

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a recapitulation of the research which includes a summary of the research findings and discussion of the findings with relation to the study model. The discussion also includes interpretation of the relationships among study variables i.e. between work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. Accordingly, the attainment of each research objective is concluded based on the findings of this study.

6.2 The Study

The vast changes of employment relationships especially in terms of staffing and scheduling practices which involve standard and non-standard practices have been recent concerns of scholars, practitioners, policy makers, employees as well as communities. The rapid revolutions of technology, businesses, demographics and social environments have formulated the increasing need for flexible working arrangements that satisfy both organisational and employees' requirements. Hence, the increasing competition and variations in consumer demands have transformed the standard work arrangements into more flexible ones that include non-standard work status and work schedule.

At the same time, these non-standard work arrangements are promoted as initiatives to enhance employees' work-life balance by providing flexibility and opportunities to meet non-work needs while maintaining demands at work. However, past studies have shown that there were employees who might enjoy or detest the staffing and scheduling arrangements they were working on, which resulted in positive or negative work-related attitudes such as job satisfaction and affective commitment (e.g. Han et al., 2009; Martin & Sinclair, 2007; Maynard et al., 2006). Hence, recent research had proven that work status congruence that took into account employee matched, or congruent preferences for standard or non-standard staffing and scheduling arrangements, was positively related to employees' work-related attitudes (Wittmer & Martin, 2011; Holtom et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the effect of work status congruence towards the employees' work-life balance was not yet tested.

Therefore, this study aimed to establish if work status congruence is related to satisfaction with work-life balance, while confirming past studies' suggestions of positive relationships between work status congruence and work-related attitudes, and between satisfaction with work-life balance and work-related attitudes, as well as between job satisfaction and affective commitment. In addition, this study targeted to investigate the mediating role of satisfaction with work-life balance in the relationship between work status congruence and work-related attitudes, and the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationships between work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, and affective commitment in a single study. Hence, this study hypothesised a comprehensive research model encompassing four main variables, i.e. work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction, and affective commitment as was shown in Figure 3.1.

The hypothesised complete partially mediated model is proposed in this study to close the knowledge gaps through various and simultaneous assessment using structural equation modelling (SEM). Satisfaction with work-life balance and job satisfaction were also examined as the mediating mechanisms that explain these relationships. Besides, the relationship between the demographics characteristics and all study variables were assessed as well. Data analyses were conducted based on a sample size of 893 respondents.

6.3 The Findings

The findings of this study provided additional information about how work status congruence was related with satisfaction with work-life balance as well as with work-related attitudes, i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment of services sector employees in Malaysia as exhibited in the research model (Figure 3.1). The results of item-total correlations analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and reliability tests affirm the measurements developed by prominent researchers in the past that were used in this study. For work status congruence measures, which were adapted from Holtom et al. (2002), modification to include other work status of contract and temporary (originally applicable for full-time and part-time only) have resulted in satisfactory reliability of .78 and accounted for 13.25 per cent of the variance, as per exploratory factor analysis.

This study also validated the new and holistic measures of satisfaction with work-life balance, adapted from the original measures of satisfaction with work-family balance by Valcour (2007), which were adjusted by rephrasing some words in the items from 'family' to 'non-work' in order to take into account other life's interests instead of family only. The results indicated a very satisfactory reliability of .94 and accounted for

23.84 per cent of the variance as per exploratory factor analysis with no item being dropped. Other fully adopted measures of job satisfaction and affective commitment were also verified in this study with all items maintained and satisfactory results of reliabilities of .84 and .77 respectively.

The measurements of work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction and affective commitment were further validated in this study using analysis of structural equation modelling (SEM). All four main variables were free from multicollinearity problems. Further, confirmatory factor analysis verified the convergent and discriminant validity of the four constructs of work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction, and affective commitment with the proposed four factor measurement model providing the best fit to the data, with a CFI of .95, TLI of .95, and GFI of .94 ($\chi^2 = 675.93$, $df = 200$, ratio = 3.38; RMSEA = .05). The results of the structural model assessment also indicated that all the paths between all of the four variables in this study were significantly and positively related with each other. Further discussions of main findings in relation to the objectives and hypotheses of this study are discussed in the following sub-sections.

6.3.1 Demographics Characteristics and Study Variables

The majority of the respondents were female employees (76 per cent), who were mostly of Malay ethnicity (60 per cent), of age less than 30 (61 per cent), holding diplomas, certificates, or secondary school education qualifications (87 per cent), earning gross monthly income of less than RM2000 (70 per cent), and working less than three years in their organisations (75 per cent) in customer service, frontline, or sales (67 per cent). These demographic findings were in accordance with the population of services

employees in Malaysia (Key Indicator of the Labour Market Malaysia 2001-2010, 1/2011, Table 2.1, 2.2, 4.4, & 6.1).

Most of the respondents were standard or permanent full-time employees (75 per cent), and only 25 per cent of them were non-standard worker (i.e. part-time, contract, or temporary). The proportion of this standard and non-standard work status was probably the actual phenomenon in Malaysia (the data was not made publicly available by the authorities). A similar proportion was also found by prior researchers in other countries (e.g. Maynard et al., 2006; Armstrong-Stassen et al., 1998). However, the respondents irrespective standard or non-standard status (85 per cent) were mainly working non-standard work schedule (e.g. flexi-time, shift, compressed week) and only 15 per cent were working standard or normal work schedule. The results of cross-tabulation affirmed that there were no significant differences among standard and non-standard employees with regard to their standard or non-standard work schedule. Thus, the non-separation in assessing congruent preferences both work status and work schedule in this study was valid and as accordance to work status congruence studies (Holtom et al., 2002).

Additionally, independent sample t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to find the significant mean differences among the demographic groups with regard to all four variables in this study of work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction and affective commitment. In short, the findings showed that there were significant differences between groups of genders in terms of work status congruence, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. However, single and married employees were found to be significantly differed in terms of satisfaction with work-life balance only. Nonetheless, employees in both groups of age and job

designation level were significantly different in terms of work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance.

On the other hand, standard and non-standard workers were significantly varied in terms of all other study variables except for work status congruence. However, employees working standard or non-standard work schedule were found not to be significantly different in terms of all other study variables except for affective commitment only. In addition, there were significant differences among employees from different organisation types with regard to both work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. The following sub-sections discuss the findings in accordance with each demographic details of this study in relations of all study variables.

6.3.1.1 *Gender and Study Variables*

Among the groups of gender, the findings of independent sample t-test showed that male employees were significantly higher in their favourable perceptions towards congruent preferences of their staffing (i.e. full-time, part-time, contract, or temporary) and scheduling (i.e. standard/normal or non-standard/non-normal) arrangements as compared to their female counterparts. These findings were in accordance to Van Emmerik and Sanders' (2005) study which found that mismatch of favourable work schedules were higher among female workers as compared to male workers.

Male employees were also statistically and significantly higher as compared to their female counterparts in terms of work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. Hence, this study affirmed the earlier studies such as by Chang and Liao (2009) and Feldman (2006) that found male employees were feeling more satisfied with

their overall jobs as compared to female employees. This study also corroborated Van Emmrick and Sanders (2005) who suggested that male workers were more affectively committed to their organisations as compared to female workers.

The findings of this study may imply that since the study was conducted in Malaysia which is a country of quite high masculinity culture, male employees might be enjoying more work status congruence and work-related attitudes because they were somewhat given more priority or respect in terms of opting the desired working arrangements thus affecting more job satisfaction and affective commitment as compared to female workers. However, this study also affirmed that there were no significant differences among gender in terms of their satisfaction with work-life balance thus indicating both male and female employees were equally stressing the importance of balance between their work and non-work lives.

6.3.1.2 Marital Status and Study Variables

On the other hand, the results of independent sample t-tests in this study found that employees with different marital status were significantly different in terms of their satisfaction with work-life balance, where married employees were more satisfied with their work-life balance as compared to the single employees. Hence, this study corroborated a few studies in the past such as Buehler and O'Brien (2011), who acknowledged that married employees were better than singles in balancing their work and non-work demands. This indirectly reflects the role played by a spouse to help in balancing work and life. However, the findings of this study also discovered that there were no significant differences between single and married employees with regard to their work related attitudes and congruent preferences for work status, schedule, shift,

and hours. Therefore, this study affirmed that employees' perceptions or attitudes towards their work would not necessarily take into account of their marital status.

6.3.1.3 Age and Study Variables

Meanwhile the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in this study had found that young employees (i.e. below 40 years old) had significantly lower work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance as compared to older workers (i.e. above 40 years old). These results verified Wittmer and Martin's (2011) discovery that older workers had higher work status congruence as compared to younger employees. Similarly, studies by Higgins et al. (2009) and Hill et al. (2004) also found that older workers experiencing higher work-life balance as compared to younger employees. Conversely, the findings of this study also revealed that there were no significant differences between the various age groups of employees in relations to their work related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. For that reason, this study showed that employees' attitudes towards their work would not necessarily depending on their age.

6.3.1.4 Job Designation Level and Study Variables

Additionally, the ANOVA results of this study showed that there were significant differences in terms of job designation level with regard to work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance. To be exact, the findings showed that lower-level employees such as clericals, back office or support staff had significantly more congruent preferences for staffing and scheduling arrangements as compared to higher-level employees such as supervisors, officers, executives, managers, head of

departments. These results proved Feldman's (2006) claim that job designation level was significantly and positively related with voluntariness aspects of staffing and scheduling practices.

Another possible justification of this finding is that the lower level employees were normally eligible for certain compensation if they were required to work non-standard such as shift allowance, overtime payment, etc. In comparison, higher level employees who normally would not be receiving extra incentives since their pay commensurate with their duties. This might impinge on their feeling of less congruent in terms of preferred work status, schedule, shift, and hours.

The findings of this study also revealed that supervisors, officers, or executives were found to have significantly higher satisfaction with work-life balance than their lower level colleagues (i.e. frontline, customer services, or sales) Hence, this study confirmed Tomlinson (2006), who suggested that there were comparable differences in terms of job level with regard to work-life balance, in which lower-level and younger employees mostly faced less work-life balance.

The findings also showed that supervisors, officers, or executives were found to have significantly higher satisfaction with work-life balance compared to their superiors (i.e. managers or head of departments). This possibly implied that the higher ranking employee had more accountability which had an impact on the balance of their work and life in comparison to middle level of management.

In contrast, this study also established that there were no significant differences among various job designation level groups of employees with regard to their work related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. For that reason, this study acknowledged that employees' attitudes towards their work would not necessarily depend on their position or ranking but might hinge on other work characteristics such as companies practice and atmosphere. Hence, this study validated Thorsteinson's (2003) meta-analytic review that suggested job designation level did not appear to be an important factor for employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment.

6.3.1.5 Work Status and Study Variables

Among standard and non-standard workers, the findings of independent sample t-test showed that standard or permanent full-time employees were significantly more satisfied with their work-life balance as compared to their non-standard counterparts (i.e. part-time, contract, or temporary employees). This study therefore, supports previous researches by Davis-Blake, Broschak, and George (2003), and Barnett and Gareis (2002) that standard employees significantly enjoyed better balance between their work and non-work lives as compared to non-standard employees.

This study also found that standard employees such as full-time and permanent workers were significantly higher than non-standard workers in terms of their work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. These findings were in agreement to previous studies by Giannikis and Mihail (2011) and Cooke et al. (2009), who claimed that standard (i.e. permanent) workers were found to enjoy higher job satisfaction than non-standard (i.e. temporary) employees. Furthermore, the results of this study were in line with past studies of work status that found standard full time or

permanent employees were more affectively committed towards their organisations as compared to non-standard workers such as part-time, contract or temporary employees (e.g. Wittmer & Martin, 2011; Han et al., 2009).

However, this study also affirmed that there were no significant differences between work status and work status congruence although in average employees working standard work schedule were more congruent in terms of their preferred working and scheduling arrangements as compared to employees working non-standard work schedule (i.e. mean value of 5.53). This insignificant result showed that both standard and non-standard employees perceived similar congruent level in terms of their preferences for work status, schedule, shift, and hours. The insignificant differences in terms of work status congruence among standard and non-standard employees discovered through this study confirmed Maynard et al.'s (2006) findings that there were no significant differences between standard and non-standard workers in terms of their preferences for work status. Likewise, this study inveterated Krausz et al.'s (2000) study, who found no significant differences in terms of preferences for work schedule among employees who were working in standard or non-standard work schedule.

Therefore, these findings inferred that preferences for standard or non-standard working arrangements such as work status, schedule, shift and hours rested upon each employee's unique motives and circumstances. In other words, the results of this study demonstrated that one cannot presume that permanent full-time employees were more agreeable to their work status and scheduling arrangements as compared to part-time or contract workers, since they might have wanted to work on a non-standard work status in order to enjoy more flexibility or for any other reasons. Past studies of Moore (2007) and Maynard et al. (2006) suggested that standard or non-standard employees might

possibly enter certain kind of employment arrangements voluntarily or involuntarily based on their own motives and reasons. Carr et al. (2010) also contended that there might be standard workers who disliked their staffing and scheduling arrangements.

6.3.1.6 *Work Schedule and Study Variables*

On the other hand, the results of independent sample t-tests in this study found that groups of work schedule were significantly different in relations to one out of the four study variables only, i.e. affective commitment. Employees working non-standard work schedule such as flexi-time, shifts, compressed work week, etc. were more affectively committed as compared to the employees working standard work schedule. In addition, although in average employees working non-standard work schedule were also more satisfied with their jobs as compared to the employees working standard work schedule, but the results were not significant. This supports McNall et al. (2010) and Ellingson et al. (1998). Employees working in a non-standard schedule perhaps perceived more favourable attitudes and affective commitment as compared to employees working normal work schedule due to the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of flexibility.

Ultimately, this study discovered that there were no significant differences between work schedule and work status congruence. Hence, both employees working standard work schedule and those who were working otherwise did not perceive differently in terms of whether they were working their preferred work status, schedule, shift, and hours. The insignificant differences between work schedule and work status congruence inveterate Krausz et al.'s (2000) study, who found no significant differences in terms of preferences for work schedule among employees who were working in standard or non-standard work schedule.

In other words, the results of this study verified the conception that one cannot assume that employees working non-standard work schedule were more agreeable to their work status and scheduling arrangements, as they might have been involuntarily working such arrangements. Based on the insignificant differences between work status and work status congruence as well as between work schedule and work status congruence as discussed in sub-section 6.3.1.5 and 6.3.1.6, this study affirmed the notion that the results of prior studies on working and scheduling arrangements were inconsistent due to non consideration of employees' preferences for such work arrangements, resulting in inconsistent results (e.g. Han et al., 2009; Cooke et al., 2009).

Correspondingly, the t-test results also exposed that there was no significant differences between work schedule and satisfaction with work-life balance. Since this study utilised the concept of work-life balance as the extension of previous study of work-family balance (i.e. the opposite continuum of work-family conflict), thus, the results of the non-significant differences among employees working standard and non-standard work schedule had extended the previous study by Liu et al.'s (2011) who found no significance differences between work schedule and work-family conflict.

Therefore, this study proved that workers enjoying flexible work schedule would not necessarily be more satisfied with their work-life balance. Therefore, the results of this study in terms of insignificant differences between work schedule (e.g. standard or non-standard) and satisfaction with work-life balance have corroborated the inconsistent results of past studies that overlooked the consideration of employee' congruent preferences for their work status and their work schedule as depicted by Van Rijswijk et al. (2004). The results of this study also affirmed the suggestion by Tausig and Fenwick

(2001) that the balance between employee's work and life domains shall depend on the individual's circumstances of such working arrangements.

6.3.1.7 Organisation Type and Study Variables

Since this study aimed to enhance the generalisation of its findings towards all services employees, there were five types of services organisations that were involved namely two banks, two restaurants, one hotel, one hospital and one supermarket. Therefore, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find whether there were any significant differences between organisation type and study variables. The results showed that there were only significant differences in terms of work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment among employees from various types of services organisations.

Specifically, the findings exhibited in terms of job satisfaction, bank employees were the lowest compared to restaurants and hospital workers. In terms of affective commitment, bank and hospital employees were significantly lesser than employees in supermarket. These results could be related to differences in nature of jobs between various organisations. The more stressful condition of a job in a bank might lower an employee's work attitudes. Likewise, Holtom et al.'s (2002) study also found that hospital employees' were less satisfied and less committed as compared to retail workers.

Interestingly, this study also discovered that there were no significance differences among employees from different types of services organisation in terms of their work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance. For that reason, this study

recognised that employees' congruent preferences towards their working and scheduling arrangements, as well as their favourable feelings towards their work and life balance would not necessarily depend on the type of services organisation they were working for. Hence, this study supported Thorsteinson's (2003) meta-analytic review of non-standard employment studies, as well as Chang et al.'s meta-analytic review of work-life balance studies, which found that organisation type did not appear to be important for employees' perceptions towards their working arrangements and work-life balance.

As a whole, the results of this study discovered that there were no demographic characteristics (i.e. gender, marital status, age, job designation level, work status, work schedule, or organisation type) that significantly differed across all four study variables of work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. Therefore, multiple group comparison analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) would not be carried out to compare the hypothesised research model among the demographic groups or to find any moderating role of this study's demographic characteristics.

However, based on certain significant differences among some of demographic groups in relation to certain variables, this study's sixth objective to ascertain such phenomenon is achieved. Nonetheless, based on the results of this study as stipulated in Tables 5.8 and 5.9, the discrepancy model (Lawler, 1973) which suggested congruent preferences for work status, schedule, shift, and hours positively affecting work-related attitudes was affirmed to be different between the genders. Hence, this study extended the researches by Holtom et al. (2002) and Carr et al. (2010) who applied similar theoretical underpinning but were lacking in terms of analysis of differences among studied employees. This research also affirmed the theoretical proposition of work

status congruence relatedness towards the underdeveloped studies of work-life balance and both constructs appeared to be significantly different among age and job designation level. Hence, the working arrangements that suit employees' preferences and their non-life needs would relate to their age and job position (Wittmer & Martin, 2011).

6.3.2 Work Status Congruence and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance

Work status congruence was proposed as the predictor of satisfaction with work-life balance. Based on the findings of this study as depicted in Table 5.6, in average services employees were found to slightly agree (i.e. means of 4.54 or 65 per cent) that their work status, schedule, shift, and hours were congruent with their preferences. The findings of structural equation modelling (SEM) as portrayed in Figure 5.3 and Appendix E had established that work status congruence appeared to be a significant predictor that was significantly and positively related to satisfaction with work-life balance. Thus, the result supported Hypothesis 1.

The findings implied that the degree to which an employee's schedule, shift, full-time or part-time status, and number of working hours, matched his or her preferences, was critical for the employee's satisfaction with his or her work-life balance. In other words, the more an employee feels that his or her work status, schedule, shift and hours matches with his or her preferences, the more he or she will be satisfied with the balance between his or her work and non-work lives.

The results of this study extended Thorsteinson's (2003) and Voydanoff's (2005) suggestions that the congruent job circumstances (e.g. person-job fit) would cause a positive feeling of one-self's work and non-work (e.g. job-life fit). The findings also supported Moore's (2007) contention that the impact of flexible working practices such as non-standard work status or work schedule, towards work-life balance depends on the circumstances of the individual. The results of this study supported the Van Rijswijk et al.'s (2004) study that the differences in individual motives or preferences may explain the conflicting results of prior studies about the effects of non-standard working arrangements towards employee's work-life balance.

Furthermore, the results of positive relationship between work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance validated Jang et al.'s (2011) claim that the ability to choose the preferred non-standard work schedule shall reduce the conflict of managing work and non-work demands. In addition, this study has also supported Tausig and Fenwick's (2001) suggestions that the balance of an employee's work and life shall depend on the extent of his or her matched voluntariness with the company's work-life balance policies and practices such as non-standard working arrangements.

In summary, this study successfully extended the studies by Holtom et al (2002) and Carr et al. (2010) in terms of the work status congruence which was based on the discrepancy theory by Lawler (1973); that assessed the degree of congruent preferences and motives of employees in terms of work-life balance practices, i.e. non-standard work status and schedule, was proven to influence the perceptions of work-life balance. Therefore, the first objective of this study has been achieved since work status congruence was found to be positively related to satisfaction with work-life balance.

Additionally, this study established empirical evidence in proving work status congruence as a better conceptualisation and measurement to overcome the inconsistent definitional and methodological problems in the past studies of non-standard work arrangements (Walker, 2011) as well as extended the theoretical underpinning of the discrepancy model to the under-developed studies of work-life balance (Chang et al., 2010).

6.3.3 Work Status Congruence and Work-Related Attitudes

Work status congruence was also proposed as the predictor of work-related attitudes i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment. Based on the findings of this study as depicted in Figure 5.3 and Appendix E, work status congruence happened to be a significant predictor that was significantly and positively related to both job satisfaction and affective commitment. Hence, both Hypotheses 2 and 3 have been supported. These findings suggested that the greater the match between what the employee prefers and what he or she is actually getting in terms of status, schedule, shift and hours, the better the employee's work attitudes in terms of job satisfaction and affective commitment. Since both Hypotheses 2 and 3 were supported, these findings are evidently in agreement with the assumptions of the discrepancy theory which predicted that, when employees obtain desired amounts of job related outcomes, they will exhibit higher levels of positive work-related attitudes.

These results were also paralleled with past studies of work status congruence (i.e. Holtom et al., 2002; Carr et al., 2010; Wittmer & Martin, 2011). Holtom et al. (2002) found there were positive and significant associations between work status congruence and job satisfaction; and between work status congruence and affective commitment in

samples of full-time and part-time employees. Holtom et al.'s (2001) study was replicated by Carr et al. (2010), who assessed the moderating role of procedural justice in the relationship between work status congruence and affective commitment using samples of full-time employees. They found that work status congruence was significantly and positively related with affective commitment, and the presence of procedural justice had a suppressive effect on this relationship. Though Wittmer and Martin (2011) conceptualised work status congruence as congruent preferences for work status only (i.e. not also included the congruent preferences for work schedule as in Holtom et al., 2002), they also found similar positive relationship between work status congruence and both job satisfaction and affective commitment as indicated in this study.

Consequently, the results of these hypotheses have verified past studies' assertions in terms of the effects of voluntariness of motives or reasons for joining standard or non-standard working arrangements towards work-related attitudes (e.g. Boo et al., 2010; De Jong & Schalk, 2010). For instance, the results of this study affirmed Thorsteinson's (2003) statement in his meta-analytic review that the differences of attitudes among standard or non-standard employees did not exist due to their status only but due to the extent of their voluntariness in pursuing such work status. Burke and Greenglass (2000) found that employees who were working their preferred or chosen work status (i.e. congruent preferences) were more satisfied than employees who were not working according to their preferred work status (i.e. incongruent preferences).

Additionally, the significant findings of positive relationship between work status congruence and work-related attitudes were in concordance with many studies that stressed the congruency of employee preferences not only for work status, but included

preferences for work schedule, shift and hours as well. For example, Lee and Johnson (1991) found preferences for work schedule as a significant predictor of organisational commitment but did not find preferences for work status to be a significant predictor. Morrow et al. (1994) found that preferences for standard or non-standard employment had small effect on work-related attitudes; instead preferences with regard to work schedule and shift were more significantly related with work attitudes. Further, Walsh and Deery (1999) suggested that work schedule and work hours not in line with workers' preferences might reduce their satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The results of this study also confirmed the Krausz et al.'s (2000) notion of psychological continuous measurement that includes congruent preferences for work status and work schedule, that was proved to have significant positive relationship with employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment (not measured as affective commitment). Taken together, this study has achieved its second objective thus corresponding with past studies of work status congruence that tend to suggest that when there was a match or congruent between employees' preferences and their actual work arrangements in terms of work status, schedule, shift, and hours; employees were more likely to feel more satisfied with their jobs as well as more affectively committed towards their organisations.

6.3.4 Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance and Work-Related Attitudes

Satisfaction with work-life balance was proposed as the predictor of work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. Based on the findings of this study as depicted in Table 5.6, in average services employees were found to be satisfied (i.e. means of 5.14 or 73 per cent) with the balance between their work and life. The

findings of structural equation modelling (SEM) as portrayed in Figure 5.3 and Appendix E had confirmed that satisfaction with work-life balance occurred to be a positive and significant determinant of employees' work-related attitudes of both job satisfaction and work-related attitudes. Hence, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were supported.

Consequently, these findings were consistent with the past research that supported the positive relationship between work-life balance and work attitudes (Virick et al., 2007; Kanwar et al., 2009; Jang et al., 2011). According to Aryee et al. (2005), drawing on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), positive experience of managing both work and out-of-work activities was found to improve job satisfaction and affective commitment. Kanwar et al. (2009) found that an increase of work-life balance has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Additionally, the results of this study extended the studies of work-family balance that also found positive relationship between work-family enrichment and work-related attitudes. For example, Baral and Bhargava (2010) found that employees who felt they had balance between their work and family life would be more satisfied in terms of their jobs and were more affectively committed towards their organisations. In summary, the results of this study concurred with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggestion that individuals would strive to reciprocate those who benefited them. In other words, the positive feeling that employees enjoying in terms of balance between their work and life shall be responded with positive attitudes.

Therefore, this study apart from verifying the findings of previous research, in terms of positive relationship between satisfaction with work-life balance and employees' work-related attitudes i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment, it has also extended the

concept of satisfaction with work-family balance [by Valcour (2007)] as the significant predictor of work attitudes. Valcour's (2007) measurement that was adapted in this study as satisfaction with work-life balance instead of satisfaction with work-family balance was tested as a better construct to overcome inconsistent operationalisation of positive interactions of work and non-work domains rather than relying on bi-directionality measurements such as enrichment, facilitation, or enhancement.

Accordingly, the results of this study resolved the scarcity of valid measurements in the underdeveloped studies of work-life balance that incorporated positive contentment of all life's interest such as hobbies, study, travel, leisure, and social activities apart from family only. Taken together, the third objective of this study was accomplished thus suggesting that the higher the employees' positive feelings about the balance between their work and non-work lives, the more they will be satisfied with the jobs they are doing, and the more they will be affectively committed to their organisations.

6.3.5 Job Satisfaction and Affective Commitment

In this study, job satisfaction was proposed as the determinant of affective commitment. With reference to Table 5.6, in average services employees were found to slightly agree (i.e. means of 5.07 or 72 per cent) that they were satisfied with their jobs. Similarly, they were also found to slightly agree (i.e. means of 4.65 or 66 per cent) that they were affectively committed to their organisation although the feelings were slightly lower than their job satisfaction. Taking into account these findings, the work attitudes of workers in Malaysian services organisations were found to be not really high. This might be due to the reasons of hectic and volatile commercial environment in Malaysia especially among rapidly growing services sector which making many companies to

mainly concern on their cost and profit, instead of their employees' welfare. Therefore, Malaysian employers need to be careful in dealing with their employees as not to hamper their attitudes while excelling in their balance sheet.

On the other hand, the results of structural equation modelling (SEM) as showed in Figure 5.3 and Appendix E had found that job satisfaction was significantly and positively related to affective commitment. Hence, Hypothesis 6 was supported. The findings suggested that the level of an employee's satisfaction towards his or her job will significantly influence his or her affective commitment level towards his or her organisation. The results of this study were in line with past studies assessing positive relationships between job satisfaction and affective commitment (e.g. Kim & Brymer, 2011; Yang, 2010; DeConinck, 2009).

In addition, this study extended past studies of non-standard work arrangements, and work and non-work balance (e.g. Holtom et al., 2002; Baral & Bhargava, 2010) by establishing job satisfaction as the antecedent of affective commitment, which simultaneously tested among standard and non-standard employees. This is because past studies on non-standard work arrangements and work-life balance, although had examined both job satisfaction and affective commitment, did not test the directionality between those work-related attitudes. In summary, the fifth objective of this study is attained thus suggesting that when there was satisfaction in doing jobs, employees were more likely to be affectively committed towards their organisations.

6.3.6 The Mediating Role of Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance

As seen in Figure 5.3 and Appendix E, this study has revealed that satisfaction with work-life balance partially mediated the relationships between work status congruence and job satisfaction as well as between work status congruence and affective commitment. Therefore, Hypotheses 7 and 8 were supported. The partial mediating role of satisfaction with work-life balance was also confirmed based on the positive results of significant direct and indirect relationships between work status congruence and both the work related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. Furthermore, the results of the complete partially mediated model were the best fit to the observed data as compared to other competing models of non-complete partially mediated, complete fully mediated, non-complete fully mediated, and non-mediated.

Therefore, the findings of this study implied that the degree to which an employee's schedule, shift, full-time or part-time status, and number of working hours, which were congruent with his or her preferences would predict the feelings about the balance between his or her work and non-work lives, and in turn facilitated his or her satisfaction with the job and elevated his or her affective commitment to the organisation. Given that, at the time this study was conducted there were probably no published works that empirically examined work-life balance's mediating role, the results of this study hence, extended the studies of work-family balance that found the mediating effects of work-family balance.

For example, McNall et al. (2010) found that work-family enrichment mediated the relationship between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction. Another study by Baral and Bhargava (2010) found that work-family enrichment fully mediated the

relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction, and also partially mediated the relationship between job characteristics and affective commitment, despite no relationship was found between work-life balance policies and both job satisfaction and affective commitment.

For that reason, these findings proved this study's contention for the mediating role of satisfaction with work-life balance (i.e. employees' overall contentment about the balance between their work and non-work demands apart from families only) as the extension of previous studies of mediating role of work-family balance (i.e. facilitation or enrichment). Subsequently, the fourth objective of this study is realised to affirm the mediating role of satisfaction with work-life balance in the relationships between work status congruence and job satisfaction, and between work status congruence and affective commitment.

Although Holtom et al.'s (2002) and Carr et al.'s (2010) studies pronounced that favourable work status, schedule, shift and hours that matched or congruent with employees' preferences could increase their job satisfaction and affective commitment, this study helps to convince that work status congruence might not be fully adequate to explain employees work-related attitudes. Satisfaction with work-life balance could unravel the factors in each employee to feel more satisfied with their jobs or be more affectively committed to organisations. This is because they would have more positive feelings about their job and organisations when they have positive expectations that their non-work demands would fit well with their work as a result of the availability of preferred staffing and scheduling arrangements.

As satisfaction with work-life balance gives employees the feeling that their work and out-of-work needs are not disrupted, they are more likely to engage in favourable exchanges that would enhance their overall job satisfaction and engage in higher affective commitment. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that the more congruent the workers perceived about their preferred work status, schedule, shift and hours, the higher the satisfaction with the balance between their work and non-work lives, and in turn, with their overall jobs. They were also more likely to be affectively committed towards their organisation.

6.3.7 The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

The findings of structural equation modelling (SEM) as portrayed in Figure 5.3 and Appendix E had established that job satisfaction partially mediated the relationships between work status congruence and affective commitment as well as between satisfaction with work-life balance and affective commitment. Therefore, Hypotheses 9 and 10 were supported. The partial mediating role of job satisfaction was also confirmed based on the results of significant direct and indirect relationships between work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, and affective commitment.

Furthermore, the results of the complete partially mediated model were the best fit to the observed data as compared to other competing models (e.g. non-complete partially mediated, complete fully mediated, non-complete fully mediated and non-mediated models); this further confirmed the mediating role of job satisfaction in the overall relationships between all studied variables i.e. between work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, and affective commitment. Therefore, Hypothesis 11 was supported.

The findings of this study implied that the degree to which an employee's schedule, shift, full-time or part-time status, and number of working hours, were congruent with his or her preferences, would predict the feelings about the overall job, and in turn facilitate his or her affective commitment towards his or her organisation. In addition, the results also revealed that the favourable feelings about the balance between work and out-of-work demands, would predict the positive feelings about the overall job, and in turn positively influence the level of affective commitment.

The results of this study confirmed Testa's (2001) findings that employees' satisfaction with companies could enhance their satisfaction with their overall jobs, and in turn increased their affective commitment. This study also corroborated a similar work by Kim and Brymer (2011) which found that the relationship between leadership and affective commitment was mediated by job satisfaction. In this study, the affective commitment was proven as the ultimate outcome hence confirming the prediction of the first mediation effect of satisfaction with work-life balance and the second mediating role of job satisfaction.

Although the Holtom et al.'s (2002) study had identified that employees' favourable work status, schedules, shifts and hours that were congruent with their preferences could increase both job satisfaction and affective commitment, their research did not confirm directionality of relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment, i.e. whether job satisfaction was the antecedent of affective commitment or vice versa. Therefore, the results of the mediating role of job satisfaction between work status congruence and affective commitment in this study had extended studies of non-standard work arrangements that established positive relationship of congruent

preferences for staffing and scheduling practices with both work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. Hence, this study revealed that job satisfaction would influence the total effects of work status congruence towards employees' affective commitment, and further explains why work status congruence might not be completely sufficient for employees to be more affectively committed.

Similarly, studies on work-family balance by Baral and Bhargava (2010) who affirmed that work-family enrichment was positively affecting both job satisfaction and affective commitment also lacked confirmation in terms of the directionality between job satisfaction and affective commitment. Therefore, this study extended work-family balance studies, by establishing that job satisfaction was the mediating mechanism in the relationship between satisfaction with work-life balance and affective commitment. Hence, this study further assists to explain why satisfaction with work-life balance might not be totally sufficient for employees to influence their affective commitment. Instead their job satisfaction should be considered as well.

Job satisfaction could reveal the potentials in each employee to commit more affectively. This is because employees would be more affectively committed towards their organisations when they have positive feelings about their overall job as a result of positive expectations that their work and non-work demands fit well together. As satisfaction of overall job allows the employees to be enthusiastic and enjoy their work, they are more likely to engage in favourable exchanges that would enhance their affective commitment.

In summary, the findings of this study recommended that the more congruent the workers perceived about their preferred work status, schedules, shifts and hours, the more they were satisfied with their overall jobs, and the more likely they are to be affectively committed toward their organisations. Similarly, the more employees were satisfied with the balance between their work and non-work lives, the more they were satisfied with their overall jobs, and the more likely they would be affectively committed towards their organisations.

Overall, the fifth objective of this study is achieved to determine that the more congruent the workers perceived about their preferred staffing and scheduling arrangements, the more the employees were satisfied with the balance between their work and non-work lives, and the more they were satisfied with their overall jobs, and in turn would be more likely to be affectively committed towards their organisations.

6.4 Summary

This chapter discussed the identified relationships between all variables in this study and the findings of the hypothesised research model. It also includes a discussion on the attainment of this study's objectives. The next chapter describes the implications of this research, as well as the limitations, recommendations for future research, and conclusion of this study.