



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Job Commitment, Total Quality Management, Information Communication Technology Adoption and Work-Related Stressors: A Conceptual Framework for Student Satisfaction

Samuel Koomson

Published online: 25 June 2022.

Abstract

This paper aim to examine the direct effect of job commitment (JCT) on student satisfaction (SST), exploring the mediating roles of total quality management (TQM) and information communication technology adoption (ADT), and moderating roles of work-related stressors: toxic leadership (TLE) and job demands (JDD). The paper develops a conceptual frame work along with postulations by combining both empirical and theoretical literature multidisciplinary fields. This paper proposes that JCT will be positively related to SST, and this positive relationship will be mediated by TQM and ADT. Additionally, work-related stressors: TLE and JDD will moderate the direct positive effect of JCT on SST. This paper provides implications for both researchers and practitioners in the areas of strategic decision-making and stress management in educational institutions for enhancing SST by applying JCT, TQM and ADT as strategic tools, while keeping work-related stressors: TLE and JDD under control. It lays the foundation for upcoming researchers to empirically test this conceptual frame work in different educational settings. By boosting employees' JCT, educational institutions stand the chance of improving SST via TQM and ADT. Additionally, JCT can foster SST under a working environment where work-related stressors: TLE and JDD are kept low. The paper offers unique insights into how TQM and ADT connect JCT to SST, and how JCT relates to SST under work-related stressors: TLE and JDD. It also highlights the theoretical contributions of the resource-based theory of a firm, affective events theory, and activation theory.

Keywords: work-related stressors; continuous improvement strategy; employee well-being; student outcomes; information technology

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has progressively turned teaching or working into an online activity, and this change in workspace has changed the work methods and processes for employees in the education sector, such that some work from home while others have adopted a rotation system where they receive minimum supervision at work (Turkmenoğlu, Ulukok, Dogan & Akin, 2020). This shift in work space originating from the Covid-19 pandemic underscores the need for educational institutions to prioritize employees' job commitment (here after, JCT), because, the level of employee JCT in any organisation is put to test when the organisation is confronted with external forces, such as Covid-19

pandemic. Committed employees take ownership of their work and are ambassadors of their institution, both inside and outside of office doors.

A committed employee presents benefits to his/her organisation (Koomson, 2020). For instance, Koomson (2021a) shows that a committed physician is more likely to show demonstrate high citizenship behaviours at work. It is often said that cutting-edge transformations in organisations are a result of committed employees (Koomson, 2021b). In the educational setting, a committed employee is capable of improving student satisfaction (here after, SST), and this positive relationship is described the resource-based theory of a firm (Barney, 1991). The theory regards a committed employee as a firm resource or asset that is able to generate value or competitive advantage by being rare and difficult to imitate by rival firms. This competitive advantage translates in to positive organisational outcomes, including SST for the benefit the organisation.

An argument is put forward that the paybacks of JCT on SST can be facilitated by adopting an innovative approach to management which will improve the work methods and processes in the educational setting, referred to as total quality management (here after, TQM). Adopting and executing this continuous improvement strategy will

Department of Management Science, Nobel International Business School (NiBS), Accra, Ghana

**) corresponding author*

Samuel Koomson

Email: skoomson68@gmail.com

improve work methods and processes in the educational institution to foster SST. This argument is grounded in the affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This theory assumes that a committed employee would be more likely to show positive emotional events at the workplace, such as feeling of responsibility, enthusiasm and appetite for new challenges. These positive emotional events would affect his/her willingness to be part of the team assigned with the responsibility of implementing the TQM strategy to eventually improve SST. The affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) is also useful in explaining the mediating influence of information communication technology adoption (hereafter, ADT) on the relationship between JCT and SST. According to the theory, a committed employee would be more likely to show positive emotional events at work, and these positive emotional events would affect his/her willingness adopt information communication technology to foster organisational outcomes, including SST for the well-being of the educational institution.

Aside the resource-based theory of the firm (Barney, 1991) and the affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), this study employs the activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) to argue for a potential moderating role of toxic leadership (here after, TLE), a psychosocial stressor, in the direct relationship between JCT and SST, such that the direct positive relationship between JCT and SST is weakened in a working environment where the leader/supervisor shows high-TLE, but strengthened within the context of low-TLE. The activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) assumes that too much stress, in the form of high-TLE from a leader/supervisor, can demoralise a committed employee and negate his/her tendency to undertake in activities that will improve organisational objectives, including satisfying students. Toxic leaders abuse the leader-follower relationship. They lie frequently, are arrogant, incompetent on their job, selfish, discriminate against employees, and create a toxic environment. Their actions are self-destructive and, ultimately, corporately harmful, as they subvert and destroy organisational structures.

The activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) is also useful in understanding the moderating role of job demands (hereafter, JDD), a physical and psychological stressor, in the direct relationship between JCT and SST, such that the direct positive relationship between JCT and SST is weakened under high-JDD, but reinforced under low-JDD. The activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) holds that too much stress, in the form high work pressure and emotional demands, can demoralise a committed employee to perform, particularly for complex and difficult task (Gardner, 1990), and negate his/her tendency to undertake in activities that will foster organisational goals. JDD are physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skills. They are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Examples are work pressure and emotional demands. The consequences of continuous job strain are depletion of energy and health problems.

However, literature addressing the relationship between JCT and SST is in dearth. Close existing studies have focused in the relationship between JCT and citizenship behaviour (Koomson, 2021a), and between job satisfaction and citizenship behaviour (Abdullah, 2018; Koomson & Opoku Mensah, 2020). Besides, there is paucity of literature addressing the mediating effects of TQM and ADT (independently and jointly) between JCT and SST. Existing studies in the area used creatively (Ismail, Iqbal, &

Nasr, 2018), job satisfaction (Al-dalalmeh, Khalaf, & Obeidat, 2018) and organisational job-embeddedness (Kapil & Rastogi, 2019) as mediators. Also, literature addressing the moderating effects of TLE and JDD between JCT and SST is hard to find. The close studies found employed psychological contract breach (Koomson, 2021c), transformational leadership (Beatrice, 2020), and abusive supervision (Teng, Cheng, & Chen, 2021) as moderator variables. To this end, this paper examines the relationship between JCM on SST, exploring the mediating roles of TQM and ADT, as well as moderating roles of TLE and JDD.

Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to explore six research questions:

- *RQ1.* How does employee JCT improve SST?
- *RQ2.* How does employee JCT affect TQM to foster SST?
- *RQ3.* How does employee JCT affect ADT to improve SST?
- *RQ4.* How does employee JCT affect TQM and ADT jointly to improve SST?
- *RQ5.* What is the moderating effect of TLE between JCT and SST?
- *RQ6.* What is the moderating role of JDD between JCT and SST?

To explore the above-stated research questions, this paper uses theoretical and empirical issues to assess how JCT improves SST, how JCT affects TQM to foster SST, how JCT affects ADT to improve SST, how JCT affects TQM and ADT jointly to improve SST, and the moderating effects of TLE and JDD between JCT and SST.

Theoretical Development

Employees' Job Commitment (JCT) and Student Satisfaction (SST)

Employee JCT is the employee's enthusiasm to exercise the best and maximum efforts and potential, just for the sake of his/her organisation (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). It is the feeling of responsibility that a person has towards the goals, mission, and vision of the organisation he/she is associated with (Koomson, 2021b). There appears to be a possible positive relationship between employee JCT and SST, and this positive relationship is grounded in the resource-based theory of a firm (Barney, 1991). The resource-based theory regards a committed employee as a firm resource or asset that is able to generate value or competitive advantage by being rare and difficult to imitate by rival firms. This competitive advantage converts into positive organisational outcomes, in the form of SST, for the benefit the educational institution.

The proposed positive relationship between employee JCT and SST is also supported by the findings of earlier researchers. For example, Koomson (2021a) shows that a committed physician is more likely to show demonstrate high citizenship behaviours at work. Abdullah (2018) reveals that a direct positive effect of job satisfaction on organisational citizenship behaviour of teachers drawn from public vocational high schools in Indonesia. Koomson and Opoku Mensah (2020) also find a direct positive connection between job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours of in Ghana. SST is a short term attitude resulting from an evaluation of students'

educational experience, services and facilities (Weerasinghe, Lalitha, & Fernando, 2017).

Improving SST is central to the existence of higher education institutions. SST is a positive antecedent of student loyalty. SST is manifested in student's grade point average, quality of lecturers, quality of physical facilities, effective use of technology, lecturer-student relationship, quality of instructions, teaching style, and quality of feedback. A satisfied student is likely to recommend the school to his/her friends and family. He/she is less likely to drop out or transfer to another school. Consequently, employee JCT can be a strong cornerstone resource or capability for enhancing SST. In the light of this discussion, this paper proposes that employee JCT has a direct positive relationship with SST.

- *P1.* JCT is positively related to SST.

Mediating Roles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Information Communication Technology Adoption (ADT) between Employee Job Commitment (JCT) and Student Satisfaction (SST).

This paper argues that, the direct positive relationship between JCT and SST is mediated by TQM, and this argument is explained by the affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This theory assumes that a committed employee would be more likely to show positive emotional events at the workplace, such as feeling of responsibility, enthusiasm and appetite for new challenges. These positive emotional events would affect his/her willingness to be part of the team assigned with the responsibility of implementing the TQM strategy to eventually improve SST. Adopting and executing this innovative and creative approach to management will improve work methods and processes in the educational institution to foster SST. This argument is supported by a closely-related empirical study by Ismail et al. (2018), in which the authors disclose that creatively fully mediated the direct relationship between employee engagement and job performance.

The affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) is also beneficial in clarifying the mediating influence of employee ADT in the relationship between JCT and SST. According to the theory, a committed employee would be more likely to show positive emotional events at work, and these positive emotional events would affect his/her willingness adopt information communication technology to foster organisational outcomes, including SST for the well-being of the educational institution. This argument is backed by a closely-related empirical studies. To exemplify, Al-dalameh et al. (2018) reveals that job satisfaction partially mediated the direct relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance. Kapil and Rastogi (2019) discover that employee's organisational job-embeddedness partial mediated employee engagement-citizenship behaviour nexus. Ahad and Khan (2020) also find that employees' experience partially mediated employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour.

To guarantee successful implementation of SST strategies, JCT, TQM and ADT are all required in every process of the higher educational institutions business model. Without these three activities, the quest to ensure and improve SST will be difficult to accomplish. Hence, this paper expect TQM and ADT to mediate the positive effect of JCT on SST.

- *P2.* TQM will positively mediate the relationship between JCT and SST.
- *P3.* ADT will positively mediate the connection between JCT and SST.
- *P4.* TQM and ADT will jointly and positively mediate the *connection* between JCT and SST.

Moderating Roles of Work-Related Stressors: Toxic Leadership (TLE) and Job Demands (JDD) between Employee Job Commitment (JCT) and Student Satisfaction (SST)

This study employs another influential theory: the activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) to argue for a potential moderating role of TLE, a psychosocial stressor, in the direct relationship between JCT and SST, such that the direct positive relationship between JCT and SST is weakened in a working environment where the leader/supervisor shows high-TLE, but strengthened within the context of low-TLE. The activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) assumes that too much stress, in the form of high-TLE from a leader/supervisor, can demoralise a committed employee and negate his/her tendency to undertake in activities that will improve organisational objectives, including satisfying students. Toxic leaders abuse the leader-follower relationship. They lie frequently, are arrogant, incompetent on their job, selfish, discriminate against employees, and create a toxic environment. Their actions are self-destructive and, ultimately, corporately harmful, as they subvert and destroy organisational structures.

The activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) is also useful in understanding the moderating role of JDD, a physical and psychological stressor, in the direct relationship between JCT and SST, such that the direct positive relationship between JCT and SST is weakened under high-JDD, but reinforced under low-JDD. The activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988) holds that too much stress, in the form high work pressure and emotional demands, can demoralise a committed employee to perform, particularly for complex and difficult task (Gardner, 1990), and negate his/her tendency to undertake in activities that will improve organisational goals. JDD are physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skills. They are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Examples are work pressure and emotional demands. The consequences of continuous job strain are depletion of energy and health problems.

The argument of the moderating role of TLE and JDD between JCT and SST is backed by a closely-related empirical studies. To illustrate, Beatrice (2020) reveals that more-transformational leadership strengthens the psychological capital-employee engagement relationship than less-transformational leadership. Teng et al. (2021) find that high-abusive supervision weakens the obsessive passion-job embeddedness relationship than low-abusive supervision. Koomson (2021) also discovers that psychological contract breach demoralised satisfied physicians from showing organisational citizenship behaviour. Thus, this paper postulates that TLE and JDD will negatively moderate the JCT-SST relationship.

- *P5.* TLE will negatively moderate the relationship between JCT and SST.
- *P6.* JDD will negatively moderate the connection between JCT and SST.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework originating from the above discussion is demonstrated in Figure 1. The postulations are symbolised as $P1$, $P2$, $P3$, $P4$, $P5$ and $P6$. The postulations explaining the positive effect of JCT on SST ($P1$), the positive mediating effects of TQM ($P2$) independently, ADT ($P3$) independently and TQM+ADT ($P4$) jointly between JCT and SST are symbolised by solid lines; while the dotted lines symbolise the negative moderating

effect of TLE ($P5$) and JDD ($P6$) on the positive direct relationship between JCT and SST. Here, ($P1$) explains how JCT improves SST. Likewise, ($P2$) explains how JCT affects TQM to foster SST. Similarly, ($P3$) explains how JCT affects ADT to improve SST. In similar fashion, ($P4$) explains how JCT affects TQM and ADT jointly (TQM+ADT) to improve SST. The remaining postulation sex plicates the working environment or condition (TLE, JDD) under which JCT–SST relationship can either be strengthened or weakened.

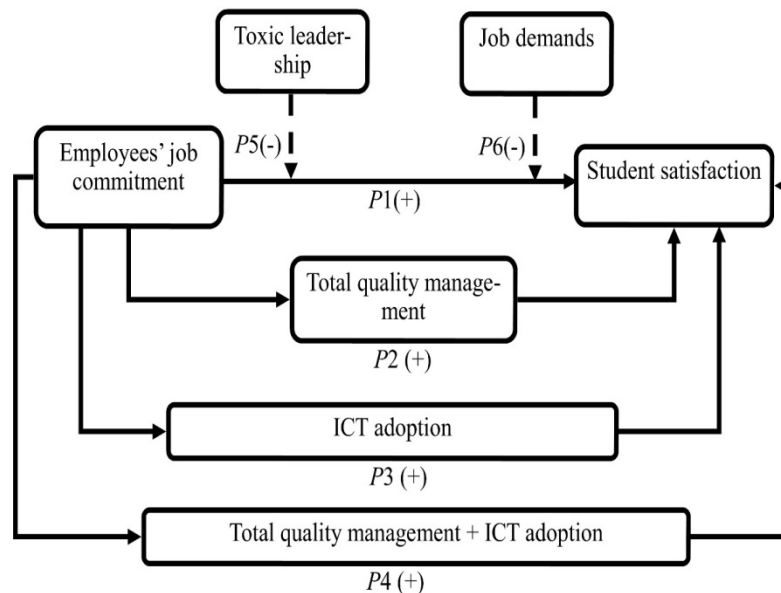


Figure 1. Conceptual model

DISCUSSION

This paper contributes in diverse ways. In the first place, it integrates and lengthens the literature on five independent fields of study: JCT, TQM, ADT, TLE and JDD, the first being an employee well-being tool, the second being a strategic management tool, the third being an information communication technology tool, the fourth being a leadership tool, and the fifth being a work and organisational psychology tool. Thus, this present study exceeds a single discipline, making interdisciplinary. Secondly, to the best of my knowledge, this is the only study that addresses the indirect effects of TQM and ADT on the direct relationship between employee JCT and SST, dwelling on the resource-based theory (Barney, 1991) and affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) as theoretical foundations. Thirdly, as much as I am aware, this study is unique because it illustrates the working environment or condition (TLE, JDD) under which employee JCT–SST relationship can be enhanced, with theoretical support from resource-based theory (Barney, 1991) and general contingency theory (Luthans & Stewart, 1977).

Upcoming researchers may empirical test this conceptual framework and postulations in different higher educational settings. Specifically, they may empirical test how JCT affects SST, since there is a dearth of literature in this area. Furthermore, they could examine how TQM and ADT will independently and jointly mediate between employee JCT and SST, since earlier researchers have found empirical support for the mediating roles of other variables, namely creatively (Ismail et al., 2018), job satisfaction (Al-dalalmeh et al., 2018), and organisational

job-embeddedness (Kapil & Rastogi, 2019) on a similar direct path. Additionally, future researchers may empirically test the working environment or condition (TLE, JDD) under which the employee JCT–SST relationship can be strengthened or weakened, following the findings of closely-related existing studies (Beatrice, 2020; Koomson, 2021c; Teng et al., 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper made the attempt to explore the direct relationship between employee JCT and SST. Again, it addresses the effect of employee JCT on TQM and its subsequent impact on SST. In addition, it explores the effect of employee JCT on ADT and its resulting effect on SST. Also, it addresses the effect of employee JCT on both TQM and ADT (TQM+ADT) and their subsequent impact on SST. It further explores the working environment or condition (TLE, JDD) under which employee JCT–SST relationship can be enhanced or weakened by proposing a conceptual business model with testable postulations. This paper highlights the role of employee JCT as an employee well-being tool, TQM as a strategic management tool, and ADT as an information communication and technology tool for boosting SST in higher educational institutions. In addition, this paper informs higher educational institutions on the essence of creating a fit between employee JCT and working conditions (TLE, JDD), which has implications for SST. Along with implications for both practitioners and researchers, this paper also recommended directions for further research to enrich the fields.

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