1. Introduction

Juggling work and family responsibilities is a common experience for many employees (Galinsky et al., 1993 and Lee and Duxbury, 1998). Although engaging in both work and family roles can have positive effects for individuals (e.g., Rothbard, 2001), if workers are unable to balance the responsibilities associated with both roles, the potential for conflict between roles increases (Frone et al., 1992, Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, Greenhaus and Powell, 2003 and Netemeyer et al., 1996).

WFC may be exacerbated when individuals face pressures to have both a successful career and a successful home life (Hammer et al., 1997 and Lundberg and Frankenhaeuser, 1999). An underlying assumption is that being strongly committed to a variety of roles has negative effects on individual well-being. However, some researchers have suggested that there are benefits to being committed to multiple roles (Barnett and Hyde, 2001 and Ruderman et al., 2003). Therefore, we examined whether role commitment is *directly* related to WFC, even after controlling for job stressors, and whether commitment moderates the relationships between job stressors and WFC.

One approach to understanding WFC involves a social-roles perspective. Using this perspective, we can view WFC in terms of types of inter-role conflict among specific social roles, such as worker, parent, and spouse (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983). Inter-role conflict occurs when pressures from two roles interfere with successful performance in each role. Kopelman et al. (1983) noted that there are at least two reasons why roles may be incompatible: (1) the requirements of one role may compete for a person's time, which results in less time for another role; and (2) the strain in one role may affect a person's performance in another role. Using this approach to define WFC, we will examine both time demands and job role strain as potential contributors to conflict between specific roles (i.e., work–spouse and work–parent).

1.1. Time-based demands

It has been well established in the literature that time-based demands can create conflict between work and family roles. Not surprisingly, incompatible time pressures are a major source of WFC (Fox & Dwyer, 1999). Increased number of hours worked, including overtime, tends to be associated with higher levels of WFC (e.g., Burke et al., 1980, Judge et al., 1994 and Pleck et al., 1980). The amount of time spent on house- and child-care tasks is also associated with increased conflict (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981).

1.2. Job stressors

It is also interesting to examine whether non-time related role stressors are related to WFC, beyond what can be explained by these time demands. For example, in addition to the *number* of work hours, the *scheduling* of work may impact on WFC. Frone et al. (1992) found that, in comparison to shift work, regular schedules were related to lower amounts of conflict between work and non-work roles. Similarly, Burke (1989) found

that police officers who worked shifts tended to experience more WFC than police officers who did not work shifts.

Typical job stressors, such as work-role conflict, also tend to result in inter-role conflict (Aryee et al., 1999, Burke et al., 1980 and Kopelman et al., 1983). Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley (1991) found that work-role conflict was associated with increased WFC for nurses. Job control also tends to be strongly linked to psychosocial health and well-being (Day and Jreige, 2002 and Hurrell and McLaney, 1989), and some research suggests that it is linked to WFC. For example, Fox, Dwyer, and Ganster (1993) examined nurses' job control and found that physiological reactions (e.g., blood pressure) to jobs that have high demands and low control may carry over to home settings. Moreover, Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that after controlling for the impact of social support, a lack of job control was a significant predictor of WFC. In related research, individuals who had low perceived control over their life tended to experience more instances of work–family interference and family–work interference than individuals with higher perceived control (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994). Most of the studies involving stressors, however, did not control for the effect of time demands in each role.

Most of the studies that have examined job stressors and WFC have examined global WFC, without examining the specific roles within the family domain (see, for example, Carlson et al., 2000 and Kelloway et al., 1999). In one of the few studies to look at specific roles, Aryee (1992) found that work flexibility and the number of hours worked jointly predicted job–parent conflict, but not job–spouse conflict (although the individual β weight for the number of hours worked was significant). High work-role ambiguity, work overload, and intra-role conflict were jointly associated with increased job–spouse and job–parent conflict for women (Aryee, 1992). These findings suggest that there may be different predictors of conflict, depending on the nature of the conflict (i.e., job–parent or job–spouse).

Based on these findings, it may be incorrectly assumed that conflict between work and family is inevitable for all employees. However, when faced with the same stressors, employees do not necessarily experience the same levels of WFC. One reason for this incongruence may be employees' commitment to various social roles (i.e., parent, spouse, and work). Carlson and Kacmar (2000) argued that when individuals are more committed to a role, conflict increases because of the increased time demands and potential stressors experienced. An alternative explanation is that individuals who are committed to a role may experience decreased conflict because the roles are important to them (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979), and thus, have positive effects. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) recommended that research in the area of WFC should clarify whether role commitment is associated with decreased or increased WFC.

1.3. Role commitment

Role commitment or salience is defined as the perceived importance of a social role, and may involve an emotional investment in the role (Super, 1982 and Super et al., 1996).

Similarly, Morrow, Eastman, and McElroy (1991) defined job commitment as the degree to which an individual is *absorbed* by his or her work. Some research has examined the direct relationship between commitment and overall WFC, but the results have been contradictory. Although most researchers have found that increased role commitment tends to lead to increased general WFC (e.g., Beutell and O'Hare, 1987, Carlson and Kacmar, 2000, Evans and Bartolome, 1984, Frone et al., 1992 and Hammer et al., 1997), some researchers have found that increased role commitment tends to lead to decreased WFC (e.g., Holahan & Gilbert, 1979).

Research has shown that roles may be associated with positive outcomes, such as increased life satisfaction and self-esteem (e.g., Frone, 2003, Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999 and Ruderman et al., 2003). However, it is important to examine not only the number of roles, but also one's commitment to those roles. Related constructs, such as role engagement, have been associated with positive individual outcomes, such as mood (e.g., Rothbard, 2001).

Aryee (1992) found both positive and negative effects of commitment on conflict, depending on the roles involved. Occupational and marital commitment accounted for a significant amount of variance in job–spouse conflict, and occupational commitment and parental commitment accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in job–parent conflict (Aryee, 1992). It is interesting that when examining the zero-order correlations, *job–spouse conflict* was associated with *decreased* occupational, parental, and marital commitment. Conversely, *job–parent conflict*was associated with *increased* occupational commitment, but was unrelated to spouse and parent commitment. Therefore, to better understand the relationships between role commitment and WFC, the first and second goals of this study are to investigate whether role commitment is related to WFC, even after controlling for the effects of job stressors and time spent on work, home, and child-care tasks. It is expected that job and spouse commitment will be associated with decreased conflict, whereas parent commitment will be associated with increased conflict.

In addition to the direct impact of commitment on WFC, commitment may moderate the relationship of time and strain pressures with WFC (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Despite the findings regarding the direct impact of role commitment on work–family conflict, however, little research has examined the moderating effects of role commitment.

In one of the few studies that considered the moderating effects of role involvement, Fox and Dwyer (1999) found that both family and work involvement moderated the relationships between family stressors and family-to-work conflict and between work stressors and work-to-family conflict. Work involvement also moderated the relationships between work stressors and work-to-family conflict and between family stressors and family-to-work conflict. Overall, Fox and Dwyer (1999) found that the stressor–conflict relationships were exacerbated for those who were more involved in their family and work roles. These findings provide preliminary support that both commitment to family and work can act as moderators between work stressors and work–family conflict (Fox & Dwyer, 1999). It is unknown, however, whether commitment to specific parent and

spouse roles can moderate conflict among specific work, spouse, and parent roles, and whether their moderating effects for the different roles behave similarly. Therefore, the third goal of this study is to determine whether commitment to specific roles moderates the relationship between job stressors and conflict. More specifically, based on past research on the direct effects of commitment and related constructs (e.g., Aryee et al., 1999, Rothbard, 2001 and Ruderman et al., 2003), we expect that the relationships between job stressors and conflict would be *buffered* by job commitment and spouse commitment, but *exacerbated* by parent commitment. That is, the negative effects of job stressors on conflict would be somewhat alleviated by high job and spouse commitment, but aggravated by high parent commitment.

2. Summary and research goals

The present study was designed to examine the direct and indirect impact of role commitment on WFC. In keeping with a social-role framework, commitment was assessed for each of the worker, spouse, and parent roles. Moreover, WFC was assessed using two inter-role conflict measures: work–spouse conflict and work–parent conflict. Although the majority of past studies used scales that assess general WFC, Frone and Rice (1987) advised avoiding the use of this type of generic scales because they "hide important antecedents or consequences of…inter-role conflicts involving the different family roles (e.g., parent/spouse)" (p. 51).

Therefore, we examined commitment in each of these three roles in terms of: (1) the direct relationship of commitment with work–spouse and work–parent conflict; (2) the incremental validity of commitment to predict conflict, after controlling for job stressors and time spent on work, home, and child-care tasks; and (3) the moderating impact of commitment on the relationship between job stressors and conflict.

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

Questionnaires were sent to 1200 female nurses in Canada and 1200 female police officers across the United States and Canada. Although some research has not found gender differences in aspects of WFC (e.g., Eagle et al., 1997 and Frone et al., 1992), other research has shown that gender differences do exist in the antecedents, consequences, and overall experience of WFC (e.g., Behson, 2002, Duxbury et al., 1994 and Greenglass et al., 1989). Therefore, the present study constrained its focus to women. These occupations of policing and nursing were chosen for this study because both professions involve considerable potential job stressors, and because they represent both traditional and non-traditional female occupations.

Respondents consisted of 253 female nurses and 196 female police officers (for a response rate of 19%). The average police respondent was 37 years old, with a university degree or a college diploma, had worked in her current job for 5 years, and had been in policing for 13 years. Police respondents were typically working general policing and

patrol duties in an urban setting. The average nurse respondent was 41 years old, with a university degree or a college diploma, had worked in her current job for 10 years, and had been in nursing for 18 years. Nurse respondents were typically working with direct patient care in an urban hospital.

For the purpose of this paper, “spouse” was defined as begin married, living together, or having a long-term partner. “Parent” was defined as individuals with children under the age of 20 years, living in the same residence either all the time (i.e., “full-time” children) or had shared custody for part of the year (i.e., “part-time” children). Of the 449 respondents, 13 were deleted because of random, missing data. Of these remaining 436 respondents, 406 of them had a spouse, and 310 had at least one child (237 respondents had one or two “full-time” children; 48 had three or more “full-time” children, and 57 of them had one to three “part-time” children). Respondents had an average of 1.66 (*SD* = .89) “full-time” children and an average of .27 (*SD* = .63) “part-time” children, and the age of the children ranged from 1 to 20 years. Moreover, the majority of the sample (i.e., 275 respondents) was defined as both a spouse and a parent. The majority of spouses (i.e., 381) was employed, working an average of 40.00 (*SD* = 14.63) hours per week. Over 90% of the spouses worked more than 37 h per week.

2.1.2. Measures

Respondents completed a work–family conflict survey, which included:

Work–spouse and work–parent inter-role conflict scales. Two 13-item scales, based on items from other general WFC scales (e.g., Kopelman et al., 1983), were developed. Based on definitions of general conflict and work–family conflict, we defined inter-role conflict as an individual’s perception of competing or incompatible demands from two roles (Kopelman et al., 1983 and Weiten, 1997). Following guidelines for ensuring content validity, the items were written to be representative of the domain (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Because both perception and incompatible demands are emphasized in our definition, directionality (i.e., work interfering with spouse and parent, or spouse and parent interfering with work) was not a focus of our study. That is, conflict requires demands from *both* roles in order to be “incompatible.” Therefore, the items were screened and rewritten in order to ensure that conflict would be measured *without* confounds of directionality. Furthermore, conflict as defined as *experienced* conflict should not measure *antecedents* of conflict, such as time or role strain factors (e.g., “I experience WFC because I have too many work time demands”). Thus, we developed items *without* these confounds. Using a 7-point Likert scale, respondents indicated the extent to which they experienced conflict between their work and spouse roles and between their work and parent roles (e.g., “I often feel that I am divided between work and spousal responsibilities;” It is hard to balance my roles as a [nurse/police officer] and as a spouse;” “I balance my work and parent responsibilities without problems” [reverse scored]; “I feel that my roles as [nurse/police officer] and parent interfere with each other”).

Because most past research has utilized general work–family measures, we conducted an exploratory principal components analysis to examine whether work–spouse and work–parent conflicts were distinct constructs. The scree plot clearly indicated the presence of two factors, which accounted for 58.89% of the variance. All of the work–parent conflict items loaded on the first factor (loadings ranged from .57 to .87) and all of the work–spouse conflict items loaded on the second factor (loadings ranged from .67 to .85). There were no complex loadings: All of the loadings on the non-dominant factor ranged from (−.07 to .18). Cronbach's α was .94 for work–spouse conflict and .93 for work–parent conflict.

Time demands. Respondents indicated the number of regular and overtime hours they worked per week. They also indicated the number of hours they spent on child-care tasks and activities with children, and on home-care tasks.

Job stressors. Respondents indicated the regularity of their work shift (higher numbers indicate longer shifts and more irregular work schedules). Respondents also completed the *Work Conflict Scale* (eight items; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Because *belief* in control, and not necessarily the *exercise* of control, decreases the stress felt in demanding situations (Fox et al., 1993 and Ganster and Fusilier, 1989), we utilized Dwyer and Ganster's (1991) *Job Control Scale* (22 items), which assesses *perceived* job control. Cronbach's αs for these scales were high (α = .85 for intra-role work conflict; and α = .89 for job control).

Role commitment. Several items from the commitment subscales of the *Life Role Salience Scales* (Amatea, Cross, Clarke, & Bobby, 1986) were included in the questionnaire to assess role commitment. Using a 5-point rating scale (1 = Disagree; 5 = Agree), respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with four items regarding their commitment to their job role (e.g., "I devote whatever time and energy it takes to move up in my job/career field"), four items assessing their spouse role (e.g., "I put a lot of time and effort into building and maintaining a relationship"), and three items assessing their parent role (e.g., "I am very involved in the day-to-day matters of rearing my children"). Cronbach's αs were .80 for job commitment, .81 for parent commitment, and .79 for spouse commitment.

2.2. Results

2.2.1. Work, spouse, and parent commitment

Correlations were calculated among the commitment variables, job stressor variables, and the work–family conflict measures (see Table 1). Of the control variables, work hours and home-care hours were related to work–spouse conflict (r = .15, p < .01; r = .12, p < .05, respectively), but none of them was related to work–parent conflict. Moreover, work hours were only related to job commitment (r = .14, p < .01), home-care hours were positively related to parent commitment (r = .14, p < .05), and child-care hours were negatively related to job- and spouse-commitment (r = −.16, p < .001; r = −.12, p < .05, respectively), but positively related to parent commitment (r = .29, p < .001).

Table 1.

Means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and reliabilities of conflict, job stressors, and commitment variables

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	12
1. Work–spouse conflict[a]	3.58	1.43	(.94)										
2. Work–parent conflict[b]	4.28	1.43	.63***	(.93)									
3. Work hours[c]	42.04	9.0	.15**	.05	—								
4. Home hours	4.48	2.49	.12*	.06	−.01	—							
5. Child-care hours	4.15	5.68	.05	.04	−.15**	.31***	—						
6. Work schedule	3.26	.90	.20***	.16**	−.04	.07	.09	—					
7. Job control	2.81	.63	−.26***	−.28***	.09	−.01	−.02	−.48***	(.89)				
8. Work role conflict	3.90	1.34	.27***	.27***	.19***	.06	−.01	.06	−.22***	(.85)			
9. Job commitment	3.16	.93	−.05	−.16**	.14**	.00	−.16***	−.12*	.24***	.00	(.80)		
10. Spouse commitment	3.83	.89	−.16***	−.16**	.02	−.05	−.12*	−.09	.08	−.06	.06	(.79)	
11. Parent commitment	3.37	.51	.04	.16**	−.03	.14*	.29***	−.01	.00	−.02	−.10	.08	(.81)

Reliabilities (Cronbach's α) are in parentheses along the diagonal.
[a] $N = 406$ for analyses involving spouse role.
[b] $N = 310$ for analyses involving parent role.
[c] $N = 436$ for analyses involving work role.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

All of the job stressors were significantly correlated with both work–spouse and work–parent conflict (*r*s ranged from = −.28 to .27, all $p < .001$). Spouse commitment was negatively related to work–spouse conflict ($r = -.16$, $p < .001$), and job and spouse commitment were negatively related to work–parent conflict (both *r*s = −.16, $p < .01$). Conversely, parent commitment was associated with increased work–parent conflict ($r = .16$, $p < .01$).

2.2.2. Commitment interactions

In order to test the hypotheses involving the work sources of conflict, and their respective moderators, the procedure for performing moderated regressions outlined by Aiken and West (1991) was used. Two moderated regression analyses were conducted (i.e., one for work–spouse conflict and one for work–parent conflict). In each analysis, the predictor variables were standardized in order to overcome the problem of scale invariance and to help to reduce the problem of multicollinearity between the interactions terms and their component parts (Aiken and West, 1991 and Neter et al., 1989). The variables were entered into the equation in four steps: (1) time demands of work hours, home-care hours, and child-care hours; (2) job stressors, (3) commitment variables on the third step, and (4) interactions.

2.2.3. Commitment and work–spouse conflict

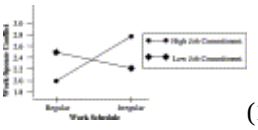
The control variables accounted to 4% of the variance in work–spouse conflict ($p < .01$), with both work hours and home-care hours uniquely contributing to the equation (see Table 2). The job stressors accounted for an additional 11% ($p < .001$) of the variance in work–spouse conflict when entered in the second step of the equation. Intra-role conflict ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$) and job control ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .001$) uniquely predicted work–spouse conflict. The commitment variables accounted for 2% of the variance in work–spouse conflict ($p < .05$), and the β associated with spouse commitment was significant ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .01$). The interactions terms accounted for a significant increase in variance ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p < .05$), and two interactions were significant. Job commitment moderated the relationship between work schedules and work–spouse conflict: Individuals with high job commitment reported moderate levels of conflict regardless of work schedule. Conversely, individuals with low job commitment were more affected by schedule irregularity: That is, conflict was highest for individuals who worked irregular work schedules and had low job commitment (see Fig. 1). Job commitment also moderated the relationship between control and work–spouse conflict, in that the relationship between job control and conflict was strongest for individuals with high commitment. Highly committed individuals who had high job control experience little conflict, whereas highly committed individuals who had low control experience high conflict. Conversely, individuals with low job commitment were unaffected by the amount of job control (see Fig. 2).

Table 2.

Regression of work–spouse conflict and work–parent conflict on job stressors, commitment variables, and job stressors by commitment interactions

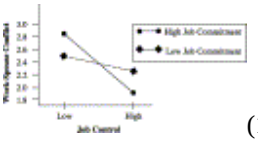
Step	Work–spouse conflict			Work–parent conflict		
	β	ΔR^2	Total R^2	β	ΔR^2	Total R^2
1. Time demands		.04**	.04**		.01	.01
Work hours	.15**			.06		
Home-care hours	.10*			.06		
Child-care hours	.04			.03		
2. Job stressors		.11***	.15***		.12***	.13***
Work schedule irregularity	.14			.06		
Intra-role conflict	.27***			.28***		
Job control	−.27***			−.30***		
3. Commitment variables		.02*	.17***		.03**	.16***
Job commitment	−.02			−.13		
Spouse commitment	−.17**			—		
Parent commitment	—			.21**		
4. Interaction terms[a]		.03*	.20***		.03	.22***
Job commitment × Work schedule irregularity	−.26***			—		
Job commitment × Job control	−.17*			—		
Parent commitment × Work schedule irregularity	—			.23**		

[a] Only the uniquely significant interactions are presented.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.



(12K)

Fig. 1. Interaction of job commitment and work schedule on work–spouse conflict.



(14K)

Fig. 2. Interaction of job commitment and job control on work–spouse conflict.

2.2.4. Commitment and work–parent conflict

In the second set of analyses, the control variables did not account for a significant amount of variance in work–parent conflict ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, p = ns; see Table 2), but the job stressors accounted for an additional 12% ($p < .001$) of the variance. Intra-role conflict ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$) and job control ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$) uniquely predicted conflict. The addition of the block of role commitment variables resulted in a 3% increase in work–parent conflict ($p < .05$), with parent commitment uniquely predicting work–parent conflict ($\beta = .21$, $p < .01$). The block of interactions explained an additional 3% of the variance in work–parent conflict (ns). All of these variables accounted for 22% ($p < .001$) of the variance in conflict. Because of the difficulty finding significant interactions overall (Evans, 1985), and because the interaction terms accounted for the same amount of variance as in the work–spouse analysis (i.e., 3%), we examined the individual βs for the interactions. One interaction term was significant: parent commitment moderated the relationship between work schedule irregularity and work–parent conflict. When respondents worked regular work schedules, they experienced moderate work–parent conflict, regardless of their level of parent commitment. However, when they worked irregular schedules, individuals who had high commitment had the highest amount of conflict, whereas individuals who had low commitment had the lowest amount of conflict (see Fig. 3).

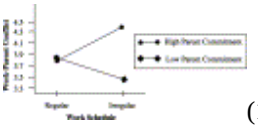

(13K)

Fig. 3. Interaction of parent commitment and work schedule on work-parent conflict.

2.3. Discussion

The present study had three goals: (1) to examine whether work, spouse, and parent commitment were directly related to work–spouse and work–parent conflict; (2) to examine the incremental variance explained in conflict by commitment, after controlling for job stressors and hours spent on work, home, and child-care tasks; and (3) to examine the moderating impact of commitment on the relationship between job stressors and WFC.

Work, spouse, and parent commitment exhibited different relationships with conflict. More specifically, *increased* job and spouse commitment were associated with *decreased* work–parent conflict, whereas *increased* parent commitment was associated with *increased* work–parent conflict, providing mixed support for Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) prediction that commitment to work and spouse would be associated with increased conflict. We also found that *increased* spouse commitment was associated with *decreased* work–spouse conflict, supporting Aryee's (1992) findings. Parent and job commitment, however, were not significantly associated with work–spouse conflict. After controlling for time demands and stressors, spouse commitment still was associated with decreased work–spouse conflict, and parent commitment still was associated with increased work–parent conflict, suggesting that commitment may be more than simply a function of time and job stressors.

The findings of the present study may explain the inconsistencies in past research involving commitment and conflict. Although commitment variables explained only a low amount of variance in conflict (i.e., 2–3%), our results suggest that utilizing separate measures of individual role commitment and conflict in research is warranted. One possible explanation for the differential impact of commitment on conflict is that there are substantive differences in what commitment to the different roles entails, as well as differences in the experience of conflict between specific roles. Therefore, one's level of conflict may not be as much dependent on their level of commitment, as it is on the *nature* of their commitment. It may be possible that despite a similar level of commitment to each role, there are specific stressors or responsibilities associated with different types of commitment.

The present study also examined how commitment to work, spouse, and parent roles moderated the relationship between job stressors and work–spouse conflict and work–parent conflict. Two interactions involving work–spouse conflict were significant. Job

commitment moderated the relationship between work schedules and work–spouse conflict. The level of conflict for individuals with high job commitment was not significantly influenced by the irregularity of their work schedules. Conversely, the level of conflict for individuals with low job commitment was more influenced by irregular work schedules: As expected, conflict was highest when individuals had irregular work schedules and were not committed to their job. These results suggest that individuals who are committed to their job may not be as negatively influenced by working irregular or rotating shift work. Highly committed individuals tend to be absorbed by their work, and may, therefore, accept irregular shifts as being necessary for their work, whereas individuals who are not as committed to their job may see irregular shifts as an inconvenience, and as limiting their time, and flexibility to schedule time, in other roles.

Job commitment also moderated the relationship between job control and conflict. Interestingly, compared to individuals with low job commitment, individuals with high job commitment were more negatively influenced by a lack of job control: A lack of control was associated with high conflict, and high control was associated with low conflict among the highly committed individuals. Individuals who are highly committed to their job may tend to seek control over their work, and they may be more sensitive to a lack of control, thus experiencing greater conflict when they do not have it. Conversely, individuals with low job commitment may not seek extra flexibility or control over how they do their job, because they are not as invested in their job.

As expected, when predicting work–parent conflict, high parent commitment exacerbated the relationship between work schedules and work–parent conflict. That is, when working regular shifts, there was no difference in the level of work–parent conflict of high commitment and low commitment individuals. For individuals working irregular shifts, however, employees with high parent commitment had higher levels of work–parent conflict than employees who were less committed to the parenting role. This increased conflict may be because these individuals view their work schedule as limiting their time in the parent role, and their flexibility to schedule time in their parent role. For example, highly committed mothers with rotating shifts may have to have a variety of child-care arrangements, depending on the shift they are working that week, which would be perceived as creating conflict. For individuals who may be less invested in the parental role, irregular work schedules are not perceived as so incompatible. These interactions highlight the different relationships that exist among the types of commitment, stressors, and conflict, and emphasize the need to examine the factors within the context of specific roles. Our results extend Fox and Dwyer's (1999) research on the moderating impact of involvement.

3. Limitations and future research

The present study has addressed many of the questions regarding commitment and role conflict. However, there are some limitations of this study. Because the present study constrained its focus to women in two specific occupations (policing and nursing), more research needs to be conducted to determine whether the relationships found in the present study are applicable to men and to employees in other occupations. In addition,

because the present study was correlational in nature, caution must be taken with any assumptions of causality that may be made within the context of this research. Future research should examine the causality assumptions about the relationship between these antecedents and work–family conflict. Furthermore, the data in this study were obtained using self-report measures, which raised the possibility that our results were contaminated by monomethod bias. However, the regression analyses indicate that this bias is not a primary concern because the relationships were still significant after controlling for the effects of time demands and job stressors. Finally, future research should apply Meyer and Allen's (1991) model of organizational commitment (i.e., affective, continuance, and normative commitment) to social roles to examine the extent to which people stay in a role because they *love* a specific role, have *no other option* but to continue in that role, or feel they *should* be committed to that role.

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