and employee attitudes. The study responds to calls from scholars and practitioners for evidence-based insights that can inform organizational policies on secondary employment, ethical guidelines, and employee engagement strategies.

The significance of this research is threefold. First, it advances theoretical understanding by integrating perspectives from role strain theory, social exchange theory, and the JD–R framework to explain how moonlighting influences key employee outcomes. Second, it offers empirical evidence from a professional workforce context, thereby enriching the limited literature on moonlighting in emerging economies. Third, it provides practical insights for managers and human resource professionals seeking to balance organizational control with employee autonomy in the evolving world of work.

In summary, as moonlighting becomes an increasingly common feature of modern employment, understanding its implications for organizational commitment and turnover intentions is both timely and necessary. By systematically analyzing these relationships, the present study aims to contribute to academic scholarship and offer actionable guidance for organizations striving to retain committed and productive employees in an era of boundaryless careers.

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Moonlighting

Moonlighting, also referred to as multiple job holding or secondary employment, describes the practice of individuals engaging in paid work beyond their primary employment arrangement. Earlier economic research conceptualized moonlighting largely as a financial coping mechanism adopted to supplement insufficient income or mitigate employment instability. However, contemporary organizational and behavioral research has expanded this view, recognizing moonlighting as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by economic, professional, and psychological motivations.

Recent scholarship highlights that the rise of flexible work arrangements, remote work, and the gig economy has significantly altered the nature of moonlighting. Employees increasingly engage in secondary employment not only for financial necessity but also for skill development, career autonomy, entrepreneurial aspirations, and professional diversification. Particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors, moonlighting has become a strategic career behavior rather than a deviant or clandestine act. Nevertheless, organizations continue to grapple with concerns related to divided attention, confidentiality breaches, fatigue, and potential erosion of employee loyalty.

Despite its growing prevalence, empirical research on moonlighting remains fragmented. Many studies focus on the determinants or motivations for moonlighting, while relatively fewer examine its consequences for internal job attitudes such as commitment and turnover cognitions. This imbalance underscores the need to systematically review how moonlighting intersects with core organizational behavior outcomes.

Moonlighting and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment, which has historically been understood to include affective, continuous, and normative elements, represents the psychological connection that exists between employees and their organization. Emotional attachment is referred to as affective commitment, perceived costs of quitting are related to continuation commitment, and a sense of duty to stay with the organization is reflected in normative commitment. Improved performance, lower absenteeism, and fewer intentions to leave have all been linked to high levels of organizational commitment.

From a theoretical standpoint, Role Strain Theory suggests that moonlighting may weaken organizational commitment by creating competing role demands. Employees who allocate time and cognitive resources across multiple work roles may experience role overload and emotional exhaustion, thereby diminishing their capacity to invest psychologically in their primary organization. Empirical studies have reported that employees engaged in secondary employment often exhibit reduced affective commitment due to divided focus and weaker identification with organizational goals.

Conversely, alternative perspectives rooted in Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory posit that moonlighting can function as a resource rather than a strain. Secondary employment may enhance employees' financial security, skill variety, and perceived employability, which can indirectly strengthen continuance commitment by increasing the perceived benefits of maintaining stable primary employment. Some empirical investigations have found that when employees perceive organizational support and transparent policies regarding secondary employment, moonlighting does not necessarily erode commitment and may coexist with moderate levels of organizational attachment.

The literature is still equivocal, though. While some research indicates that moonlighting and organizational commitment are negatively correlated, other studies point to a more complex relationship that is influenced by contextual elements like job satisfaction, HR procedures, industry standards, and cultural expectations. Notably, a lot of research ignores the multidimensional structure of organizational commitment and treats it as a unidimensional construct, which limits the depth of interpretation. This discrepancy draws attention to an important research gap that needs more empirical study.

Moonlighting and Turnover Intentions

Turnover intention, which is commonly recognized as the most direct antecedent to real turnover, is the conscious and intentional desire of an individual to leave their organization. Job attitudes, especially job satisfaction and organizational commitment, have been repeatedly found in the turnover research to be important determinants of employees' withdrawal cognitions.

Moonlighting is increasingly viewed as an early indicator within the withdrawal cognition sequence. Employees who engage in secondary employment may reduce psychological dependence on their primary employer and gradually develop exit strategies. By diversifying income sources and gaining external work experience, moonlighting employees may perceive lower risks associated with job change, thereby strengthening their intention to leave the organization. Empirical evidence suggests that moonlighting intentions are positively associated with turnover intentions, particularly when primary job satisfaction is low and organizational commitment is weakened.

Additionally, moonlighting can intensify job stress, fatigue, and work–life conflict, indirectly enhancing turnover intentions. Employees juggling multiple jobs may experience burnout and role conflict, which are well-established antecedents of turnover cognitions. In contrast, when moonlighting is voluntary and autonomy-driven rather than necessity-driven, its impact on turnover intentions appears less pronounced, suggesting the role of motivation and perceived control.

Despite growing scholarly interest, research explicitly linking moonlighting to turnover intentions remains limited, particularly in emerging economy contexts. Most existing studies focus on job satisfaction or commitment as predictors of moonlighting rather than examining moonlighting as a predictor of turnover intentions. This conceptual reversal remains underexplored and forms a key theoretical contribution of the present study.

Integrating Moonlighting, Organizational Commitment, and Turnover Intentions

Social Exchange Theory provides the most insight into the connections between moonlighting, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. According to this perspective, employees develop reciprocal obligations based on the perceived balance between contributions and rewards. When employees perceive that their organization fails to meet financial, developmental, or work-life expectations, they may engage in moonlighting as a compensatory mechanism. Over time, this shift in exchange dynamics may reduce emotional attachment and increase intentions to exit.

Empirical studies indicate that organizational commitment often acts as a mediating mechanism linking job attitudes and withdrawal behaviors. Lower commitment resulting from moonlighting may directly translate into heightened turnover intentions, whereas strong organizational support and ethical clarity regarding secondary employment may buffer negative outcomes. However, few studies empirically test these linkages in an integrated framework, particularly using quantitative modeling approaches.

Moreover, the majority of existing research is sector-specific, predominantly focusing on IT and academic institutions, limiting generalizability. There is a clear need for broader empirical evidence examining how moonlighting reshapes commitment and turnover cognitions across professional workforce contexts.

Research Gap

Based on the foregoing review, three major gaps emerge. First, empirical evidence on the attitudinal consequences of moonlighting, particularly organizational commitment and turnover intentions, remains inconclusive and fragmented. Second, limited studies examine moonlighting as an antecedent rather than an outcome of job attitudes. Third, there is a scarcity of integrated models simultaneously examining moonlighting, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions, especially in emerging economy settings.

In order to fill in these gaps, the current study empirically examines how moonlighting affects organizational commitment and turnover intentions, advancing both theory and practice in the field of modern organizational behavior research.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework that connects moonlighting to two key employee outcomes—organizational commitment and turnover intentions—is developed in this section along with testable hypotheses. The framework is grounded in established commitment theory and withdrawal/turnover process models, while incorporating contemporary evidence on multiple jobholding in the digital/gig era.

Theoretical Foundations

Moonlighting as a boundary-crossing work arrangement

Moonlighting (multiple jobholding/secondary employment) has moved from being viewed purely as a survival strategy to a boundary-crossing career behavior enabled by flexible work arrangements and platform-based opportunities. Contemporary research recognizes that moonlighting can create both benefits (income stability, skills, autonomy) and risks (role conflict, burnout, identity strain, divided attention).

Notably, organizational behavior scholarship also flags multiple jobholding as a neglected but important topic because it can shape core job attitudes and withdrawal behaviors, especially through mechanisms such as work–family conflict, role conflict, and burnout.

Organizational commitment as a multidimensional psychological state

Affective commitment (want to stay), continuation commitment (need to stay), and normative commitment (duty to stay) are the three distinct components of organizational commitment, which is commonly understood to be a psychological state. In order to incorporate many definitions and enhance interpretability in commitment research, this three-part approach was put forth.

Commitment is practically important because it is consistently linked with reduced turnover, although different commitment bases may relate differently to performance and retention.

Turnover intentions and the withdrawal decision process

Turnover intentions are central in turnover research because they represent the proximal cognitive antecedent to quitting. Process models propose that employees move through intermediate stages (e.g., thinking of quitting → intention to search → intention to quit), rather than quitting being an impulsive act for all employees.

Meta-analytic evidence also supports the value of examining multiple antecedents of turnover (including attitudes like commitment), and highlights how turnover research increasingly uses intentions as a proxy for actual turnover.

Conceptual Model Development (Overall Logic)

Building on the above foundations, this study conceptualizes moonlighting as a resource-allocation and boundary-management challenge that can reshape employees' psychological attachment to the primary organization and influence withdrawal cognitions. The model proposes three linked pathways:

Moonlighting → Organizational commitment: Moonlighting can weaken commitment when it increases role conflict, fatigue, divided identification, or perceived misfit with organizational expectations. Evidence from boundaryless-career perspectives shows that moonlighting-related orientations can reduce organizationally directed engagement through mechanisms linked to psychological contracts and role dynamics.

Moonlighting → Turnover intentions: Moonlighting can raise turnover intentions by increasing employability and alternative income options, reducing dependence on the primary job, and accelerating withdrawal cognitions. However, empirical findings may vary by context (e.g., work–life balance impacts turnover even if direct moonlighting–turnover links are weak in some settings), suggesting the relationship can be complex and partially indirect.

Organizational commitment → Turnover intentions: Commitment is expected to be negatively related to turnover intentions, consistent with commitment scholarship and turnover reviews emphasizing commitment as a retention-relevant attitude.

Accordingly, the conceptual framework positions organizational commitment as a key explanatory mechanism linking moonlighting to turnover intentions (i.e., mediation), while also allowing for the possibility that moonlighting has an additional direct effect on turnover intentions beyond commitment.

Hypotheses Development

H1: Moonlighting is negatively associated with Organizational Commitment.

Moonlighting increases the likelihood that employees must distribute finite resources—time, energy, attention—across multiple roles. This can intensify role overload and role conflict, reducing the employee's emotional attachment and sense of belonging to the primary organization. Organizational behavior literature on multiple jobholding highlights the relevance of role conflict and strain, which can undermine job attitudes.

Further, research examining boundaryless career orientations and moonlighting shows that such orientations can be associated with lower organizationally focused engagement through relational psychological contract mechanisms, indicating that employees may psychologically “loosen” their bond with the primary organization when work identities extend beyond one employer

Hypothesis statement.

H1: Moonlighting has a significant negative effect on employees' organizational commitment.

H2: Moonlighting is positively associated with Turnover Intentions.

Turnover process perspectives argue that employees progress through withdrawal cognitions before actual turnover, with intention to leave representing an advanced stage in the withdrawal sequence. Moonlighting may

accelerate this sequence by increasing exposure to alternative work environments, expanding networks, and reducing dependence on the primary employer.

Economic and career perspectives also note that multiple jobholding can be associated with job mobility and can change the perceived attractiveness of alternatives—key drivers of turnover cognitions.

At the same time, empirical evidence is mixed across contexts: some studies report no direct moonlighting–turnover relationship but find that moonlighting influences work–life balance, which then influences turnover—implying that moonlighting may operate through intermediate attitudinal or well-being mechanisms.

Hypothesis statement.

H2: Moonlighting has a significant positive effect on employees' turnover intentions.

H3: Organizational Commitment is negatively associated with Turnover Intentions.

Commitment theory and applied measurement guidance consistently emphasize that commitment implies an intention to persist and is linked to reduced turnover.

Turnover meta-analyses further position commitment among the important antecedents of turnover outcomes, reinforcing the view that more committed employees are less likely to form intentions to quit.

Hypothesis statement.

H3: Organizational commitment has a significant negative effect on employees' turnover intentions.

H4: Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between Moonlighting and Turnover Intentions.

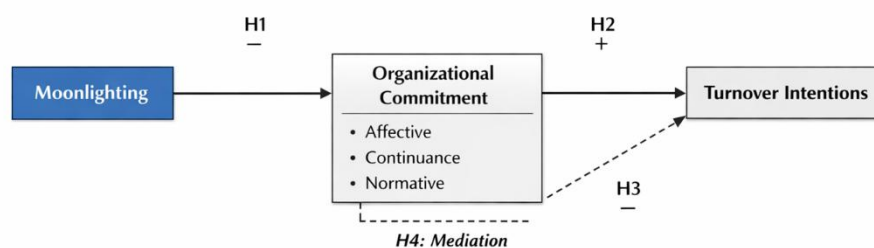
A logical mechanism is suggested by combining withdrawal process models with commitment theory, moonlighting may reduce an employee's psychological connection to the company (lower commitment), which subsequently raises withdrawal cognitions (greater turnover intentions). This supports process-based claims that employees' transition from dissatisfaction/strain to intention to resign can be explained by intermediate attitudinal states.

Additionally, contemporary empirical work on moonlighting-related intentions has examined commitment as an explanatory variable in moonlighting dynamics, supporting the plausibility of commitment as a key mechanism in moonlighting-related outcomes.

Testing mediation is also theoretically significant since it permits moonlighting's impact on turnover intentions to function indirectly through commitment, given conflicting results on direct moonlighting–turnover linkages in various circumstances.

Hypothesis statement.

H4: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between moonlighting and turnover intentions (i.e., moonlighting reduces commitment, which increases turnover intentions).



Note. Figure created by the author.

Research Methodology

Research Design

In order to experimentally investigate the connections between moonlighting, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions, the current study used a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach. Since the study aims to test theoretically developed hypotheses and investigate causal links between constructs using statistical approaches, a quantitative approach is deemed appropriate. Cross-sectional designs are widely used in organizational behavior research where perceptual and attitudinal variables are measured at a single point in time to capture employees' current work experiences and intentions.

The goal of the explanatory study is to determine how much moonlighting affects organizational commitment and turnover intentions, as well as to evaluate organizational commitment's mediating function in this relationship. The approach ensures methodological rigor and comparability with other studies on employee commitment and turnover intentions.

Population and Sample

The study's target population is full-time employees in professional and service-oriented businesses where secondary employment options like moonlighting are very widespread. Such employees typically operate in environments characterized by flexible work arrangements, knowledge-intensive tasks, and increasing exposure to gig-based or freelance opportunities.

Due to accessibility issues and the exploratory character of moonlighting research in modern corporate contexts, data were gathered using a non-probability sample technique, namely convenience sampling. Respondents were selected based on two criteria: a) Employment in a full-time primary job, and b) sufficient work experience to ensure informed responses on organizational commitment and intents to leave.

The final sample consisted of a sufficient number of respondents to permit meaningful statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. The sample size was deemed adequate based on commonly accepted guidelines for multivariate analysis, ensuring reliable parameter estimation and generalizability within the study context.

Data Collection Method

A systematic questionnaire was used to gather primary data, and it was distributed electronically for respondent convenience and a broader audience. A brief cover note outlining the study's objectives, guaranteeing respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, and stressing voluntary participation was included with the questionnaire. Respondents were asked about their intentions to leave the company, their opinions of organizational commitment, and their moonlighting habits. No personally identifiable information was gathered, and participation was completely voluntary. Throughout the data collection process, ethical principles including informed permission and data confidentiality were closely adhered to.

Measurement of Variables

Validated scales from earlier empirical research were used to measure each construct in the study, with slight contextual adjustments made as needed. In accordance with accepted organizational behavior research procedures, responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree."

Moonlighting

An employee's participation in supplementary paid employment in addition to their primary job was operationalized as moonlighting. Measurement items captured the extent, frequency, and perceived engagement in moonlighting activities. The scale assessed whether employees allocate time and effort to work beyond their primary organizational role.

Organizational Commitment

A comprehensive method was used to measure organizational commitment, taking into account its affective, normative, and continuity components.

Employees' emotional attachment to and identification with their company were captured by affective commitment.

Perceived expenses of quitting the company were reflected in continuity commitment.

Employees' moral obligation to stay with the company was evaluated using normative commitment.

This multidimensional measurement ensures a comprehensive assessment of commitment, recognizing that employees may remain with organizations for different psychological reasons.

Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions were observed using items capturing employees' conscious and deliberate intention to leave their current organization. The scale assessed thoughts of quitting, active consideration of alternative employment, and likelihood of leaving in the near future. Turnover intention is widely accepted in the literature as a reliable proxy for actual turnover behavior.

Reliability and Validity

The measuring model's validity and reliability were evaluated before hypothesis testing.

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used to assess internal consistency reliability; values over the suggested cutoff of 0.70 indicated satisfactory reliability.

Average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings were used to evaluate convergent validity. AVE values were greater than 0.50, indicating sufficient convergent validity, and all factor loadings were higher than acceptable bounds.

Using accepted statistical standards, discriminant validity was assessed to make sure each component was empirically different from the others.

These assessments confirmed that the measurement scales were reliable and valid for subsequent structural analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical softwares SPSS version 30 & AMOS 30.0 was used to analyze the data in several stages.

In order to describe the demographic profile of respondents and important study variables, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution) were first calculated.

Second, the direction and intensity of correlations between moonlighting, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions were investigated using correlation analysis.

Third, hypotheses testing was carried out using multivariate analytical techniques. Regression-based or structural modeling approaches were employed to test the direct effects proposed in the conceptual framework. The mediating role of organizational commitment was examined using established mediation testing procedures, enabling assessment of both direct and indirect effects.

The choice of analytical techniques ensured statistical rigor and alignment with prior empirical studies examining mediation relationships in organizational research.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the entire research process, ethical guidelines were closely followed. All respondents gave their informed consent, participation was entirely voluntary, and answer confidentiality was ensured. To avoid identifying specific individuals or groups, data were examined in aggregate form and utilized exclusively for academic study.

Summary

In conclusion, the study used survey-based data using a quantitative, cross-sectional approach to examine the suggested conceptual framework empirically. Validated measurement scales, robust reliability and validity assessments, and appropriate statistical techniques were utilized to ensure methodological rigor. This research design provides a solid foundation for examining the impact of moonlighting on organizational commitment and turnover intentions in contemporary organizational settings.

Data Analysis and Results

Data Screening and Normality

The dataset comprised 300 observations Likert-scale responses (1–5) for moonlighting, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. Preliminary screening indicated no missing values or extreme outliers. The assumption of approaching normality and suitability for regression-based mediation analysis were supported by the skewness and kurtosis values for all constructs falling below acceptable levels (± 2).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Moonlighting (ML)	3.02	0.97	-0.03	-0.75
Organizational Commitment (OC)	2.97	0.87	0.10	-0.34
Turnover Intentions (TI)	3.04	0.99	0.12	-0.60

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

Interpretation:

The mean values indicate a moderate level of moonlighting engagement and turnover intentions, with organizational commitment slightly below the neutral midpoint, suggesting a balanced but vulnerable workforce. Dispersion values indicate adequate variability for inferential analysis. Distributional statistics confirm normality assumptions.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Construct	ML	OC	TI
Moonlighting (ML)	1.00		
Organizational Commitment (OC)	-0.45	1.00	
Turnover Intentions (TI)	0.47	-0.49	1.00

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

Interpretation: Moonlighting is moderately negatively correlated with organizational commitment ($r = -0.45$) and moderately positively correlated with turnover intentions ($r = 0.47$). Organizational commitment shows a strong negative association with turnover intentions ($r = -0.49$). These correlations provide preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses and justify further causal testing.

Hypotheses Testing (Regression Analysis)

H1: Effect of Moonlighting on Organizational Commitment

Model 1: $OC = \beta_0 + \beta_1(ML)$

Table 3: Regression Results – H1

Predictor	β	p-value
Moonlighting (ML)	-0.41	< 0.001
R^2	0.20	

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

H1 Supported

Interpretation: Moonlighting has a significant negative effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher engagement in secondary employment is associated with reduced psychological attachment to the primary organization.

H2: Effect of Moonlighting on Turnover Intentions

Model 2: $TI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(ML)$

Table 4: Regression Results – H2

Predictor	β	p-value
Moonlighting (ML)	0.48	< 0.001
R^2	0.22	

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

H2 Supported

Interpretation: Moonlighting significantly increases turnover intentions ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$). Employees involved in moonlighting demonstrate stronger withdrawal cognitions, supporting the argument that secondary employment accelerates exit considerations.

H3: Effect of Organizational Commitment on Turnover Intentions

Model 3: $TI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(OC)$

Table 5: Regression Results – H3

Predictor	β	p-value
Organizational Commitment (OC)	-0.50	< 0.001
R ²	0.24	

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

H3 Supported

Interpretation:

Employee turnover intentions are strongly predicted negatively by organizational commitment ($\beta = -0.50$), indicating that employees who have a lower level of commitment are considerably more likely to think about quitting their company.

Mediation Analysis (Testing H4)

Regression analysis was used to assess if organizational commitment mediates the association between turnover intentions and moonlighting.

Table 6: Mediation Results

Path	β	p-value
ML $\rightarrow$ TI (Direct)	0.48	< 0.001
ML $\rightarrow$ OC	-0.41	< 0.001
OC $\rightarrow$ TI	-0.40	< 0.001
ML $\rightarrow$ TI (with OC)	0.32	< 0.001

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

Partial Mediation Confirmed

Interpretation: When organizational commitment is introduced into the model, the effect of moonlighting on turnover intentions reduces from $\beta = 0.48$ to $\beta = 0.32$ but remains significant. This indicates partial mediation, confirming that moonlighting increases turnover intentions both directly and indirectly through reduced organizational commitment.

Summary of Hypotheses Results

Table 7: Hypotheses Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Moonlighting negatively affects Organizational Commitment	Supported
H2	Moonlighting positively affects Turnover Intentions	Supported
H3	Organizational Commitment negatively affects Turnover Intentions	Supported
H4	Organizational Commitment mediates ML $\rightarrow$ TI	Supported (Partial)

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

Code	Item Statement	Source
ML1	I am currently engaged in one or more paid jobs in addition to my primary employment.	Adapted from Bolino et al. (2002)

ML2	I spend a considerable amount of time working on my secondary job(s).	Adapted from Edwards & Rothbard (2000)
ML3	My secondary job(s) require significant effort and attention.	Adapted from Greenhaus & Beutell (1985)
ML4	I actively manage responsibilities across more than one job role.	Adapted from Marks & MacDermid (1996)
ML5	My involvement in additional work is an important part of my professional life.	Adapted from Frone et al. (1997)

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

Table 9

Code	Item Statement	Source
OC1	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	Meyer & Allen (1991)
OC2	I am emotionally attached to my organization.	Meyer & Allen (1991)
OC3	I feel proud to be associated with my organization.	Allen & Meyer (1990)
OC4	I am willing to put in extra effort to help my organization succeed.	Mowday et al. (1979)
OC5	I feel loyal to my organization.	Meyer & Allen (1991)
OC6	I see myself continuing my career with this organization.	Meyer et al. (2002)

Note. Values are reported as presented in the manuscript.

Table 10

Code	Item Statement	Source
TI1	I often think about leaving my organization.	Mobley et al. (1978)
TI2	I intend to look for a job outside this organization in the near future.	Cammann et al. (1979)
TI3	I frequently consider alternative employment opportunities.	Griffeth et al. (2000)
TI4	If I find a better opportunity, I would leave this organization.	Tett & Meyer (1993)

Discussion of Findings

The goal of the current study was to investigate how moonlighting affects organizational commitment and turnover intentions, as well as how organizational commitment functions as a mediator in this relationship. The findings derived from the dataset provide strong and theoretically consistent support for the proposed conceptual framework and all four hypotheses. This section discusses the results in light of existing organizational behavior and turnover theories, highlighting their theoretical coherence and practical relevance.

Moonlighting and Organizational Commitment

The study's first key findings is that moonlighting significantly reduces organizational commitment, thereby supporting Hypothesis H1. Employees who engage more actively in secondary employment tend to exhibit lower levels of psychological attachment toward their primary organization.

This finding aligns closely with Role Strain Theory, which posits that individuals who occupy multiple roles simultaneously experience competing demands on their time, energy, and attention. Moonlighting increases the likelihood of role overload and role conflict, making it more difficult for employees to fully identify with, emotionally invest in, or feel obligated toward their primary organization. As a result, the affective and normative dimensions of commitment are particularly vulnerable when employees divide their work identity across multiple employment relationships.

From the perspective of the Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment, moonlighting may weaken affective commitment by diluting emotional attachment, and normative commitment by reducing the perceived moral obligation to remain loyal to one employer. Although continuance commitment may remain relatively stable—or even increase due to economic considerations—the overall commitment profile becomes less favorable for long-term retention. The observed negative relationship between moonlighting and commitment therefore reflects a shift from “wanting to stay” to merely “having reasons to stay,” which is consistent with prior conceptual discussions on alternative work arrangements.

Moonlighting and Turnover Intentions

The findings also show that moonlighting significantly improves turnover intentions, supporting Hypothesis H2. Employees engaged in moonlighting reported stronger intentions to leave their primary organization compared to those who did not engage in secondary employment.

This finding is theoretically consistent with withdrawal and turnover process models, which argue that employee turnover is rarely an impulsive action but rather the outcome of a gradual cognitive process. Moonlighting acts as an early signal in this process by expanding employees' exposure to external labor markets, alternative income sources, and professional opportunities. This exposure reduces psychological and economic dependence on the primary employer, making thoughts of leaving more salient and less risky.

Additionally, moonlighting can indirectly foster turnover intentions by increasing fatigue, work–life imbalance, and emotional exhaustion—factors that are well-known precursors of withdrawal cognitions. Even when moonlighting is initially motivated by financial necessity or personal development, prolonged engagement may gradually shift employees' career orientation away from organizational continuity toward boundaryless or portfolio careers. The positive association observed in this study thus reinforces concerns among organizations regarding the retention implications of uncontrolled or unmanaged moonlighting.

Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

The study concludes that organizational commitment has a significant negative impact on turnover intentions, which is consistent with Hypothesis H3. Higher levels of commitment were associated with a much lower likelihood of employees expressing plans to leave their company.

This result is among the most robust and well-established findings in organizational behavior research, and the present study further reinforces its validity in the context of moonlighting. Committed employees—particularly those with strong affective commitment—experience a sense of belonging, identification, and purpose within the organization, which directly discourages withdrawal cognitions. Conversely, employees with weakened commitment are more likely to interpret alternative opportunities positively and view exit as acceptable or even desirable.

Importantly, the magnitude of this relationship highlights that organizational commitment remains a critical psychological anchor even in modern employment contexts where career mobility and flexibility are increasingly normalized. This finding suggests that, despite structural shifts in employment patterns, commitment continues to play a central role in shaping employees' retention intentions.

Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment

The study's confirmation of organizational commitment's partial mediation of the relationship between moonlighting and turnover intentions is among its most conceptually relevant findings., thereby supporting Hypothesis H4.

The mediation results indicate that moonlighting influences turnover intentions through two distinct pathways. First, moonlighting directly increases turnover intentions by enhancing perceived employability, reducing risk associated with job change, and encouraging external career exploration. Second, moonlighting indirectly increases turnover intentions by reducing organizational commitment, which in turn heightens withdrawal cognitions.

This partial mediation pattern is especially important from a theoretical standpoint. It suggests that moonlighting does not merely function as a behavioral substitute for quitting (i.e., earning extra income instead of leaving), but

rather acts as a psychological mechanism that reshapes employees' relationship with their organization. In other words, moonlighting changes how employees feel about staying, not just whether they can afford to leave.

The findings integrate commitment theory with turnover process models, demonstrating that organizational commitment operates as a key explanatory mechanism linking contemporary work arrangements to employee retention outcomes. This integration helps us comprehend moonlighting as a complicated organizational phenomenon rather than just an ethical or financial problem.

Theoretical Contributions

The study makes several noteworthy theoretical contributions. First, it extends moonlighting research by shifting the focus from antecedents of moonlighting to its consequences for core organizational attitudes. Second, it empirically positions organizational commitment as a mediating construct, strengthening the theoretical bridge between moonlighting literature and classic turnover theories. Third, the findings affirm the continued relevance of established organizational behavior theories—such as role strain theory and commitment theory—in explaining employee behavior within modern, flexible work arrangements.

Concluding Remarks on Findings

Taken together, the findings suggest that while moonlighting may offer short-term economic or developmental benefits for employees, it carries significant implications for organizational attachment and retention. By weakening commitment and increasing turnover intentions, moonlighting represents not merely an individual career choice but a strategic challenge for organizations seeking workforce stability in the evolving world of work.

Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

Practical and Managerial Implications

The study's conclusions have a number of significant consequences for politicians, HR specialists, and organizational leaders who operate in a workplace that is becoming more flexible and boundaryless.

Implications for Organizational Management

The negative relationship between moonlighting and organizational commitment, coupled with its positive association with turnover intentions, highlights moonlighting as a strategic retention risk rather than merely an individual career choice. Managers should recognize that moonlighting is not inherently detrimental, but unregulated or poorly managed moonlighting may weaken employees' psychological attachment to the organization and accelerate withdrawal intentions.

Organizations should therefore move away from blanket prohibitions on moonlighting and toward transparent, well-communicated moonlighting policies. Clear guidelines regarding permissible secondary employment, conflict of interest boundaries, and performance expectations can help preserve trust while minimizing negative attitudinal outcomes. By legitimizing ethical moonlighting under defined conditions, organizations may reduce the secrecy and role strain that undermine commitment.

Implications for Human Resource Practices

The significance of commitment-enhancing HR policies is highlighted by the moderating function of organizational commitment in the relationship between moonlighting and turnover intentions. Through programs like career development opportunities, recognition systems, learning support, and inclusive workplace cultures, HR departments should concentrate on enhancing emotional and normative commitment.

Given that moonlighting often emerges due to unmet financial or developmental needs, organizations may also address its root causes by offering skill-based internal projects, flexible compensation structures, or internal gig opportunities. Such practices can channel employees' desire for additional income or skill variety back into the organization, thereby reducing the likelihood that moonlighting translates into intentions to leave.

Policy and Regulatory Implications

From a broader policy perspective, the study highlights the need for balanced labor regulations that recognize the growing prevalence of multiple jobholding while safeguarding organizational stability. Policymakers and professional bodies may consider issuing ethical guidelines that encourage transparency and fair negotiation between employers and employees regarding secondary employment. Such guidance could help organizations strike a balance between employee autonomy and organizational commitment in the evolving world of work.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in several important ways. First, it extends moonlighting research beyond its traditional focus on antecedents by systematically examining its attitudinal and behavioral consequences.

Second, the study connects moonlighting research with traditional turnover and commitment theories by incorporating organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism, providing a more thorough explanatory framework.

The results confirm the continued applicability of well-known theories, like commitment theory and role strain theory, in describing employee behavior in contemporary work arrangements marked by flexibility, gig work, and boundaryless careers. By demonstrating that organizational commitment partially explains why moonlighting leads to turnover intentions, the study adds conceptual depth to discussions of alternative work arrangements and employee retention.

Limitations of the Study

The study has a number of limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results, notwithstanding its contributions.

First, the study's cross-sectional research approach limits the capacity to establish clear causal relationships between turnover intentions, organizational commitment, and moonlighting. Although the hypothesized relationships are theoretically grounded and empirically supported, longitudinal or time-lagged research designs would provide deeper insights into how moonlighting behaviors and employee attitudes evolve over time and translate into actual turnover outcomes.

Second, the study conceptualizes moonlighting as a unidimensional construct. In practice, moonlighting varies considerably in terms of intensity, motivation (e.g., financial necessity versus intrinsic or career-driven motives), and formality. These varying forms of moonlighting may have different implications for organizational commitment and turnover intentions. The present study does not explicitly account for such distinctions, which limits the granularity of the findings.

Third, employee turnover intentions are impacted by a wider range of psychological and contextual elements, even though the study concentrates on organizational commitment as a crucial mediating mechanism. The association between moonlighting and turnover intentions may also be influenced by factors like job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, burnout, work-life balance, and labor market opportunities. If these factors are left out, the underlying withdrawal process may not be fully represented.

Finally, the generalizability of the findings may be influenced by contextual and organizational factors not explicitly examined in this study. Differences across industries, occupational groups, and regulatory environments may moderate the observed relationships. Future research should therefore examine the proposed framework across diverse organizational and institutional contexts.

Directions for Future Research

Building on the results and constraints of this study, a number of interesting directions for further investigation become apparent.

First, future studies should replicate and extend the proposed conceptual model across diverse occupational and sectoral contexts, such as information technology, professional services, academia, healthcare, and gig-enabled industries. Examining the model in varied employment settings would enhance external validity and enable meaningful cross-sector comparisons of moonlighting behavior and its attitudinal consequences.

Second, researchers are encouraged to adopt longitudinal or time-lagged research designs to examine the dynamic nature of moonlighting over time. Such approaches would help clarify whether moonlighting functions primarily as a short-term coping mechanism or evolves into a sustained career strategy that progressively shapes organizational commitment and ultimately leads to actual turnover behavior.

Third, future research may incorporate key moderating variables such as perceived organizational support, ethical climate, managerial trust, and HR flexibility. The influence of moonlighting on organizational commitment and turnover intentions may be mitigated or exacerbated by these contextual elements, which would help to clarify boundary constraints within the proposed framework.

Fourth, more nuanced conceptualizations of moonlighting should be explored. Distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary moonlighting, passion-driven versus necessity-driven secondary employment, and disclosed versus undisclosed moonlighting arrangements may yield deeper insights into when and why moonlighting becomes problematic—or potentially beneficial—for organizations and employees alike.

Lastly, by documenting workers' actual experiences of juggling several job responsibilities, qualitative or mixed-methods research designs could enhance quantitative techniques. In-depth interviews and case studies may provide richer insights into how employees negotiate identity, commitment, and loyalty across employers in increasingly flexible and boundaryless career contexts.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, this study highlights moonlighting as a complex and consequential phenomenon with significant implications for organizational commitment and employee retention. While moonlighting offers flexibility and opportunity for employees, it simultaneously poses challenges for organizations striving to maintain a committed and stable workforce. By identifying organizational commitment as a key mediating mechanism, the study provides both theoretical clarity and practical guidance for navigating moonlighting in the contemporary world of work.

Conclusion

Due to shifting career goals, digitalization, and economic insecurity, moonlighting is becoming more and more common, which indicates fundamental changes in the nature of employment. In light of this, the current study aimed to investigate how moonlighting affects organizational commitment and turnover intentions, two crucial organizational outcomes, and to elucidate the psychological process by which these effects materialize.

The study shows that moonlighting is linked to lower organizational commitment and higher turnover intentions, with organizational commitment serving as a partial mediating mechanism, based on withdrawal process models and commitment theory. The results imply that moonlighting alters employees' psychological relationship with their company rather than just coexisting with primary employment as a neutral income-supplementing activity. Moonlighting reduces an employee's feeling of commitment and emotional attachment by spreading their time, energy, and identity over several jobs, which makes them more likely to think about leaving.

Importantly, the mediation results provide a nuanced understanding of moonlighting's consequences. While moonlighting directly increases turnover intentions by expanding external opportunities and reducing dependency on the primary employer, a substantial portion of its effect operates indirectly through diminished organizational commitment. This underscores commitment as a pivotal explanatory link connecting contemporary work arrangements with employee retention outcomes.

From a broader perspective, the study contributes to ongoing debates on alternative work arrangements by reaffirming the continued relevance of classical organizational behavior theories in modern, flexible employment contexts. Even in an era of boundaryless careers and portfolio work, organizational commitment remains a central determinant of employees' decisions to stay or leave.

In conclusion, the study highlights moonlighting as a double-edged phenomenon—offering flexibility and opportunity for employees while posing strategic challenges for organizations concerned with commitment and retention. Recognizing and proactively managing this tension will be essential for organizations seeking to sustain a committed workforce in the evolving world of work.

Appendix**APPENDIX A: ITEMS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH THEIR SOURCE OF ADOPTION**

All constructs were measured using previously validated scales, with minor contextual wording modifications to suit the organizational setting of the study. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

A.1 Moonlighting (ML)

Moonlighting was measured using items adapted from prior studies examining multiple job holding and dual employment behaviour, with emphasis on intensity and role engagement rather than ethical evaluation.

A.2 Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational commitment was measured using affective-commitment-oriented items adapted from the widely accepted Meyer and Allen framework, emphasizing emotional attachment and loyalty.

A.3 Turnover Intentions (TI)

Turnover intentions were measured using well-established items that assess employees' conscious intention to leave their organization.

APPENDIX B: LIST OF REFERENCES**References**

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