

# Chapter 2

## Introducing Theoretical Approaches to Work-Life Balance and Testing a New Typology Among Professionals

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Clark (2000) defines work-family balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict” (p. 751). In this chapter, we examine how professionals have succeeded in achieving work-life balance in their lives. First, we examine classic and current approaches to multiple roles and then introduce a typology of work-life balance based on the synthesis of the presented theoretical foundation. We propose four types of work-life balance; beneficial, harmful, active, and passive. The employees belonging to each type are expected to differ qualitatively from each other in relation to psychological functioning and role engagement. Second, we empirically investigate (a) how typical these four types of work-life balance are among three samples of professionals (Finnish university professionals, Finnish managers, and Estonian managers), and (b) whether professionals belonging to the different work-life balance types differ from each other in terms of their psychological functioning and work role engagement as expected according to the typology of work-life balance.

### 2.1 What is Work-Life Balance? A Glance at the Theoretical Background

#### 2.1.1 Role Theories: The Foundation for Work-Life Balance

Work-family research has long been guided by the role stress theory, wherein the negative side of the work-family interaction has been put under the spotlight. Recently, the emphasis has shifted towards the investigation of the positive interaction between work and family roles as well as roles outside work and family lives, and scholars have started to deliberate on the essence of work-life balance (Jones et al., 2006). It should be noted that the term *work-life* is used throughout this chapter from here on as it is more comprehensive than the term *work-family*. However,

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when the work of other scholars is referred to, the terms *work-life* and *work-family* are used according to the citations.

It is generally agreed that work-life balance is important for an individual's psychological well-being, and that high self-esteem, satisfaction, and overall sense of harmony in life can be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and family roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Marks and MacDermid, 1996). However, there is a lack of consensus on how work-life balance should be defined, measured, and researched, and thus, the theorizing of what constitutes work-life balance, how it develops, and what factors enable or hinder it, is still in progress (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007; Jones et al., 2006; Voydanoff, 2005). Greenhaus et al. (2003) have also questioned the self-evident assumption that work-family balance always leads to favorable outcomes since according to them this is an empirical question which has not yet been firmly answered due to miscellaneous definitions of work-family balance.

The origins of research on work-life balance can be traced back to studies of women having multiple roles. Barnett and Baruch (1985) investigated the psychological distress connected to the balance of rewards and concerns generated by individual women's multiple roles as paid worker, wife and mother. They found that positive role quality – more rewards than concerns experienced in a given role – was related to low levels of role overload, role conflict and anxiety. Based on their research, Barnett and Baruch defined role balance as a “rewards minus concerns” difference score which could range from positive to negative values.

Tiedje and her colleagues (1990) approached the same research question from the perspective of a typology of role perception. They argued that women may perceive their work and family roles in multiple, qualitatively different ways, and thus they based their typology on both the role conflict and enhancement hypotheses. According to the *conflict hypothesis*, multiple roles with infinite demands are likely to cause role strain and conflict for individuals because the resources they have to meet these demands are finite and scarce (Goode, 1960). The core statement of the *enhancement hypothesis*, in turn, is that multiple roles provide benefits in the form of privileges, status security, psychological energy and personal growth which expand individual resources and facilitate role performance (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974).

More specifically, Tiedje and colleagues (1990) regarded role conflict and role enhancement as independent dimensions, and therefore they argued that it is possible to experience simultaneously either (a) high conflict and low enhancement, (b) high enhancement and low conflict, (c) low conflict and low enhancement, or (d) high conflict and high enhancement. They found that regardless of the level of enhancement, women who experienced high role conflict were more depressed and less satisfied as parents than women belonging to the low conflict-high enhancement group. On the basis of studies by Barnett and Baruch (1985) and Tiedje and colleagues (1990), it may be concluded that high rewards and enhancement combined with low concerns and conflict experienced across the roles in one's life is beneficial for an individual's well-being, and hence these experiences characterise role balance.

However, Marks and MacDermid (1996) conceptualise balance quite differently. According to them, role balance is not an outcome but rather “both a behavioral pattern of acting across roles in a certain way and a corresponding cognitive-affective pattern of organizing one’s inner life of multiple selves” (Marks and MacDermid, 1996, p. 421). Specifically, according to Marks and MacDermid (1996) there are two ways to engage multiple roles; as either positive or negative role balance. *Positive role balance*, in Marks and MacDermid’s theory (cf. Barnett and Baruch, 1985), refers to the tendency to engage in every role with equally high effort, devotion, attention and care, whereas *negative role balance* refers to the tendency to engage in roles with apathy, cynicism, low effort and low attentiveness.

Due to these behavioral and cognitive-affective tendencies, it is theorised that positive role balance will lead to role ease and that negative role balance will lead to role strain (Marks and MacDermid, 1996) – role ease and strain corresponding with role enhancement and conflict, respectively. In the case of positive role balance, role conflict is either prevented or solved before acute problems of role management become chronic; this is achieved by addressing the demands of each role on time, with effort and attention. For example, avoiding unnecessary breaks, calls and e-mails while working, prioritising job responsibilities, and updating one’s professional skills, may substantially facilitate managing job responsibilities more efficiently so that the employee’s work time does not cut into his or her allocated family time. In contrast, for individuals of whom a negative role balance is typical, occasional incidents of role conflict are likely to accumulate due to their indifference towards role-related tasks and duties, creating an ongoing state of unfulfilled demands. For example, ignoring one’s spouse’s emotional concerns and avoiding private life responsibilities, such as taking care of one’s children or household chores may, over time, escalate into constant and daily disagreements, which can also negatively affect job performance due to the consequential worsening of mood and concentration.

### ***2.1.2 Overall Appraisal and Components Approach: Contemporary Views on Work-Life Balance***

More recent views about work-life balance can be classified into the overall appraisal approach to work-life balance, and the components approach to work-life balance (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007).

*Overall appraisal* refers to an individual’s general assessment concerning the entirety of his or her life situation. For example, work-family balance has been defined as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with a minimum of role conflict” (Clark, 2000, p. 751), “equilibrium or maintaining overall sense of harmony in life” (Clarke et al., 2004, p. 121), and “global assessment that work and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains” (Voydanoff, 2005, p. 825). When an overall appraisal approach is applied, work-life balance is typically assessed with general

questions (e.g., “All in all, how successful do you feel in balancing your work and personal/family life?”: Clarke et al. 2004).

A *components approach* to work-life balance emphasises balance as a direct formative latent construct (Edwards and Bagozzi, 2000), which means that work-family balance consists of multiple facets that precede balance and give meaning to it (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007). For example, according to Greenhaus et al. (2003), work-family balance consists of time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance. According to Frone (2003), in turn, work-family balance consists of work-family conflict and work-family facilitation (corresponding with role conflict and enhancement, respectively). The advantage of the components approach over the overall appraisals approach to work-life balance is that one can use conceptually based measures of balance that tap into the different aspects of work-life balance. These aspects form the overall evaluation of how well an individual is meeting role-related responsibilities (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007).

Following the theory of role balance (Marks and MacDermid, 1996), Greenhaus et al. (2003, p. 513) have defined work-family balance as “the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work and family role”. Furthermore, according to these scholars, work-family balance consists of three dimensions of which *time balance* refers to equal time devoted, *involvement balance* refers to equal psychological effort and presence invested, and *satisfaction balance* refers to equal satisfaction expressed across work and family roles. Greenhaus et al. (2003) regard work-family balance as a continuum where imbalance in favor of the work role lies at one end, and imbalance in favor of the family role lies at the other end, and *balance* lies in the middle favoring neither work nor family role.

In the above conceptualisation, work-life balance and imbalance are not seen as inherently beneficial or detrimental, respectively, for psychological well-being and quality of life. Instead, Greenhaus et al. (2003) state that it should be empirically tested whether equal time, involvement, and satisfaction balance is better for an individual than imbalance in favor of either the work or family role. In their study, it turned out that among individuals with a high level of engagement across roles, those reporting the highest quality of life were those who invested more in the family than the work role, that is, they showed an imbalance in favor of family. In regard to their level of engagement, the equally balanced individuals scored lower in quality of life than those favoring family over work, but higher than those favoring work over family. Thus, those who invested most in work had the lowest quality of life.

Frone (2003), in turn, has presented a *four-fold taxonomy of work-family balance*, in which work-family balance is defined as “low levels of inter-role conflict and high levels of inter-role facilitation” (p. 145). The four-fold taxonomy is based on the notion of bi-directionality between work and family domains, meaning that participation in the work role may interfere with or enhance the performance in the family role, and likewise, participation in the family role may interfere or enhance performance in the work role (Frone et al., 1992; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz and Marks, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 1992). Accordingly, work-life balance (low conflict, high facilitation/enhancement) is hypothesised to occur in two directions: from

work to nonwork domains and vice versa. Thus, according to Frone (2003), the measurable four components of work-life balance are work-to-family/nonwork conflict, family/nonwork-to-work conflict, work-to-family/ nonwork enhancement, and family/nonwork-to-work enhancement.

### ***2.1.3 Outcomes of Work-Family Balance***

Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) studied the variance explained in work and family related outcomes, such as satisfaction and stress, by two means: using a single item of work-family balance (overall appraisal) and by using the four-fold taxonomy of work-family balance (i.e., the components approach presented by Frone (2003)). They found that the components approach produced systematically higher explanation rates than did the overall appraisal: for example, in the case of job stress, the respective explanation rates were 45% as against 18%. Therefore Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) recommend the use of measures of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment (i.e., facilitation, enhancement) for investigating and assessing the experience of work-family balance.

Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) point out one limitation, however, namely that the four-fold taxonomy of work-family balance together with other previously reviewed definitions of work-life balance tends to overemphasise balance as a psychological construct, that is, as the experience of an individual, and thus fails to capture the contextual and social perspective of work-life balance. For example, daily interaction and conciliation of needs and responsibilities between work and nonwork members exemplifies such a contextual and social nature of work-life balance. An extended definition of work-life balance, taking into account this limitation, was therefore developed as follows: work-family balance is the “accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domains” (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007, p. 458).

Studies measuring the bidirectional work-nonwork conflict and enhancement have most often relied on the variable-oriented approach to work-life balance with the goal of finding out which of the four work-life balance components is correlated with what outcomes. For example, it has been found that work-to-nonwork conflict is related to various forms of psychological ill-being (fatigue, distress, job exhaustion, and dissatisfaction at work and home), whereas nonwork-to-work conflict has most often been found to be related only to fatigue and low family satisfaction (Geurts et al., 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2004). Work-to-nonwork enhancement, in turn, is associated with high job satisfaction, low job exhaustion and low psychological distress, while nonwork-to-work enhancement has shown a positive association with family satisfaction (Aryee et al., 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2004).

In conclusion, the different views of work-life balance suggest that the phenomenon has at least three important aspects. First of all, it seems that work-life balance is unlikely to be a unidimensional construct but rather a conglomeration

of multiple measurable constructs. Many scholars suggest that work-life balance consists of high rewards, resources and enhancement combined with low concerns, demands and conflict experienced by individuals across their life roles (Barnett and Baruch, 1985; Frone, 2003; Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007; Tiedje et al., 1990; Voydanoff, 2005). Second, in addition to role-related resources and demands over which individuals may not always have control, work-life balance seems to stem also from individuals' own actions and attitudes. It is assumed that acting with equal devotion and being equally satisfied with one's life roles reflects a work-life balance that produces the ability to manage multiple roles successfully (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Marks and MacDermid, 1996). Third, the achieved balance between work and nonwork roles is expected to lead to satisfaction and well-being in life.

## **2.2 A Typology of Work-Life Balance: A Person-Oriented Approach to Work-Nonwork Interaction**

### ***2.2.1 Building a Bridge Between Different Views of Work-Life Balance***

The notion that work-life balance consists of multiple constructs, such as work-nonwork conflict and enhancement in both directions, is very important because the components approach captures more of the phenomenon than the overall appraisal approach (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007). At the same time, however, it may obscure the entirety of an individual's work-life balance experience. For example, it is easy to agree that high role enhancement combined with low conflict constitutes work-life balance and that the opposite – low enhancement, high conflict – constitutes work-life imbalance because enhancement has been shown to be linked with high psychological well-being while conflict has been linked with low psychological well-being (Frone, 2003; Geurts et al., 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2006). But what if one experiences both high enhancement and high conflict or alternatively both low enhancement and low conflict simultaneously – do these experiences reflect work-life balance? Does high work-nonwork enhancement counterbalance the negative effect of high work-nonwork conflict on well-being? Additionally, is high enhancement still needed to produce a positive effect on well-being when work-nonwork conflict is not experienced? To find an answer to these questions, a new four-dimensional typology of work-life balance has been suggested (Rantanen, 2008).

According to the proposed four-dimensional typology illustrated in Fig. 2.1, individuals can belong to beneficial, harmful, active or passive work-life balance types. In line with role conflict theories (Frone, 2003; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964), role enhancement theories (Barnett and Hyde, 2001; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Wayne et al., 2007) and the demands-resources approach (Bakker and Geurts, 2004; Voydanoff, 2005), the term *beneficial balance* refers to the proposition that the simultaneous experience of work-nonwork enhancement and absence

<b>Work-nonwork enhancement experienced</b>	<b>Work-nonwork conflict experienced</b>			
	Yes	No		<b>Psychological functioning differentiating factor</b>
	<b>Active balance</b>	<b>Beneficial balance</b>		
	- high resources - high demands	- high resources - low demands		
No	No	<b>Role engagement differentiating factor</b>		
<b>Harmful balance</b>	<b>Passive balance</b>			
	- low resources - high demands	- low resources - low demands		

**Fig. 2.1** Typology of work-life balance (revised from Rantanen, 2008, p. 25, figure 5)

of work-nonwork conflict facilitates psychological functioning and well-being. This occurs because the resources provided and gains attained from the participation in multiple roles are experienced to exceed the demands of these roles. The term *harmful balance*, in turn, refers to the proposition that simultaneous experience of work-nonwork conflict and absence of work-nonwork enhancement threatens psychological functioning and well-being, because the combined demands of multiple roles are experienced as exceeding the benefits that these roles provide. Thus, the main differentiating factor between beneficial and harmful work-life balance is psychological functioning, due to disparity and imbalance in role-related resources and demands.

Furthermore, active and passive work-life balances are considered to represent the opposite ends of the spectrum of role engagement, based on the theory of role balance by Marks and MacDermid (1996). They suggest that role balance reflects a behavioral and cognitive-affective pattern of acting and feeling across roles with either high or low dedication. Thus, *active balance* in the present typology refers to the proposition that individuals may be highly engaged in their life roles both by choice (will to succeed and achieve happiness in different life spheres) and/or by necessity (due to tough demands from different life spheres). *Passive balance*, on the other hand, refers to the proposition that the simultaneous absence of work-nonwork conflict and enhancement experiences may reflect low engagement across life roles (conflicting role demands are perhaps avoided but also rewards are not gained) or a composition of life roles that are less demanding or challenging.

### 2.2.2 Formation of the Typology of Work-Life Balance

The typology of work-life balance is intentionally described without reference to the bidirectionality of work-nonwork interaction (i.e., work can affect nonwork and vice versa). This is because the aim of the present typology is to capture the individuals' work-nonwork interaction experience in a holistic manner. Here the bidirectionality is not ignored but rather the work-to-nonwork and nonwork-to-work conflict

and enhancement factors are considered as closely connected subdimensions of the higher constructs of work-nonwork conflict and enhancement. This view is supported by the fact that often when work-to-nonwork conflict is experienced, its counterpart nonwork-to-work conflict is also reported; the same applies to work-to-nonwork and nonwork-to-work enhancement (Aryee et al., 2005; Grzywacz and Bass, 2003; Kinnunen et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2004). Therefore, although both work-nonwork conflict and enhancement are to be assessed according to the principle of bidirectionality, within this typology of work-life balance they are combined into the total experience of conflict and enhancement.

The types of work-life balance (Fig. 2.1) are formed by dichotomising the total of the work-nonwork conflict and enhancement experiences into two groups, using the arithmetic mean of the scale as a cut-off point and then cross-tabulating these dichotomised work-nonwork conflict and enhancement experiences in order to obtain the beneficial, harmful, active, and passive balance types. The arithmetic mean of the work-nonwork interface scale was chosen as a cut-off point because work-family conflict is generally reported according to a proportion of population experiencing conflict at least “sometimes”, which is a scale midpoint (Bellavia and Frone, 2005). For example, in a scale from 1 to 5 the mean scores below 2.5 constitute non-experience of the work-nonwork conflict and enhancement (1 = never or 2 = seldom), while a mean score of 2.5 or above signifies experiencing work-nonwork conflict and/or enhancement (3 = sometimes, 4 = often, or 5 = very often). This means that the work-life balance types are anchored in the response scale instead of mean or median splits of the variable mean scores, which are sample-specific and hinder the comparison of results between different samples.

This typology of work-life balance represents a holistic and person-oriented approach to work-life balance and tests Voydanoff's (2005) view that the work-family balance is a result of one's global assessment of the fit between demands and resources within the work and family domains. In addition, Grzywacz and Bass (2003, p. 258), who examined the work-family fit with a variable-oriented approach focusing separately on each dimension and direction of work-nonwork interaction, noted that in the absence of strong theory, the numerous possibilities for how each direction of work-nonwork conflict and enhancement may be combined complicate the precise specification of the work-family balance (i.e., work-family fit). Therefore, we suggest that one alternative is to consider work-nonwork interaction experiences in their entirety because “the totality gets its characteristic features and properties from the interaction among the elements involved, not from the effect of each isolated part on the totality” (Bergman et al., 2003, p. 9).

## **2.3 Work-Life Balance Among Professionals: The Typology of Work-Life Balance in Practice**

### ***2.3.1 Prevalence of the Different Balance Types***

Our typology of work-life balance has been studied within a community-based sample of 42-year-old employees with spouse and/or children ( $n = 213$ ) in Finland (Rantanen, 2008). It was found that 48% of these middle-aged respondents belonged

to the beneficial balance type, whereas only 9% belonged to the harmful balance type. Of the respondents, 26% belonged to the passive balance type and 17% belonged to the active balance type. The harmful balance type was represented by a greater number of upper level white-collar workers and by more men than the other types. Those belonging to the harmful balance type had the lowest psychological well-being scores, as well as the least amount of personal time (outside of work and family activities), and they invested less thought and action into their family and their own health compared with the individuals belonging to the other types.

For the present chapter, the typology of work-life balance was examined among three samples of upper level white-collar workers with spouse and/or children: Finnish university professionals (including staff with a minimum of a Master's degree or supervisory position,  $N = 1482$ ), Finnish managers ( $N = 1214$ ), and Estonian managers ( $N = 396$ ). Based on the aforementioned findings, our expectation was that the harmful balance type would be more prevalent among these professionals due to their demanding jobs. We also know from related studies that professional work can be rewarding (Kinnunen et al., 2008), which suggests that these professionals may also be part of the beneficial and active balance types if the rewards gained either exceed or are equal, respectively, with the demands of their roles.

The details for sample characteristics are described in Table 2.1. Characteristic of the university professionals in relation to the other two samples is a higher prevalence of females, higher level of education (in comparison to Finnish managers), higher proportion of persons under age 30, and having more than two children (in comparison to Finnish managers). The sample of Finnish managers, in relation to the other two samples, is distinguished by a higher prevalence of males (in comparison to university professionals), lower level of education, higher proportion of persons over age 49, and a higher proportion of respondents whose children are not living at home with them. The Estonian managers, in relation to the two other samples, were represented by a higher proportion of males (in comparison to university professionals), higher level of education (in comparison to Finnish managers), and a higher proportion of persons between the ages of 30–39.

The work-life balance types among these three samples were formed as described in Sect. 2.2.2. Among Finnish university professionals, work-nonwork conflict was measured with eight items derived from the scale by Carlson et al. (2000): four for work-to-nonwork (e.g., “The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities”) and four for nonwork-to-work (e.g., “Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work”) direction. Work-nonwork enhancement was measured with eight items from the scale by Carlson et al. (2006): four for work-to-nonwork (e.g., “My involvement in my work helps me to acquire skills and this helps me be a better family member”) and four for nonwork-to-work (e.g., “My involvement in my family makes me feel happy and this helps me be a better worker”) direction. The response scale for all items ranged from “1 = completely disagree” to “7 = completely agree”, and the Cronbach's alphas were 0.78 for work-nonwork conflict and 0.88 for work-nonwork enhancement. The cut-off point for dichotomisation of work-nonwork conflict and work-nonwork enhancement experiences was 3.5.

**Table 2.1** Sample characteristics (%)

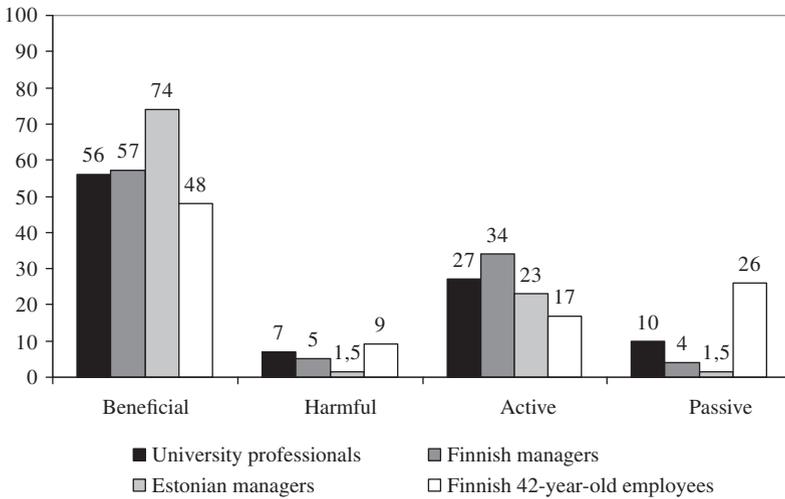
	University professionals ( <i>N</i> = 1482)	Finnish managers ( <i>N</i> = 1214)	Estonian managers ( <i>N</i> = 396)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	38	72	60
Female	62	28	40
<b>Age</b>			
Under 30	13	1	6
30–39	29	17	44
40–49	28	34	33
Over 49	30	47	18
<b>Education</b>			
Polytechnical school (or less)	4	40	16
University degree <sup>a</sup>	55	57	84
Licentiate/doctor <sup>b</sup>	41	3	
<b>Married or cohabiting</b>			
Yes	91	94	87
No	9	6	13
<b>Number of children</b>			
No children	31	38	28
1	17	21	23
2	33	18	35
3 or more	19	13	14

<sup>a</sup>University degree, which means a minimum of 3 years for a Bachelor's degree among Estonian managers, and a Master's degree among university professionals and Finnish managers

<sup>b</sup>Information not available in the data of Estonian managers

Among Finnish and Estonian managers work-nonwork conflict was measured with the scale by Carlson et al. (2000) as among Finnish university professionals but with twelve items: six for work-to-nonwork and six for nonwork-to-work direction. Work-nonwork enhancement, in turn, was measured with six items from the scale by Grzywacz and Marks (2000): three for work-to-nonwork (e.g., "The things I do at work help me deal with personal and practical issues at home") and three for nonwork-to-work (e.g., "Talking with someone at home helps me deal with problems at work") direction. The response scale for all items ranged from "1 = completely disagree" to "5 = completely agree", and the Cronbach's alphas were 0.85 and 0.88 (among Finnish and Estonian managers, respectively) for work-nonwork conflict and 0.74 and 0.79 for work-nonwork enhancement. The cut-off point for dichotomisation of work-nonwork conflict and enhancement was 2.5.

The prevalence rates for work-life balance types between these professional samples and in relation to the sample of 42-year-old Finnish employees illustrated in Fig. 2.2 were both expected and surprising. Professionals often have both more



**Fig. 2.2** Prevalence (%) of work-life balance types between the samples

work-related demands and resources than blue-collar and lower level white-collar workers (Kinnunen et al., 2008; Lundberg and Frankenhaeuser, 1999), and they are also characterised as being higher in their agency and striving for achievement than the latter two occupational groups (Judge et al., 2002; Tokar et al., 1998). In the light of these aspects, the finding that about one quarter of these professionals belonged to the active work-life balance type (i.e., high levels of both conflict and enhancement) and only 10%, or even much less, belonged to the passive work-life balance type (i.e., low levels of both conflict and enhancement) was not surprising. Thus, the relation between the prevalence of the active and passive balance types was the opposite in these professional samples in comparison to the aforementioned community-based sample (having a lower representation of professionals) where the passive balance was more prevalent than the active balance (Rantanen, 2008).

In contrast, the fairly high prevalence of the beneficial work-life balance and low prevalence of the harmful work-life balance was an unexpected finding. Both of these phenomena were extremely pronounced among the Estonian managers, of whom altogether 74% belonged to the beneficial balance type and only 1.5% (i.e., six persons) to the harmful balance type. Professionals and managers have been found to suffer from higher work-family conflict than other occupational groups, presumably because of high responsibilities, tight deadlines, and long working hours associated with their work (Bellavia and Frone, 2005; Byron, 2005). Therefore, one might expect that the prevalence of the beneficial balance would be lower, whereas the prevalence of the harmful balance would be higher among professionals in comparison with other occupational groups. This point is also suggested by research findings in other studies where higher education and high socio-economic status have been found to be linked to low enhancement from family to work-life (Kinnunen et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2004). The fact that the ratio between the

beneficial and harmful balance is in favor of the beneficial balance is not surprising as such, because enhancement experiences are generally more common than conflict experiences between work and family (Aryee et al., 2005; Grzywacz and Bass, 2003; Kinnunen et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2004).

The high prevalence of the beneficial balance among the professionals studied may be explained by the typological approach which combines the experiences of enhancement and conflict in both directions, work-to-nonwork and nonwork-to-work. Even though the professionals may show a somewhat higher amount of work-nonwork conflict and lower amount of work-nonwork enhancement at their mean level, when dichotomised as non-experience and experience, the enhancement experience seems clearly to outweigh the conflict experience. Thus, it seems that professional work truly provides important tools for reconciliation of one's work and nonwork roles, or as another option, these professionals have found ways to adapt their nonwork life to support their challenging jobs.

When the three samples were compared with each other, the prevalence of the passive balance was highest among university professionals. This particular group was characterised by a lower level of education and not having a permanent intimate relationship or any children, although they were not especially young and represented equally well different age groups. Thus, these factors seem to confirm the assumption made in the typology of work-life balance that the composition of life roles may be less demanding for persons belonging to the passive balance type when it comes to interplay between work and nonwork domains. The prevalence of an active balance was higher among Finnish managers in comparison with the other two samples; among these managers, having one or two children was characteristic. In addition, the prevalence of the harmful balance was the highest among university professionals, and among these more men than women belonged to the harmful balance type. The prevalence of the active balance was highest among Finnish managers, and the prevalence of beneficial balance was highest among Estonian managers.

Thus, the present findings might further suggest that among professionals, managers in particular are not a disadvantaged group when it comes to their abilities and possibilities in regard to reconciling work and nonwork roles. One reason for this might be that managers, especially those who also face parenting demands, have developed good coping strategies to handle the interplay between work and nonwork. Better coping skills may stem from the kind of job a manager has, which often requires a good deal of organizational and delegating skills – these are useful skills in work-nonwork reconciliation. It might also be that managerial work is so demanding from the viewpoint of work-life balance that those individuals who enter into managerial positions have had to think through what “being a manager” means for work-nonwork reconciliation. Therefore, they are well prepared to meet these demands. Yet another reason for university professionals belonging to the harmful balance type more often than managers may be that Finnish universities have changed a lot during recent years, in which time many of their policies have become more similar to those in private sector companies. These changes in work culture (e.g., long working hours, increased competition, continuous change) may have had

a negative effect on university employees' well-being and brought them to reflect negatively on their work-life balance.

Whereas slightly over half of the university professionals and Finnish managers belonged to the beneficial type, altogether 74% of the Estonian managers showed a beneficial work-life balance. The Estonian managers were more often in the range of 30–39 years of age than the other two samples (44% vs. 29% and 17%, respectively). As people in this age group are quite likely to have small children, the high proportion of respondents reporting no perceived work-nonwork conflict, but instead only work-nonwork enhancement, was unexpected. One possible explanation lies in the fact that the Estonian managers may find themselves in a relatively better situation compared to the general population in terms of being able to afford outsourcing chores ranging from childcare to housekeeping and cooking. In addition, the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in Estonia is higher than in Finland (in 2008 the Gini index for Estonia was 34, and for Finland 29.5; Central Intelligence Agency, 2008), supporting the view that the Estonian managers, in comparing their situation with that of their fellow countrymen, may have the necessary financial means of minimising the possible antecedents to conflict by securing high quality childcare and/or housekeeping. Due to this, they may be more likely to attribute positive feelings and emotions to their jobs, which may in part explain the high proportion of beneficial balance among them.

### ***2.3.2 Differences in Psychological Functioning and Role Engagement Between the Balance Types***

Psychological functioning is understood here as a broader phenomenon than merely psychological well-being. Personality characteristics and strategies that enable and enhance well-being and adjustment in life are also part of the definition when referring to good psychological functioning (Caspi et al., 2005; DeNeve and Cooper, 1998). Accordingly, the indicators of psychological functioning studied herein were high vigor and low exhaustion/stress at work, as well as having scored high in positive core-self evaluations (i.e., emotional stability, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and locus of control: Judge et al. (1997)) and regarding oneself as healthy and satisfied with one's life. Role engagement is also defined broadly, including both objective and subjective indicators of role engagement such as actual time spent in a given role and psychological involvement directed to a given role (Greenhaus et al., 2003). In addition, the definition of role engagement also consists of those behavioral and cognitive-affective tendencies that reflect the overall style of engaging in life and its roles (e.g., effort vs. apathy: Marks and MacDermid (1996)). The herein studied indicators of role engagement were high weekly working hours, over-commitment to work, high organizational involvement and low turnover intentions.

According to the typology of work-life balance, the main differentiating factor between the beneficial and harmful balance types is psychological functioning and the main differentiating factor between the active and passive types is role engagement (cf. Fig. 2.1). Our results – based on the General Linear Model of Profile

**Table 2.2** Results of profile analyses

Profile	Differences between work-life balance types in each variable <sup>a</sup>	
	University professionals	Finnish managers
<b>Psychological functioning</b>	<b><math>F(12) = 40.21^{***}</math></b>	<b><math>F(12) = 25.06^{***}</math></b>
Vigor at work	Ben > Act > Pass > Harm	Ben > Act > Pass, Harm
Low job exhaustion/stress <sup>b</sup>	Ben > Pass > Act > Harm	Ben, Pass > Act, Harm
Core self-evaluations/ Self-Efficacy <sup>c</sup>	Ben > Pass, Act > Harm	Ben, Act > Harm
Self-reported health	Ben > Pass, Act > Harm	Ben > Pass, Act, Harm
Life satisfaction	Ben > Act, Pass > Harm	Ben > Act > Pass > Harm
<b>Work role engagement</b>	<b><math>F(6) = 9.98^{***}</math></b>	<b><math>F(6) = 10.65^{***}</math></b>
Weekly working hours	Act > Ben	Act, Harm > Ben, Pass
Organisational involvement/ Overcommitment <sup>d</sup>	Ben, Act > Pass, Harm	Harm, Act > Pass, Ben
Turnover intentions	Harm, Act, Pass > Ben	Harm, Pass, Act > Ben

<sup>a</sup>Differences between types ( $p < 0.05$ ) in single variables are based on parameter estimates of the MANCOVA models

$***p < 0.001$

Ben = Beneficial balance, Act = Active balance, Pass = Passive balance, Harm = Harmful balance

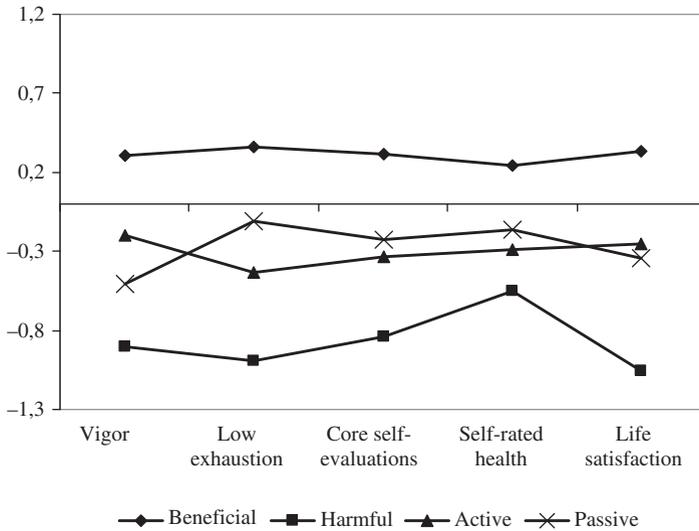
<sup>b</sup>In the data of Finnish managers fatigue at work was measured with stress item instead of job exhaustion

<sup>c</sup>In the data of Finnish managers self-efficacy was measured instead of core self-evaluations

<sup>d</sup>In the data of Finnish managers overcommitment was measured instead of organizational involvement

Analyses (i.e., application of MANCOVA) with sample characteristics (Table 2.1) as covariates – were mostly in line with these expectations as summarised in Table 2.2. These profile analyses were only conducted among Finnish university professionals and Finnish managers because there were only six persons in the group of harmful balance type, as well as in the group of passive balance type, among Estonian managers; this was not sufficient to enable valid comparisons between the types.

Professionals belonging to the beneficial type had the highest psychological functioning regarding all studied indicators, while professionals belonging to the harmful type had the lowest, as illustrated in Table 2.2 and Fig. 2.3. These findings are in line with expectations and confirm the most common view on work-life balance, which is that work-life balance consists of minimum conflict and high enhancement between work and nonwork life spheres (e.g., Clark, 2000; Frone, 2003). We would like to point out, however, that low conflict combined with high enhancement could also be interpreted as an *ideal*, or as in this case, *beneficial*, work-life balance. This is because, in general, the active and passive types who fell in between the beneficial and harmful types did not show extremely poor psychological functioning (Table 2.2 and Fig. 2.3). This means that *satisfactory*

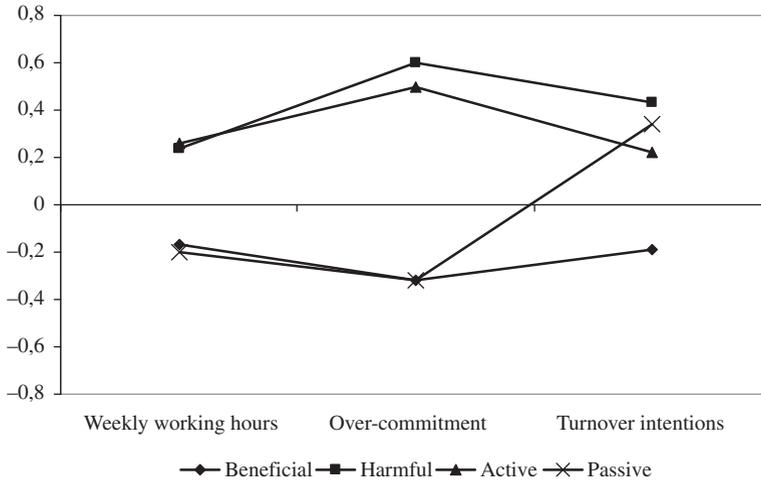


**Fig. 2.3** Psychological functioning among Finnish university professionals according to work-life balance types (values are standardized means)

work-life balance in terms of psychological functioning can also be reached when the work-nonwork conflict and enhancement experiences are equivalent (i.e., both are high or low).

Interestingly, professionals belonging to the active type showed more vigor at work than professionals belonging to the passive type, the downside of which was that they also showed more job exhaustion and stress than the passive type. This, however, fits well with the definition of the active and passive work-life balance types. The experiences of devotion and energy combined with exhaustion and stress at work may well reflect the presence of both high work-related resources and demands for the active type, whereas the opposite might be true for the passive type, hence showing a combination of lower vigor and lower exhaustion, respectively.

In general, professionals belonging to the active balance type showed high work role engagement concerning all indicators except (low) turnover intentions (Table 2.2, Fig. 2.4). Professionals of the active type had higher turnover intentions than professionals belonging to the beneficial balance type, whose turnover intentions were the lowest both among university professionals and Finnish managers. Also as expected, professionals belonging to the passive type showed lower work role engagement (lower working hours, lower organizational involvement and lower over-commitment to work) than professionals belonging to the active type. For the beneficial type, in addition to low turnover intentions, higher than average organizational involvement, as well as low over-commitment to work, was typical. For the harmful type, high weekly working hours and high over-commitment to



**Fig. 2.4** Work role engagement among Finnish managers according to work-life balance types (values are standardized means)

work were combined with low organizational involvement and high turnover intentions. All these findings were especially clear among Finnish managers as illustrated in Fig. 2.4, whereas among university professionals the differences in work-role engagement between the balance types were less pronounced.

In summary, *the typology of work-life balance* seems to function well. As expected, the main differentiating factor between the beneficial and harmful balance types was psychological functioning, and between active and passive balance types it was role engagement. However, the differences between balance types were not as clear in regard to role engagement as they were in relation to psychological functioning. It should be mentioned that our study did not have the scope to use indicators of role engagement in the domain of nonwork (i.e., family and private life) as an analytical factor because the research data at our disposal were designed primarily to study psychological phenomena of working life.

## 2.4 Theoretical and Practical Conclusions

Our *typology of work-life balance* combines some of the basic premises of theories pertaining to role conflict (Kahn et al., 1964), role enhancement (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974), and role balance (Marks and MacDermid, 1996) and also aims to incorporate the main underlying points from recent theories on work-family balance (Bakker and Geurts, 2004; Clark, 2000; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Voydanoff, 2005) into one model. The typology of work-life balance thereby corresponds with the overall appraisals approach, as the four different balance types refer to individuals' overall experience of the quality of work-nonwork interaction in their lives, as well as corresponding with the components approach, as the four balance

types are based on the multidimensional measurement of work-nonwork interaction (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007). As such, the typology covers the essential experiences contributing to work-life balance, while at the same time offering a global description of work-life balance and a cost-effective way of modelling work-life balance at an individual level.

Our typology is not without limitations, however. For example, it does not specify whether psychological well-being is an antecedent or an outcome of specific types of work-life balance, the question of which would require longitudinal data. Neither does our typology take into account the social context of an individual such as social interactions at work and in nonwork domains that are expected to contribute to shaping one's experience of work-life balance (cf. Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007). In the future, these two aspects also need to be studied in relation to the typology of work-life balance. Furthermore, more holistic theories on work-family balance, which would consider different life contexts, would also be considered valuable.

From a practical point of view, the present findings draw a relatively positive picture of the work-life balance of professionals: for most professionals, the reconciliation of work and nonwork roles seems to be either ideal (beneficial type 56–74%) or at least satisfactory (active type 23–34%, passive type 1.5–10%) when psychological functioning is held as a criterion. Accordingly, the most problematic group, that of harmful balance types who experience reconciliation of work and nonwork roles solely as burdensome and subsequently show poorest psychological functioning, was rather small (1.5–7%).

Although these prevalence results relate to the way the typology is formed (i.e., using cut-off points under which the presence of the experience is ignored), they show that professionals are in many respects in a good position. This is related to many factors. For example, they have control and autonomy in their work, which helps in reconciling the demands from various life domains, and their financial situation – especially in Estonia – enables them to acquire unburdening domestic help. In addition, it is very likely that professionals, and managers in particular, have consciously thought about and negotiated over the issues related to work-life balance concerning their family. Therefore, they might have better coping abilities in this regard. However, a more careful investigation of those work/nonwork circumstances, organisational practices, and personal strategies that are most relevant to professionals who belong to the beneficial work-life balance type might offer valuable tips on how to support more efficiently those at greatest risk, that is, professionals belonging to the harmful balance type.

The present findings also confirm the self-evident assumption – for which Greenhaus et al., (2003) called for empirical evidence – that the combination of low work-nonwork conflict and high enhancement leads to favorable outcomes of well-being, and that the opposite leads to detrimental outcomes. Nonetheless, the present findings also showed, in accord with others (Clark, 2000; Greenhaus et al., 2003), that the combination of low work-nonwork conflict and high enhancement is not the only strategy for achieving work-life balance and good well-being. Segmentation, that is, the absence of both positive and negative interaction between

work and nonwork roles, also seems to be a solution that produces at least satisfactory well-being. In fact, in a highly demanding context, such as combining professional work with nonwork demands, restraining oneself from over-investing in work and nonwork roles may act as a protective shield against loss of personal resources. This may especially be the case if work and nonwork roles do not return the individual investments, that is, there is an imbalance between individual efforts and perceived rewards.

From an organizational perspective, our study offers an important message. A crucial general question for organizations is how to promote role enhancement and prevent work-nonwork conflict among employees. Our findings show that those professionals who belonged to the beneficial balance type reported fewer turnover intentions compared to the other balance types. This finding suggests that it is particularly important *both* to promote work-nonwork enhancement *and* to prevent work-nonwork conflict if organizations want to keep their highly professional employees for a long time. A good starting point to the building of a work environment supporting this beneficial work-life balance is to take the following two things into account. First, the need for policies and, second, supervisors supporting employee needs in order to balance work and nonwork responsibilities (cf. e.g., Kinnunen et al., 2005). We believe that the latter point is more crucial in countries like Finland, where the state is especially active in forming work-family policies (e.g., day care, child care leave system, reduced working hours). Supervisors are in a key role for building a work-nonwork culture consisting of a beneficial work-life balance, that is, a culture which is sensitive to employees' needs. A supportive work-nonwork culture also means increasing employees' entitlement to make use of existing policies within organizations.

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