UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

MEDIATING EFFECTS OF WORK-FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT FULFILLMENT ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL AND NON-ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

ABDUL MUTALIB BIN MOHAMED AZIM

FPP 2012 76

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By

ABDUL MUTALIB BIN MOHAMED AZIM

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2012

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MEDIATING EFFECTS OF WORK-FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT FULFILLMENT ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL AND NON-ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

By

ABDUL MUTALIB BIN MOHAMED AZIM

July 2012

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With the increase in dual-career couples in the workforce and the lack of adequate legal contracts in the form of work-family policies, employees may hold expectations regarding employer's obligations based on what has been promised by the organization regarding work-family benefits. Employees' expectations of obligations from an employer may depend on psychological contracts rather than formalisms arising from laws. Despite the existence of earlier studies on psychological contract, there is still lack of studies on psychological contract that specifically addresses work-family issues. The violation of the psychological contract has received much attention while research into the fulfillment of the contract has been neglected. There is also a critical gap in the research on

organizational commitment models that had examined work-family psychological contract as a mediator.

This study examined the mediating effects of work-family psychological contract fulfillment on the relationships between organizational and non-organizational work-family related factors, and organizational commitment. Organizational work-family related factors include four variables, namely family supportive organizational perceptions, family supportive supervisor, job autonomy and flexible work schedule. Non-organizational work-family related factors consist of two variables, namely work interference with family and work-family facilitation.

A total of 307 executives and professionals from 15 media organizations in Klang Valley, Malaysia participated in this study. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling procedure to assess direct and indirect relationships among variables. AMOS version 16.0 was used to perform these analyses. Four mediation models were tested to determine if the hypothesized model fit the data.

Results show that work-family psychological contract fulfillment fully mediates the relationships between flexible work schedules and organizational commitment. Further, the results reveal that work-family psychological contract fulfillment partially mediates the relationships between family supportive organizational perceptions and organizational commitment, family supportive supervisor and organizational commitment, job autonomy and organizational commitment, work

interference with family and organizational commitment, and work-family facilitation and organizational commitment.

To conclude, the results of this study suggest that work-family psychological contract fulfillment plays a critical role in increasing employees' organizational commitment. Overall, this study contributes to the psychological contract and work-family literature by introducing work-family psychological contract fulfillment as an important mechanism through which work- family related factors affect employees' organizational commitment.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KESAN PENGANTARA PEMENUHAN KONTRAK PSIKOLOGI KERJA-KELUARGA DALAM HUBUNGAN ANTARA FAKTOR-FAKTOR ORGANISASI DAN BUKAN ORGANISASI, DAN KOMITMENT ORGANISASI

Oleh

ABDUL MUTALIB BIN MOHAMED AZIM

Julai 2012

Pengerusi: Profesor Aminah Ahmad, PhD

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Peningkatan pasangan dwi-kerjaya dalam tenaga kerja dan kekurangan kontrak dalam bentuk undang-undang berkaitan kerja-keluarga, memungkinkan pekerja mengharapkan majikan dapat memenuhi tanggungjawab berdasarkan apa yang telah dijanjikan oleh organisasi mengenai faedah kerja-keluarga. Pekerja mengharapkan tanggungjawab majikan berdasarkan kontrak psikologi berbanding kontrak yang diwujudkan daripada undang-undang. Walaupun terdapat kajian lampau yang mengkaji kontrak psikologi, namun kajian mengenai kontrak psikologi yang khusus mengenai isu-isu kerja-keluarga masih kurang. Pelanggaran kontrak psikologi telah diberi banyak perhatian mana kala kajian berkenaan pemenuhan kontrak telah

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diabaikan. Terdapat juga jurang kritikal dalam kajian berkaitan model komitmen yang telah mengkaji kontrak psikologi kerja-keluarga sebagai pengantara.

Kajian ini mengkaji kesan pengantara pemenuhan kontrak psikologi kerja-keluarga dalam hubungan antara faktor organisasi dan bukan organisasi berkaitan kerja-keluarga, dan komitmen organisasi. Faktor organisasi berkaitan kerja-keluarga mengandungi empat pembolehubah iaitu persepsi pekerja berkaitan sokongan organisasi terhadap keluarga, sokongan penyelia terhadap keluarga, autonomi tugas dan jadual kerja anjal. Sementara dua pembolehubah faktor bukan organisasi berkaitan kerja-keluarga adalah gangguan kerja terhadap keluarga dan fasilitasi kerja-keluarga.

Data telah dikumpul daripada 307 pekerja eksekutif dan professional dari 15 organisasi media di Lembah Klang, Malaysia. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan prosedur *Structural Equation Modeling* untuk mengkaji hubungan secara langsung dan tidak langsung antara pembolehubah. Empat model pengantara telah diuji bagi menentukan sama ada model yang dihipotesiskan berpadanan dengan data.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pemenuhan kontrak psikologi kerja-keluarga merupakan pengantara sepenuhnya dalam hubungan antara jadual kerja anjal dan komitmen organisasi. Selanjutnya, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pemenuhan kontrak psikologi kerja-keluarga merupakan perantara secara separa dalam hubungan antara persepsi pekerja berkaitan sokongan organisasi terhadap keluarga

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dan komitmen organisasi, sokongan penyelia terhadap keluarga dan komitmen organisasi, autonomi tugas dan komitmen organisasi, gangguan kerja terhadap keluarga dan komitmen organisasi, dan fasilitasi kerja-keluarga dan komitmen organisasi.

Kesimpulannya, dapatan kajian menunjukkan pemenuhan kontrak psikologi kerja-keluarga memainkan peranan kritikal bagi meningkatkan komitment pekerja terhadap organisasi. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini telah menyumbang kepada literatur berkenaan kontrak psikologi dan kajian kerja-keluarga dengan memperkenalkan pemenuhan kontrak psikologi kerja-keluarga sebagai mekanisme penting di mana melalui mekanisme ini faktor-faktor berkaitan kerja dan keluarga mempengaruhi komitmen pekerja terhadap organisasi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the support of several people without whom I never could have completed this thesis. First, I would like to thank Professor Dr. Aminah Ahmad, the chairperson of my supervisory committee, for her continuous guidance. I would also like to thank Professor Dr. Abu Daud Silong and Dr. Zoharah Omar, for their insightful comments and suggestions. I also wish to acknowledge executives and professionals from media organizations kindly who have participated in this study. Last, but certainly not least, my deep gratitude is extended to my wife, daughter and son, whose unconditional love and support gave me the strength to finish this doctoral program.

APPROVAL

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (date of viva) to conduct the final examination of Abdul Mutalib bin Mohamed Azim on his Degree of Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Mediating Effects of Work-Family Psychological Contract Fulfillment on Relationships between Organizational and Non-Organizational Factors, and Organizational Commitment" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of Examination Committee were as follows:

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisor committee were as follow:

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Date: 9 July 2012

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for the quotation and citation which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it is not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institution.

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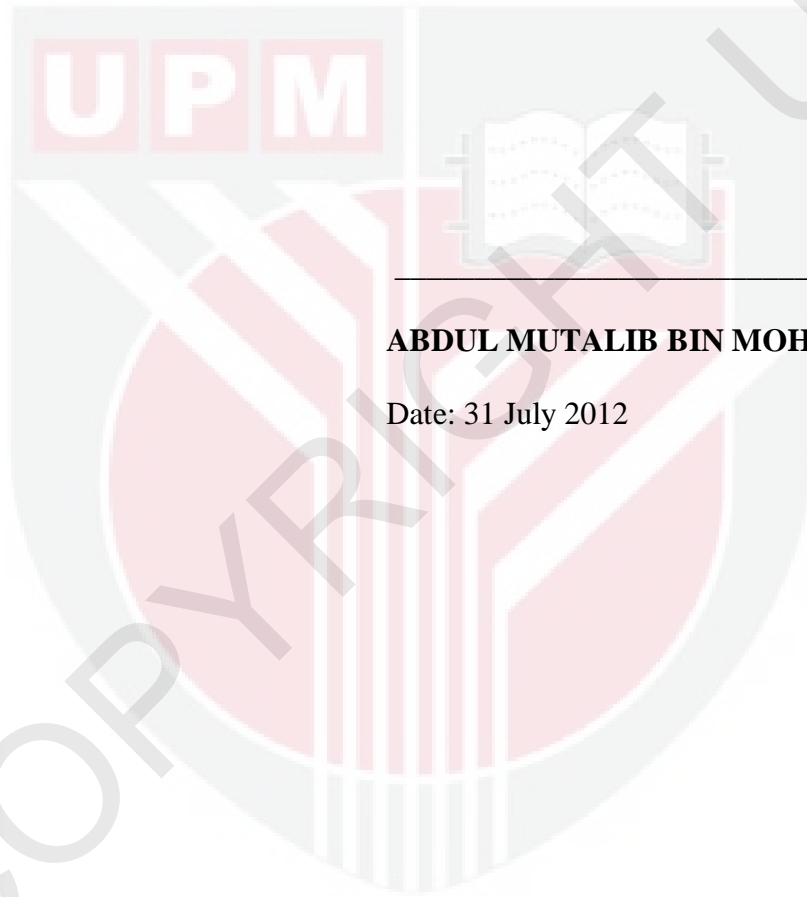
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Date: 31 July 2012

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problems

One of the challenges in human resource development is in managing workforce diversity (Werner & DeSimone, 2009). Diversity includes factors such as gender, age, ethnicity and physical ability. Many countries, including Malaysia, face the challenge of a rapidly changing demography of the workforce including the increase of women workers, the ageing workforce and the increase in foreign workers (Aminah & Saodah, 2011). Among the most significant workforce diversity is an increase of women in the workforce (United Nations Children's Fund, 2005). In Malaysia, from 1990 to 2010, the participation rate of women in the labor force increased from 46.7% to 47.8%, respectively (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010).

The Ministry of Human Resource estimated that the number of women in the workforce would continue to increase due to the tremendous increase in the number of female enrolment into universities from 45.7% in 1990 to 64.8 % in 2010 (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2010). When women become more educated and at the same time as the opportunity in employment increased equally for both genders, the number of working married couples also increased significantly (Lewis, 2002). The increase of married couples in the workforce means that more couples

are juggling their roles in both work and family domains (Perrewe´, Treadway & Hall, 2003), and the potential for interference between these domains could contribute to harmful effects on both domains (Kossek, Colquitt & Noe, 2001). Therefore, the changes in the demographic workforce have led organizations to focus on issues related to work-family interface (Aminah & Zoharah, 2008). Failure to manage the change may create obstacles in achieving organizational goals (Cox, 2001).

In dealing with work-family issues, many organizations nowadays take the initiative to support their employees in integrating their work and family responsibilities (Allen, 2001; Poelmans, Chinchilla & Cardona, 2003), and this kind of support is not just limited solely to married couples because married or non-married employees experience problems related to work-family interface (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006). This kind of support portrays that the organization cares about their employee's well-being (Morin, Rousseau & Aube, 2007). Previous studies found that this work-family support is related to employee's loyalty to the organization because the organization is perceived to be a 'family-friendly' environment to work in (Scandura & Lankau, 1997; Aminah & Zoharah, 2010).

Previous research have shown that employees who are not able to handle work and family demands successfully, because of perceptions of insufficient time and energy, are associated with lower organizational commitment (Haar & Spell, 2004; Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas, 2005; Wang & Walumbwa, 2007). However, if

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employees perceived that their organization is committed and supportive of them, they are more committed to their organization. Many researchers found that an organization which supports employees' efforts to integrate work and family demands, tend to improve employees' commitment (Kelly, Kossek, Hammer, Durham, Bray, Chermack, Murphy & Kaskubar, 2008; Wood & De Menezes, 2010; DeConinck, 2011).

Organizational commitment is a critical issue because it portrays the overall effectiveness and success of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). For the purpose of this study, organizational commitment is defined as the degree to which an employee feels a sense of loyalty to the organization. This definition is in accordance with the concept of affective organizational commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001; Allen et al., 2003). In addition, an employee who is affectively committed to their organization firmly identifies with the organizational objectives (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993), and performs better (Rutherford, Park & Han, 2011). Abbasi and Hollman (2008) found that employees who leave the organization might jeopardize strategic plans to achieve organizational objectives. When an organization loses its critical people, there might be a number of impacts like reduction in overall level of innovation and quality of customer service (Denvir & McMahon, 2002; Miller, 2010). Consequently, organizations incur great loss when employees, especially those who are high performing, leave the organization. According to Garino and Martin (2005), an organization that has to hire and train new workers may also experience an increase

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of cost. Many scholars agreed that highly committed employees give a big contribution to organization because they perform and work towards achieving organization's goals (Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin & Jackson, 1989; Hunter & Thatcher, 2007; Zhang & Zheng, 2009; Hunton & Norman, 2010; Rutherford, Park & Han, 2011). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it is suggested that human resource development practitioners should take proactive action in handling dynamic changing demographics within the workforce as mentioned earlier, because it may very well affect employees' organization commitment.

Previous studies have shown that employees' who perceive that their organization is family-supportive tend to be more committed and satisfied with their jobs, tend to perform well and remain in organization (Allen, 2001; Haar & Spell, 2004; Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas, 2005; Grandey, Cordeiro & Michael, 2007; Aminah & Zoharah, 2010). Employee's who perceive that their organization has provided work-family related programs, such as flexible work hours and job autonomy, may increase their organizational commitment. Employees may perceive the organization's offering of flexible work hours and autonomy as representing the organization's concern for employees' work-family balance and they tend to remain in the organization (Morin, Rousseau & Aube, 2007; Zhang & Liu, 2011).

Besides, employee's immediate supervisor is particularly important because they serve as agents for implementing organizational benefit policies (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees are more committed to their employer if they have

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supportive supervisors who understand employees' need to manage their family demands (Allen, 2001; Kelly et al., 2008; O'Neill, et al., 2009). Employees who are not or less likely to receive support from their organization tend to experience work-family conflict (Aminah 1997; Hajar, Siti Nor & Rumaya, 2010).

Past research has shown that work roles tend to interfere with family roles more than family roles interfere work roles (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Frone, 2002; Yang & Hawkins, 2004; Boyar, Maertz Jr., & Pearson, 2005; Aminah & Zoharah, 2008). Therefore, organization should consider their obligation in reducing work interference with family that may increase employees' organizational commitment. Employees may be more likely to stay in the organization or be highly committed to the organization if they experience work-family facilitation (Karatepe & Kilic, 2009). In order to maintain high commitment among employees, this study suggests that organizations should be sensitive in dealing with integrating employees' work and family demands.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Affective commitment is the most widely studied component of organizational commitment (Bergman, 2006; Meyer & Allen 1997), and this concept has been studied with various variables comprehensively. This is because affective commitment is the strongest and most consistent predictor of organizationally desired outcome such as employee retention (Allen et al., 2003; Meyer & Smith,

2000; Rhoades et al., 2001). One reason why employees' are affectively committed is because of the support from the organization which signals the organization's concern of the employees' well-being (Williams, 2004).

In dealing with demographic change within the workforce, an organization may provide work-family support because this is one of the ways of communicating with their employees that the organization care about employees' well-being. Organizations should look into this factor seriously because it may very well affect employees' organizational commitment. Previous studies have found that employees, who are not able to integrate their work and family responsibilities due to insufficient time and energy, reduced their commitment towards their organization (Rothbard et al., 2005; Wang & Walumbwa, 2007). Therefore, employees may expect that the organization will help them in achieving work-family balance in return for their willingness to contribute their time and energy to the organization. This set of reciprocal exchange means that the employees and employer are engaged in a psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989). In line with psychological contract concept, employees who believe that their organization has fulfilled its promises regarding work-family support, tend to be more committed to their organization.

This study proposes that the employee's perception of family-supportive organization, family-supportive supervisor, job autonomy and flexible working schedule can be seen as organizational support in helping employees integrate work and family demands and as an exchange, employees will be more committed to their

organization. Meanwhile, employees who experience high work-family facilitation and low work interference with family, may perceive that their organization has delivered its promises in helping employees integrate their work and family responsibilities, which in turn affect employees' organizational commitment.

A noticeable number of studies have been conducted on psychological contract, but most of these studies do not focus on work-family element as the content of the contract (Conway & Briner, 2005). The concept of psychological contract is important in understanding employees' expectations of their benefits and work arrangements related to work-family balance (Smithson & Lewis, 2004). This is because employees' beliefs on the extent to which their organizations have fulfilled or failed to meet their obligations would have important implications for both parties. Undeniably, several studies on psychological contract and work-family issues have been done (e.g. Scandura & Lankau, 1997; Taylor, DelCampo & Blancero, 2009). However, their studies were limited to global perception and not specific to work-family related issues. In addition, very limited research examined the psychological contract as a mediator.

A study conducted by Sturges, Conway, Guest and Lieffooghe (2005) indicates that psychological contract acts as a key mediating variable in the relationship between career management and organizational commitment. Meanwhile, Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson and Wayne (2008) found that psychological contract mediated the relationships between employees' perceptions of organizational support and

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leader member exchange, and employees' attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. These studies have not focused on work-family issues in the exchange relationship.

This study examines the psychological contract as a mechanism in understanding employees and employer relationship in handling work-family issues in organizations in Malaysia. According to Aminah (2007), organizations in Malaysia are still at the early stage of work-family policy development. This mode of employment relationship is still very new and not very common in Malaysia (Subramaniam & Silvaratnam, 2010). A survey conducted by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (2009) in private sectors, reported that only 13.3 percent out of 60 organizations provided childcare centers at the workplace and 1.7 percent work from home. Zoharah and Aminah (2009) reported that since 2001 until 2009, the number of childcare centers at the workplace in the public sector has increased by 154 percent whereas in the private sector, the number has increased by only 36 percent. A nationwide survey done by Subramaniam and Silvaratnam (2010) indicated only 16 percent of the respondents in private organizations reported working in a truly family-friendly organization. Acknowledging that in Malaysia, there is no legislative pressure put by the Malaysian Government on employers to provide work-family policy (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2009), employees may engage in psychological contract with regard to employer assistance in integrating work and family roles.

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Based on the lack of research on psychological contract pertaining to work-family issues and the critical gap in the literature on organizational commitment models that had examined this psychological contract as a mediator, this study examined psychological contract which focuses on work-family issues, hereafter referred to as work-family psychological contract (WFPC). This study looked into WFPC fulfillment rather than breach or violation of the contract. The violation of the psychological contract has received much attention while research into the fulfillment of the contract has been neglected (Smithson & Lewis, 2004).

1.3 Objectives

Generally, this study examines the mediating effects of WFPC fulfillment on the relationships between organizational and non-organizational work-family related factors, and employees' affective organizational commitment.

Specifically, this study has four main objectives:

1. To determine the mediating effects of work-family psychological contract fulfillment on the relationships between family supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) and family-supportive supervisor, and organizational commitment.

2. To determine the mediating effects of work-family psychological contract fulfillment on the relationships between flexible work schedules and organizational commitment.

3. To determine the mediating effects of work-family psychological contract fulfillment on the relationships between job autonomy and organizational commitment.

4. To determine the mediating effects of work-family psychological contract fulfillment on the relationships between work interference with family and work-family facilitation, and organizational commitment.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This study attempts to examine the mediating effects of WFPC fulfillment in the relationship between family supportive organizational perceptions, flexible work schedules, job autonomy, family-supportive supervisor, work interference with family and work-family facilitation and organizational commitment. This study is significant in understanding the mediating effect of WFPC fulfillment in the above-mention relationship investigated from both knowledge and practical perspectives. This is because psychological contract is an important mechanism in understanding employee-employer relationship (Smithson & Lewis, 2004; Collins, 2010).

From the knowledge perspective, first, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge by extending the psychological contract theory through an expansion of

its content into work-family issues. Previously, psychological contract had focused on traditional content such as pay, promotion and training. Second, the present study will contribute to the psychological contract theory and work-family literature by examining the mediating effects of WFPC that may shed some light on the relationships between organizational and non- organizational work-family related factors and organization commitment. This would help provide a greater understanding of the process by which WFPC fulfillment, organization and non-organization work-family related factors are linked to organizational commitment. Finally, the study would also contribute to knowledge through the use of social exchange theory, and psychological contract theory on this important topic on psychological contract, work-family research and organization commitment.

From the practical perspective, the absence of formal work-family policies may subsequently decrease employees' organization commitment, and this should be a major concern of organizations. Organization commitment is identified with an interest in the overall effectiveness and success of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). It is important to have a better understanding of the situation faced to enable human recourse practitioners to take proactive steps in increasing organization commitment among employees. Literature on organizational behavior and attitude has suggested that enhancing and maintaining commitment should become a major focus of an organization. In handling the increase in married couples in the work force, human resource development may benefit from this study the findings could serve as a guide to provide conducive work-family environment.

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1.5 Limitation of the Research

In general, this research is limited in three areas:

a) **Perception**: This study is limited to the examination of executives and professionals of media organizations in terms of their beliefs that the WFPC has been fulfilled by their organization and the consequence on employee's organizational commitment.

b) **Respondents/sample**: The respondents of this study are limited to executives and professionals of Malaysian private media organizations. The media organizations were selected by random sampling from the list of Companies Commission of *Malaysia* (*Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia*). Therefore, the sample in this study represents a purposeful sample. Although the organization type has been controlled through sampling, other variables that may impact organizational commitment were not considered.

c) **Generalizability of findings**: The findings of this study are limited to a similar sample or groups of executives and professionals from media organizations. Theoretically, psychological contracts are influence by forces outside the organization, such as culture (Thomas, Au & Ravlin, 2003). Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other countries with different cultures.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Family supportive Organizational Perceptions (FSOP)

Family supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) are perceptions held by employees regarding the extent to which organizations have an interest in helping employees achieve a viable balance between work and family life through work-family policies and practices (Allen, 2001).

Flexible work schedule

Flexible work schedule is a schedule whereby an employee has discretion in his or her work schedule (Clark, 2001).

Job autonomy

Job autonomy refers to the degree to which the employee is granted freedom, independence, and discretion in scheduling work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Family-Supportive Supervisor

A family-supportive supervisor is one who is sympathetic to employees' desire to seek balance between work and family roles and hence engages in efforts to help the employees accommodate work and family responsibilities (Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

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Work Interference with family

Work interference with family is "a form of conflict in which the role pressures from work interferes with family roles" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77).

Work-family facilitation

Work-family facilitation is defined as the extent to which an individual's engagement in work contributes to a growth (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Psychological Contract

Psychological contract is defined as a promise that has been made and a consideration offered by the organization in exchange for employees efforts (Rousseau, 1989).

Affective Organizational Commitment

Affective organizational commitment is defined as employees' positive emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Work-Family Psychological Contract Fullfillment

Work-family psychological contract fulfillment refers to the extent to which employees' belief that promises regarding facilities and work arrangements for work-family integration have been fulfilled.

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