

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter elaborates the theoretical and managerial implication of this study. Certain justification on the limitations of this study will also be explained. This is followed by a few recommendations or suggestions for future research and an overall conclusion of this study.

7.2 Implications of the Study

There are numerous theoretical and practical insights that could be drawn from the research findings. In view of that, this study has contributed to the body of knowledge conceptually and methodologically, and at the same time was useful for the practice of managers and organisations as a whole as further explained in the following sub-sections.

7.2.1 Theoretical Implications

Firstly, most of the studies on non-standard work arrangements were inconsistent in terms of their findings, irrespective of their theoretical background and measurements

used. Walker (2011) confirmed that based on his review of non-standard employment studies, the majority of the researchers had different definitions of non-standard employees and methodological approach in their studies. Hence, this study has established a broader definition of non-standard work arrangements as flexible working arrangements that include permanent full-time status working non-normal working schedule, shift, and hours, as well as combining both part-time and temporary or contract dimensions. Further, this study extends the work by Zeytinoglu et al. (2011), who conducted a study of turnover intention among all dimensions of non-standard employees (i.e. part-time, contract, or temporary), in examining the other type work-related attitudes i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment instead of turnover intention.

Distinctively, the main theoretical implication of this study is the extension of the work status congruence concept by Holtom et al. (2002) towards the underdeveloped studies of work-life balance, hence proving that work status congruence as a unifying construct measuring congruent preferences for flexible working arrangements (i.e. work status, schedule, shift and hours), which significantly and positively predict employees' satisfaction with work-life balance. Therefore, this study theoretically contributed by extending the discrepancy model (Lawler, 1973; Locke, 1969) which was proved to better understand the effects of non-standard work arrangements towards employees' work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment (Morrow et al., 1994; Holtom et al., 2002, Carr et al., 2010; Wittmer & Martin, 2011).

This study has succeeded in verifying the similarly hypothesised positive relationship between work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance, which was drawn on the same theoretical underlying assumption. Thus, the same theoretical model

was not only proven to overcome inconsistency in terms of its positive effects towards work-related attitudes, it was also proven to offer the same positive effects toward balancing work and non-work domains. Furthermore, Chang et al. (2010) in their meta-analytic review of work-family/life studies found the work-life balance studies were still underdeveloped due to a lack of theoretical conception and insufficient measurement. Therefore, these gaps have been narrowed in this study through theoretical underpinning of discrepancy model that was proven to positively and significantly enhance employees' satisfaction with work-life balance.

In addition, this study found significant and positive relationship between work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance and thus, theoretically extended the study of positive effects of voluntariness of preferences for working standard or non-standard (i.e. flexible) work arrangements towards work-family balance (Van Rijswijk et al., 2004). As past studies examining the effects of voluntariness of joining non-standard work arrangements towards employees' work related attitudes were evolved into the study of congruent preferences of work status and work schedule (Krausz et al., 2000; Holtom et al., 2002), this study has therefore successfully examined the effects of congruent preferences for work-life balance policies (e.g. flexible working arrangements) towards employees' overall contentment of work-life balance.

Further, this study which found congruent preferences for staffing and scheduling arrangements as determinants of employees' satisfaction with work-life balance has also extended the study of positive effects of perceived scheduling control towards work-family balance (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001; Jang et al., 2011). Therefore, this study affirmed that the availability of work-life balance policies like flexible work arrangements would not necessarily influenced an employee's work-life balance

(Tausig & Fenwick, 2001), because the congruent preferences for such work arrangements was actually the significant positive determinant. Further, this study had answered Moore's (2007) call for empirical investigations of the link between the impact of individuals' circumstances of flexible working practices such as non-standard staffing and scheduling arrangements towards their work-life balance.

Consequently, this study enhanced the body of knowledge of work-life balance, by theoretically proving that employees' positive psychological perception of flexible working arrangements (i.e. through work status congruence concept) would be significantly related with the employees' positive interactions between work and non-work domains, thus overcoming the inconsistent findings of past studies. This is because there were past studies that excluded the consideration of voluntariness or perceived controls of work-life balance policies (e.g. flexible or non-standard work arrangements) which found negative relationship between such work arrangements and employees' balance of their work and non-work lives (Barnett & Gareis, 2002; Higgins et al., 2000). There were also some studies that directly assess the effects of work-life balance policies which resulted with no significant effects of the policies towards employees' ability to balance their work and non-work demands (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Wayne et al., 2006). Thus, this study affirmed the importance of considering the individual's circumstances in the understanding the effects of work-life/family policies (e.g. non-standard staffing and scheduling arrangements) instead of directly examining their impacts towards employees' work-life balance.

As such, this study also contributed to the under-developed body of knowledge in work-life balance, by verifying the positive effects of flexible working arrangements in terms of non-standard work status (e.g. part-time, temporary or contract) and non-standard

work schedule (e.g. flexi-time, evening or rotating shift, compressed work week) that have been promoted as part of organisational life/family-friendly policies towards improving employees' positive feelings about their work-life balance, as long as employees' individual preferences for such arrangements are congruent or matched. The findings of this study have further confirmed Thorsteinson's (2003) and Voydanoff's (2005) suggestions, that the congruence of job circumstances (i.e. person-job fit) would cause a positive feeling of one-self's work-life balance (i.e. job-life fit).

Moreover, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there was probably no study that explored the relationship between employees' congruent preferences for flexible work arrangements and their work and non-work balance (Chang et al., 2010). Therefore, this study is perhaps the first to prove that work status congruence (i.e. employees' congruent preferences for work statuses, schedules, shifts and hours) was significantly and positively related to employees' satisfaction with their work and life balance. Additionally, this study extended the boundaries of the concept of work status congruence (Holtom et al., 2002) towards the study of employees' work-life balance which have not been empirically examined before. Hence, this study contributed to the work status congruence literature by appending more evidences that it is essential in affecting employees' attitudinal consequences (e.g. satisfaction with work-life balance). Simultaneously, this study initiated a theoretical underpinning that was beneficial in better understanding of underdeveloped studies of work-life balance (Chang et al., 2010).

Besides extending the knowledge of work status congruence towards work-life balance, another theoretical contribution of this study is in terms of the replication of prior research of work status congruence and authentication of the positive significant effects

of congruent preferences for staffing and scheduling arrangements towards work-related attitudes, such as job satisfaction (Holtom et al., 2002; Wittmer & Martin, 2011) and affective commitment (Holtom et al., 2002; Carr et al., 2010). The results of this study affirmed the positive expectation on employees' responses to the benefits they obtained from their dealings with their organisations (i.e. congruent preferences for work status, schedule, shift, and hours). Clearly, work status congruence was proven as job circumstances that were valued by employees who consecutively reciprocated with attitudinal outcomes valued by organisations as well.

Therefore, this study further supported the validity of work status congruence that was drawn on the discrepancy model of job satisfaction (Lawler, 1973; Locke, 1969) as the better theoretical underpinning as compared to partial inclusion and frame of reference theories that were utilised by many earlier studies of non-standard work arrangements. Further, this study also corroborated prior studies investigating separately, congruent preferences for work status or work hours, which had also established a positive relationship between the congruent preferences (i.e. for work status or work hours) and work-related attitudes, e.g. job satisfaction (Giannikis & Mihail, 2011; Burke & Greenglass, 2000) and affective commitment (Wittmer & Martin, 2011; Van Emmerick & Sanders, 2005). It cannot be disputed that both job satisfaction and affective commitment are crucial to organisations. Specifically, recent meta-analytic results of Ricketta (2002) recommended a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment and individual performance.

Methodologically, this study also contributed by answering Holtom et al.'s (2002) call for operationalisation of work status congruence towards all dimensions of standard and non-standard employees, i.e. combining both full-time versus part-time dimensions and

permanent versus temporary/contract dimensions. This is because Holtom et al. (2002) had operationalised work status congruence among full-time versus part-time dimension only. Whereas Carr et al. (2010) who replicated Holtom et al.'s (2002) study had operationalised work status congruence among full-time employees only, with certain modification of the measurement to exclude congruent preferences for part-time employment.

Therefore, this study had extended the validity of work status congruence construct (i.e. congruent preferences for work status, schedule, shift and hours) towards both dimensions of full-time and part-time, as well as permanent and contract/temporary services employees; who were working in various job designation levels, and in standard and non-standard work schedules. By employing multi-sample study from various services organisations, this study systematically controlled most factors that caused the divergence of past findings of non-standard employments as proposed by Barling and Gallagher (1996), such as fundamental differences in the context of work performed, differences in motives or preferences, differences in demographics and differences in the psychometric properties of the dependent examined constructs. Moreover, this study had complemented the reliability and unidimensionality of the measurement of work status congruence (Holtom et al., 2002) by testing its effects towards the balance of employees' work and non-work lives as well as towards the employees' work-related attitudes, among all standard and non-standard working arrangements.

Apart from extending knowledge on work-family balance by affirming satisfaction with work-life balance as an outcome of work status congruence, another theoretical implication of this study is by extending previous studies of work-family balance

through the verification of newly adjusted concept of satisfaction with work-life balance. This broadened concept was proven to examine employees' favourable perception towards the balance between their work and non-work interests apart from families only, which include leisure, study, hobbies, and travel.

Explicitly, this study integrated previous research of work-family and enhanced the under-developed work-life studies by authenticating a comprehensive concept of satisfaction with work-life balance. In doing so, it resolved a number of prior problems in the literature. For example, in terms of incomplete definitions and inconsistent operationalisations of work-life balance constructs (Chang et al., 2010). Hayman (2009) suggested that studies on the relationship between work-family interface could be broadened by examining more than work and family dimensions of a person's life, thus proposing inclusion of other non-work concerns of employees (e.g. study, travel, leisure).

In addition, Chang et al. (2010) in their meta-analytic review of work-family/life studies found that past work-life balance studies were mainly qualitative and were inconsistently operationalised. This is because work-life balance studies were the extension from work-family balance studies, which were also inconclusive in terms of their measurement of the balance or positive interactions between work and family domains. For example, some of the studies inferred the balance as an overall positive blended experience of various aspects of work and non-work lives such as fit, synergy, compatibility, or integration; whereas there were some other researchers who inferred the balance or positive interactions between work and family interfaces as enrichment, facilitation, enhancement or positive spill-over.

Therefore, this study contributed to knowledge by extending studies of work-family balance by confirming the validity of the adapted construct of satisfaction with work-life balance by Valcour (2007) (i.e. originally known as satisfaction with work-family balance), which involved rephrasing of items that included 'family' to 'non-work' instead. This would make the items equally relevant to respondents with or without family as demanded by past researchers, such as Waumsley et al. (2010). Hence, this study extended the Valcour's (2007) contribution of a unique, unitary, and holistic construct of employees' favourable perceptions that could capture their affective and cognitive aspects of overall balance between work and all non-work domains, and at the same time, empirically inferred the measurement that was not centred on conflict, direction and cross-domain (such as interference, facilitation or enrichment, or based on global perception only).

Another theoretical implication of this study is by attesting the stream of literature on the positive interaction between work-life balance and its positive outcome (e.g. Burke et al., 2004). The results of this study demonstrated that satisfaction with work-life balance can predict positive work-related attitudes, i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment. Specifically this study is parallel to past studies which established work-life balance as an antecedent of job satisfaction (Kanwar et al., 2009; Virick et al., 2007). Additionally, since to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there were yet studies that proved the relationship between work-life balance (i.e. using measurement assessing non-work demands other than family only) and affective commitment, this study extended work-family balance studies that found work-family balance as the positive predictor of employees' affective commitment (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Van Steenbergen et al., 2007).

Therefore, this study had contributed to the under-developed work-life balance literature in providing evidence of positive and significant predicting role of positive interactions between work and life interfaces towards work-related attitudes, as well as proving the satisfaction with work-life balance as a better concept than directly examining the effects of work-life policies in predicting employee attitudes (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Deery, 2008; Sturges & Guest, 2004). Consequently the results of this study concurred with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggestion that individuals would strive to reciprocate those who benefit them, hence, solving the inconsistent results of past studies predicting the effects of work-life policies or initiatives instead of using the concept of work-life balance as antecedents of work-related attitudes (Kanwar et al., 2009; Frye & Breugh, 2004; Thompson et al., 2004).

Taken together, this study extended Valcour's (2007) contribution of a unifying construct that better understands the employees work-life interface by operationalising it towards standard and non-standard services employees, as well as testifying it as a significant positive outcome of matched preferences for work arrangements (i.e. standard and non-standard work status and schedule) and as a significant positive antecedent of work-related attitudes (i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment) in a single study. Hence, this study added to the knowledge of work-life, by pervading past studies that tend to examine the antecedents of work-life balance and the outcomes of such interaction in separate studies (e.g. Russell, O'Connell, & McGinnity, 2009; Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Buehler & O'Brien, 2011).

This study also contributed to the knowledge by extending past studies of work-family balance in terms of its mediating role, by proving the similar significant mediating effects of satisfaction with work-life balance. Past studies of work-family balance that

was operationalised as work-family enrichment have exhibited its significant mediating role in relationships between job characteristics and work-related attitudes, i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment (Baral & Bhargava, 2010), and between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction (McNall et al., 2010). However, to the best of this researcher's knowledge, there were no empirical studies that explored the mediating effects of work-life balance that was an extension from the concept of work-family balance.

The findings of this study revealed that satisfaction with work-life balance partially mediated the relationships between work status congruence and job satisfaction. The results also showed that satisfaction with work-life balance partially mediated the relationships between work status congruence and affective commitment. Therefore, this study is probably the first to testify the mediating role of work-life balance in the relationships between preferences for working arrangements and work-related attitudes. In addition, the significant results of the mediating effects of satisfaction with work-life balance have also contributed to the knowledge by proving its connecting mechanism in the relationships between work status congruence and work-related attitudes (i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment). Consequently, this study supplemented the body of knowledge by successfully combining the study or the relationship between work status and work-related attitudes (e.g. Holtom et al., 2002; Carr et al., 2010), with the study of relationship between work-life balance and work-related attitudes, which were separately examined in the past (Kanwar et al., 2009; Virick et al., 2007).

Another theoretical implication of this study is proving the prediction role of job satisfaction towards affective commitment and simultaneously confirming the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationships between work status congruence and

affective commitment, and between satisfaction with work-life balance and affective commitment, as well as between work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance and affective commitment as whole. This contribution was made based on the results of this study which is probably the first to confirm the hypothesised integrative framework of complete partially mediated model comprising of work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction and affective commitment and it was proven as the best model that fits the observed data well. Hence, this study affirmed past studies that suggested the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationships between company satisfaction and affective commitment (Testa, 2001), and between leadership and affective commitment (Kim & Brymer, 2011).

On the other hand, this study also added to the body of knowledge of non-standard arrangements, work status congruence, work-life balance, and work-related attitudes (i.e. job satisfaction and affective commitment) in terms of differences among various demographic characteristics of Malaysian standard and non-standard services employees. Particularly, this research contributed to the study of non-standard arrangements by concluding that full-time and part-time/contract/temporary employees were not significantly different in terms of their working schedule (e.g. normal or non-normal) and in terms of their congruent preferences for work status, schedule, shift, and hours. However, they were different in terms of work-life balance and work related attitudes. Besides, male employees were found to enjoy the work arrangements that they preferred more than their female counterparts and are thus more satisfied and committed to their job although not necessarily feeling more satisfied with their work-life balance. Additionally, married employees who were above 40 years old and working in middle management were better in their work-life balance, although employees at lower level have better preferred work arrangements. Nonetheless, work-related attitudes appeared

to be different among various organisation types, but no differences were established in regard to the employees' marital status, age or job designation level.

By drawing on a sample of services employees of Malaysia, this study highlights the influence of socio-cultural variables on the operation of the work–life interface and addresses the glaring under-representation of samples from developing economies in the research literature of work status congruence and work-life balance (Chang et al., 2010). Furthermore, with the majority of services employees utilising non-standard staffing and scheduling arrangements (Wittmer & Martin, 2011), this study that the effects of congruent preferences for such work arrangements towards employees' work-life balance is essential especially in a developing country like Malaysia.

In addition, this study might be the earliest to utilise structural equation modelling especially in proving the structural model that revealed significant and positive results on all pathways between all variables of work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. Overall, this study was important because it suggested that work status congruence could have indirect effects on affective commitment outcome, via the mechanisms of satisfaction with work-life balance and job satisfaction.

7.2.2 Managerial Implications

The results of this study showed that work status congruence have indirect relationships (i.e. through the mediating roles of satisfaction with work-life balance and job satisfaction) with employees' affective organisational commitment. To improve the work-life balance among the employees and their work related attitudes such as job

satisfaction and affective commitment, the management could formulate appropriate staffing and scheduling practices to match the preferences of all employees irrespective of standard or non-standard. The staffing and scheduling arrangements should be made available to employees of different work statuses (e.g. full-time, part-time, contract, temporary, or others) and work schedules, shifts, or hours (e.g. flexi-time, day/night shifts, split hours, compressed workweek, or etc.). Hence, this study attested that non-standard work arrangements (e.g. part-time, contract, shifts, and etc.) should not be considered as a method to exploit employees to reduce organisational cost or meeting customer demands, because it is also beneficial to the employees as long as the implementations were according to the employees' preferences.

Management should acknowledge that there are diverse motives and reasons for an employee to enter into such staffing and scheduling arrangements. The motives comprise of work and non-work concerns such as caring for family members, studying, earning extra income, stepping stone to permanent employment, pursuing other life's interests, staying active in profession, losing jobs, exploring new career, desiring less jobs responsibilities, applying different type of expertise, having health issues, lacking other jobs alternatives, and many more. Thus, with revolutions in the labour force taking place concurrently (e.g. non-traditional families, moonlighting students, primaries, or supplementers), managers should not presume which employees will favour either standard or non-standard or more or less hours. To a certain extent, organisations would be well informed to cautiously assess and value individual proclivities.

Furthermore, this study proved that management should ensure the employees' participation in any kind of working arrangements to be voluntary, upon their own choice, so as to avoid creating work-life imbalanced, dissatisfied, and uncommitted

workers that may indirectly impact the organisations business activities. For example, if a company decides that a particular work would be best filled by temporary or part-time employees, who work flexible hours, it should configure selection processes to find and recruit employees who are open to such statuses or non-normal schedules. It should then establish a forecasting system to plan ahead to locate and prepare these labours to ensure they are available. As proven in this study, Malaysian services employees commonly do not fully agree in terms of congruent preferences of their work status, schedule, shift and hours, as well as in terms of their job satisfaction and affective commitment. Malaysian employers should therefore take cognisance of the findings of this study as to improve their employees' satisfaction and commitment in order to ascertain competence of their service businesses.

Besides that, the results of this study revealed that satisfaction with work-life balance was significantly related to employees' work-related attitudes and was a mechanism that influenced the total effects of matched preferences for working arrangements towards employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This implied that the favourable feelings towards the balance between employees' work and non-work demands are important attributes to their work attitudes and are vital in response of to the companies' family-friendly or life-friendly policies or initiatives.

Hence, management should be very careful in developing such policies to promote work-life balance of employees by making sure their plans or initiatives are available and accessible with no biasness, and are well communicated and well accepted by employees. The flexible staffing and scheduling are demanded extensively in today's ever-changing world of business, and this study has proven the impact of how it is managed towards employees' work-life balance and work attitudes which may further

influence their behaviour and wellbeing. Therefore, this study proved non-standard employment is not necessarily a substandard employment as long as its implementation is accordance with the workers' needs.

Other than that, the management may involve their employees in the establishment of work-life balance guidelines and procedures that are more employee-focused. These actions are part of managements' corporate social responsibility and should be considered as competitive advantage strategies. The non-standard work status and schedule should be advocated as a win-win means to support employees' work and non-work needs as well as for organisational efficient cost and flexibility requirements especially in services industries that need to fulfil variations in customer demands. Hence, management should encourage effective application of work-life initiatives that do not exploit their employees but capitalise on its beneficial effects to become the employer-of-choice. This is also important in attracting new talents as well as retaining existing ones that is very vital for all organisations' competitive advantage as well as for the nation's strategic action towards overcoming brain drain.

Also, the findings highlighted the importance of job satisfaction and affective commitment as attitudinal outcomes in the workplace. In addition, this study found job satisfaction could positively affecting employees' affective commitment. Moreover, the presence of job satisfaction would strengthen the impact of matched preferences for working arrangements and work-life balance towards employees' affective commitment. Managers should therefore take the appropriate actions to facilitate the occurrence of job satisfaction in the workplace by promoting human resource practices that are congruent with employees' preferences and various works and out-of-work desires, so that ultimately they will be more committed to their organisations. Proactive

actions may include cultivating open and agreeable cultures where employees may happily express their overall wishes, while their supervisors are willing to accommodate them reasonably.

In summary, this study suggested that when employee preferences in staffing and scheduling arrangements are met, irrespective whether they were working as standard or non-standard workers, they are likely to be more satisfied with the balance between their work and non-work lives, to be more satisfied with their overall jobs, and to be more committed to their organisations. In contrast, if jobs lack the flexibility that workers desire or imperil the fit between employees' work and other life's interests, employers may find that the yearn for economical lead of their just-in-time staffing do not materialise. Organisations thus should invest considerable time and resource to provide well-congruent staffing and scheduling arrangements that suit the employees' choices, and their work and out-of-work needs.

Ultimately, this research ought to be made reference by policy makers and government by proving that a vigilant working and scheduling practices shall impact employees' work-life balance and work attitudes especially those in the services sector, the majority of whom work non-standard arrangements. As services is the main contributor to the country growth and as one of the National Key Economic Areas, assiduous attention towards employees of this industry need to be undertaken in order to upsurge women participation in the labour market as well as to facilitate Malaysian human capital development. Consequently, the national agenda such as the Tenth Malaysia Plan and Economic Transformation Plan to increase the quality of life and to produce a world class workforce shall be accomplished in order to build a developed and high-income nation as per Vision 2020.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

Notwithstanding the contributions made by this study towards knowledge and practice, there are some limitations. One of the limitations is that this study used cross-sectional survey methodologies which limited inferences of causality about the relationships among the variables. For example, it is difficult to ensure if work status congruence was positively related to satisfaction with work-life balance or the reverse. It could be that employees with higher satisfaction with work-life balance have more congruent perceptions of the work status. Further support on the relationships among variables would be necessary by perusing longitudinal or experimental designs to address issues of causality.

In spite of having collected data from the various ranks of employees and from different organisations to eliminate any concern with same-source bias, there are still some limitations in using self-ratings. As the analyses of all variables in this study were based on data collected from individual workers only, this study may have been inclined by common method variance. Additionally, the usage of subjective assessments of employees' perceptions and attitudes using self-report survey measures might have been influenced by potential response biases like leniency, central tendency, halo and similarity errors (Siders, George, & Dharwadkar, 2001). Nonetheless, the results of confirmatory factor analysis in the measurement model had rejected any single common method factor as the significant relationship between all variables indicating discriminant validity.

Summers (2001) expressed concern on the usage of single source self-report data to interpret the correlations between measures. Despite that, most of the past researchers still depended mainly on self-report data. Further, Krausz et al. (2000) found that self-report data, due to its steady reliability and validity, was the most frequent and realistic method used in work status and work-life balance studies. The non-self report data such as actual performance and other parties' objective evaluations may not be practical where there are a substantial number of respondents (like in this study). Moreover, this study used the self-report measure due to cost, time, and resource constrains, and for easier administration and data collection of the survey.

This study was carried out at various private services organisations located in selected urban regions of Malaysia i.e. Kuala Lumpur and its neighbouring state of Selangor. Therefore, the attitudes of individuals are unlikely to be representative of those working in government sectors and other industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, or those working in services organisations located in other parts of the country. Hence, the extent to which the results can be generalised across a wider population is compromised. How the results concerning the relationships studied might differ in another cultural setting is a question for future research.

Despite these limitations, this study suggested that work status, schedule, shift and hours that matched with the employee's preferences had significant relationships with satisfaction with work-life balance, and such satisfaction was significantly related to job satisfaction and in turn with affective commitment. This study demonstrated that satisfaction with work-life balance and job satisfaction are the mechanisms through which matched preferences for staffing and scheduling arrangements affect an employee's affective commitment. However, it also raises some interesting issues that

could be explored further in subsequent research. The issues are discussed in the following section.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Instead of work status congruence i.e. the matched preferences for staffing and scheduling arrangements, future research may further explore other antecedents of satisfaction with work-life balance. Future research may explore variables such as workplace culture, work conditions, and job design as antecedents of satisfaction with work-life balance. Future studies could also extend this study by identifying potential moderator effects for relationships among work status congruence, satisfaction with work-life balance, and work related attitudes. Future research may investigate the conditions under which moderator variables such as organisational climate, task interdependence, procedural justice, company size and marital status may influence these relationships.

It would also be feasible to consider other mechanisms or types of mediators such as fairness (Maynard et al., 2006) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Felfe et al., 2008) instead of satisfaction with work-life balance as the mediators, which could improve prediction of work status congruence and work-related attitudes. Future studies could also extend this study by examining the relationships between satisfaction with work-life balance and other types of employees' work attitudes and behaviour. The dependent variables could include employees' withdrawal intentions, job involvement, role ambiguity, and task performance. Additionally, future research could explore antecedents to work status congruence, which would be essential for both social researchers and managers.

Other research may replicate this study by collecting sample data from other industries such as from manufacturing, construction, and agriculture industries, where norms and expectations for work conditions might be different. Such multi-industry research may yield high internal validity benefits as its results could perhaps be generalised with greater confidence across industries (Keck & Tushman, 1993). The attempt to investigate other non-standard and work-life initiatives such as leaves, childcare assistance, and others may be promoted to discover a broader view of work-life balance. In addition, future researchers may establish the causality of the relationships among the variables by using longitudinal or experimental, or qualitative research designs.

Future research may also investigate the role of work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance for employees who were working with employment agencies. It would be interesting to determine if work status congruence and satisfaction with work-life balance would be related to dual-employer organisational commitment. Finally, it would be interesting to explore whether the findings of this study can be replicated in other countries with different work values and cultural contexts. Studies conducted in different cultures may indeed prove fruitful.

7.5 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to test the hypotheses that work status congruence had effects on work-related attitudes through the mechanism of satisfaction with work-life balance. Work-life balance had been the apprehension for many stakeholders including government, society, employees, as well as corporations. This study had shed light in affirming that work status congruence had direct and indirect

effects (i.e. via the mediating roles of satisfaction with work-life balance and job satisfaction) on employees' affective commitment, whereas satisfaction with work-life balance had direct and indirect effects (i.e. via the mediating role of job satisfaction) on employees' affective commitment.

This study had successfully looked into a more comprehensive and integrative model which enabled the examination of the influence of work status congruence towards work-life balance, and at the same time affecting other work related attitudes simultaneously. It seemed that matched preferences for staffing and scheduling practices could influence employees' work-related attitudes through the mediating roles of satisfaction with work-life. The results of this study suggested several promising avenues for future research and urged management scholars to continue examining the role of work status congruence and work-life balance among employees and their non-work demands.

The findings also depicted that the management should arrange staffing and scheduling practices that match their employees' choices while promoting work-life balance in attaining satisfied and committed employees as these would ultimately benefit organisations. Clearly the increasing implementation of non-standard employment in today's human resource practices in supporting work-life balance initiatives provide a strong reason for this research to look into the determinants of its success factors, as well as to overcome gaps of past studies. In conclusion, the primary purpose of this study had been achieved thus warranted several promising contributions theoretically and practically, as well as becoming an avenue of reference for future research.