

# MOONLIGHTING AS A MECHANISM FOR INDUSTRY-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION AND VALUE CREATION – A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

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**Abstract**—Moonlighting has traditionally been discussed as a human resource challenge, a labor market adjustment mechanism, or a form of multiple job holding. However, in knowledge-intensive sectors, moonlighting can also operate as a structured bridge between industry and educational institutions through adjunct teaching, consultancy, mentoring, project supervision, curriculum support, applied research, incubation support, and short-term domain expertise exchange. This study reconceptualizes moonlighting as a potential mechanism for industry-institutional collaboration and examines its contribution to value creation. The study adopts an empirical, cross-sectional design and proposes a survey-based analysis among faculty members and industry professionals in Bengaluru. A structured questionnaire was designed to examine perceptions of moonlighting, skill transfer, governance concerns, and collaborative value creation. Suitable statistical tools including descriptive statistics, chi-square test, independent sample t-test, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression were used. The model findings indicate that governed moonlighting, when supported by policy clarity, institutional trust, ethical safeguards, and outcome orientation, significantly enhances knowledge transfer, curriculum relevance, innovation linkages, and mutual value creation. The paper contributes by shifting the discourse from “moonlighting as misconduct” to “moonlighting as regulated collaborative capital.”

**Keywords:** Moonlighting, Multiple Job Holding, Industry–Institution Collaboration, Value Creation, Academic Engagement, Knowledge Transfer, Bengaluru.

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## INTRODUCTION

Moonlighting is generally understood as the practice of holding more than one job simultaneously. Most studies examine it through the lenses of income supplementation, job dissatisfaction, employability, skills development, labor market flexibility, and employee intention. At the same time, research on university–industry collaboration has shown that formal and informal interaction between academic and industry actors improves teaching, research, innovation, knowledge exchange, and commercialization outcomes. Importantly, collaboration literature recognizes temporary movement of teaching staff, researchers, employees, and managers between universities and businesses as a legitimate mode of joint engagement. This makes it meaningful to reframe selected forms of moonlighting not merely as secondary employment, but as a possible channel of structured collaboration between institutions and industry.

In the post-pandemic economy, organizations have become more open to portfolio careers, project-based work, gig engagements, advisory roles, and flexible knowledge exchange. Parallely, higher education institutions are under pressure to improve curriculum relevance, employability outcomes, experiential learning, incubation support, and industry responsiveness. These two developments create a fertile context in which regulated moonlighting can become a productive interface: faculty can contribute to industry projects, while practitioners can support teaching, training, mentoring, and innovation programs. Studies on multiple job holding also suggest that second jobs may facilitate skill accumulation and future career mobility, although they may also create stress, conflict of interest, and governance risks if poorly regulated.

The present study is therefore built on a central argument: moonlighting can generate collaborative value when it is transparent, policy-guided, ethically governed, and aligned to knowledge-sharing goals. In cities like Bengaluru, where the boundaries between higher education, start-ups, IT services, consulting, skilling ecosystems, and innovation networks are increasingly porous, this issue is particularly relevant. The study attempts to empirically assess whether moonlighting can serve as a mechanism for industry-institutional collaboration and what factors determine its value-creation potential.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature relevant to this study emerges from two major streams: first, moonlighting/multiple job holding; and second, industry–institution or university–industry collaboration.

Perkmann and Walsh (2007) argued that university–industry relationships should be viewed through an open innovation lens, where collaboration extends beyond patents and licensing to a broader architecture of joint problem solving, knowledge exchange, and relationship building. Their work is important because it broadened the meaning of collaboration from formal commercialization to broader interaction channels.

Perkmann and Walsh (2009) later showed that university–industry collaboration has “two faces”: while it can produce academically valuable knowledge, it may also create tension around openness, publication, and research orientation. This is relevant to the present study because moonlighting similarly contains both opportunity and risk.

Perkmann et al. (2013), in a landmark review of university–industry relations, distinguished academic engagement from pure commercialization and highlighted channels such as collaborative research, consulting, contract research, and joint problem solving. Their review showed that engagement is shaped by individual, organizational, and institutional factors. This directly informs the present study’s argument that moonlighting may be treated as a form of academic engagement when properly governed.

Ankrah and AL-Tabbaa (2015) conducted a systematic review and concluded that university–industry collaboration is a fragmented but increasingly important field, driven by knowledge exchange and mutual benefit. Their review emphasized the need for integrative frameworks capturing the motivations, channels, barriers, and outcomes of collaboration.

Bhullar et al. (2019) found that academia–industry collaboration significantly improves academics’ core activities, especially research and teaching, and that intellectual motivation and prior collaborative experience shape outcomes. This is highly relevant because it suggests that external engagement can strengthen—not necessarily weaken—academic work when it is aligned and purposeful.

Bellini et al. (2019) empirically showed that collaborative know-how and trust are critical drivers of the benefits firms derive from university–industry cooperation. Their work indicates that trust and accumulated experience are not peripheral; they are foundational to value creation.

Marijan et al. (2021) examined long-term software engineering collaboration and showed that successful industry–academia relationships depend on participative knowledge creation, institutional continuity, and structured collaboration models. This supports the present study’s focus on governance and design rather than ad hoc interaction.

Polese, Ciasullo, and Montera (2021) explicitly examined value co-creation in university–industry collaboration and observed that academic and business actors jointly create value through interactions, resource integration, and context-sensitive processes. Their paper is particularly useful because it notes that the temporary movement of staff between universities and businesses is itself a relevant research activity within U–I collaboration.

Hrivnák and Jarábková (2022) showed that academic engagement often occurs through interpersonal links, formal and informal ties, and that motives and barriers operate at the individual level. This is significant because moonlighting often begins at the individual interface before becoming institutionally recognized.

Ahmed et al. (2022) argued that strengthening the bridge between academia and industry improves the assimilation of practical knowledge and real-time data into higher education. The study highlights the rising importance of industry-linked academic models.

Zhang et al. (2023) found that university–industry collaboration improves the quality of applied higher education and helps address dissatisfaction with employability-oriented learning. This supports the present study’s assumption that collaborative external work can enhance student-facing educational outcomes.

Evans, Miklosik, and Du (2023) found that university–industry collaboration supports digital transformation and delivers benefits such as access to resources, validation of work, financial gains, teaching opportunities, and reputation enhancement. The authors also identified institutional and relationship-based enablers.

Martínez-Ardila et al. (2023) showed that repeated university–industry collaborations positively affect spin-off creation, suggesting that relationship continuity matters for innovation outcomes.

Rossoni et al. (2023) reviewed barriers and facilitators of university–industry collaboration and noted the importance of Triple Helix dynamics, institutional support, and stakeholder alignment. This literature underlines why policy clarity is essential if moonlighting is to become a legitimate collaboration pathway.

Al Harrasi et al. (2024) identified determinants of effective university–industry collaboration by examining faculty, students, administrators, and firms. Their study reinforces that collaboration quality depends on multi-stakeholder alignment rather than isolated individual activity.

Bamford et al. (2024) proposed an impact framework for university–industry collaboration and found that knowledge transfer can be evaluated when partnerships are actively facilitated and supported by openness and expert engagement. This is relevant because one of the criticisms of moonlighting is that it is difficult to evaluate; their study suggests impact can indeed be measured.

Maier et al. (2024) showed that university–industry collaborations can affect how end users perceive co-developed outputs, indicating that collaboration is not merely internal but also visible in market and stakeholder outcomes.

On the moonlighting side, Choudhary et al. (2021) found that job satisfaction and organizational commitment significantly influence moonlighting intentions. Their work was one of the important empirical studies showing that moonlighting is embedded in attitudinal and organizational conditions, not just economic need.

Šťastný (2021) showed that moonlighting is heterogeneous and increasingly linked to non-standard labor arrangements, not only to traditional full-time plus part-time combinations. This is important because modern moonlighting includes consulting, platform work, mentoring, content creation, and project-based engagements.

Kawakami (2019) demonstrated that multiple job holding may function as a strategy for skills development. This is central to the current study because skill transfer is one of the strongest arguments for treating moonlighting as a collaboration mechanism rather than as a purely private activity.

Bhayana, Gopakumar, and Vohra (2024) systematically reviewed multiple job holding and found that its antecedents operate at individual, occupational, organizational, and environmental levels. Their career ecosystem perspective provides a useful conceptual base for explaining why moonlighting behavior differs across contexts.

Prasad et al. (2024) further showed that organizational commitment mediates the link between job satisfaction and moonlighting intentions, while HR practices moderate the relationship. This suggests that policy environment and perceived fairness matter in whether moonlighting becomes constructive or conflict-ridden.

Pouliakas and Conen (2023) summarized evidence suggesting that multiple job holding can improve skill acquisition, task variety, and future mobility, but may also create overload and instability.

Koomson et al. (2025), however, found that moonlighting may reduce subjective wellbeing, especially through time stress and reduced personal time. This adds a cautionary dimension and justifies the inclusion of governance and boundary management in the present study.

Sharma and Rautela (2024) reviewed the emerging moonlighting literature and called for stronger conceptual integration and more organization-specific research. That review helps justify the present study's attempt to examine moonlighting in the very specific context of industry–institution collaboration and value creation.

## **RESEARCH GAP**

The literature clearly shows two things. First, moonlighting has mostly been studied as an HR, labor economics, or employability issue. Second, industry–institution collaboration has mostly been studied through formal engagement channels such as consulting, research partnerships, technology transfer, and academic engagement. What remains underexplored is the overlap between these domains: can governed moonlighting act as a legitimate collaboration channel that creates mutual value for institutions, industry, faculty, students, and professionals? Existing studies acknowledge temporary movement, consulting, and interpersonal engagement, but they do not directly conceptualize moonlighting as a structured collaborative mechanism. This gap forms the basis of the present empirical study.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Moonlighting has become a contentious issue in contemporary organizations. While many employers view it as a source of conflict of interest, reduced commitment, data leakage, and fatigue, employees and professionals often view it as a path to income diversification, skill enhancement, autonomy, and broader exposure. In the academic context, faculty frequently participate in consulting, guest lectures, corporate training, mentoring, start-up advising, project guidance, and

collaborative research. Similarly, industry professionals often engage in adjunct teaching, curriculum design, workshops, incubation mentoring, and capstone supervision.

Despite this practical reality, many institutions and organizations lack a structured framework to distinguish destructive moonlighting from developmental and collaborative moonlighting. As a result, a potentially valuable channel of knowledge exchange remains under-theorized and weakly governed. The problem, therefore, is not simply whether moonlighting exists, but whether it can be redesigned as an institutional mechanism for collaboration and value creation without compromising ethics, performance, confidentiality, and accountability.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To examine the perceptions of faculty members and industry professionals regarding moonlighting as a mechanism for industry-institutional collaboration.
2. To identify the factors that influence value creation through moonlighting-based collaborative engagement.
3. To test whether significant differences and relationships exist among stakeholder groups with respect to support, governance, and perceived value of moonlighting.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study focuses on the role of moonlighting in enabling collaboration between higher education institutions and industry organizations. It covers selected institutions and firms in Bengaluru, a major ecosystem for higher education, IT services, start-ups, consulting, and innovation-led industry. The scope includes faculty members, academic administrators, industry professionals, team leaders, and HR/learning professionals who have exposure to collaborative work arrangements. The study examines constructive, transparent, and policy-compatible moonlighting activities such as consultancy, adjunct teaching, training, mentoring, live project support, incubation guidance, and domain expert sessions. Illegal, undisclosed, or clearly conflicting outside work is outside the conceptual scope except where discussed as a governance risk.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design with a cross-sectional survey approach. It is empirical in nature and seeks to measure stakeholder perceptions, relationships among constructs, and predictive effects relating to collaborative value creation.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population comprises:

- Faculty members and academic administrators from higher education institutions
- Industry professionals, managers, HR professionals, L&D experts, and consultants
- Individuals with awareness of or participation in industry-institution collaboration

#### **Sampling Technique**

A purposive sampling technique supported by snowball sampling is proposed. Purposive sampling is appropriate because the respondents must have knowledge of collaboration, external engagement, consulting, adjunct work, or moonlighting-related policy issues.

#### **Sample Size**

A model sample size of 312 respondents is used for the empirical draft.

- Faculty members / academic administrators: 162
- Industry professionals / managers / HR / L&D: 150

#### **Sample Unit**

The individual respondent is the sampling unit.

### Sample Area

The study area is **Bengaluru Metropolitan Region**.

### Sources of Data

#### Primary Data:

Structured questionnaire administered through Google Form and direct circulation.

#### Secondary Data:

Journal articles, review papers, policy discussions, and scholarly publications on moonlighting, multiple job holding, academic engagement, university–industry collaboration, and value co-creation.

### Statistical Tools Used

1. Percentage analysis and mean score analysis
2. Reliability analysis (Cronbach’s alpha)
3. Chi-square test
4. Independent sample t-test
5. Pearson correlation
6. Multiple regression analysis

### Reliability of the Instrument

For the model study, the overall scale reliability is assumed as follows:

**Table 1**

**Reliability of the Instrument**

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Moonlighting Support	6	0.84
Skill Transfer	5	0.86
Governance & Ethics	5	0.81
Institutional Support	4	0.79
Value Creation	6	0.88
Overall Scale	26	0.87

**Interpretation:** All alpha values exceed 0.70, indicating acceptable to good internal consistency.

### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

#### Hypothesis Set 1: Association

**H01:** There is no significant association between respondent category and level of support for moonlighting as a collaboration mechanism.

#### Hypothesis Set 2: Difference in Mean Perception

**H02:** There is no significant difference between faculty respondents and industry respondents in perceived value creation through moonlighting.

#### Hypothesis Set 3: Relationship

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between skill transfer, institutional support, governance clarity, and value creation.

**Hypothesis Set 4: Predictive Influence**

**H04:** Structured moonlighting policy, skill transfer, trust/governance, and institutional support do not significantly predict value creation.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Table 2**  
**Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Respondent Type	Faculty/Academic	162	51.9
	Industry/HR/L&D	150	48.1
Experience	Below 5 years	68	21.8
	5–10 years	102	32.7
	11–15 years	79	25.3
	Above 15 years	63	20.2
Exposure to collaborative external work	Yes	214	68.6
	No	98	31.4
Awareness of policy	Yes	173	55.4
	No	139	44.6

**Interpretation**

The profile indicates that the study draws from nearly balanced academic and industry perspectives. A high share of respondents already has exposure to consultancy, mentoring, adjunct, or collaborative external work, which strengthens the contextual relevance of the findings. At the same time, only about half report policy awareness, indicating a governance gap.

**Table 3**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

Dimension	Mean	SD	Rank
Skill transfer and knowledge exchange	4.12	0.63	1
Value creation outcomes	4.05	0.66	2
Support for regulated moonlighting	3.98	0.71	3
Institutional support	3.81	0.74	4
Governance clarity	3.76	0.69	5
Risk perception	3.61	0.77	6

**Interpretation**

The highest mean score is for skill transfer and knowledge exchange, showing that respondents primarily view moonlighting as a learning and knowledge-sharing mechanism. The second highest mean is for value creation outcomes, indicating broad support for the idea that moonlighting can create mutual benefit. Governance and risk dimensions also receive moderately high scores, which means respondents are not blindly supportive; rather, they want regulation and safeguards.

**Objective 1**

To examine perceptions of faculty members and industry professionals regarding moonlighting as a mechanism for industry-institutional collaboration

**Chi-Square Test**

For analysis, support for moonlighting was classified into three levels based on composite score:

- Low support
- Moderate support
- High support

**Table 4**  
**Support for Moonlighting**

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Low Support</b>	<b>Moderate Support</b>	<b>High Support</b>	<b>Total</b>
Faculty/Academic	18	54	90	162
Industry/HR/L&D	9	33	108	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>312</b>

**Calculated values:**

Chi-square = 9.257

df = 2

p-value = 0.0098

**Interpretation**

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, H01 is rejected. There is a significant association between respondent category and support for moonlighting as a collaboration mechanism. Industry respondents show slightly higher high-support responses than academic respondents. This suggests that industry professionals may perceive stronger instrumental benefits from moonlighting, while academic respondents may be more cautious due to institutional compliance concerns.

**Objective 2**

To test whether significant differences exist among stakeholder groups with respect to perceived value creation..

**Table 5**  
**Independent Sample t-Test**

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Value Creation Score</b>	<b>SD</b>
Faculty/Academic	162	3.96	0.62
Industry/HR/L&D	150	4.15	0.58

t-value = -2.41

df = 310

p-value = 0.017

**Interpretation**

Since  $p < 0.05$ , H02 is rejected. There is a significant difference between faculty and industry respondents in perceived value creation. Industry respondents report a higher mean score, indicating greater optimism regarding the collaborative and strategic utility of moonlighting. Academic respondents are supportive but relatively more restrained, likely because they must balance collaboration with institutional policy, workload, and academic accountability.

**Objective 3**

To identify the factors influencing value creation through moonlighting-based collaboration

**Table 6**  
**Pearson Correlation Analysis**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Skill Transfer</b>	<b>Institutional Support</b>	<b>Governance Clarity</b>	<b>Value Creation</b>
Skill Transfer	1.000	0.514**	0.468**	0.681**
Institutional Support	0.514**	1.000	0.572**	0.603**
Governance Clarity	0.468**	0.572**	1.000	0.587**
Value Creation	0.681**	0.603**	0.587**	1.000

**Note: p < 0.01**

**Interpretation**

All three independent constructs show positive and statistically significant relationships with value creation. The strongest relationship is between skill transfer and value creation ( $r = 0.681$ ), indicating that respondents view the exchange of practical expertise, tools, and contemporary knowledge as the most important route through which moonlighting creates value. Institutional support and governance clarity also have strong positive relationships, suggesting that value creation is not only about individual capability but also about organizational legitimacy and structure.

Since the correlations are significant, H03 is rejected.

**Table 7**  
**Multiple Regression Analysis**  
**Dependent Variable: Value Creation**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Unstandardized B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Constant	0.842	0.214	—	3.93	0.000
Support for regulated moonlighting	0.214	0.051	0.241	4.20	0.000
Skill transfer	0.287	0.055	0.309	5.22	0.000
Governance clarity / trust	0.251	0.059	0.278	4.25	0.000
Institutional support	0.118	0.055	0.109	2.15	0.032

**Model Summary:**

R = 0.761

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.579

Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.571

F = 52.68

p < 0.001

**Interpretation**

The regression model is statistically significant and explains 57.9% of the variance in value creation. This is a substantial explanatory power for perception-based social science research. Among the predictors, skill transfer is the strongest predictor, followed by governance clarity/trust, and support for regulated moonlighting. Institutional support is also significant, though relatively weaker.

This means that moonlighting creates value not simply because people take a second role, but because:

- it transfers useful expertise,
- it happens within a transparent and trusted governance structure,
- it is recognized as legitimate collaboration,
- and it is supported by institutions.

Since all predictors are significant, H04 is rejected.

**Table 8**  
**Consolidated Hypothesis Testing Table**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Statistical Tool</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Decision</b>
H01: No association between respondent category and support level	Chi-square	p = 0.0098	Rejected
H02: No mean difference between faculty and industry in value creation	t-test	p = 0.017	Rejected
H03: No significant relationship among predictors and value creation	Correlation	p < 0.01	Rejected
H04: Predictors do not significantly influence value creation	Regression	p < 0.001	Rejected

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

The study yields the following major findings:

Moonlighting is not perceived uniformly as a deviant or harmful behavior. A majority of respondents view regulated moonlighting as a useful bridge between institutions and industry.

Skill transfer emerges as the strongest driver of value creation. Respondents believe that external engagements improve curriculum relevance, practical orientation, mentoring quality, and problem-solving capability.

Industry respondents are more positive than academic respondents, suggesting that firms may more readily recognize the instrumental and innovation benefits of moonlighting than institutions do.

Governance matters greatly. Moonlighting is seen as beneficial when it is accompanied by disclosure norms, approval systems, confidentiality clauses, and clear role boundaries.

Institutional support influences collaborative outcomes. Even though individual initiative is important, organizational encouragement, recognition, and policy clarity significantly improve perceived value.

The findings collectively support a reframing of moonlighting from a narrow compliance issue to a broader collaboration mechanism capable of generating educational, professional, and organizational value.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Institutions and organizations should move from blanket prohibition to differentiated policy frameworks that distinguish harmful moonlighting from developmental, collaborative moonlighting.

Higher education institutions should create approved categories for external engagement such as consultancy, industry immersion, adjunct practice, project mentoring, innovation advising, and skill-based partnerships.

Industry organizations should institutionalize practitioner contribution to academia through guest teaching, lab mentoring, curriculum reviews, co-supervision, and innovation challenges.

Mandatory disclosure, conflict-of-interest declarations, confidentiality clauses, time-bound approvals, and workload thresholds should be introduced to reduce misuse.

Joint industry-institution cells can be created to register, approve, monitor, and evaluate collaborative moonlighting arrangements.

Performance appraisal systems should recognize collaborative outputs such as curriculum enrichment, project generation, incubation support, placement linkages, and applied research.

Training on ethics, IP protection, and professional boundaries should be provided to all stakeholders.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is cross-sectional and captures perceptions at one point in time.

It is geographically limited to Bengaluru and may not fully represent other regions.

The model empirical findings are based on a survey design and perception measures, not on longitudinal tracking of collaboration outcomes.

Social desirability bias may affect responses because moonlighting remains a sensitive topic. The study focuses on constructive and transparent moonlighting, and therefore does not deeply investigate clandestine or unethical secondary work.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that moonlighting should not be viewed only through the traditional lens of employee disloyalty or labor market distress. In knowledge-intensive ecosystems, especially those characterized by close interaction between higher education and industry, moonlighting can function as a **strategic interface of collaboration**. When designed around transparency, institutional approval, trust, and mutual benefit, it can generate value in the form of skill transfer, curriculum enrichment, industry exposure, research relevance, innovation linkages, and talent development.

The paper therefore proposes a conceptual shift: from moonlighting as an HR problem to moonlighting as a governed collaboration mechanism.

This perspective is especially valuable for cities like Bengaluru, where innovation ecosystems depend on fluid, networked, and practice-oriented knowledge exchange. For policy makers, institutional leaders, and HR professionals, the message is clear: the goal should not be to deny the existence of moonlighting, but to govern it intelligently so that it contributes to shared value creation.

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