

**RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT: PROMOTING WORK-
LIFE BALANCE THROUGH SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
AND GREEN HRM**

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Abstract

The changing workplace dynamics bring to the fore the need for organisations to embrace the act of responsible management. In this context, responsible management entails being more empathetic to employees' welfare, as well as showing greater concern and accountability to their social/societal and environmental needs. This qualitative study aimed to investigate if social sustainability and green HRM can help promote work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions (HEIs). Several studies have been conducted in the West, while there is a paucity of research on work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in the global South, specifically Nigeria. Thus, the study's objectives include critically examining the notions of work-life balance (WLB), social sustainability, and green HRM among the academics in Nigerian higher education institutions (HEIs); and investigating if and how social sustainability and green HRM practices can promote or hinder WLB in Nigerian HEIs. To achieve these objectives, qualitative research was conducted using semi-structured in-depth interviews with fifty-seven academics across different higher education institutions in Nigeria.

From the data collected, three main themes emerged to enhance our understanding of the research phenomenon, including (1) the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among Nigerian academics; (2) the impact of social sustainability on work-life balance in Nigerian HEIs, and; (3) the impact of green HRM on work-life balance in Nigerian HEIs. The study concludes that social sustainability and green HRM are essential for promoting work-life balance. In this regard, the study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to knowledge. Theoretically, the findings extend the work-life integration agenda, which serves an important role to ensure sustainable development with the inclusion of social sustainability and environmental sustainability (through green HRM). In a sense, the practices of social sustainability that includes

enhancing the social value system, social cohesion, social engagement, promoting equitability in human rights and access to social infrastructure, social wellbeing and community development, will support the work-life integration agenda where individuals can imbibe these practices to better their work and non-work lives. In addition, part of the work and non-work responsibilities include activities that promote environmental sustainability, which are facilitated through green HRM practices and individual pro-environmental behaviours. Thus, incorporating these social and environmental sustainability practices allows for a holistic approach to the work-life integration agenda.

Practically, it offers empirical data to understand the perceptions and reality of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in a non-western context (Nigeria). It advocates the need for organisations to increase their support through implementing effective policies and practices that promote WLB, green HRM and social sustainability. For instance, providing equitable access to flexible work arrangements and family-friendly options could help increase work productivity and enhance employees' overall wellbeing. Social sustainability should be promoted by implementing socially oriented policies and practices that address social issues and manages the risks of violations to human rights and access to social infrastructure. Likewise, promoting green HRM should be a strategy for increasing employees' awareness, enhancing eco-friendly behaviours and environmental sustainability, especially in Nigeria.

Declaration

I attest that this thesis is submitted at the University of East London for the purpose of a PhD degree and has not been previously submitted for any other award, degree or qualifications to another academic institution. I affirm that this research is entirely my work, and I have obtained and presented all the information in compliance with the University's academic rules and ethical conduct.

Olatunji David Adekoya

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the Almighty God for His mercies, grace and faithfulness.

Publications during the PhD Journey

- 1) Adisa, T.A., Gbadamosi, G. and Adekoya, O.D. (2021). Gender apartheid: The challenges of breaking into “man’s world”. *Gender, Work and Organization*, pp. 1–19 (3* ABS Ranked).
- 2) Adisa, T.A., Ogbonnaya, C. and Adekoya, O.D. (2021). Remote working and employee engagement: a qualitative study of British workers during the pandemic. *Information Technology & People* (3* ABS Ranked). <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-12-2020-0850>
- 3) Adisa, T.A., Adekoya, O.D. and Sani, K.F. (2021). Stigma Hurts: Exploring Employer and Employee Perceptions of Tattoos and Body Piercings in Nigeria. *Career Development International*, 26(2), pp. 217-237 (2* ABS Ranked).
- 4) Akanji, B., Mordi, C., Ajonbadi, H. and Adekoya, O.D. (2021). Exploring Cultural Values in Conflict Management: A Qualitative Study of University Heads of Departments. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 16(2), pp. 350-369 (1* ABS Ranked).
- 5) Adisa, T.A., Aiyenitaju, O. and Adekoya, O.D. (2021). The Work–Family Balance of British Working Women during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 13(2), pp. 241-260 (1* ABS Ranked).
- 6) Adisa, T.A., Adekoya, O.D. and Okoya, O. (2021). Modern-Day slavery? The Work-Life Conflict of Domestic Workers in Nigeria. *Gender in Management*, 36(4), pp. 519-535 (1* ABS Ranked).
- 7) Adisa, T.A. and Gbadamosi, G. and Adekoya, O.D. (2021). The Myth and the Reality of Work-Life Balance in Nigeria. In: Adisa, T.A. and Gbadamosi, G. (ed.) *Work-Life Interface: Non-Western Perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 127-153.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As the general introduction of the entire thesis, this chapter provides an overview of the research. Therefore, the chapter begins with a background of the study to present the main concepts examined, followed by the statements of the research problem. This is followed by formulating the research questions, aim and objectives that guide the research. The chapter also justifies the significance of the study by stating the importance of conducting the research, as well as the contributions to literature, theory and practice. Next, the research framework briefly discusses the theoretical lens guiding the study. Lastly, the chapter outlines each chapter's research structure and contents in this thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Today's era of globalisation portrays a business environment that continually revolves around several emerging changes that have either engendered promising opportunities or threats to businesses and the labour force around the globe (Darwin and Palanisamy, 2015; Daud, 2017). The speculations surrounding the recent concerns regarding the desire and ability of employees to resolve the conflict between work and their personal lives have necessitated continuous studies or research into the concept of work-life balance (Polemans et al., 2005; Adisa et al., 2016). According to Runte (2009), the conflict arising between an employee's work and personal life is associated with the need to strike a balance between an employee's allocation of the basic limited resources (time and commitment) to both work life and personal life; hence, these resources being scarce provoke the need to choose and effectively allocate them to both work and personal life which is a daunting task.

Work-life balance (WLB) pertains to an employee's ability to ensure a successful negotiation between work-related and family commitments coupled with other non-work responsibilities and activities (Parkes and Langford, 2008; Wheatley, 2012; Adisa et al., 2016). The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (2018) posits that WLB is a crucial factor that dictates the productivity of workers; as such, organisations are obligated to ensure that employees are padded with benefits, policies, and programmes geared towards creating and improving the balance between job demands, healthy management, and enjoyment of life outside work.

In addition, WLB practices are adjudged to reside primarily in the domain of human resource management (HRM) and business and organisational behaviour, which necessitate for HR professionals to continuously proffer better means of ensuring job satisfaction and improved employee productivity among the stream of responsibilities involved (Bosch, 1999; Poelmans et al., 2005). More importantly, many scholars (Renwick, 2008; Stringer, 2009; Muster and Schrader, 2011; Shen et al., 2018) have emphasised the role of green HRM in promoting green work-life balance. Jackson and Seo (2010 cited in Shen et al., 2018; p. 595) define green HRM as “a set of HRM practices adopted to achieve organisational green goals that are a part of perceived CSR initiatives.” Green HRM, therefore, is opined to involve green hiring, green training and development, green performance management and regulatory stakeholders, and environmental performance (Renwick et al., 2013; Shen et al., 2018). The studies of Muster and Schrader (2011) allude that employees should be regarded as dual human beings, stemming from the fact that they act as both producers and consumers. Hence, there are different kinds of learned behaviours that are elicited and are not exclusive to the workplace but also the private lives of individual employees. Green HRM, therefore, is opined to not just serve as the need to be environmentally aware, but much more the perception of employees as

key players to attaining effective environmental management systems (Cohen et al., 2010; Chou, 2014). Therefore, in the bid to promote responsible management – an intentional management practice to handle organisations’ impact on society – green HRM is directly responsible for creating a green workforce that lends itself to activities and behaviours to protect the planet, people and profits (Ahmad and Nisar, 2015; He et al., 2021).

Consequently, the controversy behind the relationship between WLB and social sustainability is yet to be fully unravelled; as a matter of fact, only a few studies have been carried out in this regard (Littig, 2008; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Social sustainability in the context of WLB is implied to broaden the concept of WLB relative to the long-term considerations that deal with employees’ influence on their personal, family, and community wellbeing (Webster, 2004; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). These considerations are adjudged to have emanated from the need to mitigate the pressures arising from the desire to ensure quality service delivery at the expense of the non-work responsibilities of an employee and the effects on the community/environment itself (Chandra, 2012). Notwithstanding, social sustainability as a critical element of the sustainability framework plays a role in responsible management, which is rooted in three key domains, including sustainability, responsibility and ethics (Gherardi and Laasch, 2021).

1.2 STATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

A variety of extant researches (Fernandez et al., 2003; Crossley et al., 2007; Kehoe and Wright, 2013) have been carried out with respect to the need to ensure that employees are able to devise means to be productive at work which in turn translates into organisational efficiency, and more importantly, profitability. However, a few factors have been ascertained to impede the rate of employee productivity, one of which is job dissatisfaction. It is opined that employees that are dissatisfied or unhappy with their jobs

either in the form of the role they undertake or the kind of activities that they are involved in tend to have lower productivity relative to their counterparts that are job satisfied (Day and Allen, 2004; Daud, 2017). One of the many reasons for job dissatisfaction is the conflict that exists between an employee's work-life and personal-life, which has become a challenge for not only the concerned employees but also the HR professionals that serve as managers of people, and the organisation at large (Adisa et al., 2021). This inexorable conflict has been identified to be either time-based, strain-based or behaviour based (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Voydanoff, 2004); hence, the work-life conflict (WLC) that exists in a typical employee's life-cycle is intermittently apparent and cannot be abruptly ignored (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1969; Carlson and Frone, 2003).

Consequently, on the one hand, in the effort of HRM to mitigate the challenges engendered by WLC, researchers (Kumari, 2012; Ones and Dilchert, 2012; Renwick et al., 2013) have overtly advocated the need for green HRM, which integrates the work and life patterns of an employee and their interactions with the environment or community. As such, the need to reconcile work-life and personal-life with environmental values, attitudes and behaviour is advertently necessitated. On the other hand, the role of WLB on social sustainability cannot be overemphasised since there are also elements of environmental considerations within the social terrain of an employee (Littig, 2008; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). It, therefore, becomes important to examine the effects of the social and environmental elements surrounding employees to achieving work-life balance or escalating the work-life conflict.

Moreover, given the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic that has dramatically changed the way work is performed, the need for managers to be responsible for their employees' wellbeing has become one of the most topical discourses (Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi, 2020). Recent studies seem to have concentrated largely on the negative consequences of

the pandemic and stay-at-home work mode on employees' wellbeing and productivity, as well as organisational efficiency and bottom-lines (Bahn et al., 2020; Adisa et al., 2021). Therefore, the need to become responsible managers cannot be overemphasised. Thus, to promote employee wellbeing (e.g., work-life balance), protect society (social sustainability), and ensure a liveable and healthy environment (through green HRM), organisations must consider the impact of their business activities on employees wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

Interestingly, the issues relating to work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM address the 17 United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs). These include no "poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace and justice strong institutions, and partnerships to achieve the goal" (UN, 2021).

More specifically, the rate of employee turnover intentions in Nigeria (especially the education sector) is becoming alarming and has been adjudged to be the outcome of WLC (Oruh et al., 2020). Social sustainability is also a dilemma in Nigeria, and specifically in the education sector, as the stakeholders' clamour for a healthy environment is becoming more exigent. Environmental greening in Nigeria remains an ongoing concern for the nation, particularly with the amount of environmental pollution and lack of proper recycling leading to a decline in the life expectancy of an average Nigerian (Adebanjoko and Ugwuoke, 2014). It is, therefore, pertinent to understand the factors that facilitate or impede work-life practices among employees in this sector of the Nigerian economy. Further, it is essential to understand the roles of social sustainability in ensuring that work-

life balance is achieved among workers in this sector, given the economic, social, political and environmental factors that either positively or negatively affect them. Lastly, there is a need to understand the potentials of green HRM in promoting work-life balance within the sector.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary question raised by this research is ‘What are the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in Nigeria’s context; and to what extent do green HRM and social sustainability inhibit/promote work-life balance in the country?’

Following the need to create a direction for this research, the specific questions include:

- a) What does work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM mean to academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?
- b) How does social sustainability effort enhance work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?
- c) To what extent does green HRM practices hinder/promote work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research is to establish what work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM entail in Nigeria’s context; and the extent to which green HRM and social sustainability inhibit/promote work-life balance in the country.

The objectives, therefore, include:

- a) To critically examine the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions.
- b) To investigate if and how social sustainability efforts can constrain/enhance WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions.

- c) To determine the extent to which green HRM practices can hinder/promote WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The nature and context of this research are very scarce as it explores work-life balance (WLB), Green HRM and social sustainability. As such, this study contributes to the knowledge of these research domains and go further to broaden the identified concepts. The studies on WLB and social sustainability have been scarcely researched (Mushfiqu, 2018); as such, the study explores this sphere of influence and interest. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature by linking three main concepts: WLB, social sustainability and green HRM; this provides originality within the context, given the sparse account of literature to sufficiently link these concepts together. Nevertheless, the research contribution is mainly in the area of WLB by contributing to the current understanding of how WLB can be enhanced through responsible management. The holistic analysis of this study adds to existing research by identifying two constructs (social sustainability and green HRM) that should be considered enablers of WLB given their inter-relationships. Yet, more of the contribution is attributed to the impact of social sustainability on WLB than the impact of green HRM on WLB, given the very sparse literature on green HRM. Note that in terms of the level of analysis, this study examines factors at the individual (academics), firm (Nigerian HEIs) and society (the Nigerian community) levels.

Firstly, this study builds on the concept of WLB, which is an ongoing global debate worthy of exploring. WLB is defined as the ability of an employee to ensure a successful negotiation between work-related and family commitments, coupled with other non-work responsibilities and activities that reduce role conflicts (Parkes and Langford, 2008).

Thus, the study explores the meaning of WLB to academics in Nigeria to further contribute to how the term may be construed within an under-researched context.

Secondly, given the understanding of the concept of WLB, the study aims to establish the relationship between WLB and social sustainability, where social sustainability is defined as the long-term sustainability considerations that deal with employees' influence on their personal, family, and community wellbeing (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Therefore, using capital resources (e.g. human and social) for future conflict-free relationship management (which is the goal of WLB) remains one of the tenets of effective social sustainability policies (Webster, 2004). More so, the study probes the influence of social sustainability factors (i.e. social institutions, community participation and support, environmental activities and human/individual related issues) in the achievement of WLB.

Thirdly, the study introduces the concept of green HRM and examine its impact on achieving WLB. The concept of green HRM advocates for the sustainability of the Green Movement through the application of green strategies. Green strategies are based on concrete and cost-effective changes that stimulate sustainable working and employment conditions. It advocates working from home to improve WLB, mechanisms to cut commuting costs, using video conferencing to cut down travel costs and carbon footprints (eco-friendly), increasing access to natural light to save energy and many more (Zu, 2013). Hence, this research investigates the extent to which green HRM supports WLB.

Fourthly, the study adopts the integration theory as a theoretical lens to understand the rationale between work and life and why they can not be presumed to be separate but rather influencing each other. The theory is useful in incorporating other contexts, like community, into the study of work and personal or family life. Integration represents a holistic strategy including effective and efficient coordination of efforts and energies

among all stakeholders sharing interest and benefits from workers able to fulfil and transition between their personal, work, family, and community obligations (Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1997). Therefore, this research adopts the integration theory to support the findings from the intended relationship between WLB, social sustainability and green HRM.

Additionally, the context of the study, which concentrates on workers in the higher education sector, is also scarcely researched, giving more value to the intended contributed knowledge. Originality will also be displayed in the form of the peculiarities as it relates to WLB, social sustainability and green HRM in the Sub-Sahara African region and Nigeria in particular, being the largest economy in Africa. The higher education sector is deemed fit for the study, given the challenges of attaining WLB among academics. The impact of social sustainability factors will also be explored within the context of Nigerian academics. Further, given that green HRM is also built on two primary factors: the preservation of knowledge capital and the implementation of environmentally friendly HR practices, the need to reconcile work-life and personal-life with environmental values, attitudes and behaviour make the higher education sector an exciting field of study. More so, environmental protection issues in Nigeria remains a dominant challenge for environmental sustainability; hence, the study investigates the actions within the sector to educate its workers (i.e. academics) on the need to be environmentally and socially responsible.

Finally, this research will contribute to the available works of literature, therefore, bringing relevant information in context to other researchers. It will also enlighten various governments and community leaders on the roles of social sustainability and green HRM and their influence on promoting WLB. Policymakers will also benefit from the study as it provides some practical implications/recommendations for improving the quality of life

of the populace. Notably, HR experts will also be able to grasp a better understanding of the workforce and implement better policies and programmes that foster WLB, social sustainability and green HRM. The study will enrich the knowledge of workers (academics) on the implications of WLB and spur the implementation of better approaches to ensuring WLB. The non-governmental organisations and labour unions will also benefit from the knowledge to reinforce their campaigns regarding employee welfare (that is, WLB).

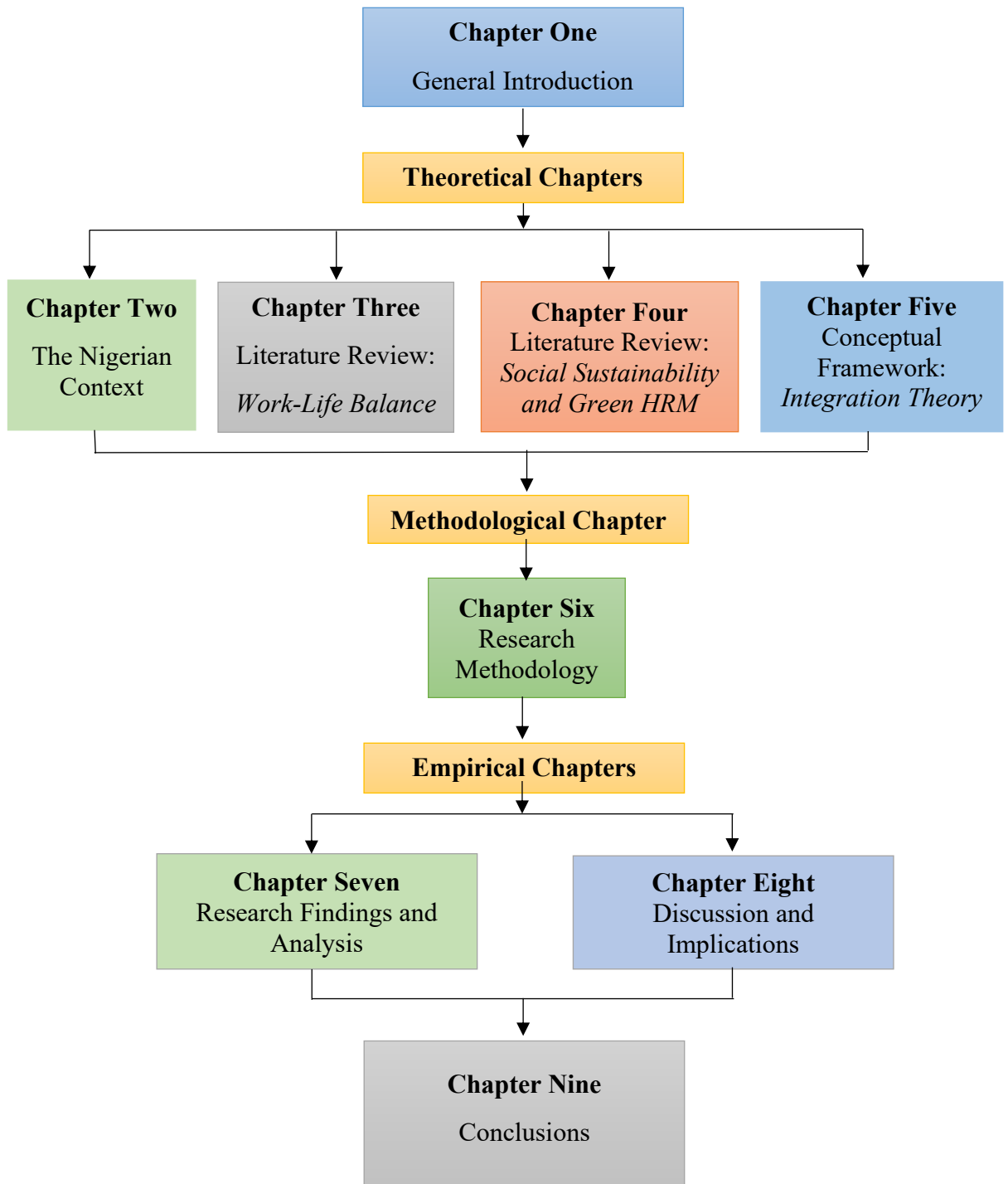
1.6 RESEARCH THEORY

This study adopts the integration theory as its theoretical lens guiding the study and proposes an extension to the theory. Drawing on arguments that the separation of work and personal roles are problematic, work-life integration is proposed to address the realities associated with the combination of both domains (Bailyn, 2011). There is a transformation from the “dual-agenda” (Rapoport et al., 2002) to a “triple-agenda” where integration provides opportunities for an equitable living for employees to fulfil greater potentials and demands that enable effective workplaces, families and community (Morris and Madsen, 2007). In addition, integration encapsulates a triciprocal relationship (Morris and Madsen, 2007) that exist within the three domains (i.e. work, personal or family and community) to generate a mediating effect which can be positive or negative (Lewis et al., 2007; Kelliher et al., 2019). Integration allows individuals to devote primary attention and commitment to any of the three domains within a necessary period, thus temporarily making the two other domains the secondary foci (Groysberg and Abrahams, 2014).

1.7 RESEARCH STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

This thesis is structured into nine chapters, the graphic representation of this study's structure (as seen in Figure 1 below) will provide readers with easy navigation through well-connected chapters for clarity and understanding.

Figure 1: Research Structure



Chapter One provides a general introduction to the research. The research background is provided, followed by the problem statements, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and research framework.

Chapter Two presents the research context (Nigeria). It provided a brief history of the country, followed by a synopsis of the Nigerian economy and its challenges. Afterwards, the characteristics of the Nigerian education sector and its higher education institutions were highlighted, being the main focus of the research. In the final section, the study presented a background of the human resources management practices in Nigeria and connections to the three main concepts examined in this study.

Chapter Three reviews the extant literature on work-life balance. The chapter discussed the historical background of work-life balance, followed by examining the concept of WLB. Other key themes explored include the nature of WLB, determinants of WLB, policies and merits of WLB, barriers to WLB, work-life conflict and its consequences. The chapter also examined the criticisms of WLB and identified a variety of coping mechanisms adopted to manage the inter-relations between work and non-work related roles. Finally, the chapter explores the perspectives of WLB across six regions, and Nigeria being the context of the study.

Chapter Four progressed into reviewing the literature on social sustainability and green HRM. It starts with the historical context of social sustainability, followed by the conceptualisation and approaches to social sustainability. Other themes explored include the relationship between social sustainability and corporate social responsibility, the relationship between social sustainability and work-life balance, and an exploratory study of social sustainability within the global context and Nigeria as the study's context. This chapter further explored the concept of green HRM, starting with its historical context. It

further reviews the key dimensions of green HRM, the relationship between the three various concepts; work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. Lastly, the chapter investigates the practices of green HRM within the global context and Nigeria as the study context.

Chapter Five presents the theoretical framework of the research. It explores the historical background of the integration theory and its conceptualisation. Lastly, the chapter discusses the implications and criticisms of integration.

Chapter Six describes the methodology adopted in this study. First, it discusses the philosophical overview, followed by a discussion of the research design. The chapter further discussed the sampling strategy adopted and the data collection methods used. Finally, it highlights the validity, reliability, generalizability of the research and its ethical considerations.

Chapter Seven presents the findings and analysis, grouped into three main themes, including the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among Nigerian academics; the range and scope of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM practices and initiatives in Nigerian HEIs, and; the forces constraining work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in Nigerian HEIs.

Chapter Eight discusses the findings in light of the research objectives as guided by the research questions. Lastly, it presents the theoretical, practical and managerial implications of the study.

Chapter Nine presents the general conclusion of the study. It provides an overview of the entire research and its theoretical and practical contributions. Lastly, it highlights the research limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a brief description of Nigeria as the research context. It gives a brief history of Nigeria, including how the country was formed, its demographics and some key facts about Nigeria. Furthermore, a synopsis of the Nigerian economy and the challenges facing its growth and development was highlighted. The chapter also discusses the Nigerian education sector as the case study of the research. It highlights the formation and operations in the Nigerian education sector and the challenges in the sector. Lastly, as the main focus of the research, the chapter specifically discusses the Nigerian higher education institution as a sub-sector in the Nigerian education sector and the HRM practices in Nigeria.

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF NIGERIA

Nigeria is a country located on the western coast of Africa with five main neighbouring countries, including Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Gulf of Guinea and Benin (Falola and Heaton, 2008). Prior to being named Nigeria, the country was formerly known for several names, e.g. the Niger Coast Protectorate which later became Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria. Following the British colonial rule in 1901, Lord Frederick Lugard who was appointed the High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of Northern Nigeria was saddled with the task to merge both Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1914 after his appointment as governor of both protectorates in 1912 (Ajayi et al., 2001). On 1st October 1960, Nigeria gained its independence after a negotiation with the British colonial masters facilitated by notable Nigerians including Sir Tafawa Balewa (Nigeria's first Prime Minister), Sir Ahmadu Bello, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony

Enahoro, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe (Nigeria's first President), and many others (Sowunmi, 2014). Lagos state became the capital of Nigeria before it was replaced by Abuja as the federal capital territory of Nigeria in 1991. Nigeria is currently a federal republic but has gone through three military regimes and four republics since its independence (Encyclopaedia Britannia, 2019). The country is currently led by President Muhammadu Buhari who was among the former heads of state during the second military regime and deemed to complete his second tenure as President in 2023.

Figure 2: The Nigeria Flag and Map



Source: Premium Times (2011)

In addition, with a population of over 200 million people across 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and seventh in the world (World Population Review, 2020a). Nigeria is divided into 36 autonomous states with its federal capital territory and categorised into six geo-political zones including North-Central, North-West, North-East, South-South, South-East and South-West. The country has over 250 ethnic groups with the dominant groups including Hausa/Fulani (29%), Yoruba (21%), Igbo (18%), Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3.5%), Tiv (2.5%). Although English is the official language in Nigeria, the country has over 500 indigenous languages. Nigeria's urban population is 50.3% of its total population, with Lagos as the largest commercial city (Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief – CIFORB, 2019). Nigeria is also known for its three main religions, including Christianity, Islam and Traditionalist. In terms of geography, Nigeria has a total area mass of 923,768 sq km comprising of land (910,768 sq km) and water (13,000 sq km), which makes it the 14th largest in Africa and 32nd in the world (Worldometer, 2020).

Nigeria operates a federal presidential republic with three distinct arms of government – executive, legislative (National Assembly and House of Representatives) and judiciary. The country's federalism governance is divided into three tiers – federal, state and local governments, all of which have different functions and roles within the Nigerian federal constitution [Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Fact Book, 2019]. Nigeria has two major contemporary political parties, namely, All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP), with the former as the current ruling party.

2.2 A SYNOPSIS OF THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY AND ITS CHALLENGES

As the most populous African country and its potential for economic growth through its large deposits of mineral resources and moderate climatic conditions, Nigeria was

labelled the “Giant of Africa” and a leading nation in Africa and the world economy (Falola and Heaton, 2008). The country is the largest producer of petroleum in Africa and 11th largest in the world. This makes petroleum the main source of revenue alongside agriculture, telecommunications and services (World Population Review, 2020b). Nigeria’s gross domestic product (GDP) for 2019 was \$410 billion and a GDP per capita of \$2,386 and a GDP growth rate of 1.92%. In 2018, on one hand, Nigeria’s total commodity export was \$61.69 billion predominantly to India, China, Spain, the United States, France, Netherlands and Indonesia. On the other hand, a total of \$51.03 billion was recorded as commodity imports from China, Belgium, South Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom, etc. Also, the country’s trade in services as a percentage of GDP was 9.7% (Statista, 2020).

Furthermore, there are some opportunities for Nigeria to enhance economic growth. For instance, as part of the MINT (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) countries known for their prospects as emerging economic giants, Nigeria – the largest economy in Africa – is argued to gain from the positive relationship between economic growth and urbanisation (Odugbesan and Rjoub, 2020). Moreover, the Nigerian labour market is characterised by the formation of the younger and older workforce based on the strength of the country’s population. According to the World Bank (2020) data, the Nigerian labour market employs about 61 million people comprising males (55.2%) and females (44.8%) between the working age (15 – 64 years). Therefore, with effective pathways and strategies aimed at capitalising on its population strength, Nigeria is argued to have the capacity to compete with countries in the developed markets in a like manner as China (Matthew et al., 2021). More specifically, the informal sector remains fundamental to the economic growth and development of the country as it contributes about 65% to its GDP and has a larger share of employment within the Nigerian economy (Bank of Industry –

BOI, 2018). Therefore, with increased market/economic activities, access to the right markets, availability of funds and required infrastructural and social amenities, Nigeria's prospect as an emerging market will boost its economy and improve the living conditions of the populace (Matthew et al., 2021).

Despite the prospects of economic growth and development in a developing country like Nigeria, several factors have contributed to its current state of economic instability. Since the financial crisis in 2008, fluctuations in oil prices in 2014 and production shocks, the Nigerian economy has been confronted with a myriad of challenges causing a decline in economic growth. In 2016, the Nigerian economy contracted by 1.6%, leading to its first recession in the last 25 years. A constraint on domestic demands as a result of a private consumption stagnation and persistent inflation (13.22 in the second quarter of 2020), has led to increases in the poverty (40.1%) and unemployment (23.15%) rates as at the year 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Although Nigeria has implemented various economic reforms to alleviate the declining economic growth, factors such as corruption, inadequate infrastructure, weak macroeconomic planning, policies and reforms and poor leadership impede the growth of the economy (Adekoya, 2018). The over-reliance of the economy on petroleum revenue, while little is done to improve revenue generation from other fundamental sectors of the economy, leads to the current state of the economy (Oladipo and Fatuki, 2018).

More importantly, the high level of insecurity is the biggest challenge to the Nigerian economy (The Guardian, 2021). For instance, Nigeria has been confronted with several civil crises and terrorism, leading to its struggle to maintain peace and order in the country. Various conflicts resulting from groups such as Boko Haram, Biafra crisis, Hausa/Fulani herdsman crisis and police brutality issues have resulted in an insurgence and national crisis over the years (Osumah, 2013; Ibrahim and Saleh, 2018). Statistics

reveal that Nigeria, in 2021, was ranked 6th out of 138 countries covered in the Global Terrorism Index (2022), showing the high rate of terrorism that ravages the country. Also, according to the Fragile States Index (2020), which measures the vulnerability of states to collapse, the country ranked 6th in the world and 9th in Africa in 2021. Moreover, in the Global Peace Index (2021), Nigeria was ranked 146th of the 163 countries included in the statistics. These and many other statistics and the immediate experiences in the economy have drastically affected the country's economic viability, such that local and foreign investments have continued to dwindle year-on-year (Igwe, 2020).

More so, the unsteady revenue and vulnerability of the currency (Naira – ₦) to fluctuations in the foreign exchange and money markets have led to the devaluation of the Naira and lower bargaining and consumption power (BOI, 2018). In addition, Nigeria's weak macroeconomic framework, inadequate revenue-driven initiatives, forex restrictions, distortionary activities by its central bank, increasing public debt and constraint on the private sector's access to funds hamper the potential for economic growth (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The various attempts to reduce the rate of poverty and unemployment have been futile particularly with the low minimum wage, which was ₦30,000 (about \$80) in 2020 (The Guardian News, 2020). Furthermore, many children in Nigeria are subjected to extreme hardship with little or no access to quality education, good water supply, good healthcare system, increasing malnourishment etc. Also, social and economic inequality contributes to the stunted economic growth in Nigeria, given the lack of investment opportunities and inadequate infrastructure to sustain economic prosperity (Adebanjoko and Ugwuoke, 2014).

2.3 THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION SECTOR

The education sector is one of the largest sectors in Nigeria owing to its large number of academic institutions, students and staff. Education in Nigeria is administered by the federal, state and local governments and regulated by the Federal Ministry of Education, which is headed by the Minister of Education. The Federal Ministry of Education is saddled with the responsibility of formulating policies and implementing effective practices to enhance and sustain the quality of education in Nigeria. The sector is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions, many of which are also run by the government and private individuals. While the Federal Ministry of Education is mainly in-charge of educational operations and practices in the tertiary institutions, the state and local governments are responsible for the secondary and primary education institutions (World Education Services – WES, 2017).

The Nigerian education sector adopts a 9-3-4 system, indicating the Universal Basic System (UBS) comprising 6 years in primary schools and 3 years of junior secondary schools (JSS); 3 years of senior secondary school (SSS) and a minimum of 4 years of tertiary education. The primary education begins at the age of 6 with the aim of obtaining a Primary School Leaving Certificate after completion. The junior secondary education awards the Junior Secondary School Certificate (JSSC) and the senior secondary education awards the Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC). To proceed to the tertiary institution, the candidates are required to achieve a required score in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) conducted by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Upon the successful completion of studies at the tertiary institutions, the graduates obtain a Bachelor's degree (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020a).

There are about 100,000 primary schools comprising an estimated total of 26 million students (males – 52.5% and females – 47.5%) and about 500,000 teachers. The junior secondary schools are estimated to be 33,000, comprising an estimated total of 60 million students (males – 60% and females – 40%) and about 300,000 teachers. The senior secondary schools are estimated at 15,000, comprising an estimated total of 4.5 million students (males – 54% and females – 46%) and about 680,000 teachers. There are about 450 tertiary education institutions in Nigeria, with about 16 million students and about 200,000 lecturers (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020b; WES, 2017).

The Nigerian education sector has also undergone some reforms aimed at improving the quality of education and equal access to education. With the establishment of the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 1972, the council was saddled with the responsibility of promoting educational research programmes in Nigeria. Also, the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 aims to bring significant reforms to basic education by providing free education to children in their nine years of Universal Basic System and also facilitate adult literacy education. Several other government-led reforms and initiatives including upgrading some polytechnics and colleges of education to a degree-awarding status institution, have not been fully implemented. Also, the federal government in 2016 granted approval and accreditation to eight new private higher education institutions to improve the education-related data. The plans to establish six regional mega higher education institutions with the capacity to admit up to 200,000 students each in 2013 is yet to be realised (WES, 2017).

However, given the increasing number of individuals gaining access to education and fluctuating economic growth, the education sector's development has been constrained over time. Over the years, the Nigerian government has struggled with its responsibilities to foster quality education, which has contributed to the stunted growth of the education

sector despite the reforms (Karugu et al., 2013). The decline in expenditure on education remains a fundamental impediment to the growth of education and maintenance of the academic institutions. Although the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared a benchmark of allocating 26% of government expenditure to education (UNESCO, 2017), 6.7% was allocated by the Nigerian government. A decline in the 2021 budget, which is expected to allocate 5.6% to education (Budget Office of the Federation, 2020) further illustrates the likelihood of persistent challenges to the sector.

In addition, political instability and poor leadership have been attributed as another major impediment to the growth of the Nigerian education sector. The inconsistency in government-led initiatives and strategies for improving education in Nigeria has resulted in several crises such as incessant industrial actions by staff in the sector, a declining rate of access to education due to capacity limitations, and increasing crime rates as a result of idleness (Karugu et al., 2013; WES, 2017). More so, previous studies argue that religious sentiments contribute to the declining education system. For instance, it is believed that religious institutions that set up academic institutions portray a hidden agenda of converting students to a particular religion. At the same time, several facilities in the schools have been turned into places of worship, leading the education system to become sectarian and failing to demarcate between religion and education (Ilechukwu et al., 2014). Another major crisis is the Islamic State in West Africa commonly known as the Boko Haram sect, is a jihadist terrorist group, which as also affected the flow of education, particularly in Northern Nigeria (Karugu et al., 2013).

2.4 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN NIGERIA

The focus of this research is the Nigerian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which is a sub-sector in the Nigerian education system. The Nigerian HEIs are divided into universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. These divisions are further categorised into federal, state, and private institutions. As of the time of writing this thesis, there are 43 federal universities, 47 state universities, and 75 private institutions; 33 federal, 91 state, 64 private polytechnic institutions, 27 monotechnics; and 22 federal, 47 state, and 20 private colleges of education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020b). HEIs in Nigeria provide undergraduate, postgraduate and professional degrees in several academic specialisations.

The universities are headed by vice-chancellors, polytechnics by rectors and colleges of education are headed by provosts. These institutions also have their governing bodies and council members, where major decisions are taken regarding the development of the academic institutions. Many of the Nigerian HEIs also have a body of staff union, which are also members of the umbrella organisation for trade – Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). These staff unions include Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non Academic Staff Union (NASU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU). The Nigerian Universities/Polytechnics academic staffs are ranked in the order of Graduate Assistant, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, Lecturer I, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor/Principal Lecturer and Full Professor/Chief Lecturer.

Although the higher education institutions are established as a citadel of learning and knowledge, the HEI sub-sector is plagued with several challenges that impede its progress

and development. The inadequacy of funds is one of the primary challenges facing HEIs in Nigeria. As mentioned earlier, the budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is very low, leading to HEIs grappling with the problems of obsolete technology needed to run a modern academic programme. The declining funds over the years have hampered the aim to invest in building adequate and sophisticated infrastructures across HEIs to aid effective student learning and teaching for academic staff members (Nwajiuba et al., 2020). The lack of access to infrastructural and academic facilities are also due to the general state of infrastructure in Nigeria. Although the government, in its aim to improve educational infrastructure established the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) as an intervention by the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 (amended in 1998). However, the TET Fund intervention faces inefficiency due to the changing strategies from different political agendas, which has led to the dumping of several infrastructural projects across different HEIs in Nigeria (Adepoju and Okotoni, 2018).

Curriculum development poses another challenge to Nigerian HEIs. Higher education institutions in Nigeria fail to update their curriculums to suit the current global educational standards. According to the Times Higher Education (THE) 2021 university ranking, the best university in Nigeria (University of Ibadan) ranked among the 401st – 500th universities in the world (THE, 2020). There has been a national call for education regulators and the management of HEIs in Nigeria to address the outdated curriculum (Nwajiuba et al., 2020). Also, academic discourses and debates about the state of HEIs in Nigeria have begged for the need for HEIs to capitalise on their strengths to generate internal revenue for funding infrastructure (Adepoju and Okotoni, 2018). More so, the poor teacher-to-student ratio due to the overcrowding of students in limited-capacity classrooms remains one of the major challenges within the sector (WES, 2017).

In addition, the incessant industrial strike actions have been a fundamental challenge to education in Nigeria. There has been no academic year where Nigerian HEIs have not experienced an industrial strike action sometimes lasting several weeks and months (WES, 2017). Such strike actions affect students' learning activities, plans of graduation and future plans are put on hold. These strike actions are also due to the agitation for promoting the wellbeing of academic and non-academic staff members who at many times have been owed several months of remuneration, compensation, rewards and other financial and non-financial benefits (Ilechukwu et al., 2014). Furthermore, previous studies reveal that there are minimal HEI-to-HEI and HEI-to-Industry collaborations in Nigeria, given that majority of Nigerian HEIs lack the necessary pedagogy to enhance graduate competency and employability skills (Nwajiuba et al., 2020). Transforming the education sector and nurturing future-ready students is a crucial need in Nigeria (Ajonbadi and Adekoya, 2019).

2.5 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

The common HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and rewards, performance appraisal and management and employee relations are also practised in Nigeria (Fajana et al., 2011). However, effective HRM practices in Nigeria are affected by many structural and contextual impediments such as economic and political instability, corruption, poverty, nepotism, government laws, labour union weakness, tribalism, religion, culture, etc. (Ikyanyon et al., 2020). The institutional environment wherein HRM is practised in Nigeria reveals its peculiarities compared to other study contexts.

In addition, the Nigerian Labour Act and other employment constitutions present a regulatory framework for HRM in Nigeria (Fajana et al., 2011). Despite the aim of these

employment regulations to provide a standard for labour relations, facilitate healthy employment and ensure that all Nigerian workers are protected from undue employer exploitation through the knowledge of their fundamental rights, the system grapples with issues of weak enforcement (Gadi and Kee, 2020). More so, the inadequacy of indigenous and contemporary HRM models fuels the problems facing HRM practices in Nigeria. Hence, rather than integrating contemporary HRM practices to fit Nigeria's socio-cultural values, most HRM practices in Nigeria are adopted from Western traditions, neglecting the indigenous societal systems (Adegbite, 2012).

Reiterating, the poor employment conditions in Nigeria is exacerbated by corrupt practices in its HRM system alongside its bureaucratic and internal politics resulting in massive unemployment and violation of labour rights (Adewumi, 2012). Therefore, talent attraction and retention are challenging for most organisations in Nigeria due to the intrinsic and structural challenges facing employment relations (Gadi and Kee, 2020). Another challenge is the weakness of the Nigerian labour and trade unions to act as an intermediary between the employers and employees. The low bargaining power among the unions fuelled by massive unemployment rate leads to the low participation of employees in unionised activities in Nigeria (Fajana et al., 2011).

Furthermore, neoliberal policies such as privatisation, deregulation, trade liberalisation, and eliminating price controls increase unemployment and labour exploitation in Nigeria (Ikanyon et al., 2020). Increased competition between indigenous and foreign (multinationals) organisations in Nigeria as a consequence of neoliberalism puts pressure on local organisations to adopt and imitate the best practices for survival (Okpara and Wynn, 2008). Consequently, this has led to reduced employee voice, low engagement levels, increased turnover intention, reduced labour income and increasing work rate to meet productivity targets (Gadi and Kee, 2020). As opposed to facilitating national unity,

the public sector, in particular, faces a primary challenge of inefficiency and systemic failure due to the corrupt practices dominant in the public sector and has severe implications for HRM in the sector (Fajana, 2008).

Nevertheless, presumably, the strategic role of HRM has gained more awareness resulting from the competition between indigenous and multinational organisations in Nigeria (Adegbite, 2012). As organisations seem to increasingly engage HR professionals and experts in dealing with people management in their organisations, strategic HRM is beginning to reflect across many of the large and a few small organisations in Nigeria (Ikanyon et al., 2020). Besides being a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) – a body representing the principles of best practices in HRM – corporate organisations in Nigeria are steadily adopting contemporary HRM practices (Oruh et al., 2020).

Furthermore, as Ellis et al. (2015) evince, weak informal institutions contribute to the debilitated state of HRM practices in Africa. This is because of the cultural and social values, norms and practices through compliance with authority, communism and the patriarchal system in Nigeria as a less egalitarian society (Fajana, 2008; Adisa et al., 2019). Issues of income, age and gender inequality, managerialist employment relations and leadership style in Nigerian organisations impede the adoption of new management models to tackle HRM issues (Fajana et al., 2011; Oruh et al., 2020). To illustrate, recruitment activities are influenced by social network relationships and kinship in Nigerian organisations due to the cultural norms in its deeply rooted informal institutions (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009).

Specifically, along the lines of the concepts discussed in this research, effective HRM practices are needed to support employees' work-life balance through social sustainability

and green HRM practices. As Nwagbara (2020) suggests, issues with work-life balance in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the work inflexibility challenges that negatively affect workers' wellbeing. Providing employees with flexible work arrangements is vital for their welfare and facilitates their ability to navigate work and non-work obligations (Adekoya et al., 2019). Work-family policies offer employees flexible working options to effectively allocate time and effort to their work and non-work responsibilities. However, Nigeria's HRM practices to support flexibility lack appropriate enforcement, particularly with workers' mistrust in their organisations' attitudes towards seeking flexible work options (Nwagbara, 2020). For instance, job insecurity issues in many Nigerian organisations deter employees from requesting time off work or seeking flexible work arrangements due to the fear of losing their jobs (Adisa et al., 2017). This is attributed to the managerialist employment relations in most Nigerian organisations, where employees are deprived of their rights to make autonomous decisions (Oruh et al., 2020).

Furthermore, extant literature reveals that Nigeria's hierarchical and unsupportive work environment contributes to low levels of employee participation in organisation activities (Nwagbara, 2020), for instance, green HRM practices. Low levels of social sustainability programmes pose significant implications for HRM in Nigeria (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). As Oruh et al. (2018) evince, low engagement levels and reduced employee voice in Nigerian organisations are consequences of authoritarian leadership style and biased managerial decision making. These issues challenge the ability to achieve work-life balance (Akanji et al., 2020), engage in green HRM activities (Oyewale, 2019) and impede social sustainability (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). The one-sided managerialism supporting the employer's sole interest (D'Cruz and Noronha, 2011) against the unitarist view, which integrates employers and employees in the employment relation is deemed

to be mirrored in the case of most Nigerian organisations. The absence of unitarianism contributes to the vulnerability and marginalisation of the workforce across many Nigerian organisations, and employees are deprived of their rights of fairness and justice (Nwagbara, 2020).

2.6 SUMMARY

Nigeria is the research context for this study. This chapter highlights some of the key structures in the Nigerian economy. It focuses on the Nigerian higher education institution, which is a sub-sector in the Nigerian education sector. Some of the main reforms implemented within the sector to facilitate its growth and progress were highlighted. The chapter concludes that although the HEIs have the potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, as well as, facilitating a good learning environment for the students and a healthy working environment for the staff. However, it also highlights some of the challenges facing the Nigerian HEIs, including poor leadership, declining economic growth, inadequate and obsolete infrastructure, increasing student enrolment, poor student-to-teacher ratio, outdated curriculum, lack of sufficient initiatives to foster HEI-HEI and HEI-Industry collaboration, labour wellbeing problems and incessant strike actions. These issues, alongside the managerialist employment relations, present severe implications for HRM practices in Nigeria. The next chapter discusses the literature review.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews a variety of literature that has explored the concept of work-life balance, especially since the research questions the meaning of WLB in the study context. Therefore, to understand the varied notions of WLB, the chapter investigates WLB within its historical context, followed by examining the concept of WLB from a range of perspectives. The nature of WLB was explored, followed by understanding the determinants of WLB. The chapter further identifies the WLB policies and merits of WLB. In addition, the barriers to the achievement of WLB was explored, followed by understanding the concept of work-life conflict and its consequences. The chapter also examined the criticisms of WLB, and lastly, the perspectives of WLB across six regions, and Nigeria being the context of the study was investigated.

3.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The origin of work-life balance dates back to the nineteenth century in a successful attempt by factory workers and the unions to campaign against the culture of long working hours across manufacturing organisations in particular (Bosworth and Hogarth, 2009; Syed 2015). Studies found that during this period, a reduced working time had little or no significant effect on the rate of productivity in many of the factories where the researches were carried out (Hopkins, 1982; Bosworth and Hogarth, 2009). The early twentieth century also witnessed a campaign for a maximum cap on the working hours (Peter and Spadavecchia, 2011) as workers and labour unions fought further for reduced working time, particularly in Britain. A variety of studies (Myers, 1924; US Department

of Labour, 2013) advocated for the role of reduced working hours coupled with motivation and a healthy working environment to impact positively on organisational productivity. Moreover, the studies of Rapoport and Rapoport (1965) points to the excruciating impact of long working hours on creating a divide between an employee's work and personal life roles. The relationship between work and personal life (inclusive of familial roles) is deemed to be crucial despite both domains representing different aspects of an employee's life (Naithani, 2010a). Both aspects of the family life that affects work-life and aspects of work-life that affects family life indicate that the work and personal or familial roles of an employee create either or both positive and negative effects not only for the employees but also their employers (Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007; Parkes and Langford, 2008).

The continuous efforts of workers and unions to reduce working hours progressed into the 1980s, a period when employers started to introduce family-friendly policies, including telecommuting, flexitime, and paid maternity leaves. However, although these policies and practices mainly focused on the female workforce, the male workforce also indirectly benefitted (Syed, 2015). WLB policies became more pronounced and formalised in the twenty-first century as the business environment began to witness rapid changes in the demand and supply of labour (Fagnani and Letablier, 2004; Caringal-Go et al., 2021). During this period, the drivers of WLB contributed to the need to legalise WLB policies; some of these drivers include long working hours, changes in labour demography, gender equality and increased women participation in the labour force, economic uncertainty, dual-career and dual-earner families, increasing growth of single parenthood, family-life privatisation, increase in weekend and evening jobs and the growing decline of participation in community activities (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Guest 2002; Adisa, Osabutey and Gbadamosi, 2016).

Work-life balance has continued into an unending debate in various societies. Many industrialised (developed) countries and a few developing countries have maintained efforts to ensure that individual well-being is pursued in the workplace to promote WLB (Guest, 2016). Therefore, the interest has since been growing in Europe (Anttila et al., 2015; Beham et al., 2017), the United States (Tomlinson, 2007; Szender et al., 2016), Spanish and Latin-American countries (Carlier, Llorente and Grau, 2011; Ray and Jackson, 2013), Australia (Burgess, Henderson and Strachan, 2007; Wilkinson, 2008), Asia (Rajadhyaksha, 2012; Xiao and Cooke, 2012), Africa (Adom et al., 2018; Bisschoff, Koen and Ryke, 2018) and specifically, Nigeria (Adisa, Gbadamosi and Osabutey, 2016; Adekoya, Ajonbadi and Mordi, 2019).

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

It is obvious that employees and employers also have a personal life that is outside of their workplace. As such, the need to take care of their families, have breaks or leisure and develop themselves is also paramount (Rao, 2017). Many organisations tend to value the efforts toward increasing productivity and output at the expense of the non-work-related lives of their employees; hence the need to consider a work-life balance for employees emerged as a global concern (Karatepe, 2013; Adekoya et al., 2019). Divorces and other forms of family separation have become the resultant effect of too busy, too tight schedules for married couples; thus, the notion of work-life balance (WLB) is one that seeks to create an equilibrium, a favourable working and personal life climate, whereby people's jobs do not encroach into their personal and family lives (Oktosario, 2018).

WLB pertains to the ability of an employee to ensure a successful negotiation between work-related and family commitments coupled with other non-work responsibilities and

activities (Parkes and Langford, 2008; Wheatley, 2012; Adisa et al., 2016). The term WLB refers to the occurrence in the level of time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance in an employee's life due to the multiple roles played (Marks and MacDermid, 1996). According to Zeytinoglu et al. (2009), WLB is borne out of the desire of employees to gain some work flexibility. Flexibility is an integral part of the workplace, particularly in the twenty-first century; it gives both the employer and employee the ability to make business decisions regarding where, how, and when work is done (Dastmalchian and Blyton, 2001; Cañibano, 2019). There have been quite a number of notions around what flexibility means and what it should entail. Researchers have recorded various approaches and perspectives to extend our knowledge of the term flexibility. Some of these include the qualitative approach (the ability for employees to operate under different roles in the organisation), a quantitative approach (the quick process of redeploying employees within the identified roles) and person-based approach (the ability of employees to employ their broad skills towards adapting to the ever-changing workplace circumstances) (Chang et al., 2013; Beltrán-Martín and Roca-Puig, 2013). Knowledge from human resource management (HRM) presents two important types of flexibility in the workplace; employer flexibility and employee flexibility (DeCenzo, Robbins and Verhulst, 2016).

Employer flexibility, on the one hand, allows the employer the prerogative to determine the working time, the location where work takes place, how work is done, the type of job to be undertaken and the length of the contract (Legg, 1995; Kerkhofs, Chung and Ester, 2008). The typology of employer flexibility is divided into four basic types. First, numerical flexibility enables the employer to recruit a certain number of workers deemed right in quantity to match a required need for specific tasks (Dyer, 1998; Ajonbadi, 2019). However, Atkinson (1984) asserts that numerical flexibility encourages a looser

contractual agreement or relationship between the employer and employee. Therefore, at any time, the employer can make easy hiring and firing decisions to suit the required needs of the organisation. Second, functional flexibility promotes easy redeployment of employees between job roles and activities (Atkinson, 1984). It is, however, beneficial to an employee as it reduces the boredom generated from specialisation in one specific task whilst it also improves organisational productivity as a result of flexible movements (Grote and Raeder, 2009; Torrington et al., 2011). Third, financial flexibility allows for labour cost to be mirrored by the forces of demand and supply of labour in the external labour market (Dyer, 1998). However, in the long-term, it proves beneficial in facilitating numerical and functional flexibilities given the possibility of a flexible payment structure (Atkinson, 1984). Fourth, temporal flexibility accounts for different patterns of working time that are made available to an employee to meet both the needs of the organisation and employee; such include part-time working, flexitime, job-sharing, and term-time working (Redman and Wilkinson, 2009).

On the other hand, employee flexibility allows for employees to take singular responsibility and self-initiated shaping working conditions through mutual agreement with the employer to determine when, how, and where work is to be done (Hill et al., 2008; Tims and Bakker, 2012). Work-life balance is synonymous with employee flexibility (Wheatley, 2016). Hence, to enrich our knowledge of WLB, this thesis discusses the determinants, nature, impact, and consequences of WLB from different perspectives.

3.3 NATURE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The nature of WLB could refer to the issue associated with the location, that is, where work takes place. It is obvious that despite the urge to encourage remote working, the

majority of managers require employees' physical presence at work (regarded as the presence-culture) as they tend to believe they can exercise more control over an employee's productivity (Clark, 2000). More so, in the attempt to understand the nature of WLB, it is crucial to clarify three key concepts: work, personal-life, and balance. According to Guest (2002), all of the three main concepts in WLB have both objective and subjective meanings, which depend on the perspective of each author and how they are defined.

Usually, work is categorised into 'paid' and 'unpaid' work. According to Guest (2002), researchers need to define work within the context of their research as work could be denoted to mean several things to different people. In the context of this study, work is regarded as paid employment. Nevertheless, research also recognises the fact that individuals are involved in unpaid work, such as voluntary work and domestic work, which is also in many cases genderised, as women take up more unpaid work while tending to the house chores besides the time available for other personal activities (Drew and Daverth, 2007; Adisa, Abdulraheem and Isiaka, 2019). Regardless, working individuals have a variety of options to choose from in order to cope with the challenges of merging paid and non-paid work without necessarily having a significant impact on other areas of their lives (Inkson and Baruch, 2008).

On the other hand, personal life entails a variety of activities that varies across individual needs. Studies have also referred to the term 'personal-life' to mean an employee's leisure time or the time devoted to other activities besides work (Haworth, 1997; Lee et al., 2015). An employee's life outside of work, inclusive of free time, enables them to meet their non-work commitments; however, the question raised is if the free time is sufficient to meet all other needs (Guest 2002). Contrastingly, arguments have also emerged to examine the impact of leisure time on employees' WLB. Some studies revealed that

employees should take full responsibility for how they use their leisure time to meet their non-work obligations (Choi et al., 2010; Qian, Yarnal and Almeida, 2013). It is argued that the fear of the underutilisation of time results in the apportionment of time between work and leisure (Lee et al., 2015). An employee's usage of leisure time is also influenced by the determinants of WLB including, age, marital status, career progression, gender, personality and work orientation (Guest, 2002). More so, most employees can choose to dedicate their time to either work or leisure, depending on the demands of work and the demands of the home (Marks and MacDermid, 1996; Mennino, Rubin and Brayfield, 2005; Adisa et al., 2021). In the context of WLB, this study supports Roberts (1999) definition of leisure as "the time, which is not occupied by paid work, unpaid work or personal chores and obligations (p.5).

The concept of 'balance' in WLB has been construed to mean different things to different people. The term 'balance' between work and home has been alluded to be a myth as it is almost impossible to achieve a balance between one's work and non-work roles (Guest, 2002; Kesting and Harris, 2009). This is based on the common definition of balance as the equal allocation of time and effort to work and personal life (Ranjan and Prasad, 2013). Thompson and Bunderson (2007) argue that there is a misconstrued meaning given to the word 'balance' as the attempt to apportion time and energy to work-related and non-work-related responsibilities. However, in an attempt to redefine the concept of balance, Clark (2000) defines balance as the satisfaction and active functioning both at work and home with lesser conflicting roles. Similarly, balance is the extent to which an employee is allowed some degree of flexibility and autonomy over where, when and how they should work (Kesting and Harris, 2009). Therefore, given the positions of other researchers about balance, this study considers balance as an employee's attempt or effort

to manage both work and non-work related responsibilities without necessarily allocating equal amounts of time, energy or effort to satisfying both competing demands.

3.4 DETERMINANTS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to Guest (2002), the determinants of WLB are basically categorised into two, namely, organisational factors and individual factors. The organisational factors account for the demands and culture of work as well as the demand and culture of home; that is, an employee's life is categorised into two domains (work and personal) which are influenced by the employee's ability to meet the demands of both domains vis-à-vis the culture exhibited within the two domains.

Studies have found that working hours remain one of the crucial predictors of achieving WLB (Hopkins, 1982; Syed, 2015). Syed (2015) ascertains that the amount of hours that an employee devotes to work plays a huge role in determining the level of balance that can be achieved between the work-related and non-work-related roles. However, contrastingly, Hochschild (1997) asserts that the amount of time allocated to either work or personal roles vary across individual employees and the circumstances that influence the decision. This is based on the notion that WLB does not necessarily denote an equal allotment of time and energy to the two important domains in an employee's life. In fact, Gambles, Lewis and Rapoport (2006) and Neequaye (2016) claim that it is a myth of WLB since a perfect WLB does not exist anywhere.

According to Adisa, Mordi and Osabutey (2017), long working hours and irregular hours impede WLB and forms one of the existing cultures in many organisations; this they deemed to be a result of a variety of factors which are organisational-based, institutional-based and individual-based. Kramar (1998) argues that employees mostly tend to dedicate more time to work to show job commitment in return for personal benefits, which could

be financial or non-financial; however, this encroaches into their personal-life engagements and mostly affects their familial duties. Othman et al. (2009) debate that the availability of flexible working arrangements promotes WLB and improves organisational productivity and profitability. Working for longer hours may be demanded depending on the employee's nature of the job, hence, many of the employees who work for longer hours associate their working time to be the organisation's culture to which they must adjust (Haines et al., 2012; Syed, 2015).

Work intensification constitutes another determinant of WLB. It is regarded as an increase in an employee's workload, which could be present in the job roles, activities and positions attained by the employee (Boxall and Macky, 2014). According to Ono et al. (1982), work intensification, which represents the organisational culture in many businesses, puts pressure on an individual's resources as it requires greater allocation of an employee's resources towards work and less towards the employee's personal life, impeding the achievement of WLB. Yousef (2002) establishes a link between work overload and long working hours; there is a high likelihood for employees to increase the number of hours worked in order to meet the high demands of their jobs (Haines et al., 2012). Contrastingly, Drago et al. (2009) argue that long working hours is presented as a vague indicator of work intensification since it does not constitute the only reason employees take up extended working time. Therefore, Chung and van der Lippe (2018) discusses two primary types of work intensification. First, enabled intensification, meaning that despite the availability of workplace flexibility, the boundaries (work and personal lives) are blurred and allows workers to work harder and for longer hours than they would have. Second, enforced intensification, meaning that an increase in the workload of an employee is facilitated with an increase in workplace flexibility. Nevertheless, Boxall and Macky (2014) found that work intensification predicted by work

overload has a significant relationship with greater fatigue, increased stress and work-life imbalance. Similarly, Yu (2014) also discovered that work intensification and job insecurity have larger effects on WLB outcomes compared to long working hours. Hence, it is deduced that despite the various reasons employees desire to increase their working time as a result of work intensification, the negative effects outweigh the positive effects and in the long-run, it leads to an imbalance.

Work-life balance, beyond the organisational context also relates to the 'home' context or as Guest (2002) puts it "life outside of work". In addition to the demands and culture at work, there are also demands and culture that exists outside of work which often requires the individual worker's active participation or involvement (Haworth, 1997, Adekoya et al., 2019). Guest (2002) posits that 'home demands' or the 'demands of home' relates to an employee's commitments, responsibilities and obligations that are not work-related and may be found existent in the family, leisure activities and community participation. However, the level of demand also differs across individual needs and preferences (Hochschild, 1997). For instance, a group of workers may require more time at home compared to others because of the workload and duties at home, particularly for workers with dependents (children and elderly parents). There is, therefore, a need to manage both work and home demands so that one does not significantly generate a negative outcome (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). Similarly, an effective WLB is expected to not only benefit employees but also employers, family members, and the community wherein the employees belong (Mishra et al., 2014). This is insinuated to comply with the spill-over theory premised upon the influence of occurrences in one field to affect (positively or negatively) the occurrences in another field (Staines, 1980; Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).

The 'home culture' or 'culture of home' as Guest insinuates "refers to the expectations of those in the home environment about commitments and obligations" (Guest, 2002:266). The culture of the home presupposes that the individual worker is surrounded by familial duties, which are not only value-based but also culturally-inclined. These could include the responsibility of childcare, adult care and domestic work (such as cleaning and cooking) (Desrochers, Hilton and Larwood, 2005; Deguili, 2007; Adisa et al., 2021). Parents may find it difficult to make decisions among themselves regarding who does what; hence, some have resorted to deciding whether the roles should be carried out by either or both parents, family members or contracted out (domestic workers). Nevertheless, these decisions are also surrounded by positives and negatives (Drew and Daverth, 2007; Chesley, 2008; Gaunt, 2013).

Besides the organisational factors, there are also individual factors that act as determinants of WLB. These factors include but are not limited to gender, marital status, age, work orientation, personality, energy, personal control and coping and life and career stage (Guest, 2002). Gender issues are predominant in WLB given the high level of demands placed particularly on women (Adisa, Gbadamosi and Osabutey, 2016; Adisa et al., 2021). Despite the increasing usage of workplace flexibility policies in organisations, studies argue that women still find it challenging to attain WLB (Boje and Ejrnaes, 2012; Adisa, Mordi and Mordi, 2014). However, for the male gender, although the workplace flexibility and family-friendly policies exist but not as much in comparison with their female counterparts (Butler and Skattebo, 2004). This is because managers, based on organisational expectations, perceive both genders in different spheres of work-life and as such allocate less flexible working arrangements to the male gender (Singley and Hynes, 2005; Hoobler, Wayne and Lemmon, 2009). Contrastingly, Chung and van der Lippe (2018) argue that fathers often more than mothers fail to use flexible working

arrangements as they tend to remain devoted to their work and place a priority on work over their family duties and care roles.

Nonetheless, the increasing rate of female participation in the workforce with little changes in the business environment increases the fear of job insecurity which discourages both the male and female genders from taking up flexible working options (Haworth and Lewis, 2005; Allen and Finkelstein, 2014). Moreover, issues around gender equality present numerous challenges for achieving WLB. Adisa, Abdulraheem and Isiaka (2019) discussed the effect of patriarchy on women's WLB. They found that in countries (particularly Sub-Saharan Africa) where the male dominance culture exists, women find it challenging to manage work and life/family responsibilities. Besides, they report that the multiple roles undertaken by women, excessive subordination of females coupled with a gender-based division of labour impedes women WLB. However, in countries with an ingrained egalitarian culture where gender equality is most promoted, WLB among the female workforce is less challenging but still exists (Lyness and Kropf, 2005; Lyness and Judiesch, 2014).

The age of an employee is another factor that determines the level of WLB. There have been various arguments about the relationship between age and WLB; however, there is yet to be a definite conclusion as to which age group is a better achiever of WLB. These results from the fact that an employee's age is influenced by other varying factors such as gender, job responsibilities, work industry, marital status, organisational culture, number of dependents, and based on economic circumstances (Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007). Richert-Kazmierska and Stankiewicz (2016) surveyed 500 employees in Finland, Lithuania and Sweden to determine if age matters in the achievement of WLB. It was discovered that most employers were the determinants of flexible working arrangements to different age groups (21-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-70) as they believed

that not all workplace flexibility options applied to all age groups. Nevertheless, the study concluded that older employees (45-70) had higher satisfaction with their WLB compared to the younger workforce, given the increase in the number of available workplace flexibility options. Contrastingly, Walia (2015) surveyed 308 professionals in India to determine the correlation of gender and age to the attainment of WLB. The study showed that while gender significantly affected WLB realities, there was no significant relationship between age and WLB.

Studies have also elaborated on the differences in the use of workplace flexibility options among the younger and older workforce. While a significant number of the younger workforce (particularly those with a single status) use their leisure time more for social activities and professional progression, the older workforce which is dominated by married couples spends most of their leisure time tending to family issues (Burgess, Henderson, and Strachan, 2007; Beham et al., 2017; Cañibano, 2019). Drawing from the different perspectives, it is presumed that age as a single factor does not necessarily have a significant impact on WLB; however, the interaction of other factors surrounding the age of the workforce makes it a determinant of WLB.

Individual personality has been evidenced to be one of the determining factors of an employee's ability to achieve WLB. Personality traits among employees are similar and different in an individual-to-individual case; therefore, employees' quest for achievement is influenced by various personality factors (Carlson, 1999; Guest, 2002). Michel and Clark (2011) recognise two main influencers of personality in determining work-life outcomes. First is the ability of an individual's traits to influence the perceptions of work and life; second, personal traits can affect how an individual (through elicited behaviour) is able to manage both work and personal lives. Studies (Watson and Clark, 1984; Stoeva et al., 2002) also considered the effect of positive and negative affectivity in an attempt

to understand the relationship between personality traits and WLB. This refers to an individual's possibility of experiencing either or both positive and negative moods or emotions, which are likely to affect (positive or negative) either work or personal lives. Therefore, an employee experiencing positive emotions or mood is likely to transfer such towards his or her personal life and vice versa.

Further, the 'Five Factor Model' personality trait (McCrae and Costa, 1987) which includes conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience, remains the most widely used personality model. The model was designed to examine or measure the differences between individuals' personalities alongside their various experiences, such as work and life (McCrae and John, 1992; Bhalla and Kang, 2018). Thus, it is presumed that personality traits affect the behaviours of individuals in different life situations (Schimmack et al., 2004; Leka and De Alwis, 2016).

In addition, work orientation which is also influenced by an individual's personality plays a vital role in the determination of WLB (Guest, 2002). According to Guest, an individual's orientation to work exemplifies which domain is considered a priority to the individual (p. 266). The debate about whether the family should come first before work and vice versa remains unsolved as there are various perspectives in support of either motion. For instance, Bhalla and Kang (2018) argue that circumstances differ among individuals, one of which is dictated by the individual personality that drives his or her orientation to work or personal life. Similarly, Ford and Collinson (2011) revealed from their studies that individuals (managers in particular) are most times not in control of their work schedule; hence, it becomes challenging to provide adequate coping strategies towards managing WLB. They further argue that, like other determinants of WLB, work orientation is not isolated from other factors of WLB. It was implied that although in most cases, individuals downplay their domestic roles (men in particular), which then creates

a highly gendered orientation to both domains of life. Individuals are the agents of their career destinies and as such, should find a mechanism for managing both their work and personal lives (Briscoe and Hall, 2006; Inkson and Baruch, 2008). According to Drenzo, Greenhaus and Weer (2015), protean career/work orientation is associated with positive WLB. The researchers revealed that a sustained career planning that is value-driven supports protean career orientation and facilitates the merging together of work and life responsibilities.

3.5 WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND MERITS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Many studies have highlighted and designed several WLB policies as they are deemed fit to facilitate flexible working, which provides employees and employers with benefits (Beham et al., 2017; Cañibano, 2019). Since WLB has been construed as the tendencies of a worker to accord substantial attention, dedication, and commitment to their work demands as well as their family and or personal life demands (Kesting and Harris, 2009); hence, WLB policies refer to measures put in place by instituted authorities to help employees or workers in general, maintain an equilibrium between their personal lives and work time/demands (Guest, 2016). In a bid to attain business targets like profit margins, sales growth, customer acquisitions, organisational expansions, shareholders benefits, and many more, workers often become the ‘beasts of burden’, championing the course of the organisational goals (Kesting and Harris, 2009). This process can include working beyond the standard working hours amidst other discomforts that may set up conflicts in personal lives (Antilla et al., 2015). As a result, organisations and governments enact policies and guidelines that are targeted at improving the job satisfaction of employees while at the same time increasing their productivity (Xiao and Cooke, 2012). In this part, common work-life balance policies are identified across the

world and their relevance to achieving WLB. In 2019, the European Union (EU) rolled out work-life balance updates that each member country should have implemented by 2022. The European Commission - EC (2019) made some additions to the existing regional policies on work-life balance. The policies were enacted to ensure that the well-being of employees is not affected by the selfish interests of their employers.

Paternity leave is one of the recent WLB policies within the EU and in many other parts of the world. The concept of paternity leave is not as popular as maternity leave, and its adoptions have been relatively scanty (Adekoya et al., 2019). Rege and Solli's (2013) investigation of the four weeks paternity leave policy adopted in 1993 found that there was an upsurge in the rate of leaves from less than 2 per cent to over 60 per cent, and this reduced the long term earnings of the fathers by 1.4 per cent. The EU's 2019 introduction allowed for 10 days leave with at least a payment the size of sick leave. The right to parental leave was strengthened following the inclusion of paternity leave as a WLB policy in favour of working fathers or soon-to-be fathers (Antila et al., 2015). The EU law already made provisions for up to four months of unpaid parental leaves, but the new adjustments of the WLB policies allow for workers to be paid for half of that time, and the leave is non-transferable (European Commission, 2019). Member states have the exclusive right to decide how much to be paid and the flexibility of the leave time.

Workers that are direct carers now have up to 5 days of annual leave. A 'carer' by contextual definition, points to an individual who provides direct personal care or support of a family member under the same roof, in need of constant attention due to medical or psychological conditions (Leckey and Taylor, 2019). Hence, this policy relates to individuals irrespective of their age, gender and marital status as long as they have a dependent in their direct care (European Commission, 2019). The leave will be unpaid unless otherwise considered by member states or as deemed fit by the organisation. The

new directive extends the worker's right to request a flexible working arrangement to parents with children within 0 to at least 8 years old and carers as well. The work flexibility may include remote working, a reduction in the total number of hours for work, and work time flexibility. Workers will also have the right to opt-in for temporary flexibility and the right to revert back to default work patterns (Leckey and Taylor, 2019).

In addition, the study of Opuko and Munjuri (2017) enlist work-life balance policies that enable workers to cope with job demands. One of these policies includes mobile/remote working that allows organisations to harness the dividends of technology in the working structure. It enables workers to work from their homes using their mobile devices, computers, and internet services at any time (Opuko and Munjuri, 2017). Buffer (2019)'s survey of 2,500 remote workers confirmed that most people utilising a remote working option do not think of opting out as 99 per cent of survey respondents reported their desire to work remotely (some of the time) for the rest of their lives. However, as evidence has shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working may not be the solution to WLB because some studies have reported that it also contributes to long working hours and stress (Adisa, Aiyenitaju and Adekoya, 2021; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir, 2021). Therefore, studies (e.g., Wang et al., 2021) have pushed for the need to implement a hybrid approach alongside implementing a work design that best suits employees.

Flexitime/flexible working hours allow workers with other needs to rearrange their working hours and reduce work-related stress (Den Dulk and Doorne-Huiskes, 2010). Some of the factors that could propel employees to demand flexitime include school runs, childcare, eldercare, traffic, and others. Menezes and Kelliher (2016) evaluated how worktime flexibility impacts employee productivity and organisational output and found a strong positive correlation. It also includes improved creativity, job satisfaction, retention rates, and employee loyalty.

Shift work and job sharing enable around the clock productivity for factories. In non-factory workplaces, it is a strategy to maintain full productivity by dividing workloads between individuals to work consecutively or concomitantly (Keller et al., 2009). However, this is one of the policies that have taken the heaviest blows of criticism. Extant literature has shown that extended shifts are highly related to health implications such as heart diseases, cancer, obesity, increased workplace accidents, and low productivity (Villnave, 2012). Job sharing is another form of shift work, but it differs in employment contracts most often. It is associated with the part-time employment of individuals to perform a task originally meant for a single fully employed person (Xiao and Cooke, 2012; Cañibano, 2019). On the management's side, it is a cost minimisation strategy to optimise business operations and a coping strategy for employees to improve work-life balance (Nollen, 2015).

Sabbaticals and career breaks are leave periods where employees take time off work. Although employers are not under legal obligations to provide them in addition to the accrued annual work leave, they are often a result of negotiations with HR managers and supervisors (Opuko and Munjuri, 2017). It is an unpaid leave period but is backed by job security. Mainly used in the academic fields, it allows employees to take time off after a period of intensive work (usually after the seventh year of consistent working) pressure to prevent burnout or engage in personal development schemes (Den Dulk et al., 2014). Employees and employers also opt for compressed working hours, which involves a work time rearrangement that will enable employees to compact hours and days of work into a few intensive work schedules (Nollen, 2015).

Work-life balance policies provide several benefits not only for employees but also employers. According to Smeaton et al. (2014), WLB policies facilitate increased organisational productivity. Hence, there is a positive correlation between WLB policies

and employee productivity, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty (Gagnano, Simbula, and Miglioretti, 2020). Absenteeism and presenteeism often tend to reduce as a result of the effective implementation of WLB policies (Den Dulk et al., 2014). When employees become overwhelmed by workloads or feel disconnected from the workplace, they often tend to react in one of these two ways (Smeaton et al., 2014). On the one hand, people make excuses for irrelevant matters, and on the other hand, people violate medical recommendations to be present at work (Gagnano et al., 2020).

Studies found that when companies are notable for their friendly work-life balance policies, they have a higher propensity to attract talents (Den Dulk and Doorne-Huiskes, 2010). Institutions like the Center for Personnel and Development (CIPD) are in the business of analysing businesses in line with their WLB practices, employee training, and growth. Institutions enlisted in the CIPD analysis of best places to work, attract the best talents with ease, many of which are known as the employer of choice (CIPD, 2020). Research also finds that high attrition rates are associated with poor WLB practices (Chemirmir et al., 2017). Econometric analysis of findings suggests that the availability of flexible working arrangements in a workplace significantly improves retention rates, individual productivity, and overall organisational output (Smeaton et al., 2014).

Overall, the literature on WLB has provided an array of WLB benefits both from employers' and employees' perspectives. From the employers' perspective, employees that enjoy WLB tend to increase their productivity, translating into high organisational productivity and profitability (Xiao and Cooke, 2012; Menezes and Kelliher, 2016). Also, employers benefit from a workforce that is highly engaged, high-performance teams, talent attraction and retention, reduced absenteeism and presenteeism, reduced operational cost, and reduced cost of employee turnover (Den Dulk et al., 2014; Smeaton et al., 2014). On the other hand, WLB is beneficial to employees because they derive

increased job autonomy, less stress, reduced personal cost, higher job satisfaction, increased wellbeing and mental health, increased trust, feelings of being valued from the perception that employers respect their non-work space, family bonds, and career advancement (Nollen, 2015; Beham et al., 2017; Cañibano, 2019).

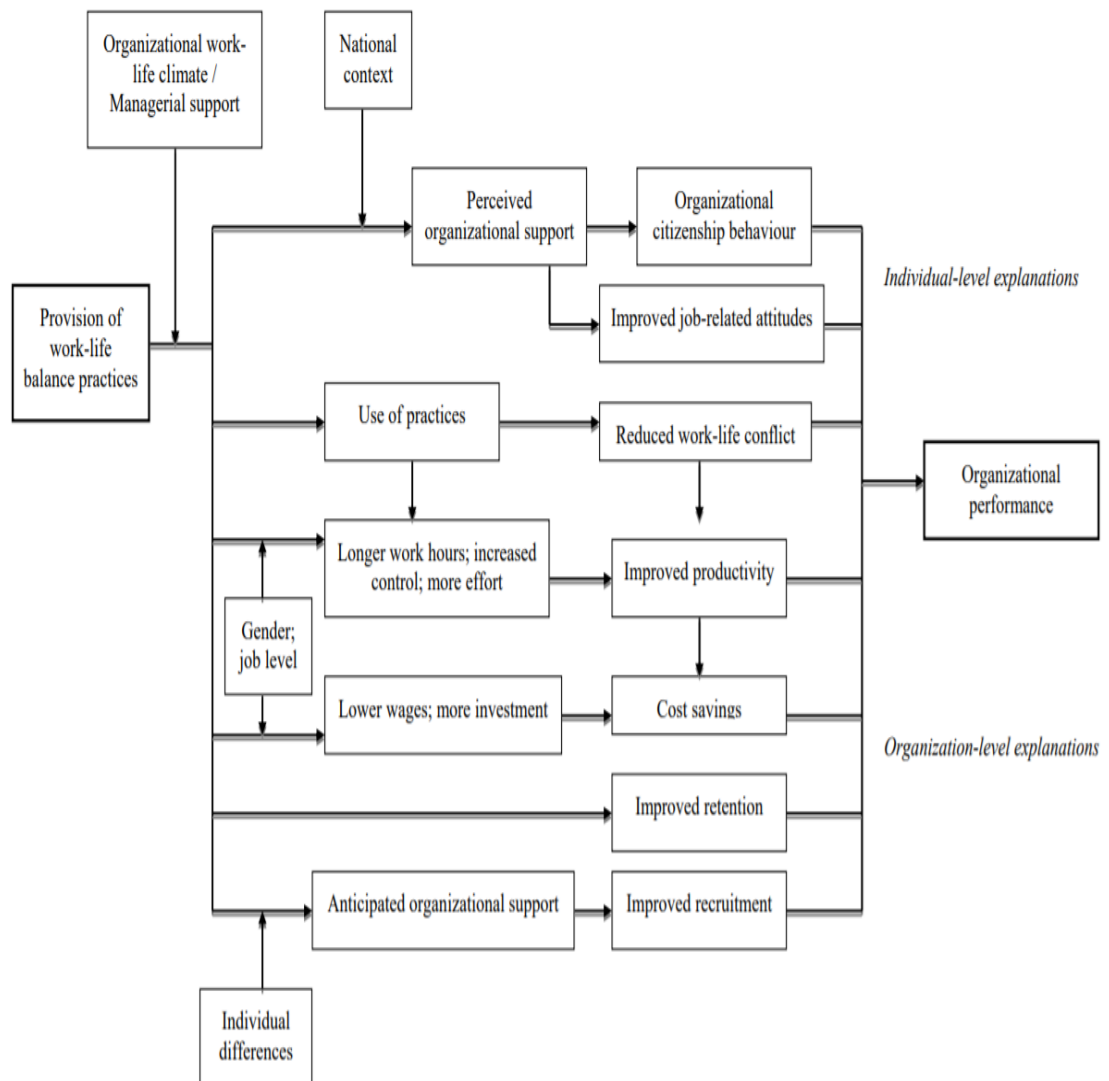
Ultimately, following the review of the extant literature on WLB, there are similarities and differences in WLB policies implemented across different countries. Moreover, there are peculiarities in different contexts pertaining to the types of WLB or family-friendly policies that are implemented to cater to employees' wellbeing. This is further explored in section 3.9 and briefly summarised in Table 1.

3.6 BARRIERS TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In today's fast-paced environment, work has taken over a huge part of people's life. However, with recommendations from researchers, and medical professionals on the impact of imbalance and overwork on a person's psychological well-being and mental stability, employers are beginning to redefine the workplace environment to accommodate personal/family lives (Thompson, 2008; Wang et al., 2021). Although, findings show that adopting work-life balance policies and initiatives could be a complicated task (Smeaton et al., 2014). On the one hand, employers have drafted concise policies and strategies to help employees cope with increasing work demands by making work more flexible. As expected, they have yielded results like reduced turnover and high retention, increased employee loyalty, commitment and job satisfaction (Guest, 2016). On the other hand, however, the complexity lies either in the inability of the policies to be transparent, deficiency of policy adoption and implementation by employers, thereby existing only on paper, unawareness of the existence of such policies by employees, or wrong perceptions of its usage (Thompson, 2008).

As Xiao and Cooke (2012) suggest, there are four primary barriers to the attainment of WLB, namely organisational, governmental, individual and societal barriers. Moreover, Beauregard and Henry (2009) proposed a model that shows how the provision of work-life balance policies may affect organisational performance. This model (see figure 3) also highlights that the organisation, national contexts and individual differences may affect the achievement of WLB and organisational outcomes.

Figure 3: Model of proposed relationships between the provision of work-life balance practices and organizational performance



Source: Beauregard and Henry (2009)

Organisational barriers to work-life balance are the top causes of imbalance. Predominantly, how an organisation defines success (in all of its pursuit of market dominance) determines how an employee defines success (Schein, 1992). Return on equity, firm performance, sales growth, profit margin, and shareholders' payout are some of the key areas of a firm's concern (Thompson, 2008). The ability of an employee to meet the demands in these areas of work determines their future with the company because these features of the company's targets incite employee's movement in the management hierarchy (Xiao and Cooke, 2012).

A diagrammatical framework by Thompson (2008) illustrates the barriers that potentially inhibit the progress of work-life policies, called the five-level model of potential barriers to the success of work-life programs (see figure 4). The diagram presents issues as it relates to individuals, supervisor, workgroup, organisation and the underlying assumptions as the main predictors of an effective WLB.

Figure 4: Five-level model of potential barriers to the success of work-life programs



Source: Thompson (2008)

According to Thompson (2008), presenteeism is an underlying assumption of both employers and employees where the need to be physically present at work is deemed the standard practice, further negating the essence of workplace flexibility. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 83% of respondents in a survey of 1,078 professionals in the UK workplaces reported going to work when ill (CIPD, 2019). About two-thirds of the survey respondents (63%) reported having used the period for their annual leave to work (CIPD, 2019). With high work demands and increasing workloads, most of the time, employees are left with no options than to resort to working long hours, working while sick, and working instead of taking leaves, which are all practices that are detrimental to the health of an employee (Thompson, 2008).

The government's inability to propose and implement policies for work-life balance poses a barrier (Xiao and Cooke, 2012). The governments' role in the implementation of work-life balance policies is essential to the real effect of work-life balance on people. One of the main reasons why work-life balance policies are making waves in most European countries can be well attributed to the role of the European Union in enforcing its member countries to observe them (Beham et al., 2017). Whereas the European Union is one of the strongest coalition governments in the world, weaker ones (e.g. ECOWAS) will have problems replicating such moves (Isham et al., 2020). Hence the responsibility shifts to state government authorities to not only lay emphasis on the establishment of work-life balance policies, but to see to its implementation with penalties and benefits and similar display of exemplary leadership (Beham et al., 2017).

In most situations where people work extremely long hours that are hazardous to their health, there are little or no government actions to stop such practices (Wong et al., 2018). For instance, extreme work conditions have become a leading cause of death in Japan for many years, which were propelled by the society and government's perception of work

(Thiruchelvam, 2018). Until governments begin to exert energy and draw attention to the threats of work-life imbalance (long working hours, work overload, gender biases, among others) to the health and mental stability of its workforce, they may not realise that there will be consequences (Thiruchelvam, 2018).

Societal barriers interrupt the perception of work-life balance. Poulouse and Sudarsan (2014) argue that society contributes a quota to the work-life conflict experienced by an employee. The unending responsibilities attached to the family such as childcare, eldercare, housing provisions and parental duties inhibit the achievement of WLB (Gaunt, 2013). In most African communities, where there is a strong influence of a patriarchal hegemonic pattern in the cultural activities, much pressure is exerted on the shoulders of the women by the men in the family (Adekoya et al., 2019; Adisa et al., 2019). Hence in situations where they may be undergoing career struggles, they are expected to swallow the pressure. Whereas many studies focus on how the patriarchy system limits the potentials of women to homemakers and creates a glass ceiling in the corporate world that blocks their career growth, very little has been said of how this same system has adversely affected men (Gaunt, 2013; O'Brien and Wall, 2017). According to Rehel and Baxter (2015), the tussle between gender roles and responsibilities in society creates as much family-work conflict for men as it does for women. On the one hand, it mounts pressure on women never to allow family roles to deter them from their career pursuits, and on the other hand, it entices men to become part of the homemakers, give up part of work for part of the family (Rehel and Baxter, 2015).

Individual barriers are another set of impediments to work-life balance. According to McCrae and John (1992), there are five personality traits of an individual that can enable or be a barrier to their work-life balance. Irrespective of the pre-existing work-life balance policies in the organisation, an individual possessing any or all of these traits are less

(more) likely to be satisfied than others. These traits include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. An extraverted individual is active, energetic, sociable, and enthusiastic. Agreeableness describes a person's ability or inability to foster cooperation with coworkers, ease of forgiving, and trust (McCrae and John, 1992). A person's intrinsic composure, sense of responsibility, and work ethic define their conscientiousness. Neuroticism explains that individuals who are less confident, more anxious, insecure, tense, are less likely to flow with an existing work-life balance that may not tick all their boxes (McCrae and John, 1992). Lastly, an individual's level of exposure creates more room for experiential learning, intelligence, and creative thinking, which are coping instruments in the workplace (McCrae and John, 1992). To Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2001), a person's averseness or neutrality in relation to these five traits define the state of their work-life balance over a period of time. The norms of an 'ideal worker' put forward by the employers are another underlying assumption inhibiting the implementation of a work-life program. Thompson (2008) buttressed factors such as gendered assumptions and roles – men should be more engaged in paid roles and women in caregiving and domestics. Increased female participation in the workplace flattens the curve for families and reduces the financial burden on either parent.

Further, empirical research also points to several forms of WLB barriers across countries, organisations and occupations. Cieri et al. (2007) investigated organisation-induced barriers to WLB in Australian organisations. In reviewing pre-existing studies in Australia in this field, they found that emphasis (through rewards) on long working hours as part of the organisational culture and high commitment, at the expense of personal life commitment prohibits WLB. Also, the unsupportive working environments that result in employees working in isolation and hostility hinders the achievement of WLB. In addition, their findings argue that WLB is hampered by poor supervisor-employee

relationships, often resulting in work frustration, depression, and low productivity. Poor communication and enlightenment on the availability and usage of WLB policies and initiatives are detrimental to the achievement of WLB, likewise poor interrelatedness of senior management staff with the juniors due to individual homosociality perception (Cieri et al., 2007).

Fernando and Sareena (2016) collected and analysed data from bankers in Sri Lanka to understand the underlying factors affecting the WLB of female employees. Samples were taken from married female employees of the Bank of Ceylon, working as an office head, and with at least one child below the age of 15. The total sample size was 32. Using a reliability test and Pearson correlation analysis, the researcher studied the availability of WLB policies to individuals in this category. Their findings showed that there exists a strong positive correlation between work-life balance enabling policies (such as child care, working hours, and organisational support system) and the attainment of work-life balance among married women.

Furthermore, Sundareshan (2014) also investigated the factors that influence women's choice of WLB in their respective workplaces. The study involved a random selection of 125 women working in different institutions in Bangalore. The findings showed that excess pressure from work, little or no time for self-care, and family expectations, were the factors limiting most of the women from a balanced life. Lack of inclusiveness in organisational policies for work-life balance and the skewness of existing policies were deemed inconsiderate. Regardless of their childcare needs or health status, the poor organisational policies were predicted as strong barriers to WLB for employees, resulting in high levels of stress and anxiety from work, long working hours to meet up with the workloads, while also meeting childcare needs.

Additionally, Jantzer et al. (2018) identified that breastfeeding support in the workplace was instrumental in increasing employee retention rates and job satisfaction. Taking samples from 87 women working in rural communities, it was found that breastfeeding support to the recipients was an indicator of workplace support from supervisors and coworkers alike. Thompson (2008) also adds that some of the barriers to WLB are self-induced. Individuals in this category are poised on achieving their personal goals, which most of the time, is a derivative of the organisational goals.

3.7 WORK-LIFE CONFLICT

Although many researchers use the terms “work-life conflict” (WLC) and “work-life balance” (WLB) interchangeably, WLC often refers to the “lack of fit” between an employee’s personal life responsibilities and their roles in their organisation’s pursuit of its goals (Becker and Huselid, 1998). In its simplest distinctive form, work-life conflict refers to the absence of work-life balance (Kim, 2014). Work-life conflict refers to the point in time where the numerous demands (both from work and personal) on a person’s limited resources (time and energy) becomes incompatible with each other. For employees, this could mean maintaining a balance between work-related roles and non-work-related or family responsibilities (Guest, 2002).

There are two existing human-life domains (i.e. work and personal or family life); hence, WLC emerges from the incompatibility between both domains as one interferes with the other and engenders a conflict between the roles (Akkas, Hossain and Rahman, 2015; Adisa et al., 2021). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) aver that WLC emerges in a situation where an individual is responsible for multiple roles (spouse, worker and parent) and requires a degree of involvement, time and satisfaction between the roles without one drastically affecting the other roles. The entirety of the WLB phenomenon is centered on

the fact that the scarce resources need to be efficiently allocated, and this focus aligns with the bedrock of the whole of the Economics discipline given its mainstream definition as “the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses” (Robbins, 1935).

However, more often than not, WLB is addressed as an entity where its causative elements are left out. For every conflict, there is a root cause, and according to the conflict resolution experts, “conflict analysis should reach, beyond the treatment of symptoms such as control of individual behaviour, to highlight their root causes” (Jeong, 2008). Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000) evince that WLC is a source of stress following irresolvable pressures from the work and family domains. Haar et al. (2009) also associate work-life conflict with work-induced stress. According to them, stress reduction techniques like relaxation and meditation could be probable solutions to attaining emotional balance. Furthermore, work pressure, burdensome familial responsibilities, impracticable and unsuitable work-family balance, substandard infrastructural facilities, and job dissatisfaction and more have been adjudged to be the causes of WLC; while juvenile delinquencies, health issues, unhappy workforce, and broken marriages/families just to mention a few, have been ascertained to be the consequences of WLC (Mordi et al., 2013; Adisa et al., 2016; Mushfiquir et al., 2018; Adisa et al., 2021).

Reporting some statistics, Salleh (2008) highlights that between 1990 to 2001/2002, stress-related conditions rose from 829 cases per 100,000 workers to 1,700 in the United Kingdom. From estimations, 80 to 90 per cent of all industrial accidents were linked to the inability to handle stress. In addition, reports from Meridian Stress Management Consultancy showed that about 180,000 annual deaths are related to work stress (Simmons and Simmons, 1997), and this have all been the situations predating the present day’s ranking of the UK as one of the worst 20 countries in the OECD concerning work-

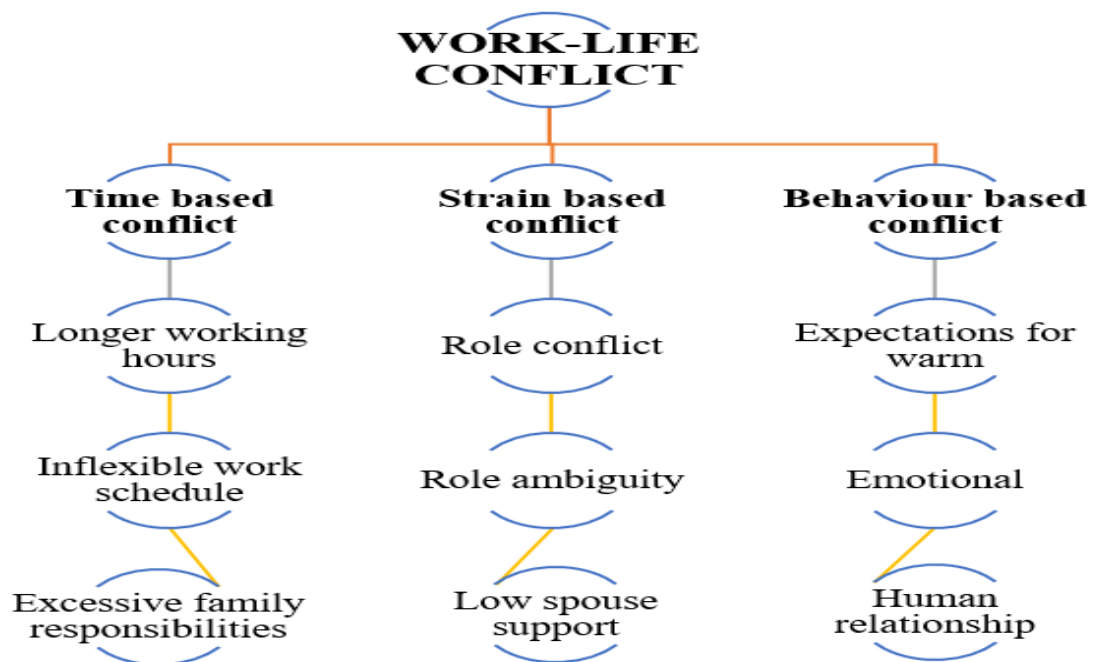
life balance. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2016) reports that at least, one-third of employees in the western community are exposed to stress which exacerbates the conflict between work and personal or family life. The report reveals the stressful characteristics of work as it relates to the work content and work context. On the one hand, the stressors from the work content include, work environment and work equipment, task design, workload and workplace, and work schedule. On the other hand, the work context stressors include, organisational culture and function, employees' role in the organisation, career development and pursuit, decision latitude or control, interpersonal relationships at work, and home-work interface. According to the Health and Safety Executive (2019) report, in 2018/2019, 44 per cent of the total work-related health problems and 54 per cent of lost working days due to illness was as a result of workplace stress, depression or anxiety. According to the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) survey report (2019), 40 per cent or two in five workers claim that work positively affects their mental health, whereas, the remaining 60 per cent report a negative effect predominantly as a result of work stress.

Geenhaus and Beutell (1985) conceptualised that there are three root causes of a work-life conflict – time-based conflicts, strain-based conflicts and behaviour-based conflicts. According to them, these three factors can either cause work-family conflict (work interfering with family time, e.g. long working hours hindering other home duties) or family-work conflict (family interfering with work, e.g. a sick child stopping a person from going to work).

The time-based conflict stems from the ideology that time is a scarce resource that needs to be efficiently allocated between work-life and personal-life (Gutek, Searle and Klepa, 1991). Akkas et al. (2015) explain it to reflect a type of conflict that arises in situations where a person is unable to allocate sufficient time to one domain to meet specific

demands because of time pressures from another. In this case, long working hours, inflexible work schedules and excessive family responsibilities are the main predictors of time-based conflicts, which in turn result into WLC (Akkas, 2015). Similarly, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest that time-based conflict implies that the devotion of time to the responsibilities in one role makes it difficult to perform the responsibilities in other roles. In addition, Barnett and Hyde (2001) argue that the scarcity model provides a detailed description of the time-based work-family conflict by entailing that human energy is available in limited quantity and cannot serve all needs concurrently. One of the prevalent adverse effects that result from excessive demand on an individual's time is the advent of role overload, which could lead to fatigue and negative emotions. An example of time-based conflict could be found in a parent's inability to go for school runs or child's graduation ceremonies due to a conflicting concurrent schedule at the workplace (Akkas et al., 2015).

Figure 5: Types of Work-Life Conflict



Source: Extracts from Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Akkas et al. (2015)

The strain-based conflict does not necessarily intertwine with time, but just like time-based conflict, it occurs because human resources are limited with respect to energy and time, and there is a need for efficient allocation of scarce resources (Gutek, Searle and Klepa, 1991). It simply explains the situation where the performance demands in one role begin to affect the performance in other roles, thereby creating stress reactions like tension, anxiety, fatigue, dissatisfaction and depression (Edward and Rothbard, 2000). Furthermore, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) simplify this type of conflict to mean that the stress from the participation in one role limits the level of participation in the other role. It refers to a situation where demands from different domains of an individual's life intervene with each other (Asiedu et al., 2013; Akkas et al., 2015). For example, an autocratic manager carrying over the trait to family outings. This kind of performance overflow is often unprecedented and are difficult to identify.

The behaviour-based conflict arises from incompatibility of the behavioural patterns/demands in one role with that of another role (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Such behavioural patterns are often found in a person's inability to switch character roles to meet the prevailing needs across domains. It is a kind of conflict that emanates from contradictory norms and expectations present in the different character roles of a person (Cooper, Dewe and O'Driscoll, 2001). Asiedu et al. (2013) define this type of conflict as one that occurs in situations where specific behavioural patterns and character traits that are acceptable and desirable in one domain becomes and is considered inappropriate, inconsistent, or counterproductive in another domain. For instance, an introvert that is suddenly needed to cover up for a marketer's role due to a breach in operations. These are two areas that demand different character traits, and as such, requires a person who has mastered the art of switching character roles to avoid a conflict (Akkas et al., 2015).

3.8 CRITICISMS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Numerous scholarly research has been carried out in different fields of study, across different occupations, and in different countries for many years now. Whereas most of these studies focus on the need for introducing and implementing work-life balance (WLB) policies in the work environment, little thought has been given to possible failures of this policy. From the review of the extant literature on WLB, some empirical and theoretical criticisms point out the loopholes in the WLB policies, which has been underemphasised until recently.

From the empirical perspective, according to Smeaton et al. (2014), the benefits of WLB do not overshadow its costs given that, while an individual enjoys the benefits of WLB through flexible working, the organisation pays the price by ensuring that business runs almost as usual to avoid huge losses. Unfortunately, employees are unaware or unconcerned about the real cost of the benefit and flexibility packages that they receive (Lotich, 2017). “Once a year, we would get a report showing how much was spent on salary, insurance, social security tax... I was always surprised to see the real cost of these benefits and total dollar value of my benefits package” (Lotich, 2017).

A report by Buffer in 2019 investigated the state of remote working as a trend that has come to stay to understand the prospects and challenges associated with it. The survey involved 2,500 remote workers, out of which 99 per cent reported they would likely carry on with remote working for the rest of their lives (Buffer, 2019). Although some of the main benefits cited are flexible schedules, time with family and working from any location; however, there were inherent challenges that hindered the outright profitability of remote working. The dominant challenge faced by remote workers is the interrelatedness of work and life, such that it is difficult to unplug from work, after work.

Hence, remote working as a way of allowing employee flexibility to promote WLB engenders consequences for employees and the organisation, which cannot be overlooked (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Additionally, Smeaton et al. (2014) carried out a study to provide insights to the UK government from micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other grassroots businesses (non-Fortune 500 companies) in a bid to encourage the government to draft an inclusive policy to cover work flexibility of UK workers across all industries. The findings from the study make up part of the criticisms of WLB that is discussed in this section. One of the criticisms were targeted towards the variations in the cost of policy implementation. Research reveals that the cost of implementing work-life balance policies was minimal and bearable relative to the benefits derived, given that organisations experience withdrawals from their balance sheet to cover for WLB policy initiatives (Smeaton et al., 2014). While most employers might not see implementation costs as a barrier or problematic, the short-sightedness is short-term induced challenges. Over the years, in the cause of its existence, every one dollar forgone alternative for a unit of WLB would total an enormous amount of money in the long-run. To some businesses, an implementation cost could include a restructuring of the business models, and this is one of the instances where the cost outweighs the benefits (Smeaton et al., 2014).

Government intervention in the market has also been a basis for the criticisms of WLB. Within the last few decades, many governments worldwide have begun to encroach into other areas of business life, and work-life balance inclusive. For instance, the UK government extended its former 1996 legislation of the right to seek contract variation to a right to flexible time (HM Government, 2012; Rubery et al., 2016). According to the classicalists, the market works with the demand side and supply side, correcting the lapses in the market and not by government intervention (Rubery et al., 2016). Classicalist

economic theories are notable for their insistence and promotion of laissez-faire - a market free from government intervention. Put simply, “leave it alone”, is the response to a government role in trade and the economy, proffered by the physiocrats and classical schools of thought (Henry, 2016). This aligns with the argument that government interventions lead to market failures (Rubery et al., 2016). While it is readily easier for big businesses and corporations to adopt a flexible time policy as put forward by the legislations, it is quite uneasy for MSMEs, which are usually characterised by a workforce of less than or equal to a hundred (Smeaton et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the cost of accommodating requests is not always low for the organisation. With the increasing popularity and spread of the right to request workplace flexibility to balance personal life and work demands, Smeaton et al. (2014) report that one-third of employers submitted that the costs of accommodating the requests, the operational cumulative administrative costs, outweigh the benefits therein. From Smeaton’s study, it was difficult for one-fifth of the businesses sampled to handle specific WLB policies such as maternity/paternity leaves, reduce presenteeism (the business sustainability depends on the constant availability of its small staff strength), and offer long annual leaves. According to the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skill (BIS) report, it costs businesses an average of £241.24 to accommodate a work flexibility request from an employee, and the business owners are not in any way compensated for this cost - not even by a more friendly tax (BIS, 2014). Although, according to a PwC report (2021), flexible working is likely to save direct costs for companies to the tune of US\$ 1.6 billion.

In addition, many other researchers believe that there could be more detrimental effects of unchecked work-life balance policy initiatives in a company (Hilbrecht et al., 2013; Osch and Schaveling, 2017). Complacency in the workplace hampers the efficient execution of projects as it breeds a situation where a staff shies away from a time-bound

responsibility in exchange for leave or any other WLB policy (Osch and Schaveling, 2017). Therefore workplace complacency reduces organisational productivity and slows down its growth progress (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Another critical challenge is associated with the level of communication and technological awareness and its usage. Remote working options as opposed to working from the office could come with a myriad of challenges in communication, technical difficulties, and delayed project or task deliverables (Koroma et al., 2014). Poor internet connections, power cuts, family interferences, and low rate of (delayed) communication with work colleagues (compared to working from offices) are some of the major operational challenges that can likely be encountered in the process.

Also, the dangers of part-time schemes pose a threat to the effectiveness of WLB initiatives, particularly for employers. Osch and Schaveling (2017) found that persons under a part-time work schedule risk slow career growth and are less likely to be fully involved in organisational development. They are less likely to grow in the managerial hierarchy, less likely to have promotions and pay raises, and are more likely to be misunderstood as contract workers (Osch and Schaveling, 2017).

Flexible working gradually reduces the level of bond and collaboration in the workplace and also poses a threat to the goal of teamwork (Shi and Weber, 2018). In 2013, the CEO of Yahoo, Marissa Mayer, banned its workers from remote working and reverted back to the office. Excerpts from the memo reported by Gordreau (2013) is as follows;

“To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices. Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team

meetings. Speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home. We need to be one Yahoo!, and that starts with physically being together.”

This validates the other claims of critics on the loopholes and lapses of a remote working scheme. The workplace creates interconnectivity, collaborations, bonding, brainstorming sessions, and interpersonal relationships that cannot be substituted by digitalisation.

Withal, WLB creates vague or blurred boundaries between work and private or family life. It is easier to resume work by 8/9 am and end by 5 pm in an office setting than it is in remote work (Siegert and Löwstedt, 2019). Remote workers are more likely to work longer hours than office working. Research finds that in 2001, 2006 and 2012, 39 per cent of 15,000 surveyed remote employees submitted to being obliged to work extra hours above normal working hours (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Remote working, in effect, did not bring about a work-life balance, instead, it exacerbated the work-life conflict by integrating work into the family.

From the theoretical standpoint, the spillover theory critically exposes the vagueness of boundaries of work and home (Staines, 1980). It emphasises that workers often tend to transfer work-related emotions, positive or negative, to their homes (AlHazimi and Ali, 2016). Similarly, by implication, research suggests that people often tend to convey their feelings, values, skills, attitudes, emotions, experiences and other prevailing variable personality traits from one domain to the other (Belsky, et al. 1985; Allen and Finkelstein, 2014); hence, the expressions of frustration and anxiety begin to obstruct family time. In a similar vein, the spillover theory provides a structural background to criticise certain flexibilities in the workplace, such as remoteness (Zedeck and Mosier, 1990). In the situation of remote working, work completely spills over into the personal life of an employee and vice versa. Rincy and Panchanatham’s (2014) review of the spillover

theory points out that the theory proposes unanimous cooperation of family and work as a single entity. The theory does not support an isolated treatment of family and work as separate phenomena, but rather that the work environment and the family life are bound to have a similarity of occurrences which makes them inseparable (Guest, 2002). According to Hall et al. (2003), a rigid structure could only result in frictional conflicts, especially when the effects are negative, hence the essence of adopting a flexible structure of synergising the work and family into a single entity.

Also, remote working may become an obstruction of the border theory. The border theory submits that workers often tend to carry out their operations on the borders of two domains - the work domain and the personal life domain (Clark, 2000). In a situation of remote work, the borderline between work-life and private-life becomes blurred as individuals constantly traverse both domains without restrictions (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Clark (2000) argues that the degree of permeability due to the increased flexibility engenders blending between work and non-work roles. There is a presumption that the border theory categorises border-crossers into central and periphery participants, where individuals are empowered with the ability to adjust the demarcation lines to suit their needs when deemed fit (Kinnunen et al., 2005). However, the periphery participants, in particular, find it difficult to maintain WLB because of their disengagement with the work and family domains resulting in work-related frustrations and strained family relationships (Clark, 2000).

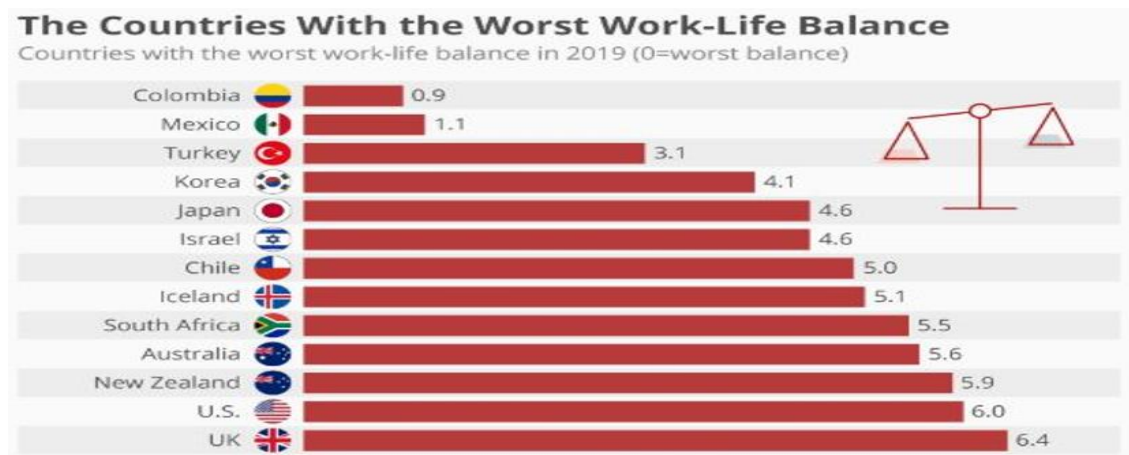
Furthermore, the resource drain theory emphasises that in a work situation, an individual can only choose to expend most of their limited resources in one domain (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Bakker et al., 2009). As Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest, work and family demands engender role pressures making both domains irreconcilable. These pressures result in time and emotional strains, which exacerbate work-life conflict and

produce adverse health and well-being outcomes (Greenhaus and ten Brummelhuis 2013; Fein and Skinner, 2015). In a flexible work scenario, the domain shifts from the workplace to the family (Tremblay and Thomsin, 2012), since childcare, adult care, home upkeep, and other family demands can disrupt the work process and inhibit career growth. Moreover, since WLB is primarily built on the level of satisfaction, degree of involvement and amount of time allocated to the work and non-work domains, an employee's limited resources (time, energy and attention) spread across both domains causes a drain and results in WLC (Talukder, 2019). Further, the compulsion of flexible workers to respond to messages from work diverts the attention from family to work and increases the completion time for attending to non-work responsibilities lowering work-life balance outcomes (Grawitch et al., 2010; Barber et al., 2019).

3.9 PERSPECTIVES OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ACROSS REGIONS

This section reviews the distinct perceptions of work-life balance in six different regions across the world. While this study focuses on Nigeria, taking into account WLB in other selected regions or countries helps to avoid isolating our understanding of WLB conditions in other contexts, as well as understanding that WLB conditions vary in different contexts. Moreover, according to the chart below (figure 6), poor work-life situations are not only region-specific but are distributed across countries driven by different socio-economic factors. This analysis covers different variables that make up the environmental and social factors that constitute the perspectives of work-life balance in the respective regions. They include the working time, working conditions (workload, presenteeism, supportive organisational culture), gender complexities, and available WLB policies and initiatives.

Figure 6: Countries with the Worst Work-Life Balance



Source: OECD (2019)

3.9.1 Work-Life Balance in Europe

The European Union's (EU) mandate for its members concerning the length of time for work constitutes a maximum of 48 hours per week which includes all overtime work for four months reference period (European Commission, 2019). Adherence to this EU policy for working hours is revealed in each European country's available number of hours. According to Eurostat (2018), Greek and the United Kingdom work the longest hours in all of the European countries, with an average of 42.3 hours per week. Bulgaria and Poland are next on the scale, having an average of 40.8 and 40.7 hours a week, respectively. At the other end of the rope, the Dutch are notably the country with the best work-life balance in all of OECD countries with an average of 30.3 hours per week - a 12 hours wide difference between the Dutch and the Greek (Smith, 2018). Research also records that employees spend 2.5 weeks every year working when they are ill, against medical recommendations to stay home, and this act costs businesses an annual average of £4,000 (Pullinger, 2019). Wong et al. (2018) findings from a cross-country meta-analysis involving selected countries in Asia and Western countries in Europe and America over a 20-year period (1998-2018) showed that the lengthened hours of work

affected the health status of workers in different magnitudes overtime. The analysis examined the work history of long working hours against five health indicators; physiological health, mental health, health behaviours, related health, and non-specified health. The results showed that, over the period of investigation, workers were more likely to suffer health impediments such as chronic heart diseases, fatigue, sleeplessness, depression, workplace accidents, among many other adverse effects.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) points out that the flexibility of work time is a vital practice carried out in most European countries as a way to improve the work-life balance of employees (Oscar and Simon, 2015). Different countries offer different levels of flexibility. To Oscar and Simon (2015), flexibility in the workplace refers to the ability to influence the length of working time (as part-time or full-time), and organisation of work time. With an average reduction in the amount of time devoted to work in Europe in the last few decades, the likes of Finland has shown high flexibility in their work orientation, then Norway and Sweden, as shown in the chart below.

In addition, the UK has experienced a more than three-fold increase in the rate of presenteeism in the past decade, having 86% of workers actively observing presenteeism in 2019, against 26% a decade ago (Pullinger, 2019). Reuter et al. (2019) analysis of the workplace presenteeism in Europe involved 20,240 employees across 33 countries in Europe. They found that while countries like France, Spain, and the United Kingdom had higher propensities of presenteeism, Turkey, Italy and Romania were at the bottom. Also, 36% of European workers, in general, worked on the days they were ill. The publication of the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) in 2020 embodied a review of literature on the wellbeing and productivity of European workers and found that there is a strong relationship between both variables (Isham et al., 2020). However,

efforts to improve productivity may become inimical to the health of employees who face the threats of increased workloads and technological replacements. Schütte et al. (2014) studied the 2010 European Working Survey to understand how working conditions affect the psychological and social well-being of European workers. The survey involved 33,443 employees, with 16,512 men and 16,931 women from 34 countries in Europe. Using multi-level logistic regression analysis, the study developed twenty-five psychosocial factors (work hours, discrimination and violence, job security, social support, work-life imbalance, and leadership quality, to mention a few) with which it examined the workers. Their findings showed that most psychosocial factors affecting employees were related to poor well-being (financial, mental, and emotional instability due to work culture and environment).

Straub's (2007) study involved a comparative analysis of 14 countries in Europe to reveal how work-life balance affects women's career advancement to senior management positions. The study involved a questionnaire analysis of responses from senior human resources managers of 854 companies across Europe. The results showed that there is a conscious effort by European companies to curb the effects of structural disadvantages specific to women in the workplace. While 74 per cent of the companies, on average, had active company policies that wards off gender-based discrimination, 58 per cent of the companies had a diverse management base - which included both genders - overseeing the gender discrimination policies. An overwhelming 95 per cent of the companies offered flexible work time to women, and 79 per cent had a remote working option available to women, as well as many other practices that encouraged WLB like paid maternity/paternity leaves with 15 per cent extra. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2020) reports that parenting is still one of the major factors limiting or slowing down women's career development. The need to carry out childcare duties is one

of the causative factors of high rates of part-time work among women in Europe. The gap between women part-time workers and their male counterparts, as revealed in studies, show that in 2018, 31 per cent of women were engaged in part-time work against 9 per cent of men.

Additionally, many countries in Europe operate an egalitarian social system where there are equal opportunities for males as well as females stemming from the efforts of Western feminism (Langner, 2018; Chung and Van der Lippe, 2018). However, females working in Europe continue to face the detrimental effects of the increasing workload and stress levels as a result of working both at work and at home, which is sometimes called the 'two shifts' (Kurowska, 2020). The multiple female responsibilities displayed within the European research results from the diverse levels of patriarchal hegemonic culture across different countries within the region (2012). Research suggests less patriarchal existence in Western Europe compared to Eastern Europe and even more pronounced in Southern Europe (Kaser, 2008; Gruber and Szołtysek, 2016).

In terms of the availability of WLB policies, the European Union recommends policies to be implemented by member countries concerning the work-life balance of employees in the private and public sectors (European Commission, 2019). These policies (paid and unpaid) include but not limited to compressed working hours, remote and virtual working, part-time work, shifts and job sharing, maternity and paternity leaves, sick leave, annual leave, sabbatical leave and carer's leave. Predominantly, these policies have been implemented to ensure that employees are protected against discrimination and that parents are not dismissed from work after (maternity/paternity) leaves. The EU also encourages gender balance in the workplace and flexibility of work arrangements and encourages organisations and employees to make adequate use of available European

funds to make better provisions for formal care services like childcare, out-of-school care, and long-term care.

3.9.2 Work-Life Balance in Asia

Long working hours are admittedly a unique feature of Asian countries whose cultural mantras lay much emphasis on hard work. One of these cultural practices in Japan makes it impolite for an employee to leave the office before the boss, and this brings about prolonged hours of unpaid work (Thiruchelvam, 2018). The Japanese work environment is notably intense in that it has a name for extreme work condition which often brings about death - *Karoshi* (Thiruchelvam, 2018). In 2016, 191 people reportedly died by *karoshi*, and the Japanese authorities note that due to intensive work time, a fifth of Japanese workers face similar risks of death. Many Japanese workers work 80 to over 100 hours per week, many of which are unpaid or uncompensated overtime work. From a sample size of 774 workers across 78 firms in China, Mishra and Smyth (2012) revealed that most of the respondents (63.9 per cent) worked between 41-45 hours weekly and 28 per cent worked more than 50 hours per week. Their findings further showed the category of individuals that work long hours. There was a significant and negative correlation between the number of hours worked and the wage rates, implying a backward bending labour supply curve. Also, educated people worked longer hours than the uneducated as the result showed a positive correlation between education and hours of work. Some of these findings resonate with the study of Wang et al. (2017), which claims that the average working hours in China is 46 hours weekly. Another study by Simović (2020) revealed the weekly working hours in some Asian countries, including Singapore (44 hours), Malaysia (48 hours), Indonesia (40 hours), Hong Kong and Thailand (48 hours).

Across Asia, discussions on work-life balance have gained weight since the last decade due to the increasing industrial activities in the region. Ratnesh et al. (2019) critically analysed the work-life balance situation in Asia, adopting a cross-country analysis of selected Asian countries - Malaysia, Singapore, India, Pakistan, and China. The study looked to understand the factors that determine WLB across countries, the current state of WLB, and measures to improve the conditions. Through a comprehensive review of literature, they found that in India, Pakistan and China, factors like work overloads, job autonomy, work exhaustion, and perceived fairness towards organisational reward system made up parts of the factors (Chawla and Sondhi, 2011). In Malaysia and Singapore, it varied slightly to include social support, family demands, and interferences (Chang, 2013).

Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui (2020) analysed workplace flexibility and WLB in Pakistani public sector university employees. Using a random sampling method to distribute questionnaires across 200 public university employees, it analysed their flexible work arrangements like flexi-time, contractual working, work shifts, and telecommuting (Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui, 2020). Their findings showed a strong positive correlation between the flexibility of working conditions and the WLB of employees. In essence, the more people are able to access flexibility in their workplace, the better they are at balancing their personal life. Lu, Cooper, and Lin (2013) carried out an extensive cross-examination of British and Chinese workers to understand their perception of the workplace in relation to presenteeism. Their findings agreed with most studies by showing that Chinese workers, more than their British counterparts, were more likely to be at work when sick. With a vast majority of low-income earners and increasing consumer needs, Asian workers resort to double jobs or often long hours of being present at work to the detriment of their health status (Wee et al., 2019).

In the Asian workforce, working women contribute about 36 per cent to the GDP (Madgavkar, 2019). Although this aligns with the global average, there could be more to it. In a variation, women in China contribute about 41 per cent to the Chinese GDP, and in India, 20 per cent (Madgavkar, 2019). Mohd Mahudin and Noor (2015) conducted a study to evaluate the perceptions of work-life balance for women in Malaysia. The study identifies the rate of participation of women in the country's labour force as steady between 44 per cent and 48 per cent for the past thirty years. At distinct periods of time that involves childbearing and nurturing (usually for women in their early or late thirties), it is found that participation becomes even worse (World Bank, 2012). The study provides that some women do not return to the labour force after marriage or childbirth. The main cause of this withdrawal is traced to inherent cultural practices (patriarchy) that relegate the (married) women to home keeping, childcare, and other family responsibilities while their husbands are solely entrusted with the responsibility of providing for the family (World Bank, 2012).

Consequently, like most less egalitarian countries or regions, the Asian region is predominantly representative of the men as dominant over the women, and in many workplaces, they do not have policies that accommodate the weakest moments in women's career journey (Rashid and Ratten, 2020). They are irresponsive and stale towards childcare policies for nursing mothers and carers, no policies for elder care, flexible work arrangements were scarce, and many workplace policies were inconvenient to mothers after childbirth and thus discouraged attempts to rejoin the workforce. For women who manage to cope, these challenges pose a barrier to career upscaling into managerial roles and executive positions (McKinsey and Company, 2012).

Many countries and organisations are beginning to bend to the empirical findings that affirm the effect of work-life balance on employee and organisational productivity levels.

In most Asian countries, the practices and initiatives of work-life balance do not vary from the Indonesian practice (Rashid and Ratten, 2020). In Indonesia, notable work-life balance practices, as clearly noted by Afrianty (2013) include a bereavement leave of 1-2 days to help an employee mourn over the loss of a direct family member; a paid maternity leave to nursing mothers for up to three months after birth; a paternity leave which was newly introduced for fathers whose wives just put to bed; a paid sabbatical leave to encourage employee personal and professional development; an adjusted time allowance for carers - childcare and eldercare; leaves for religious rituals. Only a handful of Asian countries appear to have government guidelines for work-life balance, like Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and a few others. Researchers like Xiao (2012) carried out an extensive study on the Chinese environment and found that while there is no clear-cut policy regulating work-life balance in China, companies who entertain some levels of balance are mainly those with fewer competitions. On the other hand, government organisations were the worst disruptors of work-life balance.

3.9.3 Work-Life Balance in America (North and South America)

The length of working time in North and South American countries are almost similar with slight variations. In the United States and Canada, employees are allowed 40 hours a week, whereas Latin Americans are notable for long working hours (Valente and Berry, 2015). According to Spector et al. (2004), their report reveals that Americans were spending 49.3 hours at work, and its Southern neighbours had 50.4 hours per week. Due to much time spent at work, most South Americans spend less time with their family and religion for a region that invests so much time in religion (Valente and Berry, 2015). Additionally, research reports that the average working hours in the United States is 45 hours per week (McDaniel, 2011; Bick et al., 2016). Johnson and Lipscomb (2006) investigated the interrelatedness of long working hours with employee health status in the

United States and found that most employees involved in long hours of work were victims of fatigue, stress, and other extreme health defects such as heart diseases, stroke, psychological instability, and other related illnesses.

In North America, Julien et al. (2017) researched the work-life balance condition of indigenous Canadian citizens from 6 provinces in Canada. The analysis involved a structured interview with 56 indigenous workers (33 females and 23 males) from the selected provinces. The study found that most of the respondents reported experiencing frustration at work from the conflict between family roles and work roles. Although the Canadian authorities mandate maximum working hours to be 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week (Government of Canada, 2019), most of the WLB challenges experienced are attached to other working conditions. Americans do not have the best working conditions and WLB. Furthermore, research conducted in the United States revealed the perception of American employees regarding their working conditions (McCarthy, 2019). The research shows that the participants were satisfied with the collegial support they received and the physical safety at work. However, the participants reported a high level of job insecurity despite the satisfactory level of job flexibility. The long working hours resulted into work-related stress for a majority of the study participants (McCarthy, 2019). In Brazil, the total cost of employee presenteeism, absenteeism, and early retirement due to ill health is estimated to rise to an equivalent of 8.7 per cent of its GDP by 2030, up from 7.6 per cent in 2015 (Rasmussen et al., 2015). Furthermore, the cost equivalent in Mexico is 5.7 per cent of its GDP in 2015, and is projected to reach 6.5 per cent by 2030. In Colombia, it costs an equivalent of 7.3 per cent of GDP in 2013, with a projection of 8.1 per cent by 2030. The case of the United States is expected to remain stable at its prevalent 8.4 per cent (Rasmussen et al., 2015).

In addition, Merino-Salazar et al. (2017) carried out a cross-country analysis in Latin America to identify how the working conditions of workers affect their health. The study included five South American countries, namely Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Central America, and Uruguay involving 15,241 non-agricultural employees aged between 18-64 years. Their findings showed that, in all countries, men worked longer hours per week (58 per cent) than women (42 per cent). While less than 10 per cent of workers in all countries reported workplace injuries, in Chile and Central America, women reported having poor health status from work-related activities than men had. This is an indication that, although men worked longer hours, women experienced more workplace-related stress. Similarly, Novta and Wong (2017) report that women labour force participation in Latin America and the Caribbean region is only 50 per cent compared to 80 per cent of men in the workforce. Hari's (2016) evaluation of the work-life balance in Canada's ICT sector found evidence of bias practices against women's work-life balance. According to Hari (2016), the root of the bias emanates from the skewed definition of an "ideal worker", which assumes that to be a male with a female partner. The high demands on the ICT sector do not regard the gender of the workers, as all hands are expectedly on deck. However, the policies do not accommodate women's needs, the larger responsibility on their shoulders to provide care (childcare and eldercare), finance, and personal life balance is mostly eroded in the policy-making for work-life balance in the ICT sector. Concerning job flexibility, Baeza et al. (2018) found that Mexicans were happier when their jobs have flexi-time and flexible arrangements. The study showed a strong positive correlation between workplace flexibility and job satisfaction, which in turn leads to low turnover and a high rate of employee turnover, especially among the millennial workforce. More so, the rising female participation in paid employment since the second half of the 20th century has increased the level of female independence both

at home and in the workplace in Latin America (Chant, 2002; Burbano, 2016). Although male dominance prevails but is low within the Northern and Southern American hemisphere, relative to other less egalitarian communities like Asia and Africa (Ruiz, 2016), females in these societies remain subjected to low pay and limited career progression (Ruggles, 2015).

Policies and initiatives of work-life balance prevalent in these regions are seemingly alike with minor differences. According to Baeza et al. (2018), most employees will prefer to take time off to attend to other needs of the family and religion in South America, however, the seemingly “rat race” of the pursuit of more money makes workers pay little attention to work-life balance. Inherent policies carried out by large organisations in both regions, according to Valente and Berry (2015), include flexible time arrangement which allowed employees to adjust their resumption and closing time so they can meet other care needs like childcare and eldercare; compressed hours which helped employees work 2-4 extra hours for 3-4 days in a week, while saving up extra days in the week to attend to other personal and family needs; maternity and paternity leaves; a friendly work environment for breastfeeding; annual leaves; part-time work and shared work both of which divides the burden of a task between two or more people; and of course, a transparent organisational operation that assured employees of fair treatment and meritocracy.

3.9.4 Work-Life Balance in Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) models the trends in working hours in Australia in the past 32 years. The ABS uses three parameters to indicate worked hours: actual hours worked, usual hours worked, and aggregate monthly hours worked (ABS, 2010). The Bureau finds that, based on the actual hours of work, there has been an average

decline over the past three decades of its analysis. From about 35.5 hours per week in 1978 to approximately 33 hours in 2010. According to legislative recommendations, working hours in Australia is a maximum of 7.6 hours per day and 38 hours per week (Fairwork, 2020). Miranti and Li's (2019) investigation on the working hours in Australia found that poor mental health is associated with long working hours. Focusing on mature age workers (45 and above), the study also found a strong positive correlation between the length of hours worked and the job strains and mental health of older workers.

Similarly, Browne's (2019) investigation into the excessive hours of work in Australia and the unpaid overtime work reveals many insights into the situation in the country. The study involved 1,464 respondents, out of which 60 per cent were actively engaged in paid labour. The analysis, in addition, noted that overtime often interpreted to early resumptions and late closure, continued work at home, working during the weekends, and exchanging breaks and lunchtime for work were the experiences in some Australian organisations. In all types of employment (full time and part-time), it was found that workers, on average, worked extra 4.6 hours every week, which are mostly unpaid. These hours of unpaid work totalled an annual average of 240 hours which translates to a cumulative at least 6 weeks of unpaid jobs using the current national work hour benchmark of 38 hours per week. The analogy is worse on full-time workers who spend 5.2 hours weekly on unpaid jobs, against part-time employees who spend 3.6 hours, and casual workers at 2.6. This "time theft" amounts to a total of \$81.5 billion and directly weakens the income of workers, reducing consumption rate and makes work-life balance more severe.

Milner et al. (2017) also found that individuals in the medical profession were more likely to experience work-life conflicts due to their working conditions, which poses adverse effects on their health. High job demands, psychological distress, insomnia, effort-reward

imbalance, and other factors are major players in the medical industry which challenge WLB (Eloivano et al., 2013). The Australian Education Union (AEU) found that about 92 per cent of teachers struggle with time constraints which are related to time spent in preparation for class lessons, marking test/exam results, reporting, and other administrative tasks.

Also, the ABS (2010) study found that about 13 per cent of the 3,591 teachers surveyed worked longer hours beyond usual in excess of 56 hours per week. Furthermore, the Australian Human Resource Institute nullifies any reason managers may give to presenteeism by clearly stating that “employees attending work while unwell is not a sign of dedication – it’s more likely they feel pressured to be there” (Martin, 2018). Experts believe that the cost of presenteeism in the workplace supersedes that of absenteeism due to loss of productivity and motivation. In Australia, the 2016 research of the Pathology Awareness Australia (PAA) found that the financial cost of presenteeism at work costs the economy in excess of \$34 billion annually (Martin, 2018). Some of the many ways in which presenteeism obstruct organisational operations include high risk of mass infection of the workforce for an infective type of illness carried by any employee who came to work regardless, higher chances of workplace accidents from weakness induced by sickness (especially in the engineering field), and low-quality service to customers due to reduced tenacity of the employee.

ABS (2010) showed that from 1978 until 2010, the proportion of men engaged in part-time work increased from 5 per cent to 17 per cent, whereas women, on the contrary, rose from 33 per cent to 46 per cent for the same time period. Reviews from the Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) revealed that in an assessment of gender participation, women recorded worse work-life balance than their male counterparts in both full-time and part-time work (Skinner and Pocock, 2014). It also found that the most outstanding

gender difference in work-life imbalance was the degree of time pressure. Women, in general, were found to be more likely to experience work-induced pressure irrespective of working hours. Burgess et al. (2007), in their investigation, considered the work-life balance in Australia and the availability of equal opportunities for women. Their findings showed that a majority of the women in the survey had access to a degree of work flexibility in the number of hours worked and the arrangement of the work-time. More flexibility was also available for most Australian women to carry out basic and necessary home demands like school runs, maternity leaves, part-time work, and other related personal activities (Burgess et al., 2007). In addition, managers surveyed under the research were found to be strict adherents of the federal legislations covering the workplace, in its non-discriminatory context and inclusiveness.

On the structural disposition of gender participation, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020) exerts that women make up 47.4 per cent of all employed persons, out of which 25.8 per cent are full-time employees, and 21.6 per cent are part-time. More so, a comprehensive report by Evans et al. (2018) revealed that the patriarchal culture evidenced by the high level of inequality was existent in Australia. The report claims that despite the recent efforts of the Australian government to push towards a more egalitarian society, the contradictory value systems (traditional, moderate and progressive views) have consistently impeded such actions. Also, the existence of sexism (judgement, discrimination and differential treatment) both at work and outside of the work environment remains a dominant factor that hampers the successful implementation of the gender equality programmes advocated by several of the Australian feminist movements (Evans et al., 2018).

Among the common WLB policies and initiatives available in Australia are flexible work hours, job-share, part-time working, remote working, compressed hours, time off lieu,

term-time working, and career breaks are the most common (Wilkinson, 2008). These public policies are implemented to oversee the stability of employee's mental/psychological and physical health in Australia. The government encourages employers to make provisions for childcare support for its workers who either have to care for a child or provide eldercare (Pignatelli, 2020).

3.9.5 Work-Life Balance in Africa (Excluding Nigeria)

Studies have shown that South Africans are the most work-centric nation in Africa and are three times more likely to work 60 hours a week than Americans (Chutel and Kopf, 2018). Among the OECD countries, South Africans are among the bottom ten countries in the number of hours worked, with longer hours than Japanese and Chinese workers (OECD, 2018). Although on average, South African employees work 43.3 hours per week, studies found that twelve per cent of its workforce worked 60 hours per week, against the state rules of a maximum of 45 hours and 10 hours maximum overtime (Chutel and Kopf, 2018). South Africans work some of the longest hours in the world at an annual average of 2,209 hours. In Ethiopia, Adane et al. (2013) investigated the effect of long working hours on the Ethiopian construction sector. The findings revealed that with the rate of annual workplace injury at 38 per cent yearly, workers who worked longer than 8 hours a day were at higher risks of a workplace injury than those who worked less.

Furthermore, Opuko and Munjuri (2017) related the situation of work-life balance in Kenya to its transport and logistics industry. It aimed at evaluating the interrelatedness of flexible work-life practices and work performance. The study findings showed a strong positive correlation between the two variables - work flexibility and employee outputs. Flexible practices like mobile working, teleworking, job sharing, and career breaks were inimical in determining employee's mental stability. Likewise, according to Ako (2018),

work-life imbalance in private sector organisations in Cameroon poses a threat to the employees across several industries to cope with such situations, which has led to a continuous rise in the lack of workplace engagements, high rates of absenteeism, growing turnover rates, reduced workplace productivity, and very low retention levels. Neema's (2014) study in Tanzania was designed to understand the underlying factors that determine the work-life balance of Tanzanian miners. The findings revealed that intrinsic organisational policies are employee-centric rather than generic. It is tailored down to each employee's personal needs, allowing them to integrate flexible aspects of their personal lives during work hours. In Zambia, absenteeism has grown to be a thorn in the flesh of government agencies. Lishomwa (2019) investigated this situation for the Zambian government delivery agencies and found that absenteeism in the agencies is a product of absent work-life balance policies, which made employees work under intense pressure. As a result, employees suffered from alcoholism as a "coping strategy" under poor working conditions and a lack of a supportive transport system.

Additionally, in Kenya, studies revealed the prevalence of an accommodating work environment that not only allows mothers to get back to work after birth, but allows them the opportunity to breastfeed their children in the workplace (Lakati et al., 2002). The study found the prevalence rate of breastfeeding policies in the workplace at 94.1 per cent, showing an unwavering confident and significant assurance of job security for women in Kenya. In the Ethiopian construction industry, Adane et al. (2013) found that fewer women (32 per cent) than men (68 per cent) reported workplace injuries per annum, whereas most female health workers had a more rigid work schedule for which they struggled to balance their work-life and their family life (Teshome et al., 2019). In Ghana, Asiedu-Appiah et al. (2014) found that while childbearing and child care slowed down the career pursuit and progress for most female lecturers, there is little or no policy

incentive by university authorities to better the lives of women and make the workplace more favourable. In addition, family demands and prevailing socio-cultural expectations of an “ideal” (working) woman inhibited career growth for most women. In the mining industry, studies revealed that all the women complained of the role of their jobs in complicating their personal life relationships with their spouses, families, friends, and personal time (Owusu-Poku, 2014).

More so, the African community is predominantly built on a much less egalitarian social system, where gender differences and inequality emerge as a result of the patriarchal hegemonic peculiarities within the continent (Bouilly et al., 2016; Madiba and Nomsa Ngwenya, 2017; Adisa et al., 2019). Many African countries practice a social system that encourages patriarchy across several social institutions, enabling the male gender domination over the female gender and creating a gender dichotomy that regards the men as ‘breadwinners’ and the women as ‘homemakers’ (Mudau and Obadire, 2017). As Ademiluka (2018) suggests, the patriarchal system generates challenges for most African women to hold important positions across the economic, social and political affairs within the continent.

Work-life balance policies in the North, South, East, and West African countries are drawn and modified versions of the ILO conventions that allowed for adjustments in organisational and governmental policies to improve mental sanity, personal well-being, and improved life an employee (ILO, 2011). To Darko-Asumadu et al. (2018), bank workers in Ghana perceive the application of work-life balance policies to be suboptimal. Pointing to the high levels of incoherence in its paternity and maternity leaves, study leaves, part-time working, and inflexible working conditions, which includes working on weekends and breaks, employees perception of the work-life balance policies for the banking sector are rather gloomy. Some of the notable work-life balance policies drawn

from the ILO (2011) and practiced in large corporations across Africa include flexible time, especially for parents with children (between 0-14 years), paid breastfeeding breaks as evident in Kenya, maternity leaves (paternity leaves are still not in practice in many areas), annual leaves, part-time working and shift working. However, despite the existence of work-life balance policies in most African corporations, there is relatively low usage of the available work-life balance alternatives. According to Asiedu-Appiah and Zoogah (2019), low usage of these policies stem from three likelihoods. The first results from the evidence that most employees are either unaware of the policies or unwilling to use them. Second, organisations pay little attention and lay negligible emphasis on the usage of WLB policies for obvious reasons – profit. Third, the employees feel insecure about asking for them, and fear that it may send the wrong signal to employees and thus endanger their career growth in the organisation.

3.9.6 Work-Life Balance in Nigeria

Long working hours in Nigeria is as applicable as in every other part of the world. The medical profession is one of the most challenged in the context of adopting work-life balance policies. For instance, Adisa et al. (2015) investigated the Nigerian community to understand the perspective of working conditions in the health industry and the role of organisational work culture in attaining work-life balance. They surveyed 60 medical professionals using semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that up to 99 per cent of all respondents complained of inconsiderate long working hours experienced in their respective workplaces. Participants reported that they worked a minimum of 12 hours every day. The findings also revealed that all respondents worked a minimum of 72 hours every week, which is about 35 hours more than most other professions. Some doctors reported working as much as 94 hours per week, which is about twice as much as every other profession but not with as much remuneration.

Furthermore, Adisa and Abdulkareem's (2017) analogy of the health sectors in Nigeria found that there is an imminent shortage of personnel among medical doctors. Their study revealed that the available medical doctors experienced spending long hours at work which obstructed other personal life responsibilities like their social lives, religious participation, family time, and almost always discouraged further academic or professional pursuits. The Nigerian banking industry is yet another industry dreaded for its enormously long working hours (averagely 45 hours per week), employee burnout, and high turnover rates (Ukpata et al., 2018). Further, Adekoya et al. (2019) also investigated the WLB in the Nigerian army and found that the working time ranged from 75 to 90 hours per week.

Similarly, reports of poor managerial support, a special kind of presenteeism peculiar to the medical profession to care for patients, and poor shift patterns all made up the list of factors contributing to poor work-life balance (Adisa et al., 2015). Similarly, Oluyemi et al. (2019) investigated the prevalence of presenteeism in the Nigerian banking sector. They surveyed a total of 248 bank employees from eight different commercial banks and found that 43.5 per cent of all respondents were present at work when they were ill. The three dominant reasons for presenteeism in the banking industry included the voluminous workload (as a result, they could not afford to be absent), employee's passion for their job, and excessive pressure from superiors and authorities in the workplace. Correspondingly, Ugwu et al. (2017) found a similar result in the banking sector from surveying 121 bank employees. They found that workloads and job stress interfered with the level of satisfaction derived from working in the bank and obstructed individual communication and flow with family. Ofili et al. (2018) found that the rate of presenteeism among nurses in the teaching hospitals were on a continuous rise. Within 12 months, 76.3 per cent (242) of the total of 317 surveyed nurses had reported working

sick at least twice, out of which 19.8 per cent had reported working seven times amidst sickness, and 13.2 per cent reported three times. Ismaila (2017) found that the rate of presenteeism in an organisation was responsible for impeding factors of organisational growth, including low productivity, loss of motivation, increased work-related accidents, and others.

Gender perspectives were explored in Nigeria by Adisa et al. (2019). Their study focused on understanding the cultural influence of gender roles on the work-life balance of women, where patriarchy was a major predictor of gender inequality. Like in many other African countries, patriarchy in Nigeria persists as one of the factors militating against the WLB of the women workforce. Their findings revealed that the prevailing strong cultural heritage in the country, which wields so much power to the men, more often than not, subjugated women and reduced their personal life satisfaction. For some reason, women were not fully satisfied with their work environment because of their spouse's views of their careers. Women experienced deferment from long training and development programs at work because of their role as caregivers, which in some cases relates to their spouse's definition of career success. This family factor reflected in their low productivity, low commitment, and in some cases, high turnover. Adisa et al. (2019) found that for many women, their imbalance is a family-work conflict (family interfering with work) rather than a work-life/work-family conflict. Likewise, the study of Ajayi et al. (2015) agrees with these findings. In evaluating the banking sector, they found that in the face of heightened pressure from work which may demand disparity between work and family, women were more likely to stake their jobs over their families than their male counterparts.

In another research, Adisa et al. (2014) focused on female medical personnel across Nigeria's six geo-political zones to unravel the unique challenges faced by women in

carrying out their professional operations. Involving 131 respondents in both private and public hospitals, the study identified a collection of family and workplace factors that impede work-life balance among employees. The findings showed that certain international practices in the medical profession, which help workers attain levels of WLB, were less observed in Nigeria. Practices such as part-time work, parental leave, casual leave, on-site child care, emergency childcare, backup adult and elder care, school holiday cover, on-site work-life balance expert, nanny share, reduced working hours, compressed working hours, annualised hours, teleworking, career breaks, term-time working, flexitime scheme, working from home, cultural/ religious leave, and staggered working hours, are all reported dormant in the medical profession and other professions like the banking industry (Oluyemi et al., 2019). However, with the recent strides of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work culture of every institution in every industry have received new lights on how to work. For most companies that are still in good standing (not folded up due to the crisis), there has been an exponential increase in their remote working policies (KPMG, 2020). Even the medical sector has seen more telemedicine and online consultations than it ever has, the banking sector more than ever is speeding towards higher internet banking services, while other jobs like construction and mining shuffle between time flexibility (KPMG, 2020).

Table 1: Summary of the Cross-Regional Comparison of Work-Life Balance

Regions	Average Working Time per Week	Working Condition	Gender Complexities	WLB Policies
Europe	48 hours	Presenteeism: low Work overload: high Supportive organisational culture: moderate	Female workforce participation: high Gender equality: high Patriarchy: low	Annual leave Maternity/paternity leave Compressed work hours Flexitime schedule

				Remote work/telework
Asia	45 hours	Presenteeism: high Work overload: high Supportive organisational culture: moderate	Female workforce participation: low Gender equality: low Patriarchy: high	Annual leave Maternity/paternity leave Compressed work hours Flexitime schedule
America (N&S)	45 hours	Presenteeism: low Work overload: high Supportive organisational culture: moderate	Female workforce participation: high Gender equality: moderate Patriarchy: moderate	Annual leave Maternity/paternity leave Compressed work hours Flexitime schedule Remote work/telework
Australia	38 hours	Presenteeism: low Work overload: moderate Supportive organisational culture: moderate	Female workforce participation: high Gender equality: moderate Patriarchy: moderate	Annual leave Maternity/paternity leave Compressed work hours Flexitime schedule Remote work/telework
Africa	45 hours	Presenteeism: moderate Work overload: high Supportive organisational culture: low	Female workforce participation: low Gender equality: low Patriarchy: high	Annual leave Maternity/paternity leave Compressed work hours Flexitime schedule
Nigeria	48 hours	Presenteeism: high Work overload: high Supportive organisational culture: low	Female workforce participation: low Gender equality: low Patriarchy: high	Annual leave Maternity/paternity leave Compressed work hours Flexitime schedule

Source: Researcher's Findings

Following the review of the extant literature, Table 1 above reflects the reality of WLB.

The information presented in the table emerges from an integration of the empirical literature of WLB across different regions to show the similarities and differences under each selected criteria.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a critical review of the concept of work-life balance. It revealed the importance of flexible working as a driver of work-life balance and its benefits and consequences to both employees and employers. It also shows that the term work-life balance has evolved in its definition and approach to facilitate employee wellbeing by providing them with family responsive policies to cater for their work-related and non-work-related roles. Having reviewed extant literature in six regions (or continents), the literature also revealed that the majority of studies on work-life balance had been centred in the western region. At the same time, there is a vast scarcity of research that explores the non-western and particularly the sub-Sahara contexts. Nonetheless, the experience of work-life balance was deemed to be peculiar across diverse regions. Interestingly, in terms of gender complexities in the work-life balance discourse, it can be concluded that WLB is much better for both males and females in egalitarian than less egalitarian countries. More specifically, in regions with high patriarchal proclivities (e.g., Asia and Africa) where men dominate women and the society, the women tend to have less WLB as they combine both paid employment and unpaid work by shouldering a huge chunk of domestic work (e.g., caregiving and house chores). Consequently, women more than men tend to suffer WLC and find it challenging to cope with the enormous work, which often results in giving up work to concentrate on their non-work roles, especially those that are married and with children.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW: SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN HRM

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Following the review of the WLB literature, this chapter explores the concepts of social sustainability and green HRM, especially since the research questions the meanings of social sustainability and green HRM, as well as the extent to which green HRM and social sustainability inhibit or promote work-life balance. At first, it reviews extant literature to understand social sustainability as a concept within various approaches. To do this, five approaches to understanding social sustainability were examined, including social sustainability as a distinct objective; social sustainability as a constraint upon economic and environmental imperatives; social sustainability as a pre-condition for environmental and economic sustainability; social sustainability as the causal mechanism of economic and environmental change; and social sustainability as place-centered and process-oriented sustainability. These approaches were basically to show social sustainability either as a stand-alone concept or an integrated concept within the sustainability framework. Furthermore, this chapter explored the relationship between social sustainability and corporate social responsibility, which serves as an umbrella under which many organisations attempt to practice and showcase their social sustainability efforts. After that, it explores the study of social sustainability within the global context and the study context [Nigeria].

Subsequently, the chapter explores the concept of green human resource management. It further reviews extant literature aimed at understanding the importance of greening HRM practices to promote environmentally-friendly business activities that are beneficial to the employers, employees, other stakeholders and the community at large. To do this, the

chapter explores the key dimensions of GHRM, including green job design and analysis, green HR planning, green hiring/recruitment, green training and development, green employee relations and green performance management. Furthermore, it investigates the practices of green HRM within the global context and Nigeria. Lastly, the chapter examines the relationship/link between the three various concepts: work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM.

4.1 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

4.1.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of ‘sustainability’ became more pronounced in the early 1960s, given the rising concern of environmental degradation and resource depletion due to the deficiency in resource management (McKenzie, 2004). Since becoming a political goal and agenda based on its increasing importance, sustainability has become a common goal for many nations and across a variety of business and societal activities (Mazur, 2015). Hence, the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ have been used interchangeably to illustrate the need for a long-term strategy that helps to ensure continuity in the developmental efforts aimed at maintaining the vital ecological processes and life support systems, particularly for humans (McKenzie, 2004). More so, until recently, debates and literature on sustainability have focused dramatically on environmental and economic aspects, while the social aspect has been intermittently ignored or under-researched (Atkinson et al., 2014; Boström, 2012).

Social sustainability became more prominent after the introduction of the ‘social pillar’ to the other pillars of sustainability (that is, economic and environmental/ecological pillars) during the 1987 Brundtland Commission report (Kidd, 1992; Robinson, 2004). Since then, contemporary debates and applications of sustainability have attempted to

create a balance across the economic, environmental and social outlooks or predominantly known as the ‘three-legged stool’, ‘triple bottom line’ or the ‘3 P’s – prosperity, planet and people’ (Boström, 2012; Boyer et al., 2016; McKenzie, 2004). However, the social pillar has become elusive given its diverseness and reputation for being context-specific, hence making it difficult sometimes to generalise its outcomes (Murphy, 2012; Demsey et al., 2009; Vallance et al., 2011). Furthermore, the definitions of sustainability offered in the Brundtland report have been criticised over time for its vagueness, which is perceived to allow organisations to declare their business activities as supportive of sustainable development, whereas they have become the perpetrators of unsustainability (Jacobs, 1999). This also comes under the disguise of the ‘brown agenda’, which is alluded to transform the use of social capital into facilitating economic development and alleviating environmental degradation (Boschmann and Kwan, 2008; Lenzen, 2007).

Nevertheless, extant literature has advocated the need to link all three tiers of sustainability (environmental, economic and social) and make them interdependent of themselves (Mazur, 2015; McKenzie, 2004). Many contemporary studies present these three spheres as equally influencing the activities in societies and businesses and provide some overlapping structures or models (see figure 7) through which they can be understood and implemented (Robinson, 2004; Saha and Paterson, 2008). Hence, the argument builds on the inclusivity of the social component, where the society is deemed to be as crucial in the achievement of sustainable development, as well as, conforming to the economic and environmental structures (Amekudzi et al., 2015). Similarly, the ‘triple-bottom-line’ approach tends to circumvent the idea that sustainability should fulfil three basic needs, including economic prosperity, environmental quality and social justice (Elkington, 1999). Despite the several advocacies for equal distribution in the tripartite

sustainability agenda, the social domain of sustainability remains downplayed and is considered more a subset of the environmental domain (Boyer et al., 2015). Social sustainability persists to be much more difficult to quantify relative to economic growth and environmental impact; this remains the primary reason for its neglect overtime (Amekudzi et al., 2015).

Figure 7: The Overlapping Three Pillars of Sustainability



Source: Hafizyar and Dheyaaldin (2019)

4.1.2 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

There has been no precise definition of the term social sustainability, given that scholars, businesses, public authorities and policymakers tend to define it within a specific context as deemed fit at a particular time. More so, within the academic literature, extant research

gives different meanings to the concept of social sustainability. According to McKenzie (2004, p. 12), social sustainability is “a life-enhancing condition with communities and a process within communities that can achieve that condition.” These conditions, as reflected in McKenzie’s research, centred on how individuals and communities interact in order to meet certain conditions, such as providing equal access to basic infrastructure, breeding a cultural relations system that supports cultural integration, increased and equal participation in political activities, and providing a sense of community responsibility and social welfarism.

Social sustainability is construed to be a process or framework geared towards enhancing the well-being of an organisation’s own members alongside creating support networks for future generations to preserve a healthy community (Magee et al., 2012). According to Woodcraft (2012), social sustainability is implied to constitute all domains of sustainability which includes economic, political, ecological, and cultural sustainability; these domains are adjudged to have elements of society or social inclination. Social sustainability, therefore, comprises concerns related to social fairness, livability, health equity, cultural competence, social justice and responsibility, social capital and support, societal development, human/labour rights, and environmental equity (Magee et al., 2012). In another sense, social sustainability deals with the “bearability, sustainability, equitability, and viability of the social, economic and environmental spheres of human life” (Littig and Griessler, 2005). According to Murphy (2012), a consensus of the concept of social sustainability themes covers issues relating to well-being, human capital and social capital.

Furthermore, studies have also expressed social sustainability as a developmental phase that is compatible with symmetrical evolution of civil society, which facilitates a conducive environment that cohabits the socially and culturally diverse group and fosters

social integration vis-à-vis improving the quality of life of the population (Polèse and Stren, 2000; Dempsey et al., 2009; Boyer et al., 2016). In addition, until recently, social sustainability remained the role of the public sector, specifically local authorities; whereas, businesses, employees and community residents have been encouraged to take responsibility for the social issues in the society (Weingaertner and Moberg, 2014). More so, Brewster (2004) avers that the concept of social sustainability takes a detour from competitive capitalism by critiquing its assumptions which value economic prosperity irrespective of the adverse risk it poses to the well-being of employees and quality of work. Similarly, Mushfiquir et al. (2018) advocate for a radical shift from economic gain and short-term benefits towards ensuring that long-term benefits are pursued in the best interest of employees' personal and family lives, organisation efficiency and community well-being.

Furthermore, Woodcraft (2012) discusses four dimensions of the social sustainability assessment framework, including amenities and infrastructure, voice and influence, social and cultural life, and neighbourhood change. His studies reveal the importance of the provision of essential services to individuals that promote welfare as the foundation of a thriving community. This resonates with the study of Gálvez et al. (2020), which avers that basic infrastructure is critical to the survival of humans from which they can exploit to meet other needs and wants, particularly those that are complex as guaranteeing social and economic equality. In addition, Woodcraft highlighted the importance of voice and influence regarding how individuals perceive their ability to influence the local area and their willingness to act to improve the local area. His study found that in most cases, people have the potential to influence their local areas, but the willingness to act is often negative. Besides, the social and cultural life dimension of the framework illustrates the way people perceive their local community, particularly in terms of their sense of

belonging and local identity. It takes into consideration the development of communal relationships among residents in the neighbourhood and how it promotes social networking, provides community facilities, and guarantees safety and quality of life. Lastly, the neighbourhood change dimension accounts for the new developments in the local area and how such changes the demographic profile of the neighbourhood leading to either prosperity or deprivation.

Table 2: Components of Social Sustainability

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Accessibility (e.g. access to employment, open spaces, local services, resources) . Social capital and networks . Health and well-being . Social cohesion and inclusion (between and among different groups) . Safety and security (real and perceived) . Fair distribution of income, employment . Local democracy, participation and empowerment (community consultation) . Cultural heritage (e.g. local heritage and listed buildings) . Education and training . Equal opportunities and equity . Housing and community stability . Connectivity and movement (e.g. pedestrian friendly, good transport links) . Social justice (inter-generational and intra-generational) . Sense of place and belonging . Mixed use and tenure . Attractive public realm . Local environmental quality and amenity

Source: Weingaertner and Moberg (2014)

4.1.3 APPROACHES TO SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

As a result of subjecting the social pillar within the broader framework of sustainability, scholars have also attempted to discuss the social dimension in diverse approaches. According to Boyer et al. (2016), drawing literature from business management, urban planning, anthropology and geography, they discuss five approaches to social

sustainability. The approaches were deemed to arrive at ensuring an “integrated, place-based and process-oriented approach to sustainability” (p. 2).

4.1.3.1 Social Sustainability as a Distinct Objective

Recently, extant research on sustainability pursues the social pillar as a stand-alone objective that is independent of the economic and environmental pillars of sustainability (Littig and Griessler, 2005; Weingaertner and Moberg, 2014; Boyer et al., 2016). As an independent pillar, the concentration has tilted towards the measures of social sustainability, also known as the social sustainability index or indicators (Littig and Griessler, 2005). For instance, in the study of Bramley and Power (2009), undesirable neighbourhood indicators such as dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood, occurrence of anti-social activities in the neighbourhood and ease of access to neighbourhood facilities formed the measures of social sustainability. Hence, their studies equate social sustainability with social issues. In addition, social sustainability as an independent objective gives an account of the autonomous meaning of each of the three sustainability pillars (Boyer et al., 2016). Researchers evince that the longer social sustainability is regarded as a proponent of only economic growth and environmental cause, the more disintegrated the social systems will become (Orr, 2011; Cho, 2015). Therefore, researchers have called for businesses to also invest in the well-being of their employees alongside making charitable contributions to their local communities (Saha and Paterson, 2008; Weingaertner and Moberg, 2014).

More so, extant literature in the attempt to distinguish social sustainability from the two other sustainability domains has often concentrated less on defining the concept and more on the key themes or factors in the operationalisation of the concept (Horner et al., 2009). For instance, Chiu (2003) suggests that social sustainability emanates from a variety of

activities within social relations, customs, values and structure within specific social limits and development constraints. Social sustainability is a necessity for the social and physiological survival of humans and society at large (Horner et al., 2009). Bramley et al. (2006) consider the autonomous influence of social sustainability to produce identity, sense of place and social networking benefits as contemporary and softer concepts of the social sustainability discourse as opposed to the traditional and hard concepts. Horner et al. (2009) present the key themes of social sustainability, as shown in the table below:

Table 3: Traditional and Emerging Key Themes of Social Sustainability

Traditional	Emerging
Basic needs, including housing and environmental health	Demographic change (aging, migration and mobility)
Education and skills	Social mixing and cohesion
Employment	Identity, sense of place and culture
Equity	Empowerment, participation and access
Human rights and gender	Health and Safety
Poverty	Social capital
Social justice	Well being, Happiness and Quality of Life

Source: Horner et al. (2009)

Furthermore, Ballet et al. (2020) divide the social pillar into three criteria, including social cohesion, equity and safety. In their study, social cohesion subsists as a crucial feature of social sustainability where there is unity in the attitudes and behaviours of the individuals within the society. Similarly, social sustainability is achievable through the motivation facilitated by the perceived social benefits to community dwellers related to social interaction, participation and perceived success (Rogge et al., 2018). Furthermore, the equity criteria assess the equity level in society by advocating for participation in the decision making process that affects society (Cuthill, 2010; Ballet et al., 2020). Dempsey

et al. (2011) aver that social sustainability and cohesion can be enhanced through direct participation in decision making and where the two dimensions of justice (procedural and distributive) are understood. Here, on the one hand, procedural justice refers to being fair and transparent in the decision-making process; on the other hand, distributive justice equates to being fair in the distribution of rights or resources (Lucas et al., 2016). Besides, the safety criteria refer to the people's right to safety within the community (Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017). Crabtree and Gasper (2020) aver that safety should precede development, given that development can only be achieved in society that provides adequate protection for not only the people but also the resources (financial and non-financial) within the community. The more people feel that they are safe, the better their perception and action towards the development of the community (Henderson et al., 2016; Ballet et al., 2020).

4.1.3.2 Social Sustainability as a Constraint upon Economic and Environmental Imperatives

Scholars envision another approach that locates social sustainability as a constraint upon economic and environmental imperatives (Boyer et al., 2016). In the study of Campbell (1996), the popular 'planner's dilemma' is explored to ascertain the process of sustainable development as a reconciliation between social equity, economic development and environmental protection. More so, in the attempt to examine the social vertex of the planner's triangle, Campbell links both the property conflict (a balance between the accumulation and fair distribution of private wealth) and development conflict (conserving environmental resources without unfair disadvantage to any specific group) as the essential elements of social sustainability (Campbell, 2016). This means that the social pillar of sustainability is relatively integrated within the economic and environmental priorities.

Furthermore, some studies reveal that the social pillar encapsulates some socially desirable results in place of being representative of all social (non-economic and non-environmental) societal values (Amekudzi et al., 2015; Boyer et al., 2016). These studies consider the social variables of sustainability as central within the three-dimensional concept of sustainability. The social pillar is ascertained to enable organisations to emphasise the importance of their business activities on their stakeholders and the larger society (Campbell, 2016). Similarly, in the study of Boyer et al. (2016), there were instances of organisations (particularly retail stores) that allowed their employees and customers social and family time by closing the stores on festive days (e.g. Christmas and Thanksgiving Days) to improve their social well-being. The researchers aver that such activities, which became the organisational culture in some organisations, tend to represent giving equal weighting to the three sustainability pillars (p. 6).

However, Milne and Gray (2012) warn that the inclusion of the social pillar into the sustainability framework does not guarantee social sustainability as being fully integrated into the decision-making process. Instead, social sustainability should transcend beyond merely facilitating both the economic benefits of promoting goodwill among customers and the environmental credibility associated with the reported positive activities. Likewise, Peterson (2010) advocate for organisations to include the social aspects in their planning and efforts to reflect social values and relationships in their business activities within the society. This becomes the role of the organisation in its practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the attempt to ensure that business activities offer more benefits than consequences to society (Peterson, 2011). However, Milne and Gray (2012) note that CSR activities are mainly reported within the supportive news stories, which lacks a critical discourse on the key social problems and fundamental issues associated with social justice and ecological impressions. More so, often times, organisations prove

a deterrent to publishing information on the social variables where they are failing or on which they fall short (Sridhar, 2012).

In addition, extant research suggests that social sustainability should be an integral part of the sustainability model and framework, and process and practice rather than as separate spheres (Dempsey et al., 2011; Boström, 2012; Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017). Also, the local contexts and ideas, citizen participation in decision-making and access to essential resources are pertinent to the achievement of social sustainability (Murphy, 2012). Weingaertner and Moberg (2014) evince that the discourse on social sustainability is necessary to ascertain the social implications and issues which are likely to be solved using the integrated approach, where the three sustainability pillars are made interdependent of each other.

4.1.3.3 Social Sustainability as a Pre-Condition for Environmental and Economic Sustainability

Another approach relates to social sustainability as a pre-condition for environmental and economic sustainability. Here the social pillar is regarded as social capital stock and a bedrock for the economic and environmental pillars (Boyer et al., 2016). The assumption within this perspective is associated with the fact that society is governed by social factors that act as predictors to individual behaviours and attitudes (Shove et al., 2012). Therefore, since these individuals make up the society, the social interaction among them determines how they react or contribute to economic and environmental development (Shove et al., 2012). For instance, Boyer et al. (2016) present a case study of the Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage located in northeast Missouri, USA, as a model that explains the importance of society in using social sustainability to promote economic and environmental sustainability. The case study presents an intentionally focused eco-town

as an experiment to explore the activities within the community, surrounded by over 60 residents earning an annual income that is below the federal poverty line. The report shows that relative to an average American, the residents consumed less electricity, cooking gas, motor fuel and water by using context-sensitive building design and cooperatively owned facilities. For instance, the community shared one pick-up truck and three cars powered by solar panels and biodiesel; this enabled them to design a plan that minimises resource depletion through ride-sharing and errand sharing. This community system also ensured that the residents invest in social competencies by investing hours daily to practice non-violent communication skills and resolving interpersonal conflict associated with the collective ownership of resources (Boyer et al., 2016). Hence, such a model influenced by social interaction facilitates economic and environmental development.

Furthermore, Shove and Walker (2014) aver that social disintegration engenders a decline in environmental sustainability and as a result, generates negative implications for economic sustainability. More so, similar studies show a positive relationship between social networks and interpersonal relationships with environmental and economic sustainability (Goldstein et al., 2008; Esteva, 2014; Boyer 2015). Social interaction as a primary component of social sustainability facilitates greater commitment towards providing solutions to social and community issues with direct economic benefits (Arora et al., 2015). Therefore, social sustainability stimulates problem-solving that is integrated and inclusive of economic and environmental concerns (Boyer et al., 2016).

In addition, participation is a crucial component of social sustainability which has been overlooked in urban development resulting in failures in the society (Boonstra and Boelens, 2010). Communities lacking effective democratic governance that allows the voice of the residents to be heard, fail to address the needs and demands of the public

towards promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability (Innes and Booher, 2004). More so, Vallance et al. (2011) discuss three components of social sustainability. They aver that the first component – ‘development’ caters for the essential needs and inter/intra-generational equity; second – ‘bridge sustainability’ considers the changes in behaviour to achieve bio-physical environmental goals; and third – ‘maintenance sustainability’ focuses on what can be sustained in social terms (Vallance et al., 2011). As such, these components relate to the importance of social sustainability in achieving economic and environmental sustainability.

4.1.3.4 Social Sustainability as the Causal Mechanism of Economic and Environmental Change

Buttressing the previous approach that presumes social sustainability as the bedrock for economic and environmental sustainability, another approach seeks to conceive social sustainability as the causal mechanism to the two other sustainability frameworks. In this approach, social sustainability stimulates economic and environmental sustainability, given that environmental issues are entirely social problems rather than technological problems (Boyer et al., 2016). Furthermore, several studies suggest that the knowledge of socio-technical transitions help to understand the impact of socio-economic transformations better to avoid environmental disaster (Geels, 2002; Boyer, 2015). The radical new social and technological changes are beginning to generate alternatives to dominant technologies in fulfilment of a sustainable environment, particularly with the ‘Green Movement’ agenda (Mazur, 2015). Although such campaigns could be referred to as promoting a pollution-free environment, however, it is solely the influence of the social pillar through interaction and collaboration to drive the global sustainable development (Murphy, 2012).

Social changes generate alternative patterns of thinking, interaction and governance, which is a necessary stimulus for environmental development (Boyer et al., 2016). Similarly, socially interactive debates spread information and provide insights for decision-making regarding environmental and economic concerns (Arora et al., 2012). Such debates are focused on social issues, relationships, institutions and policy interventions necessary for facilitating sustainable development particularly as it relates to the unconscious activities perpetrated by human beings daily, which have implications for the economy and the wider environment (Esteva, 2014). Changes in social practices such as commuting, modes of energy consumption and domestic activities are presumed to lead to changes in the environmental elements, which can either be positive or negative depending on the risks involved in the events (Shove et al., 2012). Similarly, Boyer et al. (2016) evince that understanding social sustainability as a causal mechanism for economic and environmental sustainability underlines the importance of culture and social interactions as a determinant of sustainable development.

Furthermore, the central environmental problems faced by society emerge from the careless economic activities perpetrated by humans leading to the depletion of natural resources and severe damage to the environment (Munasinghe, 2010). Human values and choices, which are also influenced by individuals' survival instincts, form a large part of individual behaviour and attitude with implications for economic and environmental development (Markkanen and Anger-Kraavi, 2019). More so, Munasinghe (2010) argues that as the rate of poverty and inequality increases, access to survival needs reduces, and humans engage in several activities in a bid to survive regardless of the harm to the economy and environment. Extant research posits that economic development is impossible without interaction among people (Benaim and Raftis, 2008; Mensah, 2019), and social conditions interlink with environmental progress (Littig and Griebler, 2005;

Farazmand, 2016). Kolk (2016) argues that social sustainability does not necessarily imply that the needs of everyone are met, rather, it is about providing the necessary structures or economic policies and enabling environmental conditions that allow people to use their abilities and competencies to meet their needs.

Also, social sustainability as a primary component of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) engenders economic and environmental changes, given that countries engage in activities aimed at achieving the SDG. However, this may be unattainable, except the social impacts through adequate access to social infrastructure and inequality reduction is prioritised (Hallegatte and Rozenberg, 2017; Klinsky and Winkler, 2018). In addition, Mensah (2019) suggests that the entirety of the SDGs are drivers of social sustainability, which determines economic and environmental progress since human interactions are needed to make them happen. More so, since the environmentally-friendly infrastructure facilitates an increase in economic output, less investment in the social components may forestall such economic productivity (Waage et al., 2015). Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, proper human resource management is crucial since it is the people that are required to abide by the principles adopted (Wang, 2016). People are liable to ensure that the environment is well utilised and conserved without significant crisis within the environment (Kolk, 2016). Hence, the role of human resource management as a social factor in sustainability cannot be overlooked but to ensure that the skills and knowledge necessary for improving the economy, environment and society is well impacted (Collste et al., 2017).

4.1.3.5 Social Sustainability as Place-Centered and Process-Oriented Sustainability

Unlike the other approaches that place social sustainability as a constraint, reinforcement or propellant of the economic and environmental sustainability, this approach presumes

that the three forms of sustainability overlap and depend on the local context. Boyer et al. (2016) suggest that making each of the sustainability pillars as a stand-alone objective undermines how diverse individuals in distinct places experience them differently. Hence, this approach seeks to establish the importance of integrating values and institutions wherein they have been separated into diverse disciplines, such as history, anthropology, economics, and sociology (Boyer et al., 2016). Richardson (2013) posits that the triple bottom line or three sustainability pillars reinforce disciplinary divisions and lead to making similar judgements regarding their relative worth. Hence, the trade-offs between the three sustainability pillars call for an integrated approach within the perspectives and practices of individuals regardless of their locality (Boyer et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Esteva (2014) suggests that rather than focusing on a one-size-fits-all development strategy, it is important to invest in 'local knowledge and grassroots movements' as the way forward to implementing policies and actions. Therefore, this approach is place-centred, as well as process-oriented to ensure that social sustainability policies are directed at the specific issues and not based on generalisations. Similarly, Boyer et al. (2016) maintain that this approach could be seen as a pragmatic method that aims to solve sustainability issues as they emerge rather than rely on a general method which may prove to be futile. Therefore, the one-pillar sustainability approach overlooks the complex and multifarious problems associated with a large amount of competing social, economic and environmental needs (Escobar, 2008).

Using the place-based and process-oriented approach to sustainability synchronises the effort of innovative governance that combines multiple approaches and encourages local possession of ideas, opinions and processes (Boyer et al., 2016). Therefore this integrated approach is essential to ensuring that individuals are granted access to necessary resources and allowed to participate in the decision-making process (Quick and Feldman, 2011).

Boyer et al. (2016, p. 12) evince that “sustainability, then, is a process of dialogue and negotiation among these diverse individuals with distinct social, economic, and environmental interests rather than the reconciliation abstract ‘social’ interests with abstract ‘environmental’ and ‘economic’ interests.” Hence, an intersection of the three pillars is deemed plausible to solve sustainability problems and improve the sustainable development agenda across the local societies and the globe at large (Kolk, 2016).

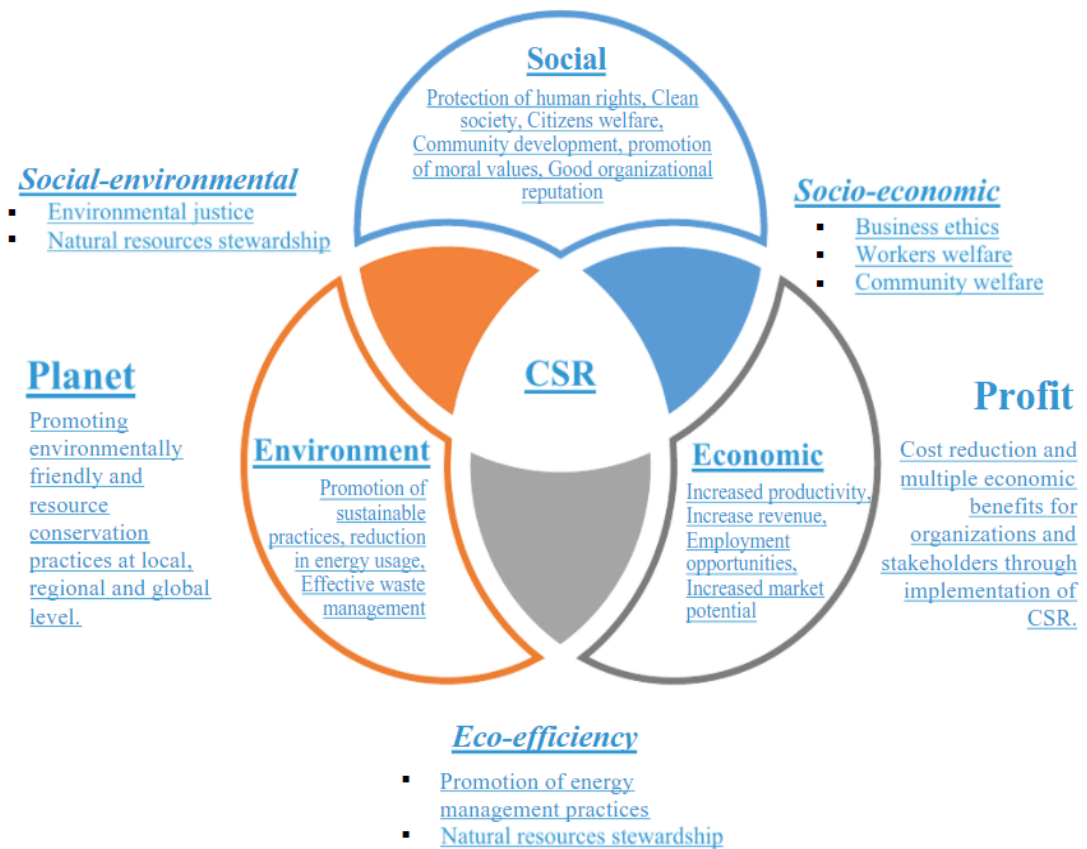
4.1.4 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HRM: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

One of the critical roles of HR is to serve as the ‘conscience of the organisation’ and ensure ethical employment practices, which serves as a crucial aspect of corporate responsibility (CIPD, 2013). Moreover, it is part of HR’s function to challenge corporate decisions and behaviours, develop and promote corporate culture and values that enhance corporate responsibility (CIPD, 2013). Therefore, corporate social sustainability remains a critical part of HR and how it supports social responsibility (Dubois and Dubois, 2012; Buller and McEvoy, 2016). Therefore, the link between social sustainability and corporate social responsibility is not farfetched. Although both terms are similar, however, they also possess some characteristics that make them distinct (Bux et al., 2020). While social sustainability remains a general concept for interactions within the society at large and considers the social values, culture, equality and access to basic infrastructure (Gálvez et al., 2020); corporate social responsibility is specific to the obligations of an organisation to the society (Anser et al., 2018). In other terms, social sustainability is much more of a geopolitical agenda, while corporate social responsibility relates to the agenda of a business or corporation (Pless et al., 2012).

The European Commission defines corporate social responsibility as “the responsibility of companies for affecting local communities, and therefore, companies should show more affiliation with society by including social, environmental, ethical, moral and human rights aspects into their business agenda and also following the law (European Commission, 2013). Generally, corporate social responsibility focuses on five critical dimensions: society, economy, environment, stakeholders and philanthropy (Eweje, 2015; Bux et al., 2020). Reiterating from the sustainability framework, corporate social responsibility captures and integrates the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environment). Besides, following the social sustainability approaches that either integrate the three pillars of sustainability (Boyer et al., 2016) or assume the social pillar as the pre-condition or causal mechanism of the economic and environmental sustainability (Murphy, 2012), the social pillar remains a fundamental element of the corporate social responsibility.

Furthermore, following the corporate social responsibility framework (see figure 8) suggested by Bux et al. (2020), the social aspect is categorised into two: first is the social-environmental responsibility comprising the organisation’s responsibility towards environmental justice and natural resources stewardship; second is the socio-economic responsibility of an organisation to promote employees welfare, community welfare and business ethics. To ensure sustainable development across organisations, the role of human resource management cannot be undermined (Pless et al., 2012). Therefore, corporate social responsibility features several aspects of an organisation’s activities to reflect its social responsibility to society and particularly the stakeholders (O’Rourke, 2003; Park and Kim, 2019).

Figure 8: Benefits of CSR implementation and triple bottom line



Source: Bux, Zhang and Ahmad (2020)

Employers are responsible to their employees and vice versa; hence, it is the employer's responsibility to ensure fair treatment of its employees, create an ecologically sustainable workplace, and maintain ethics in employee relations (Crane and Matten, 2007). Orlitzky and Swanson (2006) aver that organisations pursuing the social and environmental objectives using the corporate social responsibility dimensions tend to depend heavily on corporate values; as such, human resource management is instrumental to increasing employee awareness and recognising stakeholders' concerns. This comprises recruitment based on attitudes and values, measuring employees' contribution to the organisation's social performance through performance management systems, and developing

employees skill towards business participation through training and development programmes (Devinney, 2009; Cohen, 2010).

In addition, within the broader term of social sustainability, corporate social responsibility also depends on the creation of social networks between the company, stakeholders and the larger society (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007; Baumgartner, 2014). Mandip (2012) argues that one of the broader programs of corporate social responsibility is the green (environmental) initiatives or activities embarked on by organisations. CSR aims to ensure that organisations are responsible and accountable to their environment and stakeholders (shareholders, employees, consumers, government, suppliers, and community) by safeguarding the environment wherein the business operates (Ahmad and Nisar, 2015). Harmon et al. (2012) posit that the HR department plays a crucial role in the formation of a sustainability culture within the organisation. Hence, organisations are expected to facilitate sustainable development within the community by ensuring social fairness, supporting conducive environment amidst business activities, providing financial support to community development and promoting employee/stakeholder well-being (Panwar et al., 2016; Jamali and Karam, 2018).

4.1.5 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL AND NIGERIA CONTEXTS

4.1.5.1 A Global Overview of Social Sustainability

The prevalence of social sustainability practices in developed or industrialised societies is unlike in the developing countries that struggle with investment in social amenities and lack strong social policies (Weingaertner and Moberg, 2014). Similarly, the political, technological, economic and environmental structures that are set up in Western countries are quite different relative to countries in the global South given their peculiarities as it

relates to their shared values and beliefs, many of which serve as the hindrance to the growth of such countries and inability to maintain social sustainability (Suopajärvi et al., 2016). Woodcraft (2012) suggests that social sustainability as a distinct concept that has recently found its way into policy and practice is associated with the social outcomes of urban development, housing and regeneration. Moreover, the strategies implemented to facilitate social sustainability have become cross-sectoral and involves the active participation of not only the government but also residents of the country (Koning, 2001; Wiechmann and Bontje, 2015). Countries such as the UK, Canada, US, Australia, Sweden, Israel have been recognised as prominent providers and facilitators of social sustainability (Woodcraft, 2012).

Furthermore, in Europe, social sustainability remains a strength for many European countries where the provision of key social facilities are accessible relative to nations in the global South (German and Schoneveld, 2012; Rafiaani et al., 2018). However, issues related to inequality in the distribution process, particularly for non-European residents, have been a rising concern for debate globally (Musterd and Nijman, 2016). In addition, in Europe, social sustainability is operationalised in its association with promoting labour and human rights, community development through individual/group involvement, human resource development, technological advancement, consumerism, stakeholder protection, societal impacts and transparent reporting (German and Schoneveld, 2012; Boterman and Musterd, 2016). Also, policies supporting sustainability appraisals in the UK, such as the 'A Better Quality of Life' report in 1999 and the 'Securing the Future' in 2005, were both in adherence to the strategy for sustainable development (Colantonio, 2008).

Studies in North America also show that social sustainability remains a crucial element in the business activities of organisations (de Moraes, 2017). According to the Centre for

Sustainability and Excellence (2017), which assessed the corporate social responsibility report of 551 companies in North America, it was found that the reports had a positive impact on the companies' financial performance, particularly for countries with high CSR ranking scores. Unlike its counterparts in Europe and larger parts of Asia, the North American region is yet to achieve a prominent role in sustainable reporting (Centre for Sustainability and Excellence, 2017). Nevertheless, the region progresses in its attempt to implement plans and policies that support sustainable development, which includes but not limited to improving working conditions, human rights, disabled and marginalised inclusion, health and safety, gender equality and community impacts (de Morais, 2017).

The Asia-Pacific region, despite its challenges, has emerged as the World's fastest-growing region owing to its socio-economic improvements in recent years (United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific – ESCAP, 2017). Following the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the United Nations ESCAP report in 2017 presents its policy agenda aimed at tackling the socio-economic challenges within the region by creating inclusive societies that foster increased social cohesion and sustained prosperity. The report is also based on a transformation that is people-centred, and that tackles the rising inequality in income, access to key facilities (health, education, water, energy and sanitation), pursuing gender equality and increased concern for the ageing population (p. 10-11). The growth in population, technological advancement, industrialisation and urbanisation in Asia has generated several debates among policymakers, academic scholars, and international bodies towards a conservative managerial approach to sustainability (van Dongen and Liu, 2015). This approach is aimed at preserving social stability and continuity through a range of socio-political institutions such as religion, government and property rights (Seghezze, 2009).

4.1.5.2 Social Sustainability in Nigeria

Despite being regarded as the ‘giant of Africa’, the debate on social sustainability and sustainable development in Nigeria are no different from the general discourse in Africa (Ochara and Mawela, 2015; Ayodele and Ogunlola, 2016; Bartniczak and Raszkowski, 2019). Like many countries in Africa, Nigeria also grapples with economic inefficiency fuelled by the increasing rate of corruption and mismanagement of national resources and revenue (Odunjo, 2013). Nigeria is yet to prioritise socio-environmental sustainability, given its lackadaisical attitude to the implementation of policies that promotes social sustainability (Odunjo, 2013). Issues with social equity, social cohesion and distributive justice in the redistribution of resources are primary challenges that hinder the achievement of social sustainability in Nigeria (Erhun, 2015). More so, the lack of investment in social capital remains a deterrent to sustainable development in Nigeria despite the several attempts of the current and past government to improve the quality of life of the country’s residents (Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anekwe, 2018).

Unlike in the Western hemisphere, where the practices of inclusivity, community participation, industrialisation, advancement in technology, promotion of labour and human rights, consumerism and stakeholder protection are prioritised, such practices are negligible within the African region and specifically in Nigeria (Odunjo, 2013; Ayodele and Ogunlola, 2016). According to Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anekwe (2018), the strategies for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria are forestalled by the political, socio-cultural and economic factors which continue to pose a challenge to the Nigerian society. More so, the type of governance practised in Nigeria (federalism) has been regarded as a failure due to the increasing rate of corruption across the three arms of government (executive, legislature and judiciary) (Ayodele and Ogunlola, 2016). More specifically, Erhun (2015) argues that the lack of autonomy in the Nigerian legal system remains one

of the primary impediments to social equity and inequality in the allocation of resources across the country. As a nation that struggles with social infrastructure investment, Nigeria continues to be threatened by its ineffective policies towards the achievement of social sustainability (Uzonwanne, 2015). Nevertheless, recent collaborations with international bodies and cooperation with foreign countries have seen Nigeria make attempts to invest in infrastructure (The World Bank, 2018; Deloitte, 2018).

4.2 GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

4.2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The global rising environmental concern has forced numerous management practices towards evaluating environmental issues and the implementation of business sustainability strategies (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). This is predominant in economies where numerous organisations receive distinctive administrative ideas for practices with less thought of its impacts on the environment (Chen and Chang, 2013). Human resource management (HRM) is a key unit in the organisation, given its role as the hub of people management (Osuagwu, 2006; Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). Hence, contemporary HRM argues that it is not enough to practice traditional HRM but rather ensure that the organisation evolves with the changing nature of its environment by making sure that its business activities do not pose any danger to the environment (Cohen et al., 2012; Ahmad and Nisar, 2015).

The significance of this condition in its regular and unique structure is what Ullah (2017) referred to as 'Green'. On this note, becoming environmentally viable does not mean a domain must be painted green. Yet, it implies the measures where an organisation's operations are guided by environmental awareness, in this case, being environmentally

friendly (Ariffin, 2014). Along these lines, the focal point of coordinating environmental administration into HRM practices is what researchers such as (Renwick, 2013; Adunbi, 2015; Adegbite, 2015; Haddock-Millar et al., 2016; Abo-Murad and Abdullah, 2019) alluded to as 'Green HRM' today.

The global norms for environmental security and protection that calls for organisations worldwide to react positively to environmental-benevolent procedures are becoming more noticeable in the industrialised economies (Castells, 2014; Ullah, 2017). A worldwide increment in business difficulties and manageability have constrained numerous organisations over the globe to participate in investigations that are best reasonable for distinguishing the best strategy towards environmental prosperity (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). Among these methodologies is green human resource management (GHRM or green HRM), which empowers HRM to take strategic decisions in its entire processes of people management towards promoting environmental sustainability (Cohen et al., 2012). According to Aggarwal and Sharma (2015), they demonstrated that most firms fizzled in a serious situation when their business surroundings are taken with levity and less environmentally conscious. In a similar vein, a few specialists have prior seen that organisations are likely more beneficial than expected when they participate in GHRM to adjust their mechanical development and conservation (Ariffin and Che Ha, 2014). In this manner, a study perspective on these environmental contemplations in HRM practices has prompted the foundation of GHRM (Chowdhury et al., 2017). These include the propensities and conduction of recruitment practices, remuneration and worker relations in an organisation with environmental sustainability mentality ((Mathapati, 2013; Mtembu, 2017).

Today, various investigations have risen on GHRM by numerous researchers utilising extraordinary measures towards accomplishing a sustainable business condition and

competitive advantage. According to Mandip (2012), “HR capacity will turn into the driver of environmental maintainability inside the organisation by adjusting its practices and approaches to maintainability objectives mirroring an eco-center”. Additionally, Arulrajah et al. (2015) affirmed that a definitive point of green HRM practices is to improve the organisation’s sustainable environmental performance. Hence, it is germane for HRM experts and organisations at large to embrace the concept of green HRM.

4.2.2 CONCEPTUALISING GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Green human resource management as a concept is gaining popularity globally. Green HRM has attracted diverse meanings to different individuals with no generally accepted definition. The concept of green HRM is surrounded by the need to create a green behaviour that incorporates the ‘greening’ of employees and the organisation itself (Muster and Schrader, 2011). Therefore, green HRM is construed to involve the participation and involvement of individual employees in relation to the environment (Harris and Crane, 2002; Elloy and Smith, 2003; Shen et al., 2018). According to Mampra (2013), green HRM relates to the usage of HRM policies to foster the sustainable use of organisational resources while also promoting the cause of environmentalism, which translates further into increased employee morale and satisfaction. Green HRM, therefore, advocates for the use of HRM policies, practices, and philosophies to stimulate business resource sustainability and mitigate environmental concerns arising from business activities (Zoogah, 2011).

Green HRM is defined as the application of HRM practices that ensure eco-friendly and environmentally approachable organisation management activities (Azeez, 2017; Mishra, 2017). The vast majority of green HRM definitions by various scholars is very comparable, aside from with little contrasts. The focal point of the green HRM concept

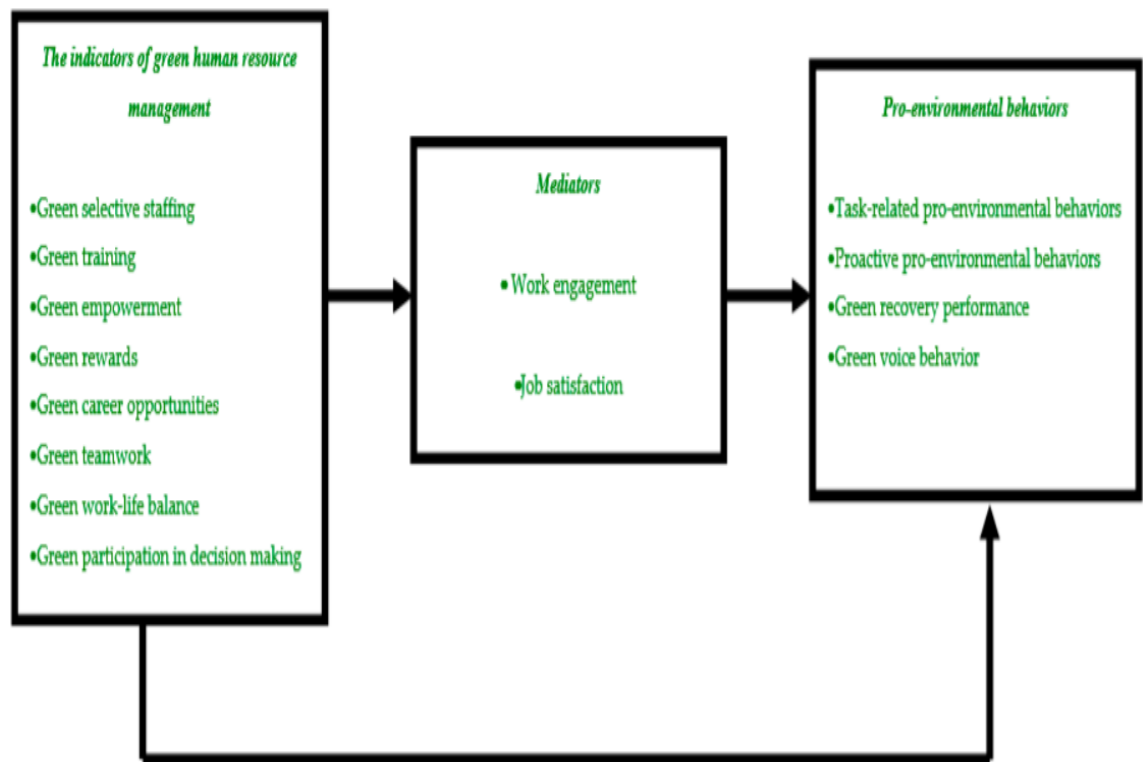
is the impression of green as an environmental framework in conceptualising the activities and functions of HRM (Renwick et al., 2013; Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). According to Abo-Murad and Abdullah (2019), GHRM is conceptualised as the approaches, practices and frameworks that make employees green to support the societal, individual, regular habitat and business sustainability (Cohen et al., 2012). In the studies of Mandip (2012), green HRM comprises two key elements, including 'environment-friendly HR practices' and 'knowledge capital preservation.' Green HRM further assumes the responsibility of organising a green workforce based on the understanding, appreciation, and practices of green initiatives, which are maintained throughout the process of recruitment, selection, hiring, training, development, compensation, and boosting the organisation's human capital resources (Mathapati, 2013).

GHRM plays a crucial role in creating a green labour force that practices, understands and appreciates green prospects and sustains organisation green goals through the HRM recruiting, retaining, developing, compensating processes, and enhancing the human capital of the organisation (Adegbite, 2015; Mishra, 2017). It refers to the practices, systems, and policies that make organisations' employees green for the societal, natural environment, individual and business benefit (Daily and Huang, 2001; Bangwal and Tiwari, 2015). According to Robertson and Barling (2013), green HRM connotes employees' management practices and policies tailored towards wider corporate sustainable environmental agenda. Green HRM activities are inclusive of online and video interviews, video recruiting for travel requirements and carbon footprints minimisation (Tatoglu et al., 2014).

Furthermore, green rewards consist of lifestyle and workplace benefits, ranging from reducing carbon footprints to engaging staff in the green agenda (Tatoglu et al., 2014). In the same vein, Ahmad and Nisar (2015) describes green HRM as environment-friendly

HRM practices which lead to better effective, efficient and less cost employee engagement levels resulting in organisations reduced employee carbon footprints through telecommuting, energy-efficient office spaces, electronic filing, teleconferencing, job-sharing, recycling, virtual interviews, and online training. The bottom line of green HRM is green employee management behaviour (Berry, 2011; Ariffin and Che Ha, 2014; Griffiths and Petrick, 2019)

Figure 9: Conceptual Model of Green HRM



Source: Ari, Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam and Avci (2020).

In addition, Chowdhury et al. (2017) evince that green HRM espouses the integration of environmental management practices alongside human resource management policies and practices. The concept of green HRM is mostly used to refer to the contribution of HRM practices and policies towards the increased sustainable environmental management program or goals of the organisation. It refers to organisational efforts in

supporting sustainable organisation HRM practices towards increasing employee awareness, interest and commitments towards environmental sustainability issues (Schroeder, 2012). Green HRM initiatives assist organisations in recognising alternative means to costs cutting while retaining their top talent and competent hands in environmentally friendly ways; hence, it is a strategic initiative that stimulates sustainable organisation/business practices (Renwick et al., 2013). Moreover, studies (e.g., Renwick et al., 2013; Paille' et al. 2014) have revealed a positive relationship between environmental management and HRM and how proactive environmental management through HRM practices showcases responsible management. More so, O'Donohue and Torugsa (2016) aver that through green HRM, HR practices align with environmental sustainability goals embedded in organisations' environmental management to promote employees' ability, motivation and commitment to meet its environmental goals.

Aggarwal and Sharma (2015) argue that green HRM is the involvement of HR policies and practices in natural resources protection and preservation. It, therefore, stretches the tentacle of conventional HRM practices towards sustainable environmental strategies (Deepika and Karpagam, 2016). As a rapidly emerging concept in today's contemporary business environment, green HRM incorporates mindfulness toward environmental issues as well as representing social justice as the economic prosperity of both the organisation and the employees inside a more extensive possibility (Dutta, 2012). Green HRM may very well be utilised to lessen costs, better efficiencies, decrease carbon footprints, bolster employees' pro-environmental behaviour and start green work-life balance programs (Guerci et al., 2016). Berry (2018) argued that GHRM is required to build up the relationship between current HRM policies and practices with green HRM standards for the sustainable turn of events.

Fundamentally, green HRM can be comprehended as a proclamation that helps create and advance green employees (Beard and Rees, 2018; Islam et al., 2020). Beard and Rees (2018) have recognised four teams associated with turning employees into green employees. They are preservationists, protectionists, non-polluters and creators. These teams are expected to operate in such a manner that environmental concerns are made a priority when taking business decisions. In like manner, the reason for green HRM is to make, improve and imbibe green experiences within every employee, with the goal that employees can exhibit pro-environmental behaviours (Islam et al., 2020). Green HRM prerequisites incorporate green attitude, green competencies, green behaviours and green outcomes expected to accomplish the corporate environmental goals (Beard and Rees, 2018).

Mishra (2017) states that GHRM has been expanded to upgrade green practices, mentalities and capacities of employees, arouse employees to think green, and give chances to employees to generate information and attitudes related to environmental sustainability. Daily and Huang (2001) and Jabbour (2011) have clarified that GHRM includes a combination of organisation environmental administration destinations to the HR procedures of enlistment, determination, preparing and improvement, execution and assessment, rewards and acknowledgement. Islam et al. (2020) broke down the different green HRM activities. They alluded to GHRM as a practice where all the activities associated with improvement, usage and sustainability of a framework that targets making the organisation workforce green. More so, GHRM alludes to the policies, practices and frameworks that make employees of the association green serve the individual, society, and the business (Islam et al., 2020).

Thus, green HRM is the point at which the field of HRM centers on extending its roles to help the organisation in the quest for supportability (Schroeder, 2012). Therefore, human

resource policies are utilised to animate and bolster the sustainable utilisation of assets and protect the indigenous habitat (Marcus and Fremeth, 2009). Green HRM centers around the turn of events, usage and upkeep of all activities planned for making individuals strong and focused on sustainable objectives (Guerci et al., 2016). The sustainable business practices shift toward green HRM as a vital role in piloting change in the organisation and harness both HR and CSR in creating synergies between organisation's strategic mission in becoming a sustainable organisation and equip its employees and other stakeholders for effective implementation of green practice in everyday business activities (Jabbour et al., 2010; Guerci et al., 2016; Islam et al., 2020).

4.2.3 DIMENSIONS OF GREEN HRM

Green HRM, as organisational practices, policies and systems make employees of such organisations contribute significantly to environmental sustainability. Green HRM designs HRM dimensions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation among others in a manner to create a workforce that promotes green behaviour in the organisation (Guerci et al., 2016). The key dimensions of green HRM are discussed below.

4.2.3.1 Green Job Design and Analysis

Generally, within the context of green HRM, job descriptions are utilised to indicate various environmental protection related activities, obligations and duties (Opatha and Anton 2014; Bangwal and Tiwari, 2015; Azeez, 2017). A few organisations have consolidated environmental and social assignments, obligations and duties beyond what many would consider possible in each job to secure the earth (Cohen et al., 2012). In some organisations, each job description incorporates, in any event, one obligation identified

with environmental protection and explicitly includes environmental duties at whatever point and any place appropriate (Bangwal and Tiwari, 2015).

Job descriptions may incorporate social, environmental, individual, and specialised prerequisites of the organisation. For instance, environmental protection obligations ought to be incorporated into job descriptions, alongside the assignment of environmental-related roles and expectations to enhance employee wellbeing and eco-friendliness (Álvarez et al., 2016). Also, a few organisations use cooperation and cross-utilitarian groups as job design strategies to effectively deal with the environmental issues of the organisation (Ambec and Lanoie, 2008; Biondi et al., 2014; Huang, 2018). These days there has been an increase in organisations that have designed job roles to cover environmental concerns. From the point of view of HRM, it is a critical inception and practice to secure the environment (Álvarez et al., 2016). Besides, a few organisations have engaged with designing their current jobs in all the more environmentally friendly way by consolidating environmental focused obligations and duties (Azeez, 2017).

4.2.3.2 Green Human Resource Planning

At present, a few companies take part in anticipating the number and type of employees to be recruited (Azeez, 2017; Chaudhary, 2020). HR managers are expected to consider talents that can execute corporate environmental administration activities, programs, and exercises (Islam et al., 2020). These are acceptable practices some environmentally-driven companies have embraced to deal with their environmental issues. The corporate environmental administration activities request some new positions and an explicit arrangement of abilities (Renwick et al., 2013; Gilal et al., 2019). Green human resource planning is required in this unique circumstance. Since companies take part in concluding systems to fulfil the determined need for environmental programs (for example, naming

advisors/specialists to perform vitality or environmental reviews), the redistribution of such activities is required to be inculcated into the human resource plan for implementation in the overall HRM practices (Chen and Chang, 2013).

4.2.3.3 Green Hiring/Recruitment

Organisations operating an environmentally-friendly businesses have their environmental arrangement structure that guides them towards ensuring environmental sustainability (Chaudhary, 2020). In the build-up of these processes using environmental policies, organisations situate their workforce within their environmental structures, policies and practices, which are communicated from the recruitment stage and maintained throughout the business activities (Gilal et al., 2019). To achieve an environmentally-minded workforce, organisations have two choices: first is concentrating on green recruitment, and second is giving required environmental protection related mindfulness, instructions, preparing and improvement to the current workforce (Islam et al., 2020). The former is more proactive and financially savvy than the subsequent choice. Consequently, looking through the best green recruitment practices is imperative to organisations (DuBois and Debois, 2012). During recruitment, organisations practising GHRM incorporate corporate environmental arrangements and procedures within their recruitment strategy (Dumont et al., 2017). For instance, a study by the British Carbon Trust affirms that the vast majority of the employees (over 75%) considering working for an association saw it as significant that they have a functioning environmental approach to lessen carbon emissions (Jackson et al., 2011; Gerhart et al., 2014).

Furthermore, potential talents (job seekers) seek to work with organisations lauded for their practice of green HRM (Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Gilal et al., 2019). For instance, in the United Kingdom, environmental issues affect organisations' recruitment

endeavours. Studies reveal that graduates with a high academic standing judge the environmental preparedness and nobility of an organisation as a model for decision making while going after jobs in such organisations (Biondi et al., 2014; Guerci et al., 2016; Berry, 2018). Progressively, firms are starting to perceive that increasing the nobility for being a green manager is a compelling method to attracting new talents (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2016). Environmentally capable businesses can attract talents that they expect to actualise corporate environmental administration activities, which may translate to the accomplishment of the organisation's environmental objectives (Paillé et al., 2014; Dumont et al., 2017). Moreover, in the endeavour to attract environmentally concerned individuals, the job descriptions of some organisations express certain environmental qualities associated with the role and their values that support a sustainable environment (Kehoe and Wright, 2014).

Preeminent is the procedure of choice and recruitment in certain basic viewpoints; this focuses attention on the connection among employees and the administration and potential ways for organisational development towards a sustainable environment (Ren et al., 2018). Subsequently, the evaluation of existing employees remains vital to the organisation's environmental values (Daily and Huang, 2001). It centers around the distinguishing proof of the high performing employees and the regions where they may function admirably (Daily and Huang, 2001). Organisations also understand how the laudability for being a business following green practices is a successful strategy for attracting talents (Azeez, 2017; Abo-Murad and Abdullah, 2019). In Britain, the Rover Group carmaker made conditions related to the obligations of an employee to facilitate environmental sustainability as a major aspect of each job undertaken (Revill, 2000; Opatha et al., 2014). Abo-Murad and Abdullah (2019) aver that a well-designed recruitment procedure can help organisations create robust execution towards employing

environmentally inclined talents and willing to uphold the organisation's values towards environmental sustainability.

4.2.3.4 Green Training and Development

Facilitating environmental training within the hierarchical organisational structure (non-administrative employees and supervisors) to create required abilities and information is a significant capacity of green HRM (Paillé et al., 2014). This will be useful to actualise corporate the environmental administrative projects of the organisation (Agarwal et al., 2011; Kapil, 2015). Training employees serve as a strategy towards orientating employees to energise and support adaptable practices that facilitate remote working (especially working from home), and decreasing significant distance work travel (Jabbour, 2011; Fayyazia et al., 2015; Khurshid and Darzi, 2016), which are extremely important to reduce environmental pollution. Providing environmental awareness among the workforce by organising training and workshops for employees are also imperative to improve environmental performance (Gilal et al., 2019).

Giving environmental instructions that will make a difference in the mentality and conduct among managers and non-managers (Fayyazia et al., 2015) are plausible for environmental sustainability. For instance, in Fuji Xerox Singapore, every staff is required to go through eco-awareness training, just as the business suppliers get instruction on the green parts of its item and supplies by implementing green supply chains (Fuji Xerox, 2017). Besides, a few organisations coordinate yearly events to celebrate environmental-friendly practices across the organisation (Fayyazia et al., 2015). This is additionally a decent practice to encourage certain vital eco-values among the workforce that can be transferred beyond the work premises to the society at large. Furthermore, extant research recognises a few companies that promote the environmental

training needs of employees to facilitate employee engagement in environmentally-friendly practices (Paillé et al., 2014; Ren et al., 2018). These are acceptable practices that are expected to execute corporate environmental administration activities. In view of environmental training needs analysis of the workforce, these companies lead genuine and efficient instruction, training and development programs for the empowerment of their employees towards exhibiting pro-environmental behaviours (Saeed et al., 2019).

Brammer and Pavelin (2006) recommend specific green training and development practices. For example, training staff to create a green analysis of the workspace, an arrangement of explicit training on environmental administration parts of wellbeing, vitality proficiency, development of green individual abilities, and re-training of staff losing jobs in important pollutant enterprises. Environmental related instructions, training and development are key zones of green HRM in an organisation. Green training and development influence the development of mentalities, practices, information, and abilities in the employees that foster green-related perspectives, aptitudes, and information (Wood, 2010). Training is considered the arrangement of multi-capable employees who are worried about developing information and aptitudes required for their advancement (Jabbour, 2011; Biondi et al., 2014). Exploratory learning is undeniably related to organisations that promote green training and development. This type of learning is aimed at encouraging the employees to evaluate and investigate new ideas to discover relationships that exist between the organisation's environmental values and the individual values of the employees (Fayyazia et al., 2015).

Green training and development are suggested as a means to improve employees' awareness and information on environmental issues, manufacture the uplifting demeanour, adopt a proactive strategy toward environmental concerns and create skills to save vitality and diminish resource wastages (Berry, 2011; Griffiths and Petrick, 2019).

Employee training and development projects ought to incorporate social and environmental issues at all levels (Saeed et al., 2019). Green direction programs for the recently recruited employees ought to be an indispensable piece of the training and development process, allowing recruits to get acquainted with the organisation's environmental-friendly policies and values (Biondi et al., 2014). For example, in Germany, all employees at Siemens get some environmental training, emphasising those engaged with the treatment of perilous waste/hazardous substances (Combette and Gimbert, 2018). Such training is a component of the in-house training program aimed at diminishing wastage, legitimate use of resources and preservation of the environment.

4.2.3.5 Green Employee Relations

Employee relations is one of the vital aspects of HRM, given its role as the people management unit of the organisation (Saeed et al., 2019). Hence, like every other function of HRM where the 'green' agenda has been infused, to sustain such agenda within the organisation, employees and employers need to relate with one another whilst focusing on the green areas of the business activities (Aragon-Correa et al., 2013). Green employee relations decide and control the practices from the top management or line managers toward employees' commitment which is regarded as a method of urging them to create potential answers for natural issues (Schultze and Trommer, 2011; Guerci et al., 2016). It was further underlined that the commitment of employees to green activities would enhance the likelihood of prevalent green management as it adjusts employee's objectives, inspirations, and discernments with green management practices and frameworks (Biondi et al., 2014; Berry, 2018). For example, in a few organisations, employees are made to comprehend the significance of green practices in their organisations, where some individuals avoid potential risk to control their apathetic propensity against their condition (Berry, 2018).

The development of green HRM has infiltrated into employee relations and the organisation at large. In green HRM, employee relations and organisational support (in an unionised workforce setting) are fundamental in actualising corporate environmental administration activities and projects (Brio et al., 2007). A few companies have procedures (joint interviews, increase sharing, perceiving association as a key partner in environmental administration) to get their employees to participate in the organisations' corporate environmental administration activities, which is genuinely a decent practice to enhance an organisation's environmental performance (Cohen et al., 2012; Harvey et al., 2013).

Extant research also suggests the facilitation of employee contribution and investment in green proposal plans and critical thinking circles, staff freedom to frame and analyse green thoughts, coordinating employee association and interest into upkeep (cleaning), employee help-line for direction in green issues, fitting green employee inclusion plans to industry/organisation guidelines, expanding line/administrative help practices in environmental administration. Likewise, some organisations encourage employees to utilise green types of transport, set up low carbon emission units to build environmental administration activity, and present green whistle-blowing and help-lines (Bangwal and Tiwari, 2015; Álvarez et al., 2016).

Furthermore, extant research has provided some insights into how green employee relations can be achieved through person-organisation fit. For instance, Chou (2014) suggests that there must be compatibility between employees and organisations' beliefs, values and culture. Therefore, a shared approach between employees and employers in promoting shared environmental values will positively affect environmental behaviour (Onkila and Sarna, 2022). Also, Ruepert et al. (2017) show the importance of shared CSR approaches to encourage employees with a less eco-friendly commitment to engage in

CSR activities that promote environmental management goals. Moreover, Kim et al. (2017) stress how the emotional aspects of CSR through internal CSR and particular employee experiences facilitate affective commitment to the organisation and its corporate environmental values.

In addition, Rubel et al. (2021) aver that green knowledge sharing – sharing knowledge of green practices and initiatives – can affect how employees and employees relate to foster green employee relations, leading to proactive environmental management. Therefore, knowledge sharing allows employees and employers to interact and consult one another to create, share and use knowledge among individuals and teams, which is beneficial to the organisation's environmental sustainability goals (Lin and Chen, 2017).

4.2.3.6 Green Performance Management

Estimating an employee's green performance on the job is one of the key functions in green HRM (Renwick et al., 2013). One of the primary objectives of performance management is to assess employees' performance vis-à-vis the organisation's goals to decide on the provision of training for employees to enhance future performance (Shen et al., 2018). Thus, green performance management also allows the organisation to assess its employees' performance towards promoting a sustainable environment (Kapil, 2015). Mandip (2012) suggest that the assessment of the green performance of employees must be done independently or, if nothing else, as a piece of the performance assessment arrangement. The estimation measures of employee green performance of job must be deliberately lined up with the organisation's standards of environmental performance (Mandip, 2012). More so, to support outstanding environmental performance, organisations must set up Environmental Management Information Systems (EMIS) and environmental reviews (Moore, 2002). Many organisations that have set up

environmental administration data frameworks (Telle, 2006) and environmental reviews (Kapil, 2015) have been able to monitor the effect of their business activities on the environment. Berry (2018) states that an environmental administration data framework aims to viably screen the enormous number of contamination, resource use and environmental pollution caused by production activities. Biondi et al. (2014) express that the creation of an EMIS is coordinated with the performance appraisals of managers just as employees.

As one of the key human resource practices for advancing sustainable development, greening the performance management procedures is considered imperative for organisations to align their objectives with the objectives of their employees (Azeez, 2017). Berry (2018) advocates that a holistic assessment of employees' job performance should consider the green-related policies and practices of the organisation drawn-up against employees adherence to the organisation's environmental sustainability practices. Also, green performance appraisal might be significant on the grounds that when an assessment is estimated to pass judgment on an individual, such endeavours should focus on improving the capacity of the employee to promote the organisation's sustainable environment agenda (Mandip, 2012; Beard and Rees, 2018).

Kapil (2015) aver that organisations have to introduce corporate-wide environmental performance guidelines to quantify environmental performance principles and creating green data frameworks and performance reviews. However, the introduction of corporate-wide environmental performance guidelines or setting up green performance markers into the performance management framework is insufficient (Beard and Rees, 2018; Ren et al., 2018). The correspondence of green plans, performance markers and principles to all levels of staff through performance assessment framework and building up firm-wide

exchange on green issues are additionally expected to appear focused on environmental performance (Bangwal and Tiwari, 2015; Álvarez et al., 2016).

It is expedient that managers set green targets, objectives and obligations regarding their segments or divisions or offices by evaluating the number of green occurrences and fruitful correspondence of environmental approaches (Griffiths and Petrick, 2019; Islam et al., 2020). For instance, a few companies have environmental objectives for every employee or group (teams) or office or division to accomplish in a given timeframe (Mandip, 2012). Those companies officially assess the degree to which every such individual or group establishments have accomplished their environmental objectives (Mandip, 2012).

4.2.3.7 Green Compensation and Rewards

According to Jabbour et al. (2010), through its HRM practices, organisations are saddled with the responsibility of promoting environmental management through their employees. Hence, rewarding employees for showing pro-environmental behaviours is a primary source of motivation. In addition, Merriman and Sen (2012) suggest that organisation's should add rewards to their environmental performance (EP) criteria and promote environmental strategies using green compensation as a catalyst for staff commitment to environmental sustainability goals. Rewarding employees for their efforts and contributions to eco-friendly activities can boost their morale and motivate them to sustain such behaviours (Renwick et al., 2013). Therefore, compensation and reward systems should focus on encouraging pro-environmental behaviours and reflect the organisation's commitment to environmental performance (Jabbour and Jabbour, 2016). Employees that perceive the management's commitment to environmental performance

may be motivated to increase their commitment to being eco-friendly and participate in the organisation's EP activities (Renwick et al., 2013).

Furthermore, to ensure the rewards system's effectiveness to boost employees' eco-friendly behaviours, there should be a link between rewards and the outcomes of green programmes within organisations, and making such rewards available across the varying levels in the organisation (Arulrajah et al., 2015). Rewards can be financial (e.g., vouchers, cash) and non-financial (e.g., recognition, awards, positive feedback) or both as long as they communicate the organisation's efforts to acknowledging employees' pro-environmental behaviours (Renwick et al., 2013; Kapril, 2015). Marcus and Fremeth (2009) suggest that green compensation and rewards can be linked to green initiatives (e.g., recycling and waste management) that provide mutual benefits to the organisation (e.g., green branding) and the employees (e.g., promotion and other benefits). Hence, motivated employees may be encouraged to display pro-environmental behaviours and promote green creativity and innovation (Paillé et al., 2014).

In addition, the strategic HRM approach to green compensation and rewards emphasises its importance to talent attraction, retention, employee engagement, employee motivation, and a contribution to environmental sustainability goals (Schroeder, 2012; Jabbour et al., 2013). Although some employees may feel more motivated by non-monetary green compensation, others are likely to prefer financial rewards (Jackson et al., 2011). Most researchers suggest that a combination of both (monetary and non-monetary) compensation would be more effective (Tang et al., 2017; Saeed et al., 2019). Whichever way, green rewards and compensation is an incentive for promoting employees' pro-environmental behaviours.

4.2.3.8 Green Empowerment

Green empowerment is a crucial part of the EM practices within organisations aimed at encouraging employees to exhibit pro-environmental behaviours and inculcate environmental-friendly ideas through employees' green participation and involvement (Renwick et al., 2016; Ansari et al., 2021). To empower employees towards becoming eco-friendly, HRM practices must consider a participative work environment that allows employees to be involved in EM and decisions that are connected with the organisation's environmental sustainability goals (Daily and Huang, 2001). Note that employees consider their autonomy to make decisions as a means to empowerment and the latitude to contribute their quota to organisational EP and overall business sustainability (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2016). Therefore, when implementing EP initiatives, the management must consider the inputs of their employees.

More so, Paillé et al. (2014) aver that employee empowerment through employee involvement in the organisation's eco-friendly activities can promote intrapreneurship traits among employees to devise green ideas and programmes. Therefore, employees should be encouraged to create environmental strategies and promote green products and services (Jaaron, 2017). Such green involvement provides significant contributions to attaining the organisation's environmental sustainability goals. For instance, in Rothenberg's (2003) study, it was observed that employees possess the technical and contextual knowledge lacking in some of their managers. Hence, when employees are allowed to suggest solutions to environmental management issues in a timely manner, it boosts their perceived trust in the management's effort to recognise them as a valuable part of the organisation (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2001).

Empowered employees are influenced by their involvement in EP practices and give their best to attaining the organisations' EP goals (Vallaster, 2017). However, Daily et al. (2007) argue that group-oriented rather than individual-oriented employee participation proves to be more effective in implementing environmental management (EM). Therefore, providing employees with the opportunities to partake in EM motivates them to be involved in environmental protection and pollution prevention activities (Ansari et al., 2021).

Additionally, according to Renwick et al. (2013), there are five aspects for measuring green involvement. First, the management must create a clear green vision that reflects the values and symbols that guide employees to promote EM, as well as developing pro-environmental behaviours to solve environmental issues. Second, employees should be provided with a green learning climate that stimulates their efforts to support their colleagues and create synergies in promoting environmental awareness. Third, there is a need to develop various communication channels through which the organisation can transmit information to their employees and disseminate information among colleagues that promotes awareness of environmental issues. Fourth, offering green practices (e.g., developing green teams, green programmes) through an organisation's green culture is a crucial green empowerment strategy (Vallaster, 2017). Lastly, encouraging green involvement serves as a motivation to employees towards the organisation's willingness to provide the necessary opportunities for solving environmental issues.

4.2.4 GREEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Green work-life balance is defined as HRM initiatives backed by green practices that are geared towards the creation of employee occupational health and organisational sustainability (Muster and Schrader, 2011). For Vasa and Sowdamini (2018), green WLB

consists of two primary elements – sustainability and operational efficiency. Accordingly, green HRM practices are designed to provide a conducive workplace for employees to enhance their capabilities and effective productivity in the workplace (Singh and Bhatnagar, 2015). Muster and Schrader (2011) suggest that green WLB presents a win-win situation or mutual benefits for both the employer and employees. In addition, Singh and Bhatnagar (2015) aver that organisations that promote flexible workplaces by allowing their employees to work remotely contribute to environmental performance and promote the sustainability of societal systems. Thus, greening employees and providing them with the necessary opportunities to demonstrate pro-environmental behaviour within and outside the organisation's perimeter is crucial to attaining environmental sustainability (Wagner, 2011). Also, Jackson et al. (2011) suggest that green HR practices that support WLB promote personal fulfilment among employees. This is because employees have the autonomy to decide when, how and where work is performed and can allocate time to cater to their work responsibilities and other non-work responsibilities such as family, leisure and community development. The strategic HRM approach views green WLB as a tool for value-addition, employee retention, engagement, reduced absenteeism and cost efficiency (Singh and Bhatnagar, 2015).

Furthermore, employees' wellbeing and ability to achieve work-life balance can be influenced within an environment where the social structures enable flexible working practices (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Hence, given that one of the critical anchors of green HRM is to promote reduced carbon footprints where employees are offered the option to work remotely (especially working from home), it is expected that an employee's work-life balance would be facilitated through such practices (Chandra, 2012). Remote working affords employees with work flexibility; hence they make decisions on when, how and where work is performed to suit other non-work roles (Demsey et al., 2011). In addition,

providing individuals/employees with equal opportunities to take advantage of social amenities within the community and family-responsive policies provided by the organisation fosters the achievement of work-life balance (Mushfiqur et al., 2018).

4.2.5 GREEN HRM IN THE GLOBAL AND NIGERIA CONTEXTS

4.2.5.1 A Global Overview of Green HRM

Green HRM practices are new practices that organisations recently adopted into their organisational strategies, particularly within their corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks (Cohen et al., 2012). Ariffin and Che (2014) evince that employee interest in environmental management frameworks positively affects the character or environmentally dependable mentalities and conduct in an employee's private life.

Research in the United Kingdom shows that recently, graduates judge the environmental representation and nobility of an organisation as a standard for deciding on their choice companies (Kumari, 2019). A review by the British Carbon Trust shows over 75% of 1,018 employees consider the significance of an organisation's functioning environmental strategy to decrease carbon outflows (Kumari, 2019), as well as supporting their work and non-work related activities and wellbeing (Mandip, 2012). Also, the most recent CIPD/KPMG overview of 1,000 respondents expresses that 47% of HR experts feel that employees would lean toward working for firms that have a reliable green methodology and 46% describing that having one would help attract talents (Liebowitz, 2019). Generally speaking, being a green manager may assist with expanding employee inspiration and commitment (through a common arrangement of qualities), enhance the opportunity to gain competitive advantage, increase customer loyalty and consumer awareness, improve stakeholder's perception of the organisation's goodwill, lessen work,

and improve the soundness of the workforce (for instance, by urging cycling to work, vehicle sharing, open vehicle) (Mandip, 2012; Ariffin and Che, 2014; Shen et al., 2018).

In addition, Mandip (2012) examined the nature and degree of green HRM activities embraced by ITC Limited as a contextual investigation. The discoveries uncovered that ITC had accomplished the achievement of being carbon positive, squander positive and accomplishing practically 100% strong waste reusing. A similar study by Deepika and Karpagam (2016) on Green HR practices in enterprises across Nasik revealed that the greater part of the organisations in Nasik was knowledgeable about the green HR agenda that facilitated their abilities to keeping the earth green. These practices were deemed to also improve the wellbeing of the employees who took advantage of the practices to enhance their work and life roles.

Mishra et al. (2014) carried out a study on Indian Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to investigate the green practices within the sector. The study uncovered that the organisations had limited existing green HRM activities. More so, the awareness of these practices was low because it was practised informally as against being a policy; hence employees were unable to take advantage of such activities to boost not only environmental sustainability but also their wellbeing. The organisations within the study failed to acknowledge the requirement for greening, thus revealing the problem of employee exclusion and disengagement.

A study in Malaysia explored the turnover intentions of millennial employees within the tourism industry (Islam et al., 2020). The study explored the impression of these employees about the green HRM activities within their respective organisations. The findings revealed that two components of green HRM (green pay and reward and green involvement) impacted a reduction in the employees' turnover intention. Other GHRM

practices had no direct relationship with employees' turnover intention; likewise, did the work environment affect the practices of green HRM.

4.2.5.2 Green HRM in Nigeria

Research on green HRM in Nigeria, like in many other sub-Saharan Africa regions, is minimal due to the inadequacies of structures across organisations to support environmental sustainability (Edeh and Okwurume, 2019). Oyedokun (2019) suggests that the complementarity of corporate environmental management into human resource management results into green HRM and has the prospect of facilitating a sustainable competitive edge in Nigeria. These researchers examined the various approaches to green HRM and recognised that the approaches were considered as useful assets for adjusting employees to an organisation's environmental procedure; however, Nigerian organisations were deficient in sustaining environmental sustainability.

According to Ihonvbere (1994), the greening of practical elements of human resource management, for example, expected set of responsibilities and investigation, enlistment, determination, preparing, execution evaluation and rewards are characterised as green HRM. Edeh and Okwurume (2019) aver that green HRM focuses on all activities engaged in the advancement, execution and on-going upkeep of a framework that targets making employees of an organisation green. The practice of green HRM is scarce across organisations in Nigeria, where environmental pollution is highly prevalent in many of its urban and especially the rural areas (Oyedokun, 2019). Also, their study reflects Nigeria as a system where employee greening is yet to be actualised as a result of the deplorable state of infrastructure and lackadaisical attitudes of the organisations' management to promote green employment and green employee relations. These factors

have been alluded to contribute to the inability of organisations within Nigeria to facilitate sustainable environmental development (Edeh and Okwurume, 2019; Oyedokun, 2019).

4.2.6 THE LINK BETWEEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE, SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN HRM

The discourse on work-life balance has been centred on the ability of an employee to make choices on how to segment or integrate work and life (Bloom et al., 2006). This has rather caused the literature on work-life balance to be obscure on the structural and relational constraints that impede the ability to make those choices (Lewis et al., 2007). On the one hand, the structural constraints equate to the political, social, cultural and economic drivers that limit the decision-making of an employee (Gallhofer, 2011). In this study context, the social drivers in particular form the relationship between the employee, employer and society (Mushfiq et al., 2018). On the other hand, relational constraints are those social relationships created between the employee and employer and the employee and society that intensifies the incidence and severity of conflict situations (such as between work and personal responsibilities) (Lewis et al., 2007), as well as the duty of care to the environment (Renwick et al., 2013).

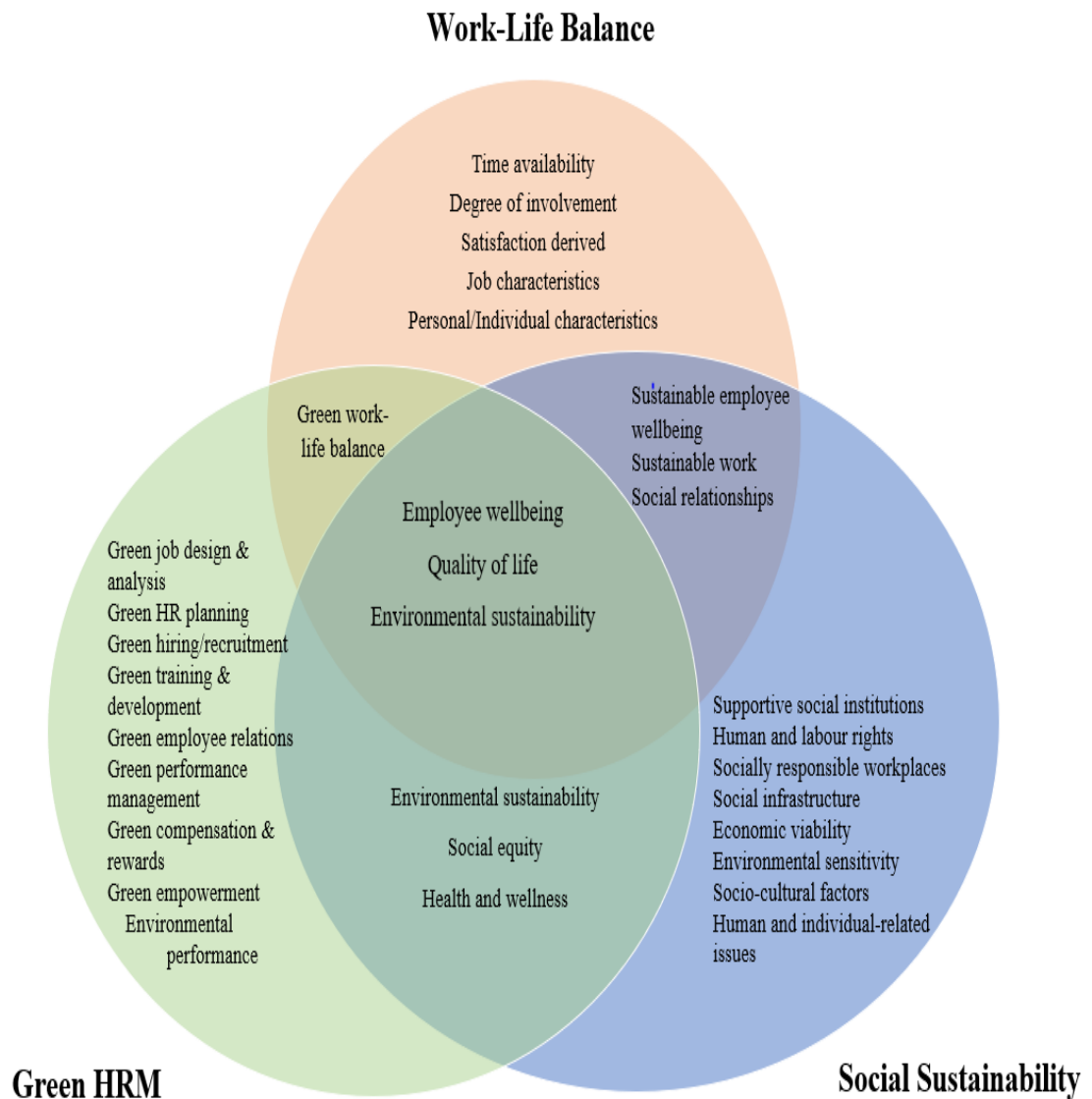
Extant research also suggests that organisational initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable work and sustainable development through corporate social responsibility practices that include, organisation's concern about the environment, community relations and equality, affect job seekers and existing employees' perception about the organisation's commitment to social values and well-being concerns (Jones et al., 2019; Scheidler et al., 2019). As Vallance et al. (2011) suggest, the threefold schema attempts to uncover the approaches to social sustainability and its strength for facilitating quality of life. First is the 'development sustainability' that responds to the provision of basic

social infrastructure and creates social capital, justice and equity; second, ‘bridge sustainability’ addresses the need to change behavioural patterns in the achievement of environmental goals, which in turn engender a conducive environment for business and leisure activities; and third is the ‘maintenance sustainability’ which equates to the preservation of socio-cultural attributes to strengthen the quality of life.

More so, the concept of green HRM is much more environmental-related, given its principles that influence how HRM coordinates business activities in an environmentally-friendly manner (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). As discussed under social sustainability being a sub-set or integrated aspect of the sustainability framework, the environmental aspects of sustainability also lie within social sustainability (Mushfiquir et al., 2018). Social sustainability, therefore, promotes the “greening of existing employment and the creation of new, environmentally sound jobs, to ensure the environmentally, socially, and health-friendly provision of goods and services” (Littig, 2008, p. 11). Thus, WLB can be enhanced where the organisational and individual factors that affect the work and non-work related roles generate positive interactivity, such that the employee is able to manage both domains by leveraging its social and environmental resources (Vasa and Sowdamini, 2018; Amrutha and Geetha, 2020).

Interestingly, from the review of literature, an overlap seems to exist between work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. As shown in figure 10, the overlap arises from the interactions that exist between the three concepts, such that it promotes employee wellbeing, improved quality of life and environmental sustainability. Therefore, it becomes evident the possibility of a linkage between WLB, social sustainability and green HRM (see figure 11).

Figure 10: Overlap between WLB, Social Sustainability and Green HRM



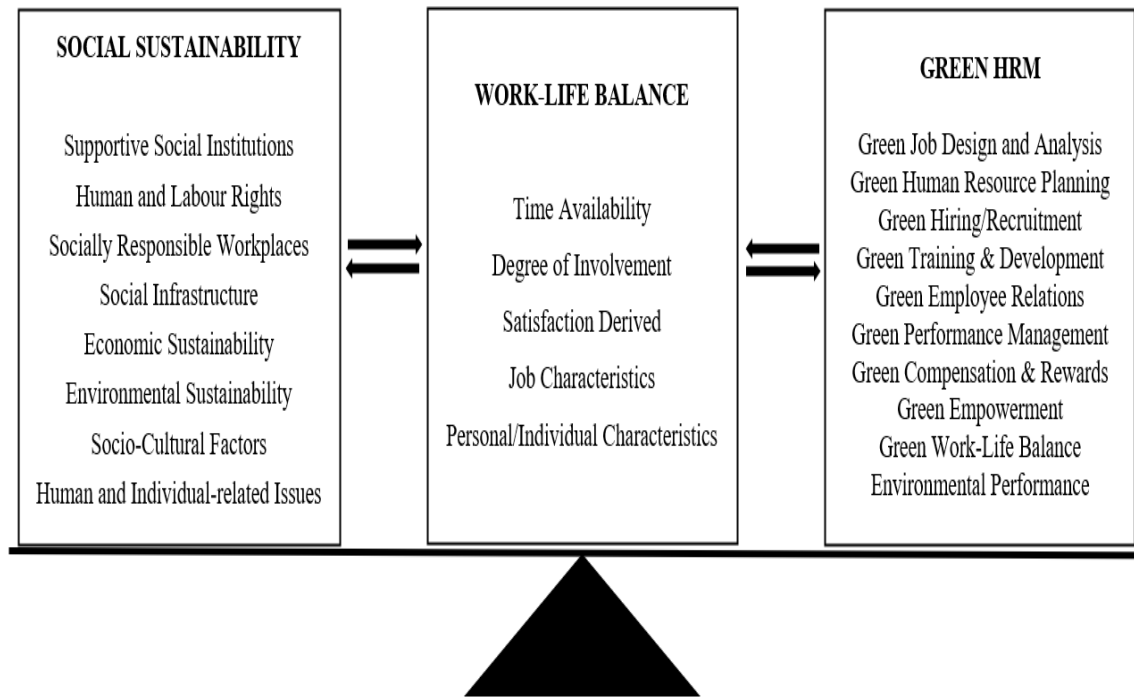
Source: Researcher's Findings

As shown in figure 11, the link emerges from the interconnectivity or overlap observed from the interactions of the three constructs, such that the activities, initiatives and elements of social sustainability and green HRM affect employees' ability to successfully combine their work and non-work obligations. In a sense, social sustainability is centred on how individuals, organisations and communities interact to meet certain conditions, such as providing equal access to basic infrastructure, breeding a cultural relations system that supports cultural integration, increased and equal participation in political activities,

and providing a sense of community responsibility and social welfare. Social sustainability address issues around socially responsible workplaces that value human rights and provide supportive social institutions. Meanwhile, green HRM is centred on how HRM policies, practices, and philosophies can stimulate business resource sustainability and reduce environmental concerns arising from business activities. This is seen in how organisations ensure their HR functions inculcate green behaviours through green hiring, green training and development, green job design, green performance management etc. This also takes shape in how these policies are made to reduce paper usage, electronic filing, recycling, office energy savings, and other initiatives that drive the reduction of activities contributing to environmental degradation, which positively affects the quality of life.

Moreover, in the context of WLB, the green WLB construct advocates that organisations should facilitate green HR initiatives that enhance employee occupational health and organisational sustainability. Interestingly, part of the aim of WLB is to go green (Singh and Bhatnagar, 2015; Ravenswood, 2022). This takes the shape of flexible workplaces (e.g., remote working or working from home), which does not only favour employees' ability to manage their work and non-work obligations, reduce travel costs, and stress of commuting, but also serve as an organisation's strategy to reduce operating costs and increase productivity and fulfilling the environmental sustainability agenda. For example, many studies during the pandemic drew attention to how working from home reduced the operating costs of organisations and increased productivity (Matli, 2020; Amankwah-Amoah, 2021), even though these were not without its challenges.

Figure 11: Pictorial Representation of the Proposed Model Linking WLB, Social Sustainability and Green HRM



Source: Researcher's Findings

In addition, Mandip (2012) argues that one of the broader programs of corporate social responsibility (CSR) are green initiatives or activities embarked on by organisations. CSR aims to ensure that organisations are responsible and accountable to their environment and stakeholders (shareholders, employees, consumers, government, suppliers, and community) by safeguarding the environment wherein the business operates (Ahmad and Nisar, 2015). Harmon et al. (2010) posit that the HR department plays a crucial role in forming a sustainability culture within the organisation. The importance of strengthening the green HRM policies within an organisation increases the likelihood of adopting an effective environmental management system (Bohdanowicz et al., 2011). Therefore, the environmental management system serves as a precursory measure to ensure that organisations comply with green initiatives and HR practices that bolster

environmentalism, such as waste management, carbon footprint reduction, recycling, green orientation programmes (Mandip, 2012).

Furthermore, Abo-Murad and Abdullah (2019) built up a hypothetical model where recognised policies in the field of recruitment, performance and appraisal, training and workforce development, employee relations and reward frameworks are viewed as integral assets for adjusting employees to an organisation's environmental system. Such policies have been ascertained to promote sustainable workplaces and cater to the wellbeing of the employees, which translates into a better work-life balance (Mushfiqur et al., 2018).

Green recruitment and selection are influenced by individual's character or behaviour and assessed during recruitment, which can help an organisation hire green-minded talents (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2016). An employee's green capabilities are essential for attaining a favourable environmental performance (Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014) which are also expected to foster work-life balance through the facilitation of social sustainability (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Likewise, green performance appraisal might be significant for ensuring that employees are within the organisation's green agenda, which is also aimed at improving their wellbeing (Shen et al., 2018). Hence, the organisation's performance appraisal framework will encourage employees to imbibe green practices to promote individual, organisational and community welfare in the achievement of social sustainability (Cohen, 2012; Sandaruwan et al., 2020).

Greening employees is critical to improving an organisation's sustainable environment outcomes, where employees are spurred to seek after green objectives which are viable and productive (Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014; Huang, 2018). According to Mandip (2012) and Robertson and Barling (2013), one of the approaches to expand employee inclusion

in environmental-accommodating practices is by promoting awareness among the employees and shaping organisational structures in such ways that bolster employee engagement and improve wellbeing. Green training and development are expected to improve employees' awareness and information on environmental issues to adopt a proactive strategy toward environmental concerns and create skills to save vitality and mitigate environmental degradation (Dutta, 2012).

4.3 SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed a variety of literature to understand the concept of social sustainability, and concludes that social sustainability is an important concept, policy and practice towards facilitating employee wellbeing, organisational productivity and community development. Whichever way social sustainability is construed either as a stand-alone concept (social pillar) or particularly as an integral part of the sustainability framework, social sustainability is adjudged as a positive influence on promoting individual wellbeing (as an employee or part of a community) and enhancing the ability of an organisation to gain competitive advantage.

The reviewed literature also provides evidence that showcases green HRM's ability to make organisational and employees operations environmentally friendly. From job analysis and design function to training and development, reward and compensation management, employee relations and performance management, greening the HRM processes are deemed to be progressive within contemporary HRM. However, the main challenge confronting HR experts is understanding the depth and scope of green HRM required to transform their organisation into green entities. Green HRM, in its depth, provides the fundamental reasoning behind being an environmentally-friendly organisation that benefits the employer, employees, the community and other stakeholders. Hence, to build, implement and maintain environmental-related innovative

employees' behaviours, combined with the right greening attitude, green HRM policies and practices are germane. Deducing from the green HRM literature reviewed, employee behaviours and intentions towards a sustainable environment are crucial to the success and attainment of organisations green management and sustainability agenda. The next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework as a lens for understanding the inter-relationship of the three concepts understudied in the literature review.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATION THEORY

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the integration theory as the theoretical lens of the study. It reviews extant literature to understand the influence of work-life integration as a strategy to manage the boundary that exists between the work and personal domains. First of all, the historical evolution of the integration theory was discussed to identify the patterns and various types of perspectives that explain the relationship between work-related and non-work-related roles of an individual. The chapter further reviews extant literature to understand the concept of work-life integration. Lastly, the chapter discusses the implications and criticisms of integration.

5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION THEORY

The integration theory of work-life balance (or work-life integration theory) is one of the oldest, yet, one of the newest approaches used by scholars to navigate the work-life terrain. The evolution of the theory spans from the traditional patterns of combining work and personal roles into other theories that describe work (professional) and personal (family or non-family) roles as separate roles within the human life cycle (Bailyn, 2011; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). A glance at the work-life boundary before the global industrialisation across societies emphasises the evolution of the concept of integration between the work and non-related roles performed by individuals (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). The pre-World War II pattern of work shows little or no separation between the work and domestic domains, given that artisans performed their production activities at home by cultivating food for commercial purposes and personal/family consumption on their family farms; likewise, using existing personal networks among merchants was

the primary pattern of conducting business activities (Edwards, 1979). In other words, the work domain merged with the personal domain; work colleagues harmonised with family and friends within close quarters, and there was hardly a separation of work from workers' personal lives (Alt, 1976).

However, following the rise of industrialisation and the expansion of factories and mass production activities, there was an increasing rate of men, in particular, leaving their homes to take up outside jobs (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Consequently, this led to the separation of work and personal time, likewise, a distinction of work-related and non-work-related duties, which shaped the patterns of work and personal life as different expectations were allocated to both domains (Weber, 1946). The proliferation of women into paid employment during the 1970s and 1980s exacerbated the prevailing complexity between work and personal life due to the increase in dual-income earning families (Geurts and Demerouti, 2003; Hahn and Dormann, 2013).

The utilisation of boundary management styles, particularly, segmentation became the individual practices to create a demarcation or borderline between work-related and non-work-related roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). However, recently, the debate on work-life balance discourse among contemporary organisational scholars have begun to traverse and challenge the assumptions of the several theories of work-life balance that support segmenting the work domain from the personal domain towards promoting work-life integration (Morris and Madsen, 2007; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). The changing nature of work due to the rise of the service sector and decreasing manufacturing industry activities also engendered an increase in knowledge work centred on skills related to processing and disseminating information alongside problem-solving (Gargiulo et al., 2009; Perlow and Kelly, 2014). In addition, the existing informal relationships among knowledge coworkers promoted effective coordination and

teamwork, resulting in the blurring of the distinction between a coworker and a friend (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). More so, knowledge work facilitates remote or home working for many employees, unlike the manufacturing work, hence, work and personal duties sometimes take place within the same space (Perlow and Kelly, 2014).

Furthermore, as technological advancement facilitates work-life integration (Kossek et al., 2012), the rise of dual-income families engendered challenges in the effective management of work-related and non-work-related duties (Hilbrecht et al., 2013). This gave rise to the implementation of several work-family policies and practices aimed at providing work flexibility to individuals as a solution to managing their work and personal commitments and promote work-life integration (Kossek et al., 2005; Atkinson and Sandiford, 2016). Extant research has referred to the separation between work and non-work roles as a myth whilst supporting the coexistence of both domains (integration) as the solution to work-life conflicts (Ramarajan and Reid, 2013; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015).

Reiterating, the integration theory, despite being the foremost approach, and its collapse as a consequence of the increasing activities of outside jobs, has since evolved again from the several other work-life theories (Morris and Madsen, 2007). For instance, the segmentation theory (Kanter, 1977; Edwards and Rothbard, 2000) refers to drawing a line of demarcation or rigid boundary that completely separates work from family (or personal) domains. The spillover theory (Grzywacz, 2000) alludes to sharing similar effects (such as behaviours, attitude, skills, affect, values) between work and personal roles, which can be either positive or negative. The compensation theory (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000) refers to the attempt made to set off negative experiences encountered in one domain by increasing the efforts made in the pursuit of positive experiences in the other domain. The enrichment theory (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) equates to the degree

to which the experiences (e.g. mood, skills, values) in one domain engender positive experiences to promote the quality of life in the other domain. The inter-role conflict perspective (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) considers the effect of work and family roles incompatibility in generating conflicts which could be time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based. The work-life facilitation perspective (Grzywacz, 2002) alludes to the degree to which participation in one domain (using skills, knowledge, experiences and resources) promotes increased engagement in the other domain. The border theory (Clark, 2000) and boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) refers to the creation and management of borders with an emphasis on border permeability and flexibility, which determine the extent to which individuals can move from one domain (temporarily) to devote time, energy and attention in the other domain. Whilst some of these theories focus on making a distinction and creating a boundary between an individual's work and personal roles, the integration theory practically blurs or weakens the boundary.

5.2 INTEGRATION THEORY IN CONTEXT

Drawing on arguments that the separation of work and personal roles is problematic, work-life integration is proposed to address the realities associated with the combination of both domains (Bailyn, 2011). Unlike the segmentation theory that reinforces the boundary between work and personal or family spheres, the integration theory advocates the blurring of the boundary and is characterised by greater permeability and flexibility (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Although many scholars argue that adopting a rigid work-life boundary helps to manage role responsibilities (Kanter, 1977; Edwards and Rothbard, 2000), some other scholars advocate blurring the boundary as a way to manage identity and relationships in the workplace (Ramarajan and Reid, 2013; Perlow and Kelly, 2014). Dumas and Sanchez-Burks (2015) acknowledge the characteristics of integration as being symmetric or asymmetric; employees may weaken the work-life boundary by

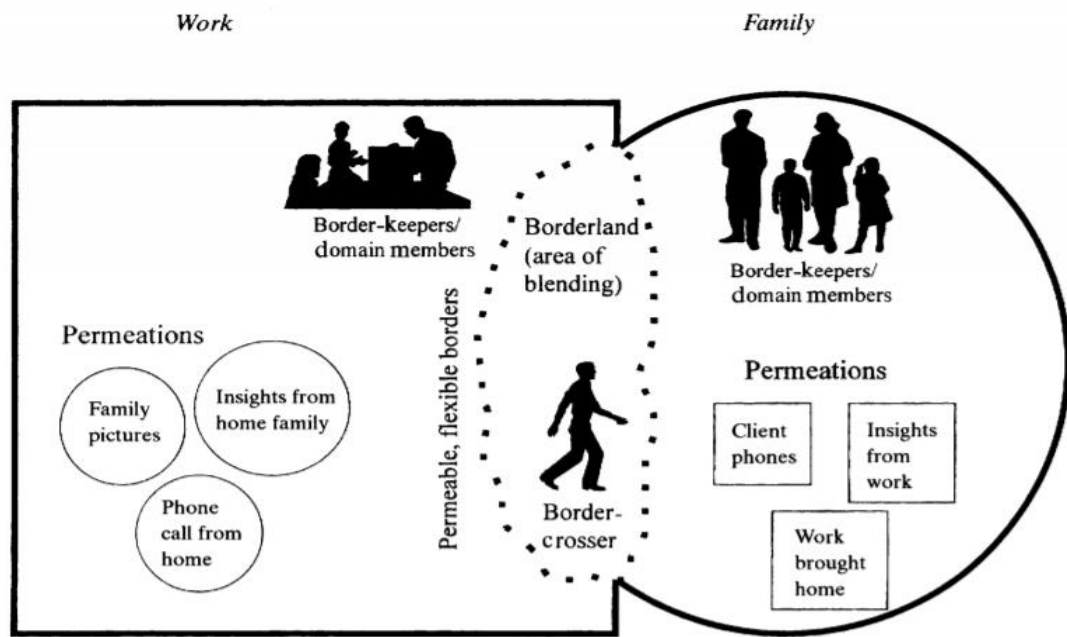
embracing their non-work-related lives into the work-space or work transcending into their domestic space.

Reconstructing the term ‘personal’ and ‘work’ is necessary to understand the notion of work-life integration (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). On one hand, the term ‘personal’ is used to denote familial and non-familial roles performed outside of the professional or work-space, including the elements of social identities (racial identity, religion, sexual orientation) which are not related to work or family (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). On the other hand, ‘work’ refers to the activities related to an individual’s job roles in the workplace or work performed offsite (telework) and the culture and processes that are associated with such job roles (Uhlmann et al., 2013). Hence, whereas the boundary management strategies supporting segmenting work and personal roles argue that embracing personal activities into the work-space is unprofessional, integration theory advocates promoting personal identities and relationships at work (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015).

It is important to note that both border and boundary theories suggest integration to an extent (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). The underlying principles of the boundary theory locate the element of integration as a structure that enables easier movement between work and non-work domains which is made possible by its increasing overlapping systems, which are temporal, spatial and cognitive (Bulger et al., 2007). By implication, integration allows the flexibility to adopt any role irrespective of the domain the individual inhabits at that time. Extant research in support of work-life integration argues that individuals have the feeling of efficiency and success in “killing two birds with one stone” (saving time) when they are able to handle multiple roles, and such is achieved through integration (Fonner and Stache, 2012). Ashforth et al. (2000) evince a strong relationship between role identification and integration, given that individuals who

create an identity around a particular role find it difficult to give up such identities and tend to adopt such roles within diverse situations. For instance, individuals who identify themselves as sporty tend to integrate such features at work as they find it beneficial to their performance and psychological well-being.

Figure 12: Pictorial Representation of the Work/Family Border Theory

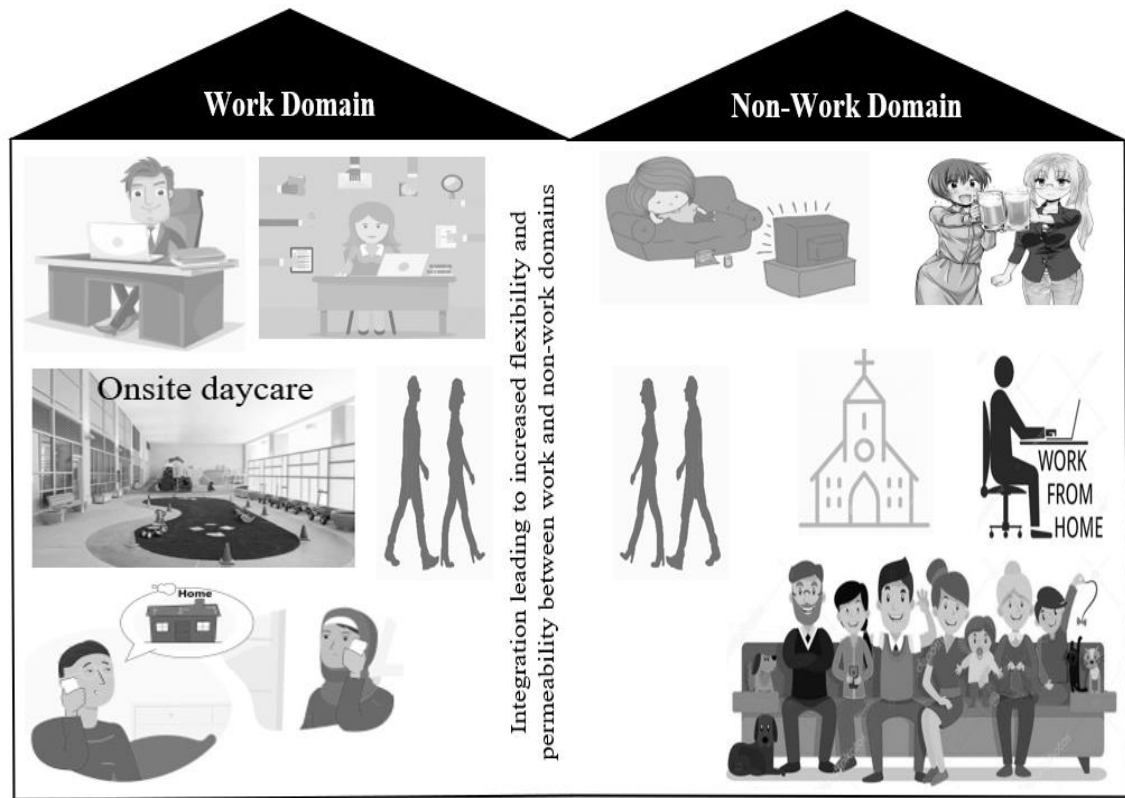


Source: Clark (2000, p. 754)

On the other hand, border theory (Clark, 2000) argues that integration allows an asymmetrically permeable boundary suitable for individuals to identify themselves with either their work or personal roles due to the porosity and flexibility of the border (see figure 12). In addition, border theory avers that individuals demand increased control over the boundary connected with their most identity-relevant role; hence, they allow that role to interfere with others where and when desired (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Clark (2000) purports that the border theory supports “other domain awareness”, affirming that employees make their managers or coworkers aware of their family role identity with the expectation that they may receive more support towards fulfilling their roles as they desire

in the family domain. Therefore, employees are likely to achieve integration where there is a similarity between their work and non-work domain (e.g. family), and when organisations facilitate such integration (see figure 13).

Figure 13: Pictorial Representation of the Work-Life Integration Theory



Source: Researcher's Findings

A significant aspect of the integration theory is the role flexibility that it offers, and flexibility is the primary asset of WLB itself (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). So specifically for this research, integration addresses the inter-relationship between WLB, social sustainability and green HRM. In a sense, given the proposition that social sustainability and green HRM facilitates WLB, it means that individuals can combine work with personal, family and community commitments, which are all embedded in the 3 constructs. Integration allows individuals to devote primary attention and commitment to any of the three domains within a necessary period, thus temporarily making the two

other domains the secondary foci (Groysberg and Abrahams, 2014). Employees rarely lose focus on other domains (i.e. family and community); instead, they are perceived in the background and switched over into when stretching the permeable boundaries and taking advantage of the flexibility to move across borders (Fonner and Stache, 2012).

Therefore, since the components of social sustainability that allows people to depend on supportive social institutions (e.g., family, friends and colleagues) in managing the domains and that of green HRM through organisation-directed practices to support conducive workplaces and living conditions are related to an individual's work and private lives, integration allows for the individual to combine these roles to reduce role and identity conflicts. A recent example of work-life integration is the COVID-19 pandemic which serves as the largest social experiment to test the efficacy of remote working (Lemay et al., 2021). Most people had to share the same space for work and non-work responsibilities, making it challenging to separate but instead integrate these two domains. Consequently, the borders became even more permeable and flexible for the majority. It is also an example of flexible working through remote work promoting the green agenda to a large extent, as research finds that carbon emissions reduced since many people worked remotely and some organisations closed their offices (Kylili et al., 2020; Adhikari et al., 2021).

Extant research emphasises the importance of integration across the domains of work and personal life. Kellogg (2011) purports that organisations are at the forefront of facilitating the integration system rather than discouraging employees from integrating their non-work roles into the workplace (e.g., allowing the display of personal items in their offices) (Uhlmann et al., 2013). Furthermore, some studies reveal that organisational practices that facilitate the blurring of boundaries or the integration of personal and work lives

include self-disclosure, organisational family-responsive policies, on-site childcare and social activities sponsored by organisations (Kreiner et al., 2009; Dumas et al., 2013).

From the employee's perspective, work-life integration fosters the successful management of identity and relationships (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). It enables employees to achieve freedom of self-expression, a sense of belonging through active participation, self-esteem, forming quality relationships with coworkers and be respected in the organisation (Bailyn, 2011). On the other hand, employers enjoy the benefits of cooperative employee interactions and teamwork that drive improved overall performance due to work-life integration (Cable and Kay, 2012).

In addition, Meister et al. (2014) posit that integrating personal identities within the work-space helps employees feel better (or valued) about themselves and the organisation when they perceive that they can bring their whole self to work. In their study, Cable et al. (2013) found that employees who had the opportunity to display their personal identities and socialise at work were more engaged, performed better, and less likely to turnover than their colleagues that emphasised organisational identity. Likewise, Bryon and Laurence (2015) discovered that employees attempt to exhibit their personal identities in their workplaces when they display personal items (e.g. personal or family photographs and arts) as a reminder of their personal identities. Furthermore, integrating non-work activities into the workplace is evident among employees who receive non-work-related calls in the workplace or reveal information about their personal life to colleagues (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Bringing the whole self into work gives the employee the feeling of authenticity (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008). On the contrary, suppressing core personal identities in the workplace results in lower satisfaction, increased turnover intention, less commitment, diminishing confidence and emotional burnout (Hewlin, 2009).

Extant research on the advantages of employee authenticity at work argues that organisations need to be more receptive, creative and innovative in leveraging their diverse workforce and accommodate the uniqueness of individuals' identities which are connected with their personal identities (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2015; Metin et al., 2016; van den Bosch et al., 2019). Robertson (2006) posits that organisations that are responsive to work-life integration, diversity and inclusion at work encourage the practice of inviting employees to partake in sharing their personal identities and experiences in the workplace. These initiatives foster a sense of common identity among dissimilar employees towards embracing each others' identities (van Dick et al., 2018). Organisations benefit from embracing the personal identities of their employees as it helps employees to serve customers better. For instance, in their study, Yagil and Medler-Liraz (2013) discovered that customer service customers related to customers on the phone using more of their personal identities than organisational identities to establish an association with the customer, which often resulted in the willingness to provide adequate support and customer service.

Furthermore, studies aver that integrating personal identities within the work-space enhances the quality of relationships with colleagues and customers (Dumas et al., 2013; Ilies et al., 2013). Disclosing personal information about non-work life with colleagues fosters closer relationships, which translates into managing the work-life boundary (Trefalt, 2013). Increased collegial support is often generated among coworkers who have a better understanding of each others' non-work roles (e.g. family roles) and personal identities (Clark, 2002), and where social networks have been built (Mushfiquir et al., 2018). Mutual cooperation among coworkers engenders increased performance due to the informal relationship (friendship) among colleagues to feel more willing to help out each other (Pederson and Lewis, 2012). In sum, employees who share their personal identities

contribute to positive psychological and relational outcomes both for the employees and organisation (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015).

More so, Orbst and White (2004) opine that community, defined as a geographical space and identified as a place to live and work, contribute to the fulfilment of basic human needs. As Voydanoff (2005) posits:

Understanding how communities may both help and hinder the efforts of work organizations, families, and individuals to enhance work–family integration provides the necessary foundation for designing work, community, and family policies and programs that increase families to meet the needs of their members. (p. 583)

Therefore, individuals perceive a sense of belonging within a community that contributes to their wellbeing; hence, social networks and social capital (as key elements of social sustainability) are essential for integrating work with personal, family and community obligations (Magee et al., 2012).

5.3 IMPLICATIONS AND CRITICISMS OF INTEGRATION

Empirical studies argue that many individuals prefer integration as a boundary management strategy, given its stronger boundary permeability and flexibility (Ashforth et al., 2000; Hahn and Dormann, 2013). Despite the drawback of integration as a factor leading to increased inter-role conflict, employees perceive their organisation's efforts towards helping them in shouldering their non-work obligations as being benevolent (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). More so, Ratnasingam et al. (2012), in their study of university employees, found that the practices of on-site childcare increased employee work engagement and satisfaction as employees perceived that their organisations were family supportive. Hence, organisational family responsive policies are often perceived

by employees as a strategy to transcend the work boundary (Shaffer et al., 2011; Golden, 2013; Putnam et al., 2014).

In addition, the schedule flexibility prevalent in contemporary work patterns tends to weaken the distinction between work and non-work time and are found attractive by employees (Baltes et al., 1999). Nevertheless, Perlow and Kelly (2014) argue that despite the attractiveness of schedule flexibility, employees often feel as if they are always at work and translates into blurring the boundary between work and personal domains and increasing role interference. Similarly, Boswell et al. (2014) aver that some individuals may prefer integration, however, such practices lead to greater challenges with boundary management and lead to role conflicts.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic created another significant change in the working patterns of employees around the world due to the social distancing measures to curb the spread of the virus (Gao and Sai, 2020). Hence, the cohabitation of work and personal roles within the domestic space was an extreme case of integration, which yielded concerns for the effects of integration. As employees attempted to perform their work and non-work duties while working from home, particularly using digital technologies, they tend to have experienced a complete integration of both domains, and the blurring of the border became inevitable (Adisa et al., 2021; Nash and Churchill, 2020). This extreme situation of extensive flexibility and integration resulted in increased work-life conflict and engendered physical and psychological stress on employees working from home (Bahn et al., 2020).

Kossek et al. (2012) posit that in consideration of boundary management effects on employees' ability to address multiple role demands, role conflict has been exacerbated, leading to distress and deficiencies in work performance. For instance, the study of Stanko

and Beckman (2014) revealed that receiving personal emails and phone calls impeded work productivity as workers tend to face distractions and interruptions as well as increased mistakes on the job. Another study (Nohe et al., 2014) argues that the negative effects of role conflicts on work performance can be reduced when there is a psychological separation of work and personal domains. The terminal point of integration was found among employees whose spouses worked in the same organisation and often resulted in strain-based work-family conflict (Halbesleben et al., 2012). More so, blurring the work and personal boundary yields cases of a negative spillover, where there is a transfer of negative experience and affect from one domain to another (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Studies aver that dealing with psychological or emotional distress may prove more challenging for employees propose that segmenting the roles and enacting a stronger border or demarcation between work and personal domains is necessary for reducing role conflict (Settles et al., 2002; Halbesleben et al., 2012).

5.4 SUMMARY

Having reviewed extant literature aimed at understanding work-life integration perspective, it can be concluded that integrating both work and life domains may prove to be a solution to managing work and non-work related responsibilities. Despite the criticisms and scholarly works against the integration of work and personal domains where the segmentation theory seems dominant, work-life integration remains a preferred strategy towards effective boundary management. It espouses a system that promotes and embraces personal identities among employees and employers in the workplace as a strategy to facilitate work productivity among colleagues, customers and wellbeing and authenticity for the individuals.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the methodological approach adopted in the study. The chapter presents the philosophical overview of the study and justifications for its adoption. It further discusses and justifies the research design, including the research purpose, approach, method and strategy. It presents the data collection and sampling strategy employed in the recruitment of the study's participants. The chapter highlights the process of data analysis and concludes with the procedures for ensuring research quality.

6.1 PHILOSOPHICAL OVERVIEW

The research philosophy is defined as a system of beliefs and assumptions regarding how knowledge is conceived and developed (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012; Baškarada and Koronios, 2018). It relates to the development of knowledge in a particular field of research, including the assumptions of research realities, human knowledge, and how the research process is influenced by the researcher's values and beliefs (Saunders et al., 2019). This study is underpinned by the interpretivist philosophy.

Following the interpretivist philosophy adopted in this research and further explained in the next section, this study is driven by ontological and epistemological assumptions. On the one hand, ontology is concerned with the "assumptions about the nature of reality" (Saunders et al., 2019) or predicated on the proposition about the nature of phenomena (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012). Therefore, given that there are multiple social realities of the phenomenon (e.g., WLB), the researcher cannot make sense of reality alone but instead needs to capture the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of the research

participants or actors. This is because the phenomenon has multiple realities, meanings and interpretations that are socially constructed and influenced by a blend of processes, experiences and practices (Saunders et al., 2019). On the other hand, the epistemological approach contrives knowledge and explains it through theories (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). According to Burrell and Morgan (2017), “epistemology refers to assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others”. It is based on how knowledge is created and the limit to what can be known (Dana and Dumez, 2015). Thus, meaning is made from focussing on stories, narratives, opinions/perceptions, and individual or context-specific interpretations (Saunders et al., 2019). For example, the study context raises the question to seek knowledge that identifies if social sustainability and green HRM promotes work-life balance. Also, it seeks knowledge about factors that promote or hinder work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in Nigerian HEIs.

6.1.1 Interpretivism Paradigm

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), interpretivism seeks to understand social phenomena through the substantive categories of human experience. Contrarily, positivism is rooted in natural sciences and seeks a derivation, explanation, and prediction of knowledge through the causal-functional approach to explain the relationship between elements or variables (Gray, 2014; Burrell and Morgan, 2017). However, interpretivism is predicated on social inquiry and revealing trends rather than laws (Saunders et al., 2019). It suggests that the researcher is an integral part of the research, whose role is to interpret the data, which is rather subjective than objective (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2014).

Interpretivists are concerned with unique, deviant and contextualised environments to understand social phenomena bounded by reality and subjective knowledge that is influenced by the actors within that environment (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). Therefore, unlike positivism whose outcomes can be generalised, interpretivism cannot be generalised (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012). This is because the construction of knowledge through the actors own perspectives of social reality is often value-laden and biased, given that people often interpret their experience in the way they see it, not based on objectivity (O’Reilly, 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2019) argue that interpretivism allows the researcher to study human beings and their social inclinations in a way that is different from natural sciences and physical phenomena. Thus, researchers tend to extract rich information through the subjective interpretations of the data collected. The rich information collected may give insights into how people of distinct cultural backgrounds, different circumstances, and varying timeframe provide different meanings and experience to different social realities (Saunders et al., 2019).

Interpretivists reject the law-like generalisations that reduce the level and complexity of the insights into humanity but provide a unique and richer understanding and interpretations of social phenomena (Taylor et al., 2016). Therefore, rather than restrict the experience and understanding of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM to what the case should be, interpretivism allows the researcher to derive an in-depth knowledge of the social realities and perspectives of different groups of people to the concepts understudied. More so, following the argument of Kumar (2019), interpretivism underscores the importance of culture, beliefs, norms, language and values in shaping how social phenomena is experienced and interpreted.

Thus, this research adopts the interpretivist philosophy as guided by the research questions. Therefore, instead of taking a random universal theory on work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM, which may be applicable in some regions or countries, the tenets of interpretivism posits that individual opinions of the subject under study be sampled as a way to obtain unique data for analysis and efficient inference (Bryman, 2016). Besides, this approach is supported by Patterson (2018) that interpretivism helps the researcher understand and reform knowledge and be able to gather data in a flexible way that is sensitive to the experiences of the research context.

6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Saunders et al. (2019), a research design is a developed framework predicated on consistent evidence found within the research question. It states the entire plan of the research that guides the researcher in the research investigation and the appropriate measures for answering the research questions (Bryman et al., 2018). The research design provides a clear structure for undertaking the research. It is the blueprint for how data is to be collected, processed and analysed (Wilson, 2014; Yin, 2017).

6.2.1 Research Purpose

A research design can be categorised into: exploratory, explanatory, descriptive or predictive, or a combination of the aforementioned (Saunders et al., 2019). However, this study uses exploratory and explanatory research. Exploratory research is used to identify patterns or trends in the research that can be used to provide an understanding of the subject area (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). It seeks to ask open questions (e.g., what or how?) investigating the experiences within a topical area of interest, problem or phenomenon. For instance, this study is exploratory by seeking to understand how the participants define work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. Furthermore,

exploratory research examines existing theories that can be used to understand the phenomenon, or it may be a case of developing new theories (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Explanatory research, also called analytical research, is used to analyse and explain the rationale for the research and its outcomes (Bryman et al., 2018). It establishes a causal relationship between variables to explain answers to the research questions of ‘why’ or ‘how’. Thus, explanatory research focuses on explaining the reason for the occurrence of phenomena (Saunders et al., 2019). For example, this study examines how social sustainability affects work-life balance in the Nigerian education sector. It also explains how green HRM promotes healthy work and healthy life in the Nigerian education sector.

In addition, descriptive research is purposed to describe a phenomenon and its peculiarities (Wilson, 2014). Thus, asking questions like ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’ ‘how’ or ‘who’, this type of research seeks to obtain a detailed description of events, situations or persons (Saunders et al., 2019). Lastly, predictive research is purposed to identify trends and patterns from existing data as a means to forecast future results, outcomes, patterns or trends (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

6.2.2 Research Approach

According to Kennedy (2018), the research approach is how the research connects data to theory. There are three main research approaches: inductive, deductive and abductive. Inductive research involves using empirical data to identify patterns or trends and infer categories that reveal new or unique understandings of knowledge (Molina-Azorin and Cameron, 2015). Inductive approach is used when the researcher interacts with the data and avoids making assumptions of the outcomes beforehand in order to derive existing patterns, concepts and theories as they emerge from the data (Eriksson and Kovalainen,

2015). However, Kennedy (2018, p. 4) argues that “inductive conclusions are always hypothetical and fallible”. This is because it is predicated on the extent to which the outcomes are credible based on the evidence or theory (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

Deductive research seeks to develop the existence of a theory following thorough testing of the theory through various propositions to validate or disprove existing understandings of the theory (Kennedy, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). According to Saunders et al. (2019), deduction allows the researcher to anticipate the phenomena, predict their occurrence, and control the outcomes. Deducing from theory allows researchers to address the evidence and nuances that might be overlooked in the data (Bryman et al., 2018). However, deduction hinders the researcher from addressing other elements of the data that fall outside the scope of the theory prescribed a priori or lead to data over-interpretation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

Abductive research is a combination of induction and deduction. As opposed to singularly moving from data to theory (induction) or theory to data (deduction), an abductive approach uses the forward-backwards approach (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, at first, the researcher observes the unique or surprising data and relates it to an existing theory that may explain the data and its occurrence. The researcher then progresses to use the outcomes to establish a new theory or substantiate an existing theory (Kumar, 2019). In addition, researchers use abduction to call for modifications in existing understandings of a particular theory; they elaborate upon (or reject, if needed) the existing premises and explain the anomalies in the data (Van Maanen et al., 2007; Kennedy, 2018). This requires the researcher to be open to the data outcomes and use an iterative interplay between data and theory from which the existing theoretical knowledge and assumptions may be revised or challenged (Thornberg, 2012; Kelle, 2014).

More specifically, based on the exploratory and explanatory nature employed in this study, this research adopts an inductive research approach because it helps the researcher to focus on the set objectives and observe the data to explain the phenomenon (Collins and Stockton, 2018). The inductive research allows the researcher to observe the patterns in the data and theorise those patterns (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Also, it helps to analyse the data based on the existing theoretical framework, thus ensuring that the theory is adopted as an analytical tool during data collection and analysis (Baskarada, 2014; Kennedy, 2018).

6.2.3 Qualitative Research

The division into quantitative and qualitative research emerges from the perspectives of what forms scientific versus non-scientific research methodologies (Saunders et al., 2019). This dichotomy is also influenced by the scope of natural sciences mainly interested in phenomena that can be quantified using quantitative techniques, which offers more realistic values and valid outcomes (Yin, 2018). However, researchers in social sciences are more interested in the evaluative and exploratory aspects of nature and humanity and deem qualitative techniques more appropriate (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Nevertheless, both quantitative and qualitative research methods offer valuable contributions in the development of knowledge and problem-solving (Azungah, 2018).

More specifically, qualitative research focuses on the perceptions, definitions, and meanings people attach to situations or lived experiences (Matta, 2019). Therefore, as Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest, qualitative researchers aim to understand people based on their subjective meanings to a particular phenomenon or reality and interpret their lived experiences. It is often a requirement for qualitative researchers to be part of the research, empathise and relate to the understudied people or demography to ascertain how

they perceive things (Patterson, 2018). Qualitative researchers tend to study their research settings and demography holistically by considering diverse situations and experiences (past or present) of the understudied people, and how they act and think (Rossman and Rallis, 2012).

In the course of the research, qualitative researchers remain naturalistic by forming interactions with the understudied demography in a manner that is natural and unobtrusive. This is because it allows the researcher to uncover several aspects of the people's lives that cannot be explained by quantitative research or outside the interaction with the understudied people. Thus, it offers the opportunity to learn from the situation no matter how little, since no aspect of human social life is insignificant to be studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

In addition, interpretivism and qualitative research are often related, given that researchers often need to interpret subjective and socially constructed meanings that are within the researched phenomenon and context (Yin, 2018). Therefore, since qualitative researchers are expected to operate within the natural setting of the research, they need to be able to create trust, make sense of meanings and gain in-depth understanding of their understudied demography (Dana et al., 2015).

More so, some qualitative researchers begin with an inductive approach to developing theory in the case that a naturalistic and emergent research design is adopted in the establishment of theory or gain rich insights into theoretical perspectives within the literature (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Also, some qualitative research apply the deductive approach as a means to testing the validity of an existing theory (Yin, 2018). Likewise, the abductive approach is also applied to qualitative research such that there is an iterative procedure of moving from data to theory and vice versa (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

Despite the benefits it offers and its wide acceptance or adoption by researchers, qualitative research has been criticised for many reasons. It is argued that qualitative research lacks generalisation, given that the outcomes may be peculiar to a specific demographic or research setting and not all because of the differences in perceptions (Saunders et al., 2019). Thus, by using qualitative research, this study could not guarantee generalisability. Also, the link between theory and research is sometimes more ambiguous relative to quantitative studies, given its limited reach to study an extensive number of quantitative cases; thus, it may not be statistically representative of the population (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). In addition, researchers argue that in qualitative research, “correlation does not equal causation”, given that patterns may be difficult to interpret and the cause-and-effect relationship may be biased based on subjective interpretations (Patterson, 2018; Ranse et al., 2020).

Regardless of the criticisms and consolidating on the benefits of qualitative research as aforementioned, this research employs a qualitative approach geared towards giving detailed and rich insights into the issues of concern associated with work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. The qualitative approach is adopted because it matches the aim and objectives of this research, as well as its appropriateness to answering the research questions. Categorically, the adoption of qualitative research aligns with its successful application across several studies on WLB. For instance, Mordi et al. (2013), Adisa et al. (2017), Adekoya et al. (2019) and Adisa et al. (2021) have adopted the qualitative study in a non-Western context and specifically in Nigeria, which is the research context of this study. Also, studies like Seierstad and Kirton (2015), Cho et al. (2016) and Ezzedeen and Zikic (2017) have examined the WLB in a Western context. Across all of these studies, there remains a consistent call for researchers to adopt

more qualitative research to gain new insights into the experiences of WLB in diverse contexts.

In addition, extant research on social sustainability and green HRM (e.g., Haddock-Millar et al., 2016; Mushfiqur et al., 2018; Hameed et al., 2020) has adopted the qualitative study to delineate several aspects, factors and elements within the context that explains the unique experiences within the distinct contexts. These studies and other related studies have also called for the increasing adoption of qualitative studies to explore, explain and interpret the anomalies that may be found within different contexts and demography.

6.2.4 Case Study Research Strategy

According to Yin (2018), a case study is an in-depth investigation into a phenomenon or research interest within its real-life context. Similarly, Saunders et al. (2019) suggest using a case study strategy in a situation where the researcher seeks to obtain substantive understandings of the research context and process. The case in research could be a person or group of people, an organisation or association, an event or a change process (Yazan, 2015). However, Lee and Saunders (2017) argue that the choice of the case to be understudied and the determination of specific boundaries in the research is a critical consideration for defining the case. Nevertheless, when the case is established and clearly defined, it facilitates effective interaction between the case subject and its context (Yin, 2017). For instance, in this study, the case refers to academics within Nigerian higher education institutions.

In addition, the case study strategy is useful when the researcher focuses on questions about the why and how of a situation or phenomenon. It is appropriate for instances where the researcher cannot control the behaviours of the study participants (Hancock and Algozzine, 2016). Furthermore, the rationale for adopting the case study strategy is that

the exploratory and explanatory approaches adopted in this study allow the researcher to gain in-depth and rich insights from the case study and provide empirical descriptions that led to theory development. Likewise, adopting the qualitative research method advances the ability to obtain rich information and understand the case study. Thus, it provides the opportunity to obtain a rich understanding of the concepts of WLB, social sustainability and green HRM within the Nigerian HEIs' setting. The case study strategy also allows the researcher to identify the issues within the case, for example, the factors that promote or hinder work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM practices in the Nigerian education sector.

6.3 DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

Using a qualitative research method, the researcher gathered data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data comprise academics within the education sector of Nigeria. Specifically, the study gathers data from the three categories of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria including, Federal, State and Private HEIs. On the other hand, the secondary data sources are obtained from a variety of peer-reviewed journal articles, credible databases, online blogs, newspaper articles, etc. The secondary sources have helped in building the literature review and further provides strength to the research findings. It also serves as a form of data triangulation to achieve coherence in the research and increase the credibility, reliability, and validity of the research outcomes (Saunders et al., 2019).

6.3.1 Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

Non-probability sampling is used in this study. It includes a wide array of alternative techniques for selecting samples, particularly those that facilitate subjective judgement (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015; Sarstedt et al., 2018), given that this research uses

interpretivism philosophy. Also, most non-probability sampling strategies are free from sample size bias, given that there are no specific rules to the sample size, relative to probability sampling (Vehovar et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Instead, the most important point is the logical relationship that exists between the research purpose and focus and the selected sampling technique (Lee and Saunders, 2017; Saunders et al., 2019). In addition, Patton (2015) suggests that the sample size should depend on the research questions and objectives, as well as the intent of the study, its usefulness, the sample size that provides credibility and the availability of resources.

This research adopts the *snowballing sampling technique* that allows participants to volunteer rather than being chosen to take part in the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). More so, the snowballing sampling technique is used to recruit participants who meet the research criteria through the initial participants' referrals (Saunders et al., 2019). It is a common sampling technique for recruiting participants when the researcher faces difficulty identifying members of the desired population or in research demography that may be difficult to contact (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012; Fricker, 2016). For example, snowballing was used to recruit Nigerian academics because the researcher found it challenging to recruit as many participants due to the academics' busy schedules, most of whom were not within the researcher's network. Therefore, building rapport with the initial participants from the researcher's network, they were able to refer the researcher to colleagues who volunteered to participate in the research.

However, the snowballing technique has been deemed to encounter significant bias, as the initial participants tend to identify and refer other potential participants with whom they share similar values or experiences, resulting in a homogenous sample (Lee and Saunders, 2017; Saunders and Townsend, 2018). However, to mitigate the degree of bias, the researcher ensured that the participants met the research criteria. This included being

registered members of the HEIs they belonged; no less than two years of working experience; members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) – especially for academics in the Federal and State HEIs; and particularly those who had direct and central role associated with the issues investigated in the research following their interests in the research questions.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2020b), there are about 200,000 academics in the Nigerian HEIs. However, the researcher collected data until the data saturation point was reached – a point when no new information or emerging themes are discovered from the data analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). Thus, this study's sample size is 57 academics (male and female) across the three categories of HEIs in Nigeria. However, based on the small sample, representativeness issues may arise, although qualitative research has been reported to be non-generalisable (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Nevertheless, the HEIs and participants were recruited from four out of the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria. These include the South-West (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states), North Central (Kwara state and the Federal Capital Territory), North-West (Kano and Sokoto states) and South-South (Rivers and Cross-Rivers states). The choice of the four selected regions was primarily based on the fact that a sample should be drawn out of the population to avoid a sample size that is too large, which may hamper meaningful, timely, qualitative analysis (Boddy, 2016). Moreover, there are significant similarities between the four regions selected and the other two regions that have been left out (i.e., South-East and North-East). Among the four geographical regions, the South-West region was the most representative in the research because it has the highest number of state and private HEIs compared to the other regions. Table 4 presents the detailed demographic profile of the participants.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of the Participants

Names (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Rank	Years in Service	HEI Category
Participant 1	M	42	Married	Senior Lecturer	12	Federal
Participant 2	M	53	Married	Full Professor	23	State
Participant 3	M	51	Married	Senior Lecturer	13	State
Participant 4	F	44	Married	Senior Lecturer	14	Private
Participant 5	F	32	Single	Lecturer I	8	Private
Participant 6	F	40	Married	Senior Lecturer	15	Private
Participant 7	M	52	Married	Full Professor	25	State
Participant 8	M	50	Married	Senior Lecturer	14	State
Participant 9	M	54	Married	Full Professor	27	Private
Participant 10	F	46	Married	Senior Lecturer	11	Private
Participant 11	F	49	Married	Lecturer I	6	Federal
Participant 12	M	50	Married	Associate Professor	21	State
Participant 13	M	43	Married	Senior Lecturer	13	Private
Participant 14	M	57	Married	Full Professor	26	Federal
Participant 15	M	45	Married	Lecturer II	6	Federal
Participant 16	M	45	Married	Lecturer I	7	State
Participant 17	M	41	Married	Lecturer II	5	Federal
Participant 18	M	48	Married	Senior Lecturer	12	Federal
Participant 19	F	37	Married	Lecturer II	8	State
Participant 20	F	34	Single	Lecturer II	5	State
Participant 21	M	49	Married	Senior Lecturer	17	State
Participant 22	F	34	Married	Lecturer I	6	State
Participant 23	M	30	Single	Lecturer II	3	State
Participant 24	M	40	Married	Lecturer II	4	State
Participant 25	F	38	Married	Lecturer I	9	Private
Participant 26	F	42	Married	Lecturer I	11	State
Participant 27	M	46	Married	Senior Lecturer	13	Federal
Participant 28	F	40	Married	Lecturer II	9	State
Participant 29	F	43	Married	Lecturer I	12	State
Participant 30	M	49	Married	Associate Professor	18	State
Participant 31	M	64	Married	Full Professor	21	Federal
Participant 32	M	45	Married	Associate Professor	17	Federal
Participant 33	F	52	Married	Associate Professor	26	Federal
Participant 34	M	42	Married	Senior Lecturer	14	Federal
Participant 35	M	53	Married	Associate Professor	20	Federal
Participant 36	M	44	Married	Senior Lecturer	19	State
Participant 37	F	54	Married	Full Professor	28	Federal
Participant 38	M	40	Single	Lecturer I	12	State
Participant 39	F	44	Married	Lecturer I	16	Federal
Participant 40	M	38	Single	Lecturer II	4	State
Participant 41	F	41	Single	Senior Lecturer	13	Private
Participant 42	M	62	Married	Associate Professor	20	Federal
Participant 43	M	61	Married	Full Professor	22	State
Participant 44	M	43	Married	Lecturer I	7	State
Participant 45	F	40	Married	Lecturer II	10	State

Participant 46	F	37	Married	Lecturer II	7	Federal
Participant 47	F	38	Married	Lecturer II	9	Federal
Participant 48	M	48	Married	Lecturer I	16	Private
Participant 49	M	51	Married	Associate Professor	24	Private
Participant 50	M	46	Married	Lecturer I	18	State
Participant 51	M	53	Married	Full Professor	23	State
Participant 52	M	55	Married	Full Professor	22	Federal
Participant 53	M	52	Married	Associate Professor	19	Federal
Participant 54	M	49	Married	Associate Professor	21	Federal
Participant 55	F	50	Married	Senior Lecturer	23	Federal
Participant 56	M	47	Married	Senior Lecturer	15	State
Participant 57	F	35	Married	Lecturer I	10	Private

Source: Researcher's Findings

The table above shows the demographic profile of the research participants from a sample of 57 academics in Nigerian higher education institutions. The sample is formed of 36 males (63%) and 21 females (37%). 90% of the participants were married, while 10% were single. From the age categories, 28% were aged between 30 and 40; 51% were aged between 41 and 50; 16% were aged between 51 and 60; 5% were aged between 61 and 70. In terms of their ranks in higher education, there were 19% (Lecturer II), 23% (Lecturer I), 26% (Senior Lecturers), 16% (Associate Professors) and 16% (Full Professors). The demographic profile also reveals their years in service or years of experience as academics in higher education, including 9% (0-5 years), 21% (5-10 years), 26% (11-15 years), 21% (16-20 years), 16% (21-25 years) and 7% (26-30 years). Lastly, the participants were divided into the three tiers of higher education in Nigeria, including 37% in federal HEIs, 44% in State HEIs and 19% in private HEIs.

6.3.2 Interviews

Based on the qualitative research method adopted, interviews were used as the data collection instruments. Research interviews are purposeful conversations between the researcher or investigator and the study participants, at which point the researcher asks specific and succinct questions to the participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Interviews are most appropriate for building rapport with the study participants. It helps

to explore points of interest and clarify and confirm meanings (Saunders et al., 2019), especially for the exploratory and explanatory approach adopted by this study. More so, using interviews can facilitate the validity and reliability of data collected and strengthen its relevance to the research questions and objectives. It also provides the researcher with insightful ideas and surprising information that may not have been formulated or explored at the beginning of the research (Hair et al., 2015).

In addition, based on the subjective approach due to the use of interpretivism philosophy in this study, interviews helps the research garner detailed knowledge of the perceptions of the participants that are socially constructed (Patton, 2015). Research interviews enable the researcher as an interpretivist to gain the central ground of the discussion and the interview process and facilitate reflexivity – to make reflections and evaluations of the approach to interviewing (Rossman and Rallis, 2012; Bryman et al., 2018).

More specifically, this research uses *semi-structured interviews*. Semi-structured interviews begin with a set of predetermined themes and key questions associated with the selected themes as a guide for conducting the interviews (Bryman, 2016). However, the order of questionings is often dependent on the conversation flow with the participants and the form of information divulged (Gray, 2014; McCusker and Gunaydin, 2019). Therefore, semi-structured interviews are not restricted to the specific questions prepared by the researcher but allow the conversations to start with clear paths and themes that prepare the mind of the study participants in the direction of the research questions. Thus, it allows the researcher to capture any emergence of new themes from the participants' interpretations or study context (Cooper and Schindler, 2011; Kumar, 2019).

This research also uses *in-depth interviews*, which are exploratory in nature, to investigate the area of research interest (Yin, 2018). It allows for the emergence of themes from the

data collected and allows the research to probe into the interpretations of the interviewees to seek clarification or extensive explanation of their subjective perspectives and meanings. Therefore, in-depth interviews allow the interviewee to talk freely and express themselves in a way that captures their experiences and subjective judgements of the phenomenon or research interest (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study's exploratory and explanatory approaches allow the researcher to adopt both semi-structured and in-depth interviews. It fosters the interpretivist researcher's ability to achieve the study's aim and objectives in such ways that help in understanding the reasons behind participants' attitudes, perspectives, opinions, and beliefs by thoroughly interrogating the answers provided to the questions asked or that which the participant volunteers to divulge (Ranse et al. 2020). Such may lead to probing into areas that have not been previously considered but are critical to the discussion, interpretation and understanding of the research questions (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). More so, the interviews were used to align with the inductive approach intended for the research to enable the researcher to derive better insights into the study's concepts and contexts based on the identified themes that emanated from the study.

Furthermore, the interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. They were recorded using an audio device with the permission of the participants to enable the researcher to record the responses of the participants verbatim. The researcher used digital-assisted communication technology via video conferencing (mainly Microsoft Teams). This allowed for broader coverage of participants while also adhering to the social distancing measures necessary to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and allowed both the researcher and interviewees to remain in their familiar and safe environment. The use of digital-assisted communication technologies – a synchronous electronic interview, ensures that the interviews are conducted in real-time and facilitates visual interaction

with the interviewees in the absence of face-to-face interviews (Hanna, 2012). More so, given that the participants were from geographically dispersed locations, the synchronous interviews served as an advantage to carry out the research. However, some non-verbal cues were lost that the face-to-face interviews effectively offered. Nonetheless, the visualisation of the digital tools used also showed significant areas of the participants' bodies that provided specific non-verbal cues like facial expressions/gestures and some hand gesticulations.

In addition, the researcher experienced some challenges while collecting data, which were adequately managed to avoid compromising the data or rendering the results invalid. For instance, due to some of the academics' busy schedules and lack of stable internet connectivity, the researcher had to reschedule some of the already booked interviews. While this was the major challenge, it did not affect the data or results in any way, but it affected the initial time for the completion of data collection. Also, some participants preferred to be interviewed at odd hours (e.g., 12 am, 1 am), stating that this was when they had time to do personal work; hence, such times were more suitable due to their enormous work and non-work obligations. However, since the interviews were conducted virtually, the researcher was able to work with the times given by the participants, especially those conducted at odd hours.

Table 5: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Research Objectives	Semi-Structured Interview Questions
1. To critically examine the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among the academics in Nigerian higher education institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does work-life balance mean to you? - Tell me about the work-life balance practices in your organisation - Are you aware of any work-life balance policies or family-friendly policies in your organisations? If yes, how do they relate to your ability to manage your work and nonwork responsibilities? - What does social sustainability mean to you?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think your organisation adopts any social sustainability measures? If yes, please explain? - What does green HRM mean to you? - Are you aware of any green HRM practices or initiatives in your organisation?
2. To investigate if and how social sustainability efforts can constrain/enhance WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please explain the factors that promote or hinder your ability to manage work and nonwork responsibilities. - What factors hinder your organisation from promoting effective family-friendly policies and initiatives? - What are the hindrances to social sustainability in your organisation? - Why is your organisation adopting or not adopting green HRM practices? - How do the realities of the social sustainability measures affect your work-life balance? - Do you think access to social and infrastructural facilities influence your work-life balance? - Does the social network within your community affect your work-life balance?
3. To determine the extent to which green HRM practices can hinder/ promote WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does green HRM promote healthy work and healthy life for you? - In what ways does your organisation communicate the need to promote environmental protection activities? - To what extent do you think green HRM promotes social and environmental sustainability?

6.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The thematic analysis procedure (TAP) as prescribed by Gibbs (2007) and recommendations for data analysis by Corbin and Strauss (2015) was used in the qualitative data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined TAP as a qualitative analysis tool for searching for themes, patterns or trends in the data collected. Thematic analysis requires the researcher to adopt codes from the qualitative data in identifying patterns and themes that are related to the research questions (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). TAP is a systematic tool and offers flexible and accessible procedures for analysing qualitative

data, such that the data is arranged in an orderly and logical manner and lead to the derivation of detailed descriptions, explanations and theorising (Gibbs, 2007).

Thematic analysis is also useful for understanding large and disparate quantitative data, ensuring that data are integrated, and producing a thematic description of data from the identified themes and patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is useful for facilitating the development or testing of theories emergent from the data trends, and for drawing and verifying conclusions (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). It is also useful based on its flexible nature to adopt any style of philosophical approach and assumptions (e.g., interpretivism). It is also flexible to the research approaches used (Saunders et al., 2019), for instance, the inductive approach used in this study.

Following the TAP procedure, the researcher began with familiarising the data, coding the data and searching for themes and relationships in the transcribed data. This allowed the researcher to thoroughly go back and forth the data to ensure that the substantive themes are deduced. The researcher aimed at searching for meanings from the recurring themes, patterns and trends in the data in an iterative manner. For instance, the researcher searched for themes that identified how work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM are defined by academics in the Nigerian HEIs. This was also useful in searching for recurring themes that pointed to the factors that promote or hinder work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM practices in the study context.

During the coding, the researcher categorised data with identical meanings by labelling specific information within the data with a code as a symbol of that specific information (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). This facilitated the rearrangement and regrouping of data under specific and related codes as identified to compare them with other similar codes that may be related to the research questions. After coding, the researcher searched for

the themes by carefully studying and analysing the patterns and trends related to the research enquiry. This facilitated the researcher's ability to make careful judgements that matched the participants' meanings from the interview extracts (Gibbs, 2007). Furthermore, as part of the analytical process, the researcher refined the themes and established the relationships that existed among the themes. This formed the main themes and sub-themes from the categorised data. As suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2015), this process helps the researcher test the propositions against the data and look for alternative explanations that seek to explain outcomes (positive or negative) to develop valid and credible conclusions.

6.5 ENSURING THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH

6.5.1 Validity and Credibility

Research validity is the degree to which data collection methods agree with the measurements and description of the research proposition – that is, the absence of self-contradiction (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Validity is crucial to the quality of data as it measures the degree of meaningfulness and agreeableness to the research enquiry (Saunders et al., 2019). Crowther and Lancaster (2012) suggest that using semi-structured and in-depth interviews can yield high levels of validity and credibility because it allows the researcher to clarify questions, probe meanings and investigate responses from several perspectives. Thus qualitative interviews may enhance the credibility of the data when questionings are supported by trust and rapport between the researcher and interviewee, such that they feel comfortable answering relevant questions (Ranse et al., 2020). Also, developing reflection and reflexivity during analysis strengthens the credibility of the data collected (Matta, 2019).

This study aligned with Hayashi et al. (2019) three main dimensions of validity. Firstly, descriptive validity was undertaken, which enabled the researcher to avoid distorting the information provided by the participants. For example, data transcription was made verbatim, and the researcher ensured that the original meanings were retained. Secondly, given the interpretivist philosophy adopted in the research, interpretive validity was ensured through the careful and thorough process to capture and interpret the subjective judgements and meanings given by the participants. For example, the researcher conducted member checks to determine the accuracy of the research findings. This led the researcher to contact the participants after the final interpretation of the data was performed. The participants were made to cross-check for any discrepancies that may have occurred in the process of interpreting the data. This allowed the researcher to determine the degree to which the participants resonate with their experiences as interpreted in the findings. The responses from the participants revealed that they all agreed with the interpretations. Lastly, the researcher confirmed the theoretical validity by ensuring consistency between the theoretical explanation within the findings and the data collected. This led the researcher to identify trends and patterns that reflected relationships between WLB, social sustainability and green HRM and specific evidence of work-life integration in the data.

6.5.2 Reliability and Dependability

Reliability refers to the degree of replication of outcomes on different occasions as a result of using a specific data collection method (Taylor et al., 2016). It also relates to the accuracy in the process of interpreting the data. Dependability relates to the stability of the data analysis procedure; for instance, the step-by-step process of coding to the derivation and categorisation of themes, concepts and theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). This means that the researcher must enhance rigour and thoroughly go through each stage

of the research process in a systematic manner. It strengthens the trustworthiness of the entire study, and the extent that the findings are reliable (Saunders et al. 2019). To achieve this, Kumar (2019) suggest that the researcher should ensure transparency in reporting the qualitative data. That is, there should be a clear rationale for the selection of particular demography, research questions, data collection methods and techniques, data analysis, as well as ensuring meaningfulness and coherence in understanding the findings and relevant implications (McCusker and Gunaydin, 2019).

The researcher facilitated reliability and dependability by ensuring triangulation by using multiple data collection sources and techniques within the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The researcher ensured that field notes were taken throughout the interviews as a supplemental resource during the data analysis.

6.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues in research cannot be ignored, given the level of integrity associated with the research, the researcher and study participants (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). Saunders et al. (2019) also suggest that research ethics presents the appropriateness of the researcher's conduct relating to the rights of the participants and other potential persons that might be affected as a result of the research process and outcomes. One critical ethical issue within this research is the use of digital-assisted communication technologies through the internet to facilitate access to the participants during the interviews. Despite its substantive advantages, it raises some ethical concerns regarding internet-mediated research, such as data storage (Hanna, 2012). However, the researcher used a computer connected to the university's network which is highly safeguarded. The research data will be regularly backed-up and stored securely in the University's remote database (cloud storage), in addition to the storage on the researcher's encrypted external hard drive. The

researcher will safeguard data with strong access control. Thus, the mechanisms to control access will be put in place to protect content from unauthorised access and avoid inappropriate use of data.

Considering the ethical issues associated with using primary data, the participants were assured of data confidentiality which is in line with the prevailing UK Data Protection Act. The researcher aligned with the university's ethical guidelines and ensured that ethical approval was given before contacting the participants. Participants were also given consent forms before the commencement of the interview to gain their consent towards using the information collected. A participant information sheet was provided alongside the consent form, which included details about the nature and purpose of the research, the requirements and implications of partaking in the research, data analysis procedure and the rights of the participants during and after the interview was completed.

Ethical concerns regarding information derived from secondary sources were be taken care of through careful consideration of plagiarism by ensuring proper citation and referencing the literature used in the research work.

6.7 SUMMARY

This chapter purposed to provide a detailed outline of the research methodology. It presented the research philosophy that adopts the ontological and epistemological interpretivist paradigm along with the justifications for their adoption. The chapter presented the research design, which described the research purpose (exploratory and explanatory), research approach (inductive). It also provided detailed justification for using the qualitative research method and case study strategy, especially in achieving the research aim and objectives. The chapter further presented the choice of sampling technique and strategy used by justifying the choice of the snowballing sampling

technique used during the data collection. This proceeded into detailed explanations and justifications of using semi-structured and in-depth interviews. The chapter also provided a detailed description of the data analysis used in the study. Lastly, issues relating to data validity, credibility, reliability, dependability and the ethical considerations for the research were highlighted.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings and analysis. It presents the empirical findings from the interviews, which are detailed in accordance with the research questions. From the analysis of results, three main themes emerged with several subthemes (see table 6). The first theme presents the notions of the participants as it relates to work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. The second theme presents the impact of social sustainability on work-life balance in Nigerian HEIs. Lastly, the third theme highlights the impact of green HRM on work-life balance in Nigerian HEIs. The following sections present the category of the findings as divided into themes and sub-themes.

7.1 NOTIONS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE, SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN HRM

7.1.1 The Notions of Work-Life Balance among Nigerian Academics

Understanding the perceptions of the study participants as they relate to their work-life balance experiences may be incomplete without prior knowledge of what the concept means to them. Therefore, the notions of WLB formed a significant theme that emerged from the research findings, explaining how the participants defined work-life balance. The participants used different keywords in their definitions of WLB, including the actual state of balance, time allocation, absence of work-life conflict, the possibility for managing two worlds, co-existence of work and non-work roles, achieving good health and wellbeing, reducing work stress and work flexibility. However, these definitions were further categorised into five sub-themes.

Table 6: Emerging Themes with Illustrative Quotes

Research inquiry	Illustrative quotes	First-order codes	Creation of conceptual categories through codes consolidation	Main themes
Meaning of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in Nigerian HEIs	Work-life balance is the freedom to divide one's time and focus in combining work, family and leisure activities (Participant 23).	Time allocation between work and non-work roles, integration of all aspects of human life, increased autonomy and control, absence of work-life conflict, and healthy work and non-work experience	Notions of work-life balance among Nigerian academics	Notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM
	Work-life balance means being able to balance work with other life realities like family, emotional and psychological needs without problems from work or home (Participant 37).			
	Social sustainability has to do with how the social environment encourages work-life and how the environmental structure facilitate work-life balance (Participant 5).	Social value system, social engagement and cohesion, social wellbeing, protecting human rights, a component of CSR, and availability and access to social amenities	Notions of social sustainability among Nigerian academics	
	Social sustainability is an approach to development in terms of promoting social interaction with people at work and outside of work (Participant 38).			
	These (green HRM) are HR functions necessary for ensuring environmental sustainability (Participant 9).	HRM strategies for promoting environmental sustainability and a component of corporate social responsibility	Notions of green HRM among Nigerian academics	
	...I would say we do CSR activities like volunteering to plant flowers in the university premises or community projects on environmental pollution, and that would be the closest to what you have explained as green HRM (Participant 19).			

Factors that promote or hinder work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM practices in	<p>I am a deacon in my Church and sometimes I have to drive to Church from work or fellowship centre. Religious activities are good for socialising [laughs] (Participant 21).</p> <p>My wife and parents are the primary sources of help and support when it comes to the home front responsibilities... (Participant 14).</p> <p>...I am only entitled to annual leaves as the formal policy and practice in my institution (Participant 26).</p> <p>...and yes, the community development service can be used to support social or environmental programmes because it is a requirement for promotion (Participant 51).</p>	Informal support, self-induced social support, flexible workplace policies and practices, community development services and promoting social justice	Factors that enhance the impact of social sustainability on WLB	Impact of Social Sustainability on Work-Life Balance in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions
	<p>There are many factors that hinder work-life balance. One is the poor road network...many roads in Nigeria are death traps because the potholes are very big that you tend to find yourself spending time at the mechanic workshop more than you do with family. Moreover, as a result, the traffic is too much, and after spending several hours both to and fro, you get to work tired or get home tired without any energy left to do anything (Participant 6).</p> <p>One issue to the lack of awareness of environmental sustainability is that my institution is not financially buoyant to create a unit that will be in charge of spreading the awareness about environmental protection (Participant 16).</p>	Inadequate provision of infrastructure, poverty, unemployment, national insecurity and job insecurity, organisational negligence, the conservative culture of Nigerian HEIs, high job demands and expectations, breaching human rights, personal ambition, individual	Factors that constrain the impact of social sustainability on WLB	

Nigerian HEIs	<p>For me, the school does not really have a clear-cut policy that shows that we are committed to it ensuring work-life balance. The job description is tight and strict, but the job execution and job monitoring is fluid (Participant 48).</p> <p>There is too much work to be done, and still, the university doesn't make provisions for sophisticated facilities. For example, we were asked to work from home during the pandemic even though it wasn't as dynamic as you have it in the developed countries because we are still very laid-back (Participant 37).</p>	ignorance and labour unions frailty		
	<p>I would be right if I said remote working promotes WLB to a large extent and also reduces the negative effects of travelling to work on oneself and the immediate environment (Participant 14).</p> <p>...some of us as lecturers do engage in environmental projects for our community development service... Maybe such can be indirectly green HRM practices because it aligns with some of its basic practices (Participant 40).</p>	Remote working practices and community development services	Factors that promote the impact of green HRM on WLB	Impact of Green HRM on Work-Life Balance in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions
	<p>...even the university is a culprit and perpetrator of environmental pollution. For instance, we are still primarily paper-based, and the digitisation of the institution's activities is yet to be a reality (Participant 49).</p> <p>I think people are ignorant of the consequences of not being sensitive to our environment, and it tells on our health, especially our life expectancy, which is among the lowest in the world... (Participant 57).</p>	Poverty, organisational negligence and absence of green organisational culture, and individual ignorance	Factors that hinder the impact of green HRM on WLB	

Time allocation between work and non-work roles

All the participants motioned that the effective allocation of ‘time’ to their work and private lives would impact and determine their ability to achieve WLB. Thus, according to the participants, striking a balance between work and non-work roles is a function of the quality time devoted to each role. The following quotes exemplify the participants’ perspectives:

WLB involves trying to strike a balance between your work and your other life, that is, managing the work-related aspects that preoccupy my time against all other responsibilities that I have, for instance, family and within society. Obviously, there are only 24 hours in a day, and because of this limited number of hours, there is a need to share the hours between several things that need to be done within the day that includes work and other non-work responsibilities (Participant 9).

Work-life balance means striking a balance or having the right proportion of time to handling home and work obligations such that issues at work and home do not result in a crisis (Participant 22).

My understanding of work-life balance relates to how one can share or divide one’s time between the two most important aspects of one’s life, that is, work and family. You know that time is of the essence, and it waits for no one, which is why it is regarded as a scarce resource. As an economist, for a resource to be scarce, it means that it has a limited amount, and one must be capable of maximising that resource. So, time needs to be judiciously allocated to fulfil these two roles. It doesn’t necessarily have to be an equal amount of time but a considerable amount that can allow one to meet the demands required from work and family (Participant 3).

To me, WLB is simply managing my work life and private life in an efficient manner... It is the quality of time that matters in achieving WLB because if you put in too much time, and yet that time is not felt, or you are not productively active in discharging your responsibility in that activity that you have allocated that much time, it is as well a waste of time (Participant 42).

‘Time’ is deemed a scarce resource for Nigerian academics; however, it is an important factor determining the extent to which WLB is achieved. Thus, like other studies (e.g., Wheatley, 2012; Chung and van der Lippe, 2018), the allocation of quality time to work and non-work activities is crucial for employees to have a participative and active role in

both domains, such that active involvement in one role (e.g. work) does not adversely affect other roles. The participants' responses reflect how they value time and its allocation to their work and non-work lives. Moreover, like participants 3 and 42, most of the participants emphasise the allocation of 'quality' and not simply 'quantity' time to achieve work-life balance. Therefore, it resonates with prior studies that suggest that the number of hours apportioned to work and non-work obligations or activities may not be enough to achieve WLB but must be complemented with quality and active participation in a particular role (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014; Grünberg and Matei, 2020).

Integration of all aspects of human life

Every employee is characterised by two domains – 'work' and 'private or non-work' domains, which are adjudged to constitute human life (Clark, 2000; Guest, 2002). Moreover, while some studies have advocated the need for a boundary or separation of the two domains (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015), others have insisted that the work and non-work domains are inseparable and should co-exist (Bailyn, 2011; Perlow and Kelly, 2014). The latter submission is reinforced by the findings from this study, where the majority of the participants define WLB as the co-existence of work and non-work roles and activities. The following statements typify their shared views:

Work-life balance is the ability to manage work, family and social life altogether... It is difficult to separate work from other aspects of life because they all collide... As an academic, it is normal to sometimes attend to work after work hours, which is why I have my small library in my house. Also, family issues that are urgent may arise when at work, so work-life balance is kind of merging work and other activities that are personal (Participant 2).

From my perspective, work-life balance extends beyond managing work and the family because it also encompasses activities that are private to me as an individual which may not be work-related or family-related. For instance, I value my alone-time when I can think clearly about things that I have penned down to achieve that

does not necessarily have to be about my career. For instance, one of my wishes is to contribute to humanity and help others in society, but I either do not have the time or resources to do that at the moment. So it is difficult and perhaps impossible to separate work from private responsibilities and aspirations (Participant 1).

Work-life balance has to do with the reconciliation between the working relationship, working environment and individuals' social and economic life. It has to do with the working condition of an individual and relationship with social relations... It is about reconciling the working environment with one's social status as a social being, making it difficult to separate work life from private life. In most cases, my working life has much to do with other aspects of my private life. For instance, when I'm in my personal confinement, I tend to find my work creeping into that time because that is what we generally face as academics (Participant 51).

WLB means being able to manage work and life in such a way that one does not affect the other. There should be a separation between working time and family time, but for academics, especially in Nigeria, this separation is almost impossible because we find ourselves in the mix of everything because of the nature of our work that requires constantly taking work home and sometimes bringing home matters to work (Participant 39).

The responses provided by most of the participants align with prior studies (e.g., Kelliher et al., 2019) that consider the private life of individuals as a combination of activities that are not work-related. In essence, it implies the aspect of an individual's life that includes roles and activities involving family, friends and the larger community (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). For instance, some participants account that while in their non-work domain (e.g., during leisure or religious activities), they sometimes find themselves drawn into the work domain, especially when they experience conversations that stimulate a particular aspect of their work. The following quotes illustrate the participants' lived experiences:

WLB has to do with balancing work experience with experiences like family and other social relations... It means giving due diligence to work and the other aspects of one's life such that one does not affect the other. As an academic, the aspect of personal life meddles in one's work and can't be separated... For instance, being in the humanities faculty, when I go to Church or with friends, I might draw ideas or data from things that happen or that are mentioned in that gathering, which could be useful for work as a researcher. In a way, I find myself doing my work outside the work environment (Participant 16).

There is no way that, as an academic, you would be able to totally separate work responsibilities from family responsibilities because they tend to affect one another. For example, being a researcher means that you can find ideas anywhere, even when you do not intend to work. Our daily experiences could form a topic for research... you can find research ideas and data anywhere, even as simple as when you are playing with your kids or out with friends... Our life is both the experiences of work and personal or family experiences which should both work in synergy rather than being separated (Participant 56).

The integration of work and non-work domains seems to be peculiar to academics in particular. Like most of the participants mentioned, academics in Nigeria are expected to undertake three distinct but inter-related roles, including teaching, research and community service. In their teaching roles, these academics often find themselves drawing examples from personal experiences (e.g., family or community activities) that are useful for extending the learners' understanding. More so, like participants 16 and 56, the research obligation of academics often means that even during leisure or non-work engagements (e.g., community service), they usually draw ideas that may be useful for their work as researchers. By implication, integrating these roles (work and non-work) may be normalised and deemed important for career progression.

In addition, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated remote working, there was an extreme experience of work-life integration among Nigerian academics. Some of the participants shared accounts of how their work and non-work responsibilities were infused, breaking boundaries between both domains due to the co-habitation of work and non-work domains in the same space:

... Despite the difficulties we faced during the pandemic, it only further confirms that we can't separate our work from private affairs...everything we did was from home, including teaching, admin work and research... (Participant 32).

...The situation got worse with COVID-19 because our academic activities were crippled until we were all told to start working from home. So can you imagine how one would stop work from affecting family time or how family needs won't creep into the time for work? It is just impossible as an academic...maybe other

professions can manage to do that [separate the domains], but many academics here in Nigeria will struggle to separate work from personal life (Participant 26).

In sum, combining the work and non-work domains is the case for most participants. Thus, work-life integration meant that academics had to integrate all aspects of their life to meet the demands of their work and non-work obligations. These experiences support the work-life integration theory that encourages individuals to blur the boundaries between work and non-work domains, allowing greater permeability to be active (temporarily) in one role in order to better manage the domains (Bulger et al., 2007; Ramarajan and Reid, 2013). Groysberg and Abrahams (2014) suggest that integration creates an overlap between work and non-work roles of an individual and increases the flexibility for adopting different roles, such as an employee, husband/wife, father/mother, friend, neighbour or other individualistic roles. The scope of the reconciliation between work and non-work domains to many of the participants meant a need to manage the work and non-work activities in the same environment, especially given the unprecedented occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic altered the way work is performed.

Increased autonomy and control

The study participants define work-life balance as having increased autonomy and control over their work and non-work domains. For the majority, having the sole ability to control and allocate time, as well as determining where and how work is performed, is essential to achieving work-life balance. The following statements typify their definition:

WLB means planning one's personal life against work responsibilities... one has to be a good planner to be able to manage work and home responsibilities because, as a woman, work interferes with home, and home interferes with work. So, to be able to plan, scheduling flexibility must be present...although as lecturers, we are allowed to schedule the lecture time that best fits, other work like admin, research and lecture preparation often disrupts the scheduling ability because we sometimes have no control over some of them (Participant 19).

To achieve WLB, one must have control over how work intrudes into personal life... Taking work home is something that I cannot sometimes control because the work needs to be done, or else it will spill over to another day and time that I could have spent doing something else. So the notion that academics have control and flexibility is not always true (Participant 6).

As lecturers, one's work schedule is important to achieving WLB, and this is where the institution's practice comes in... in cases where the schedule requires one's presence for a long time, it might be difficult to get things done as quickly as one would expect and it is worse when there are excesses of work to be done... Although in academia, there is a notion of higher flexibility compared to other professions, it is sometimes not the case because as an academic, we have three key roles – a teacher, researcher and community service, all which needs to be combined within the limited time that is available to do work and taking into consideration other people's availability and such makes the case of flexibility an illusion (Participant 40).

It is not surprising that the participants mentioned schedule flexibility and control over their work and non-work domains in their perception of work-life balance. Prior studies have regarded autonomy and control as determinants of work-life balance (Beauregard and Henry, 2009; DeCenzo et al., 2016). In addition, Pedersen and Jeppesen (2012) and Cañibano (2019) aver that flexibility is an integral part of the workplace for organisations that promote WLB for their employees. Although the nature of flexible work in academia is undisputed, this study finds that there is a clamour for increased workplace flexibility because Nigerian academics, in particular, find it challenging to leverage the scheduling flexibility provided by their jobs due to other work-related responsibilities (e.g., administrative roles and research) that hinders the usage of such opportunities. Moreover, the integration theory advocates blurring the boundary between work and non-work domains by providing greater permeability and flexibility (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). By implication, as academics permit the temporary crossing from one domain to another, they may experience greater flexibility that facilitates work-life balance.

Absence of work-life conflict

Work-life balance is deemed to be achieved when an employee can ensure a successful negotiation between work-related and family commitments coupled with other non-work responsibilities and activities (Mordi et al., 2012; Adisa et al., 2016; Adekoya, 2019). Therefore, the study participants motioned that WLB is achievable where there is no conflict between work and personal life:

One needs to come to terms with the need for appropriating a balance between work-life and private-life because it also goes further into consideration regarding the conflict experienced by individuals regarding managing their work and personal life... This includes balancing work and family roles, work and family stress, work and family conflict and interferences (Participant 7).

Well, for me, work-life balance is just being able to find the balance between your official life and your unofficial life, that is, your private life. So it is a question of if one can strike a balance between work, family, social commitments and engagements, and all other things that can not be considered as work. So, it doesn't matter whether you are putting 2 hours of work, and 19 hours of play, or the other way around, but just being able to find a balance so that one is not suffering at the expense of the other; for instance, your productivity is not suffering over building a family (Participant 18).

Work-life balance is related to the need to create a process by which work and other commitments that are not necessarily work can be managed. It is the attempt to avoid a conflict between one's work and private life by ensuring that adequate time and attention is placed to the different parts of one's life (Participant 8).

The notion of WLB as the absence of work-life conflict corroborates prior studies that refer to WLC as the point in time where the numerous demands (both from work and personal) on a person's limited resources (time and energy) becomes incompatible with each other (Kim, 2014; Adisa et al., 2021). Moreover, where there is an incompatibility between both domains as one interferes with the other, it exacerbates the occurrence of WLC and engenders role conflict (Akkas et al., 2015; Jiang and Shen, 2018). Therefore, combining the three prominent roles of a Nigerian Academic, as previously mentioned, with their non-work responsibilities may be challenging, especially in the case where

work-life integration is not facilitated. This resonates with the findings of Bailyn (2011) that suggests that work-life integration is the solution to addressing the realities associated with the combination of both domains. Therefore, as academics embrace their non-work-related roles into the work-space or work transcending into their domestic space, it may also enhance the quality of life across the work-life domains (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Julien et al., 2017).

Healthy work and non-work experience

Another notion raised by some participants while defining WLB relates to the ability to engage in healthy work and operate in a healthy work environment, as well as having a healthy non-work experience. For these participants, WLB balance also means managing work and non-work domains without experiencing excessive stress, tension, anxiety and burnout. The following quotes exemplify this shared notion:

Work-life balance to me is the ability to ensure engagement and interactions with all other people and all other things... so whether it is my non-work engagements or work commitments, it is like being able to find a balance so that one [work or non-work] is not overshadowing the other and causing a detrimental effect on my health, work productivity and social relations (Participant 30).

...If I'm able to combine my work and personal duties without going through too much stress or burnout, then I believe I have achieved work-life balance, but where this is not the case, there is nothing to balance because I need good health to function at work and home (Participant 11).

From my perspective, I think work-life balance is the ability to combine my job and social activities in a way that tensions do not arise to the extent that it affects my mental or physical health... As academics, we sometimes forget that the crucial aspects of our work are intellectual, and especially in Nigeria, we do not take our mental health seriously (Participant 47).

Employees who experience WLC often report its negative health consequences (Asiedu et al., 2013; Akkas et al., 2015). Thus, for the participants, the achievement of WLB may be subject to the effect of managing or combining work and non-work domains on their

health. More specifically, as Participant 47 mentioned, other participants (e.g., Participants 6, 27 and 55) also alluded that many Nigerian academics lack mental health awareness. There is a perception that “*Nigerian academics are often ignorant of the effect of the demands of their work on their mental health and only raise the alarm when they suffer physical injuries (Participant 27)*”. Therefore, the state of individual health and wellbeing is deemed a determining factor in achieving WLB. A poor WLB is associated with work-related stressors that could engender adverse health effects on the employee (Barber et al., 2019; Feeney and Stritch, 2019). Similarly, Lunau et al. (2014) argue that adverse psychosocial working conditions, including job insecurity, high workload, job strain, burnout and reward imbalance, are critical risk factors for poor health.

7.1.2 The Notions of Social Sustainability among Nigerian Academics

The concept of social sustainability could mean different things to different people. Therefore, it is important to understand how Nigerian academics define social sustainability based on their experiences, reactions and judgements associated with the concept. Although the concept is relatively new to some Nigerian academics, in explaining the concept, several keywords were deduced, such as connections to one’s social life, social values, social engagement and activities, social wellbeing, CSR, availability of social amenities, fostering gender equality, promoting fairness, and supporting people with disabilities. However, these definitions were further categorised into six sub-themes.

A social value system

The participants generally interpreted social sustainability as the continued existence of a social value system upon which the people ‘live by’ and ‘act in accordance to’ in their daily lives. Most participants emphasised that every society is built on social values, and

while some might be similar, others are distinct. Thus, for the participants, these social values influence how they live on a daily basis and interact with their social environment.

The following quotes exemplify the notion of social values among the participants:

Social sustainability means that connections to one's social life, values, and responsibilities must be sustained. However, in Nigeria, we are gradually losing our social values because we are in pursuit of other things (e.g., work). The value system of Nigeria is currently being eroded, and we have to strive to remind ourselves of those things that brought us together as a society in the past (Participant 6).

I consider social sustainability to mean the structures within the society that influence the way we live and act on a daily basis... Every society is distinct in one way or the other, and even in Nigeria, with over 250 ethnic groups, the social values are not entirely the same, but we learn to live by the values that have been created generations ago and pass them on to the next generation (Participant 37).

I think social sustainability is a mix of social and cultural attributes that operate within a country or community. In a sense, Nigeria has a social value system that we all must live by if we are going to survive... and our value system is such that if it is violated, that individual becomes the 'black sheep' within the society and often affects the integrity of the person and his household (Participant 24).

When you say social sustainability, I believe it means a kind of continuity or a continued societal system that binds those who live within that society... This social system is taught around different places; for example, in primary and secondary schools, we have a subject called social studies, and even at the tertiary level, we also have social sciences, humanities and others... In the family, as parents, we teach our children social values...in the Church and Mosque, religious teachings are also influenced by social values... So one gets to know the social values from different areas, and it becomes a way of life (Participant 2).

The common saying among the participants is that social value is an inherent culture, sometimes informing regulations and influencing human behaviour. Like Participant 2 remarked, other participants (e.g., Participants 4, 12, 17, 31, 39 and 47) also pointed to social sustainability as a social value system that can be regarded as 'a way of life', 'a tradition', or 'a means of survival'. Therefore, in line with Kroeger and Weber (2014), this study finds that social values are based on social objectives that conform to current societal expectations. For instance, many others like Participant 6 allude that "*the value*

system of Nigeria is currently being eroded, and we have to strive to remind ourselves of those things that brought us together as a society in the past". Therefore, these social values connote something that is of qualitative importance and fosters a sense of accomplishment or satisfaction (Osaat and Omordu, 2011). Asemah et al. (2013) suggest that the social value in Nigeria is influenced by social norms and beliefs regarding how people interact, express respect and adhere to moral and ethical values. These are expressed through age, dressing culture, greetings and food, among others.

Moreover, the fact that Nigerian social values are taught across several social institutions (e.g., schools, family, religion and community) demonstrates the extent to which they are considered an important and integral part of Nigerian society, like many other societies. Also, these social institutions in Nigeria assign social roles and responsibilities that govern the society. For instance, the Nigerian family system is guided by hierarchy and seniority, such that older members of the family are revered and respected (Asemah et al., 2013; Columbus, 2014). Thus, unlike the western culture, where most children call older people by their first names, the Nigerian society shuns such culture and teach their children to use words that show respect (e.g., sir, ma, uncle, aunty, etc.). Likewise, religious leaders are highly respected by using words like father, daddy, mummy, besides the usual names (e.g., pastor, reverend, imam) to show reverence to their perceived high status in society (Dowd, 2016; Nche, 2021). Thus the social value system is an essential part of the Nigerian society that requires sustainability.

Social engagement and cohesion

While social institutions may create social values, building and communicating shared values despite the differences that exist within the society is made possible by promoting social engagement and cohesion (Fonseca et al., 2019; Healy, 2019). Thus, most

participants defined social sustainability as the social activities, social engagement and social cohesion that enables interdependence among individuals to unite their social values. This perspective is illustrated as follows:

Social sustainability is the ability to engage in social activities and be able to do so now and in the future. That is, to ensure that the social aspects of living are sustained beyond the now (Participant 4).

Social sustainability refers to interactions among people, how they work and relate and also sustain the relationships. It also means how people can foster wellbeing, live and work together (Participant 52).

Social sustainability has to do with things that we do to keep social cohesion going, things we do to ensure that people within our social cycle will feel the impact of our presence in their lives... All activities that are geared towards enhancing social relations are what I regard as social sustainability (Participant 10).

For me, social sustainability means finding your space in the social spectrum, being able to be there, being an active partaker, not one that is just a one-time appearance. It is being able to sustain your social engagement, social involvement, social interaction and for it to be regenerative and rekindled, and become a pattern or a sustainable pattern (Participant 17).

It [social sustainability] has to do with how well we behave or act within our society to be able to sustain the continued existence of the society and the family... By social sustainability, you are referring to activities within the society and unifying those attitudes that will assist in ensuring the continued existence of certain activities within the society (Participant 47).

There is a strong culture of collectivism that exists in Nigeria, such that it promotes the culture of interdependence and social relations among the populace (Adisa et al., 2017).

It is crucial to note that the family system is of great importance to Nigerians because it promotes social interaction. For example, participant 31 mentioned that “*in Nigeria, there is always one social event or one party or the other that you will attend with family or friends, and that is a way to help socialise with others outside the working environment*”.

Thus, attending events (e.g., naming and wedding ceremonies, birthday parties, funeral services and other social functions) are considered as an avenue to promote social interactions and exchange social values with one another. It was common among the

participants that social sustainability is reinforced by social cohesion that acts as social support for upholding social values in society.

Moreover, the extended family system in Nigeria is such that it creates a social bond across family members and often extends to other people that are not directly within the family tree (Mordi et al., 2012). Therefore, to sustain social interactions and cohesion, the family system acts as a social network and support system, where family members have a duty of care to cater to the financial, physical and emotional needs of one another (Adisa et al., 2021; Akanji et al., 2021). This system is used as a support network for the non-existent welfare system of the country (Onuoha, 2005). In addition, to further substantiate the social cohesiveness associated with the concept of social sustainability, Participant 21 views social sustainability as *“how an individual is able to perfectly relate within his neighbourhood and is not seen as an outcast”*. Also, as participant 9 explained, *“In Nigeria, we recognise our neighbours as part of our families... Communal living trained us to become what we are today”*, it shows the extent to which inter-communalism is practised in Nigeria. Therefore, the existing sense of communality enhances the inter-communal relationship prevalent in Nigerian society; as a result, it normalises certain beliefs, traditions, values and norms, especially those that promote ‘humane living’ (Colombus, 2014).

Social wellbeing

Another perspective shared by the participants to define social sustainability is that it promotes social wellbeing. Therefore, co-existing peacefully within the Nigerian community is considered an integral part of social sustainability for the participants. Moreover, there is a general consensus from the responses that social sustainability should enhance one’s general health and wellness within and outside the formed social

relationships, as well as managing social conflicts. The following are typical of the responses:

Social sustainability is about the social wellbeing of an individual, the way and manner an individual's health is managed and sustained to reduce the risk of depression and undue anxiety (Participant 12).

...in a country where people don't feel safe to cohabit, it negates the concept of social sustainability. The case of the herdsmen, Boko haram and other terrorist events, as well as the cry and push for ethnic separation and division of Nigeria that are currently happening, shows that we can no longer sustain our social relationships as a people (Participant 33).

... Another perspective in terms of social sustainability is its health and wellbeing aspect. By this, I mean that my social relationship with people should be one that increases my physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing or else, it won't be sustainable (Participant 41).

Social sustainability means working together to achieve social relationships that reduce conflict. For instance, the lack of social sustainability in Nigeria is the cause of the killings, kidnappings and all sorts of crimes that we see happening today... At present, there is no peace because you can't sleep with your two eyes closed, and these insecurity issues contribute to adverse health effects (Participant 2).

... in the context of this discussion, academics health and wellbeing should be regarded as part of social sustainability. You know that you can only sustain relationships with people when you are healthy and emotionally stable because you don't want to burden others... (Participant 28).

As previously highlighted in the notions of WLB, health and wellbeing are also important issues that are important in defining social sustainability. For instance, Amrutha and Geetha (2020) argue that an organisation's social sustainability dimension should cater to its employees' health, wellness, wellbeing and equity. Therefore, as the participants mentioned, health and wellbeing are determining factors of sustainable relationships or social sustainability. In addition, Rogers et al. (2012) define social sustainability as "living in ways that can be sustained because they are healthy and satisfying for people and communities". This supports the statement made by Participant 28 that health and wellbeing are essential to sustaining relationships, such that people with health

deficiencies do not become a burden to others, draining their financial or emotional resources. Moreover, it sheds light on the fact that the Nigerian crisis and terrorist activities are detrimental to achieving social sustainability. Therefore, social sustainability requires the provision of resources (i.e., financial and non-financial), preventing behaviours that lead to poor health and conflict and avoiding the destruction of social structures, socio-cultural values and knowledge systems that facilitate a thriving society (Rogers et al., 2012).

Protecting human rights

According to some of the participants, another dimension to defining social sustainability relates to providing legislation that protects human or employee rights. They emphasised that social sustainability is incomplete without the ‘human’ aspect. Therefore, considering individual needs fairly and equitably is considered important for achieving social sustainability. The following quotes illustrate the views:

When referring to social sustainability, one must concentrate on the keyword ‘social’ because that’s the most important part of the concept. One must not forget that as human beings, we are created to be social and interact with others. So an organisation must do everything in its power to ensure that every employee is treated fairly and without any nepotism... For example, resolving issues regarding racism or ethnic discrimination at work, providing equal opportunities, inclusivity and health facilities...are important in consideration of social sustainability (Participant 5).

...social sustainability should include human rights, which should be passed into law and an organisation’s policy. Protecting human rights should not be left alone for the government; organisations also have a part to play in promoting human rights in the workplace (Participant 12).

...I also believe in the principle of fair play at work. If social sustainability is to be realised in this sector [higher education], the rules must be fair to all and sundry. It is only at this point that we can say that there are sustainable practices in the treatment of employees (Participant 34).

Some participants were also specific about gender equality and inclusiveness as proponents of social sustainability:

I am of the opinion that for organisations to promote social cohesion as an agenda of social sustainability, they must first consider the extent to which their policies are fair, not to just one segment of the staff but all... Everyone has to be included so that they get a feeling that the organisation has got their back. In particular, gender equality is something that should be taken seriously, especially in academia... (Participant 45).

...so like I mentioned earlier, there is a need for inclusivity if social sustainability must work in Nigeria. We do not seem to enjoy much of that [inclusivity], and I think it is a very important part of social sustainability. For instance, how do you sustain social relations if some people feel like they are left out? ...gender diversity policies are important for promoting an inclusive workplace, although here in Nigeria, we often 'talk the talk' but 'don't walk the talk' (Participant 13).

In addition to describing the inclusive nature of social sustainability, some participants mentioned the importance of supporting people with disabilities:

...social sustainability is not solely made for able-bodies but also those with disabilities because they are also social beings even though in this part of the world, there is little recognition, much less considerations for these kinds of people... In academia, you hardly find staff with disabilities; one, because they don't bother applying for teaching jobs because they have the mindset that they won't get the job; and two, even when they get the job, there are no special support or equipment made available....so tell me where the social sustainability lies? (Participant 3).

...we live in a society where the disabled are often ignored because, first of all, there are only very few laws, if at all, that consider them in employment... How then can we say we are socially sustainable if inclusivity is only used at our convenience? Are the disabled not human beings? (Participant 18).

As the quotes illustrate, there is a consensus among the participants that social sustainability must include social elements that foster gender equality, promote fairness, and support people with disabilities. The findings align with the underlying principle of the human relations management theory that employees are social beings and should be treated as such (King and Lawley, 2019). Therefore, for organisations to ensure productivity and employee wellbeing, empowerment, participation and positive treatment

are required (Den Hartog et al., 2013; Boon et al., 2019). In addition, the participants' views corroborate Magee et al. (2012) that opine that social sustainability comprises social fairness, social justice and responsibility, human/labour rights. Although most of the participants decry the situation of social sustainability in Nigeria (as discussed under the challenges), they remain firm in their opinions regarding the need to protect human/employee rights to achieve social sustainability. Their explanations concentrate on four critical human rights issues, including gender equality, inclusivity, fairness, and support for people with disabilities.

A component of corporate social responsibility

Similar to prior studies (e.g., Pless et al., 2012; Boyer et al., 2016), it is not surprising that some participants linked social sustainability to CSR. For these participants, an organisation's effort to promote social sustainability can be seen through their CSR activities, regarding how they consider the effect of their activities on society. For example, the following quotes illustrate how social sustainability is defined through CSR:

Social sustainability is a new terminology in this part of the world... It is about identifying and managing the business impact on the workforce and society. I also see it as the relationship and engagement between an organisation and its stakeholders (Participant 14).

My perception of social sustainability is that it aligns with the concept of CSR, that is, the ability to manage or sustain social impacts or activities that impact the immediate environment and sustain social interaction with society (Participant 20).

I wouldn't say that I'm too familiar with the term [social sustainability], but I think it is something that has to do with corporate social responsibility... To be socially sustainable, it would mean that organisations must consider how what they do in the community affects the people in that community and promote their reputation (Participant 7).

With social sustainability, one has to think about how we contribute to the progress of our society as academics. It should be seen as having a responsibility to promote sustainable development, especially within the community where we live or the

university is domiciled...that is why we have what we call community service for which we are assessed during the promotion exercise (Participant 36).

The above statements show that Nigerian academics consider social sustainability as individual and organisational efforts towards facilitating sustainable development in society. Although the concept is not widely pronounced within this context, the participants resorted to linking social sustainability to CSR (a more familiar concept). Therefore, they believed that CSR is a way to promote social sustainability, thereby making conscious efforts to make positive impacts within their communities. Furthermore, their perceptions resonate with the argument that the socio-economic responsibility of an organisation is to promote employees welfare, community welfare and business ethics (Bux et al., 2020). Therefore, engaging in ‘community service’ or ‘community development programmes’ [discussed subsequently] are considered conscious efforts necessary to achieve sustainable development and enhance their organisation’s reputation within the community. Thus, it is not enough for organisations (e.g., Nigerian HEIs) to communicate their shared values about social sustainability, they must respond and act in accordance with these values (Galuppo et al., 2014; Sundström et al., 2019).

Availability and access to social amenities

A large number of the participants defined social sustainability as the availability and access to social amenities. Providing infrastructural facilities that are accessible for the local and surrounding communities are considered a critical part of the social sustainability agenda. For these academics, to sustain social cohesion or interactions with others in the community, the government and organisations must play their part in providing infrastructure or social amenities such as good roads and transport networks, electricity, clean water, accessible and affordable internet connectivity, childcare and

fitness facilities, among others. The following quotations epitomise some of the shared views of the participants:

...With all that I have mentioned regarding social sustainability, it will be impossible to achieve social sustainability if there are no provisions for social amenities like good roads, cheap WiFi and clean water. In order to encourage people to establish constant interactions and enjoy their social life, good infrastructure is needed... (Participant 15).

Infrastructure is something that we lack in Nigeria and perhaps why we are very far from understanding the realities of social sustainability. Based on my little knowledge, social sustainability requires that the government and organisations should provide the necessary facilities. For instance, if I need to visit my friends or organise a programme in my community, it will require that the infrastructure is available and also accessible...even the community service that the university requires us to do, the fact that the social amenities are not enough means that we [academics] are limited to things that we can do, so we always repeat the same things we did in previous years (Participant 23).

It will be difficult for a country to achieve social sustainability if it does not have the social amenities in place. The case is what we currently face here in Nigeria, where social amenities are only available to the rich because the poor cannot afford them. Even though they are supposed to be public goods and made accessible to everyone, you find that as academics, our salaries can hardly pay for them. For example, electricity in Nigeria is like gold [expensive], and you can't afford to switch on anything at any time...the alternative is to buy petrol to power the generator, but that is also very expensive. So I don't think we should be talking about social sustainability in Nigeria if our basic needs can't be met (Participant 49).

Social amenities and public infrastructure remains a critical determinant for defining and evaluating the achievement of social sustainability among the participants. Like Participant 23 mentioned, some participants also share the view that the realities of social sustainability may not be admissible in a case of inadequate social infrastructure. The findings resonate with Roelich et al. (2015) that social infrastructure is needed to satisfy individuals and social and personal needs. Moreover, Grum and Kobal Grum (2020) evince that social infrastructure can help facilitate and cater to asocial interaction and enhance the all-inclusive development of the individual and community because it serves

as an impetus for a functioning society. In addition, most participants suggest that social infrastructure should not only be made available and accessible but also affordable to all and sundry. Therefore, besides the fact that infrastructural facilities promote economic wellbeing and complement social interventions (Schwarz et al., 2016; Sierra et al., 2018), they must enhance the quality of life of individuals and the larger society to achieve social sustainability.

7.1.3 The Notions of Green HRM among Nigerian Academics

Having emerged about a decade ago, the concept of green HRM is gradually becoming popular. The term ‘green’ is widely known by the participants to refer to anything that relates to the environment and its protection. However, in Nigeria, green HRM is an unfamiliar concept yet to gain considerable prominence among academics and the larger society. Nevertheless, the researcher briefly defined green HRM and provided simple illustrations of how green HRM may be construed and examples of its practices and initiatives. Afterwards, the researcher asked the participants to explain what green HRM means to them. In most cases, the participants were led by their understanding of the term ‘green’ while explaining green HRM. The researcher further categorised their definitions into two sub-themes.

HRM strategies for promoting environmental sustainability

More than half of the participants were able to relate green HRM as a strategy of human resource management to promote environmental sustainability. Thus, they defined green HRM as the role of HR and its strategies adopted to ensure that organisations are aware of their activities that lead to environmental pollution, degradation and depletion of resources. The following quotes are typical of the participants’ notion of green HRM:

Green HRM means being aware and sensitive to environmental issues in society (Participant 1).

Green HRM is a new concept in this part of the world. For me, green HRM is a concept whereby the organisation promotes sustainable practices and increases employees' awareness and commitment to the issues of environmental sustainability... I believe that green HRM has to do with reducing the negative effect of human activities on the ecosystem and being environmentally conscious or friendly (Participant 17).

To my understanding, I think green HRM is ensuring that human relations are managed in such a way to benefit the system so that it does not cause some harm or pollution to society. It means ensuring a green society that is concerned with environmental sustainability to promote good health (Participant 21).

Some participants also define green HRM as the organisation's efforts to promoting employees' consciousness to their environment:

Green HRM are practices and policies put in place by organisations that will stimulate the green behaviour of employees in an organisation in order to create an acceptable, more efficient and responsible organisation. The workforce should be able to create a better environment that everyone is able to produce at an optimal level and promote employee wellbeing by providing a conducive environment for employees (Participant 7).

It [green HRM] has to do with the setting of policies and practices to enhance the behaviour of employees to be socially responsible. It is very similar to social entrepreneurship because it emphasises practices beyond making profits, but also educating employees about the social cause and being sensitive to the environment (Participant 15).

Green HRM means being able to orientate employees to be conscious of the environment and promote the knowledge of staff about practices that might have a negative effect on the environment (Participant 36).

Green HRM are policies that HR implement to encourage their staff to be conscious of the environment and be conscious of the fact that whatever you do to the environment comes back to pay its dues either positively or negatively (Participant 22).

So if you're saying green, which is talking about sustainability, it is about the human resource management that takes care of the fact that sustainability is a responsibility of every individual... Green HRM would then mean that HR has a responsibility to ensure that its members are well-groomed to understanding why it is important to safeguard the environment (Participant 35).

The quotes above show that despite the unfamiliarity in conceptualising green HRM, the participants clearly understand its importance in enhancing environmental sustainability. Therefore, ‘being conscious of the environment’, ‘being sensitive to environmental concerns’, ‘reducing environmental pollution’ and ‘creating awareness of the environment’ were the common words used to define green HRM. The perceptions of the participants align with prior studies that have defined green HRM as the usage of HRM policies to foster the sustainable use of organisational resources while also promoting the cause of environmentalism (Mampira, 2013; Ren et al., 2018).

In addition, the definitions provided by the participants resonate with Mandip (2012) findings that green HRM comprises two key elements – environmentally-friendly HR practices and knowledge capital preservation. While Nigerian academics define green HR as strategies, policies and practices that reduce the adverse effects of an organisation’s activities on the environment, they also acknowledge that for green HRM to work, employees must be made aware of their environment through activities or programmes that help orientate or educate them. Thus, the fact that the concept [green HRM] remains relatively new to most participants shows the low level of its awareness. Moreover, extant research has construed green HRM as the practices, systems, and policies that make organisations’ employees green for the societal, natural environment, individual and business benefit (Renwick et al., 2013; Bangwal and Tiwari, 2015). It also means that it is required to enhance employees’ green practices, mentalities and capacities, arouse employees to think green, and give chances to employees to generate information and attitudes related to environmental sustainability (Schroeder, 2012; Mishra, 2017). Nevertheless, some of the green HRM practices identified by the participants are subsequently highlighted.

A component of corporate social responsibility

As previously mentioned, social sustainability has been linked to CSR; however, some participants also link green HRM to CSR. Thus, it reinforces the underlying premise of the three pillars of sustainability, where organisations, through their CSR activities, are expected to “achieve a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives” (United Nations, 2021). In essence, while explaining the concept to the participants using examples, they tend to associate green HRM with some of their organisation’s CSR practices. However, the following quotes exemplify how some participants link green HRM to CSR:

...I wouldn’t have known that there are shreds of green HRM practices in my university. I am still convinced that we only practice them as CSR without knowing the actual name...it is not a conscious or deliberate action in most cases, just something that we sometimes do (Participant 38).

My personal view is that green HRM is not a known terminology in Nigeria as a whole and not just among Nigerian academics. I would say we do CSR activities like volunteering to plant flowers in the university premises or community projects on environmental pollution, and that would be the closest to what you have explained as green HRM... (Participant 9).

Let me start by saying that, don’t let anyone deceive you that green HRM is a popular concept in Nigeria [laughing] because this is the first time I’m also hearing about it. By green HRM, we could say maybe CSR activities... In academics, we have what we call community service, and it is one of the promotion criteria to show our contribution as academics to the immediate community in the form of CSR, so maybe that way green HRM is practised because sometimes, the service rendered might be in the form of telling the public how to dispose waste or keep the environment clean... (Participant 53).

In a way, my institution practices green HRM. For instance, early this year, we held a project called the “community development project” required for every staff as part of the CDS (Community Development Service) in our CSR programme. So, some staff members created a group where they organise programmes in the university’s community, some of which are about raising awareness of environmental pollution such as waste management. Sometimes we have carried out programmes tagged “trash to cash” or “waste to wealth”... This is largely

because my institution is based in a very remote area, where the villagers are used to burning refuse and littering the environment (Participant 16).

From the above responses, it is evident that green HRM is an unfamiliar concept but is perceived by some participants as an element of CSR. Some participants believe that there are shreds of green HRM practices in their HEIs but are often regarded as CSR. Moreover, while some of the CSR activities identified to contribute to environmentalism are green initiatives, they are often performed to meet the promotion criteria or practised by those who have an informal orientation of green initiatives due to their exposure and knowledge from global news. For instance, Participant 40 stated:

I only adopt green initiatives for my community service because I follow international news like CNN, BBC and CNBC and not because my institution creates that awareness.

Another participant mentioned that the shreds of green initiatives adopted in his university result from the leadership being inclined to :

My vice chancellor is a professor of environmental studies, and that is why we have some programmes on environmental protection. So I think that it is because that is his specialisation, else we wouldn't have such awareness no matter how little or have it embedded in our CSR programme... (Participant 12).

Generally, green HRM has been previously linked to CSR to promote sustainable environmental practices, reduction in energy usage and effective waste management (Bux et al., 2020). Mandip (2012) suggests that facilitating green initiatives or activities form one of the broader obligations of organisations to promoting corporate social responsibility. Therefore, being accountable and responsible for their environment and stakeholders is an important obligation of organisations practising CSR (Ahmad and Nisar, 2015). Nevertheless, the extent to which Nigerian HEIs are accountable and responsible for their environment is evidently low despite the fragments of CSR activities performed. Consequently, it engenders significant problems for academics and the wider

society, as discussed subsequently under the challenges to WLB, social sustainability and green HRM.

7.2 IMPACT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

To investigate if and how social sustainability efforts can constrain or enhance WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions, the findings are divided into two: factors that enhance the impact of social sustainability on WLB and factors that constrain the impact of social sustainability on WLB.

7.2.1 Factors that Enhance the Impact of Social Sustainability on WLB

Several factors enhance the impact of social sustainability on WLB, including informal support, self-induced social support, flexible workplace policies and practices, community development services, and social justice, are presented as follows.

Informal support

Informal support is a widely used coping strategy among the participants to promote WLB and social sustainability. Moreover, WLB studies (e.g., Daverth et al., 2016; French and Shockley, 2020) have recognised the importance of informal support to promote employee wellbeing and manage the conflict between the work and non-work domains. Dependence on spousal and family member support is considered very crucial in managing work and non-work obligations among the participants. For these Nigerian academics, family is an important social institution that helps them to effectively manage the two domains. Therefore, soliciting support from spouses, family members or close relatives and friends were individualised coping strategies for dealing with the pressure from the work-life domains. The following quotes illustrate the shared views:

My family understands the work that I do and know that it requires a lot of my time... However, I manage to devote some time to family and friends as much as I can. Also, having that understanding within the family helps to ease the pressure from the home front because they understand that my job requires most of my attention and time. It was better during the pandemic because we were all at home, and the time used to commute 'to and fro' work can be used for other things that are not work-related (Participant 1).

My wife has been very supportive because she understands how busy working as an academic could be. Family support and understanding is very important if one must manage work and personal life... Also, when both of us [parents] are not available, we could rely on our close relatives or friends by leaving the kids with them (Participant 42).

As an academic, work is life, and it eats into one's personal time for family and friends, but you just have to learn to combine them... I mostly depend on my parents or brothers and sister to look after the kids when my husband and I have a busy schedule. In fact, my younger sister lives with us, and she is a student, so she often helps out to cook for my children while I'm still at work and she would message me if need be or if there is an emergency... I don't think it would have been easy without them [family] (Participant 19).

Here in Nigeria, family is an informal support system because you can run to them when you need help, especially with taking care of the kids when needed. In as much as I try to bond with my family, there are some times that it might be difficult to always be there for them, so I often rely on family support during those times... (Participant 12).

From the above statements, the collectivist system in Nigeria is often helpful in managing the work and family domains because academics can rely on family support to manage their work-life domains. This collectivist system is developed by ensuring close social ties with families and friends, and it often builds a strong sense of obligation to support one another (Mordi et al., 2013; Akanji et al., 2020). Therefore, in a sense, the family support system helps Nigerian academics to not only depend on close family and friends for caregiving assistance, but also foster a sustained social relationship with them.

However, like in most Nigerian WLB studies, women are often subjected to most of the caregiving roles in the family with little or no help from their male spouses. This situation also played out in this research, as most female academics alluded to soliciting caregiving

assistance from their parents, relatives and friends rather than their male spouses. This is due to the patriarchal proclivities that exist in Nigeria, where women are regarded as ‘home makers’ and ‘caregivers’ and men as breadwinners (Adisa et al., 2019). Moreover, due to institutionalised patriarchy, Nigerian women take up multiple roles in the family, which makes WLB a rare occurrence, particularly for those with formal and professional jobs (Nwagbara, 2021). Therefore, in a case where organisational support is inadequate, the female participants resort to help from their immediate family and close friends. In addition, unlike western studies where women depend on paid au pairs or daycare centres, Nigerian women are often reliant on unpaid domestic workers or family members that assist them in their domestic roles (Adisa et al., 2016). Employing paid domestic workers or daycare services is considered an extravagant expense, especially with the low remuneration or salaries associated with most Nigerian HEIs. For instance, of the twenty-one female participants, only four have paid domestic care services or daycare services. These views are further illustrated by the following quotes:

...I know that most women lecturers find it more difficult than men to manage work and personal life, especially if you have younger children. We can't solely depend on our husbands because the Nigerian culture doesn't recognise men as caregivers. In fact, if your in-law or an ordinary friend sees your husband doing the dishes or feeding the children or any other domestic chores, you will see the disdain look on their faces. It is better to bring one's younger siblings to help out than one's husband (Participant 25).

With my little salary, I can barely feed my family, much less paying another individual to do the house chores. I have my younger sister here with me, so she takes care of my kids, and in turn, she gets to eat free meals, and I sometimes support her education... My husband tries to help but trust me, I can't rely on the little help that he offers, and I can't blame him because I sometimes stop him from doing some house chores before his family or somebody will come and start saying that I have turned him into a woman (Participant 11).

Another female participant shares the view that patriarchy is gradually declining:

I think the culture of men doing absolutely nothing is gradually declining because sometimes, my husband does the cooking because he says he loves doing it. While

I was living with my parents, I never saw my dad step into the kitchen to cook or wash the dishes or even do the domestic chores, so I think that culture [patriarchy] is slowly declining... But I still have my lovely sister, who has been very helpful with the enormous chores so that I don't come back from work to start doing them all (Participant 43).

Also, below is an account of one of the female academics who employed a paid domestic worker:

I have a paid domestic worker that lives with us... I told my husband that if he can't shoulder a considerable amount of the house chores, he might as well employ a housemaid because I was getting too stressed out combining my work and family duties. So, my husband pays her salary because how much is my own salary to afford such services [laughing] (Participant 55).

From the accounts above, the informal support system also includes the services of paid and unpaid domestic workers, which is a widely common practice in Nigeria. Specifically, individuals who employ domestic worker services in Nigeria are often a result of the need to cater to family demands while at work and reduce WLC that may arise from combining the work and non-work responsibilities (Adisa et al., 2021). Therefore, while it might be difficult or impossible for Nigerian academics to separate their work and non-work lives, integrating both domains also mean that they require informal support for successful work-life integration.

Self-induced social support

Besides leveraging informal support, self-induced social support is another individualised practice that helps Nigerian academics improve their quality of life through social relations. To an extent, despite the high demands from their jobs, some participants made out time to socialise and sustain their social relations with people outside their working environment. The responses below elaborate on this point:

As Nigerians, we love partying, and this is an avenue to socialise with people and build social networks. So the way to cultivate a life outside of work is through attending social events that brings people together. However, as academics, it takes

a conscious effort to attend social events or parties because the workload is too much that we seldom have that time to attend parties (Participant 29).

We always have a saying that no man is an island. So that means, automatically, you will draw strength from other people from your engagement and interaction with other people.... that is why your social life is as important as whatever other aspects of your life.... And for me, I think that is the pedestal on which I stand, as I always say that my social network is actually my social web and my productive wealth... I'm able to relax based on the fact that I'm leveraging on the social network that I have. So the absence of that social support system can only take away my social relations and work-life balance (Participant 34).

One thing that I have realised is that depending on my institution to provide resources and avenues for socialising is not worthwhile because they always think about the cost first rather than the benefits. So, I have improvised on my own by attending as many social functions as I can and that my work can permit so that I do not lose that social touch in my life... So if my organisation is not willing to help, I'd better help myself [laughing] (Participant 31).

However, some participants also share the view that while social interaction is needed to achieve WLB, it may also exacerbate WLC and stress:

Because of the nature of my work, interacting or socialising with friends is almost impossible. This often affects relationships; for example, I was discussing with a family friend a few days ago, and he expressed his displeasure at not picking his calls or calling back in time or even checking up on him. I think, if I'm not careful, I might no longer have friends with the way things are going as a result of my demanding job. Besides, talking to people after a stressful day also adds to my stress (Participant 50).

My engagement with people within and outside my organisation could encourage work-life balance. For instance, my department has a WhatsApp group where we discuss other things besides work e.g., politics, economics, social events and so on. However, in a way, it is a two-edged situation because sometimes official matters are thrown into the social media platform, which makes it difficult to delineate work from non-work activities (Participant 16).

Furthermore, as part of the self-induced social support, most participants hold the view that religion contributes to their social support. However, there were mixed feelings about the impact of religion as a social support system. The following quotes further illustrate these views:

Sometimes we pay so much attention to religious activities. In a way, it helps to create time for social activities that I have missed due to working for longer hours because I tend to interact with other congregation members. However, it also eats into your time for work particularly for the Muslims who tend to observe their periodic prayers during the day, which is why few organisations have dedicated places of worship for their staff so that going long distances to pray doesn't affect the time spent working. Moreover, the religious meetings also eat into the time I sometimes have to spend with my family during the weekends (Participant 9).

Religion is put above many things in Nigeria because we sometimes tend to pretend as if we are holier than the Pope [laughs]... As Muslims or Christians, we have several religious activities to attend at least once every week, and for Nigerians, religious laws are sometimes valued above national laws. For every religious activity, you have to interact with people, which might be a good way to relax after a week-long work. However, it might take you away from family sometimes because they should be the priority when there's that little time away from work... so religion has its positive and negative effects on WLB (Participant 54).

Spirituality is a culture in Nigeria that helps us interact with others outside of work but is also a strain on our lives because of the several activities that you are encouraged to engage in while at religious places of worship. Although I want to spend time with friends and congregational members, but my first responsibility is to my family, and if religious activities take up the little time I have to spend with them before I resume work, there would be a family crisis. As much as religion paves the way to be sociable, it could also harm other personal activities when things are not done in moderation (Participant 15).

Religious activities have both positive and negative effects on WLB. For instance, as a Christian, I have a prominent role in Church that makes me a key decision-maker, and that means that I get to meet and socialise with other people, including building profitable networks. However, because of the position that I hold, some people in Church have the perception that I don't have my personal issues that I'm dealing with, so they tend to burden me with their financial and emotional issues, which can be straining on my private life. However, the interesting thing is that I tend to consider it as enjoyable stress because engaging in religious activities is something that I'm passionate about because it is not mandatory, and it's a way for me to reduce work stress and take my mind off the stress at work (Participant 21).

An aspect of my life is religion, and I don't joke with my faith. Religion is a way of life for me... For someone like me, I go to Church every day and spend a minimum of one hour in Church. I believe that religious activities have a way of relieving one's stress from work. Also, you get to hear your pastor say things like "cast your cares on God and He will give you rest" or words of encouragement that helps me live through the hard times that I might be going through at work or personally (Participant 28).

Religion can actually enhance one's ability to balance work and personal life... Most times, during the week, Church activities are held in the evenings, by which time I'm back from work, or I drive straight to Church. I would say that the time I spend in the presence of God is when I tend to get more ideas regarding work or some career prospects (Participant 11).

Religion allows me to absorb all the abnormalities that I witness in my day-to-day work life. In a way, it gives a kind of boost to continue forging ahead because I see it as a tranquilliser. Unlike work, religion is a personal decision to go to one's place of worship, not mandatory (Participant 16).

From the above statements, irrespective of the views and mixed feelings that the participants have regarding the influence of their self-induced social support on their work and non-work lives, it reinforces the argument that the work and non-work domains are inseparable and thereby could work together to promote work-life integration (Morris and Madsen, 2007; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Spending time at work and having time for social activities or personal activities at the same time is a necessity for most participants to promote social sustainability or sustainable social relationships. Moreover, based on the distinctive socio-cultural characteristics of Nigerians, socialising is an important aspect of their lives; therefore, when they have no time to socialise, it becomes a burden and decreases their productivity at work (Nwagbara, 2021). Furthermore, this finding corroborates with prior studies (Fernandez-Crehuet et al., 2016; Kelliher et al., 2019) that suggest integrating one's work life and social life as a crucial way to achieve work-life balance. More so, less than a decade ago, Nigeria ranked among the top 70 in the world's happiest people but now ranks 116th as of 2020 (World Happiness Report, 2021). The Nigerian collectivist system that enhances socialisation could be the reason for being ranked among the happiest countries in the last decade. However, several other reasons, including the rising insecurity issues in the country, could have contributed to its decline to the 116th position.

In addition, as the excerpts illustrate, investing time in spiritual or religious activities is considered a means to forming social relationships outside the work domain and enhancing social sustainability. It is interesting that a few participants (e.g., Participants 11, 16, 21 and 28) consider the stress of engaging in spiritual activities as ‘enjoyable stress’ that helps tranquilise the stress from their work domain. This is because, like Participant 42 mentioned, “if you remove the spirituality aspect (e.g., praying and listening to sermons) from the Church or Mosque, what remains is the social aspect”. Therefore, in Nigeria, spiritual activities are not merely regarded as a way to commune with the ‘God’, it is also a means of socialising with others (Fasan, 2018). Moreover, some Nigerians take their spirituality seriously and sometimes take leaves to attend religious events, such as crusades, revivals, and travelling to pilgrimage sites (e.g., Mecca or Jerusalem), among others (Stein, 2015; Nwabughio, 2016). This could perhaps explain why some of the participants consider their spirituality as a means to assuage their work-related stress and compensate for the social relations that may not be adequately available in their work domain. Therefore, work-life integration becomes important for individuals that value their social life.

Flexible workplace policies and practices

Extant research has argued that organisations that implement flexible and family-friendly policies and practices have a better chance of enhancing productivity, increasing job satisfaction, reducing employee turnover and attracting talents (Wheatley, 2012; Beham et al., 2017; Cañibano, 2019). Moreover, flexible working is considered a socially sustainable practice, given that it serves as a proactive way of managing business impacts on employees (Blake-Beard et al., 2010; Davidescu et al., 2020). However, in this current study, the availability of flexible working arrangements are scarce from the point of view of Nigerian academics. The following quotes are typical of some of their responses:

The only family-friendly policy that I believe allows me to bond with family and do other things that are personal is my 40 days annual leave which I often use to travel out of the country. Besides that, I can't point to any family-friendly policy that my institution provides in this regard (Participant 12).

Besides the usual leaves, which are annual leaves or sabbatical, I am not aware of any family-friendly policies implemented by my institution... (Participant 1).

Work-life balance practices or policies are not available in my organisation besides the normal annual leaves, which is outdated and does not sustain that balance that is required because the leaves are only available within a specific period during the year (Participant 23).

Based on my knowledge of the university's policies, I can confirm that annual leaves and sabbatical leaves are the only approved policies and practices in my institution. Another is the maternity leave, but that only applies to female lecturers, not me [laughs] (Participant 34).

For the females, maternity leave was part of the options to stay away from work:

I only know of annual leave and maternity leave in my university... The university system is different from other professions where you hear of other types of [flexible working] practices... Here in Nigeria, those two [annual and sabbatical leaves] and maybe sabbatical leave are what's common (Participant 6).

There are only a few policies present in my organisation...annual leave and maternity leave are the most commonly used ones... I don't think we have any other flexible work policy or practice that is formally written somewhere in the employee handbook...as a woman, I'm even lucky to have maternity leave because the men are not entitled to paternity leave, and that is sad (Participant 20).

Despite the prevalence of annual leaves and sabbatical leaves among the majority, some participants further decried the process and procedure for being entitled to such opportunities:

Annual leave of 40 working days is the only flexible policy that I can identify as being formalised in my university...even the sabbaticals are not as common because you have to wait seven years and the process is quite complicated that you often give up or don't attempt to apply (Participant 8).

It may be difficult to point towards a particular work-life balance policy in my organisation... I can't remember the last time I had a break from work... For instance, being in a lower academic rank (lecturer I), I am considered as a supporting staff because I'm yet to attain a senior lecturership, so I am not entitled to annual leaves (Participant 38).

... there is no precise demonstration of commitment to work-life balance in my organisation. We only have leaves (e.g. annual leave) written in the policy, but I wouldn't say that it is encouraged because there is no incentive to take such leaves when it is an unpaid leave. There is also no reminder from the institution that I should make use of my leave allowance... The system is not programmed in a way that people will be encouraged to go on leaves or take a vacation (Participant 16).

...for instance, there is no provision for paternity leaves in the Nigerian constitution, much less the HEIs. It is a strange policy in Nigeria, and only very few organisations, especially multinationals that allow such (Participant 9).

Most participants could only identify three common formal policies across HEIs in Nigeria, including annual leave, sabbatical leave and maternity leave. In most cases, while these leaves were made available to the majority, they tend to be biased to some extent. For instance, some participants who are below senior lecturers are not entitled to annual leaves. Likewise, the Nigerian employment law does not recognise paternity leave, hence its absence in most Nigerian HEIs except for those in a few private HEIs. More so, as participant 9 mentioned that there are no provisions for paternity leave in Nigerian HEIs, paternity leave is yet to be enforced by law in the Nigerian employment law; however is practised in a few state-owned organisations, including Lagos and Enugu (Premium Times, 2018). Interestingly, the researcher observed that annual and maternity leaves are prevalent across most federal, state and private HEIs. However, while sabbatical leaves are prevalent in federal HEIs, paternity leaves are mainly available in a few state and private HEIs.

In addition, the participants also alluded to the recent practice of remote working (mainly working from home) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, all the participants allude that it was an informal flexible working practice that gained increased popularity in their HEIs due to the social distancing measures (e.g., lockdown) implemented by the Nigerian government to curb the spread of the deadly virus. The following quotes exemplify the shared views:

As academics, working from home is only an informal initiative that we practice personally, not because the institution has remote working policies or a formal practice for it... Remote working only became popular across Nigerian academics during the pandemic because the pandemic forced us to work from home. However, we still found it difficult to work from home because of the significant issues with the internet and other facilities required for working from home (Participant 2).

Until the pandemic broke out in 2020, remote working was only complimentary, but when the pandemic broke out, my school itself was not ready, either by policy or by modalities, or by exigencies and by practical realities, for the demands and challenges of virtual learning... So it took us about five to six months before the school even came out in itself to begin to sweep or work with the idea of us exploring the possibility of remote learning (Participant 38).

...Although we used to run a distance learning programme before the pandemic, it wasn't practical because of the technicalities and lack of sophisticated technologies. Then the pandemic came and forced us to run helter-skelter to ensure that the students get the services they paid for... because, as a private institution, the students will complain if the academic session is disrupted without an alternative, and you can understand their plight based on the fact that their tuition is costly compared to the state or federal schools (Participant 49).

From the above statements, while remote working is considered a flexible working arrangement (Opuko and Munjuri, 2017; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir, 2021), for academics in Nigeria, remote working was a case of environmental determinism – a state when human behaviour is determined or influenced by forces outside the individual, especially the physical environment (Hamidi and Ewing, 2020). This is because pre-pandemic, remote working was not a practice for most HEIs in Nigeria (Egielewa et al., 2021). Thus, there is limited evidence that portrays remote working as a strategic approach in Nigerian HEIs. The majority of this evidence suggests that although there are shreds of practices involving distance learning in Nigerian HEIs, it does not connote remote working for the academics inherent in the institutional policy. Thus, remote working has been deficient before the outbreak of the pandemic. Evidence from prior studies suggests that the drastic shift towards implementing remote working practices in

the education sector arose from the environmental complexity and turbulence that has arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Egielewa et al., 2021; Oyediran et al., 2021).

Consequently, the usage of flexible working arrangements within the study context suffers acute shortage as the participants claim that pre-COVID-19, home-working was primarily used to address administrative obligations, while other principal responsibilities (teaching, research and community service) have continued to be densely performed on a face-to-face basis. Further, the findings bring to fore that despite the limited usage of flexible working arrangements (e.g., remote working) in Nigeria, it is better practised in the private HEIs than the state and federal HEIs. This is primarily due to the lack of investment in sophisticated technology across public organisations in Nigeria compared to private organisations. Moreover, the findings resonate with some western studies (e.g., Melton and Meier, 2016; Boselie et al., 2019) that the public sector remains resilient to the traditional or classic model of public organisations; hence, the public sector remains dormant in the implementation of flexible working arrangements or practices (Whyman et al., 2015).

In addition, extant research reveals that flexible working practices (e.g., remote working) could enhance safety and health practices for organisations and employees, such that it facilitates social sustainability (Petrudi et al., 2021). Moreover, when employees (e.g., academics) work remotely, they have more time and flexibility to deal with their non-work domain, requiring their physical presence or attention. Therefore, it makes work-life integration easier for employees to manage the conflicting work-life. More so, accessibility is commonly quoted as the primary measure of social equity; therefore, equal access to flexible working arrangements can help employees manage their work and personal life better (Guy and McCandless, 2012). By spending more time interacting with people, especially those outside the work domain, such as the community, religious

centres, fitness centres, etc., employees may be better at achieving work-life balance (St-Jean and Duhamel, 2020).

Community development services

The participants identified some organisational practices that they perceived to bolster their engagement within and outside the work domain. For instance, more than half of the participants identified academics' 'community development service' or 'community service' responsibility as social sustainability practices that contribute to WLB. Like academics in different parts of the world, Nigerian academics are required to engage in community service. In Nigerian HEIs, community service is a means to bring the institutions closer to the community through innovative and creative programmes and projects that "promote economic, environmental and socio-cultural development" (Adekalu et al., 2018). The following quotes are typical of the participants' shared views of the community development service practices:

There are three roles in academia, including teaching, research and community service... My institution expects that the community service role of an academic must be used to promote social support within the community, such that as academics, we are able to interact with the community either through public lectures/orientation or individual or partnered sponsorship projects within the immediate community that could help promote social sustainability (Participant 56).

Although community services is an aspect that academics in Nigeria are appraised on, while only a few academics might use that to orientate their immediate community about environmental concerns, most academics do other things that are not environmentally related (Participant 9).

On a scale of 1-10, I would rate my organisation 4 in promoting social sustainability. For example, in my institution, as young as the university is, we do not have any recreation or leisure centre where staff or students could use. However, in the centre that I head, we practice social entrepreneurship, although it is mainly focused on students' projects within the university community, where they raise funds to provide social amenities such as clean water, sponsoring villagers for apprenticeship for generating income and many more, and because

some staffs are involved, it is a way of promoting that same awareness (Participant 8).

With social sustainability, one has to think about how we contribute to the progress of our society as academics. It should be seen as having a responsibility to promote sustainable development, especially within the community where we live or the university is domiciled...that is why we have what we call community service for which we are assessed during the promotion exercise (Participant 36).

While engaging in community development service is a requirement in most Nigerian HEIs for promotion and career development, not all participants were convinced about the seriousness and commitment of their HEIs in this regard. According to the participants, academics are expected to engage in community development service at least once a year in some HEIs, while in others, it could be performed at least once in three years. Nevertheless, some participants opined that the efforts of their HEIs towards community development are minimal and sometimes insignificant:

As much as community service is practised in my institution, I don't think we do enough because it often does not impact society as it ought to... You cannot practice community service once in three years and expect sustainable development because it must be a continuous exercise... (Participant 17).

...the university has to really educate us on what community development actually means because some of the things I see, even though they are contributing to the community in a way, they may not be sustainable because we do them and forget that they need maintenance and nurturing... For example, when we organise seminars or public lectures, we stop there without following up. It is the university's responsibility to ensure that they partner with lecturers that make significant contributions to the community, particularly those that require long-term monitoring (Participant 20).

...I have since concluded that community service is a box-ticking promotion exercise here in Nigeria and not as if most universities are entirely devoted to it... I spent some time abroad, and you can see the efforts across European institutions that provide grants and funding so that academics can do research that contributes to society, but we don't have that here in Nigeria (Participant 48).

While it may be a box-ticking practice for some Nigerian HEIs or minimally practised, an increased commitment to community development will foster individual-community interactions, contribute to the quality of life and enhance social sustainability (Mushfiqur

et al., 2018; Cardillo and Longo, 2020). Moreover, the more interactions between academics and their community, the greater they are likely to have a sense of belonging to their community through their social capital investment (Demsey et al., 2011). Besides, a few of the community development service activities aim to improve the quality of life of academics and the members of the larger society. Therefore, on the one hand, engaging in community development services would enhance the potentials for career development since it is a promotion requirement for academics, especially in Nigeria. On the other hand, it also enables academics and their HEIs to make significant contributions to the development of their immediate communities, translating into national economic and social development, as well as achieving work-life integration.

Promoting social justice

The promotion of social justice is a global concern and not specifically peculiar to Nigeria. Issues with providing equal access to resources, ensuring equity, increasing employee participation, managing diversity, and promoting human rights are worldwide concerns (Littig and Griessler, 2005; Boyer et al., 2016; Gálvez et al., 2020). However, the extent to which these issues are prioritised or given significant attention varies in different contexts. For instance, Mushfiquer et al. (2018, p. 882) suggest that the “contextual, institutional and professional issues underpin Nigeria’s unique WLB practice”. Social justice is also a concern for Nigerian academics, but while more than half of the participants express their negative experiences, as highlighted subsequently in the challenges, others identified some practices in their HEIs that promote social justice.

These views are presented in the following quotes:

The management is always ready to hear out any grievances or cases that are related to human rights. Although cases like incivility and injustice are highly pronounced and rampant in this part of the world because of the Nigerian culture

and values that create the power disparity between men and women, so some of these issues do exist in academia but are relatively managed... (Participant 5).

All lecture halls in the university have facilities for disabled staff and students. We also have a unit called "Centre for the Deaf", so as a lecturer, if you have a large class, an interpreter will be sent to assist in the class through sign language... In terms of human rights, the university disapproves of any form of discrimination, whether age, gender or religion, either from recruitment to promotion... The employment law is clear, but the rate of implementation is not yet desirable, and there's still a lot more work to be done (Participant 15).

The culture in my university is quite good as it relates to openness, transparency and equal opportunities for gender. So, I would say that although there's still a lot to be done, my university seems to be trying its best to ensure that justice is served across all quarters (Participant 30).

In terms of promoting social sustainability, my institution tries its best in some aspects. For instance, there are free campus shuttles for staff and students that are disabled or physically challenged. Also, there is zero-tolerance to gender inequality issues and to a large extent, my institution promotes some level of inclusivity and is quite transparent with its activities (Participant 7).

There are cogent policies to enhance human rights in my institution... for instance, the promotion exercise happens every year, and the institution is quite serious about that. In the case of being disapproved, one can follow due process to appeal, and it will be looked into, and afterwards, if merited, the promotion will be granted. There is also gender fairness where the institution promotes equal opportunities for male and female academics to occupy positions such as heads of units, coordinators etc. (Participant 41).

My university places premium and high emphasis on human rights, in essence, they don't just talk the talk but ultimately walk the talk, in the sense that I've seen some policy documents that show that there's always consideration both in admission and employability, for those who are living with a disability. There are structures that are put in place, and some of the structures are being reformed to cater to those living with disabilities... Also, on the aspect of gender equality, the school has a very strong policy, and there's almost no discrimination on a gender basis but all-inclusive affairs. In fact, we have a gender mainstreaming office in the University to make sure that gender discrimination is alleviated... And at every point in time during our meetings, the agenda policies of the school is always put on the screen for everybody to know that this is a portion of the University concerning issue of gender. However, does this mean that every question of discrimination has been taken care of? No! (Participant 27).

There are policies that have been implemented by the university to ensure that there is fairness in dealing with all manner of things that happens within the university. For instance, it is not unusual for one to organise a committee and find women as

members or chairs of the committee... in fact, if the committee is inducted and the VC or HOD does not see women among, it will be dissolved, except for cases where such committees are exclusive to the male staffs... Also, in terms of consideration for staff with disabilities, the university although tries its best by providing structures that could help staff with such conditions, but in my opinion, there's still a lot that needs to be done in that regard (Participant 36).

The above statements reveal the considerable extent to which social justice is prioritised in Nigerian HEIs. Although the findings indicate a unanimous conclusion among the participants that social justice in Nigerian HEIs is still relatively weak, some participants believe that their HEIs are gradually improving. However, the procedural and distributive dimensions of social justice require that organisations support social cohesion by promoting fairness and transparency in their relations with employees, as well as being fair in the resource distribution (Dempsey et al., 2011). Therefore, in a situation where Nigerian HEIs are able to address the needs of academics for social justice, there is a disposition towards fairness and equity, thus promoting social sustainability. With this in mind, academics may worry less about inequality and discrimination in the workplace, which often affects their physical, mental and psychological wellbeing (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2018; Harnois and Bastos, 2018); because, with these unsettled mind and health issues, achieving a work-life balance may become difficult.

7.2.2 Factors that Constrain the Impact of Social Sustainability on WLB

Several factors that constrain the impact of social sustainability on WLB, including inadequate provision of infrastructure, poverty, unemployment, national security and job security, organisational negligence, Nigerian HEIs' conservative culture, high job demands and expectations, human rights breach, personal ambition, individual ignorance and labour unions frailty, are presented as follows.

Inadequate provision of infrastructure

Most participants decried the state of infrastructure as a major economic challenge. For these academics, the problems they grapple with are the poor internet connectivity (e.g., WiFi), bad roads and transport networks, irregular power supply and lack of adequate facilities to foster social activities, among others, affecting social sustainability and WLB.

The following quotes are typical of the participants' shared views:

The mobile network connectivity is a problem in Nigeria that impedes work-life balance. As academics, we need constant WiFi services not just for teaching but also for our research responsibilities. So if my organisation is able to provide a reliable source, I feel it will reduce the work stress. Also, traffic issues in Nigeria is a major aspect of life that is frustrating for many workers. To avoid getting late to work, you leave home very early, sometimes without the opportunity to say goodbye to your children who are still sleeping and get back very late when they are asleep...Power supply is worse...I can't predict when the electricity will be on, so it's difficult to plan activities that require the use of electricity, and that affects my ability to manage my work and private life (Participant 18).

Where there are no social facilities, there is nothing to balance. If I have access to social facilities that could help connect to others in my community, it could be a good way to relax or use my leisure time. For instance, besides Lagos, many states in Nigeria do not have leisure parks for people to go with their families and relax. Although the parks in Lagos are also closed, and you hardly find people there because it is not the culture that the government has created for Nigerians compared to countries in the West. Also, the few tourist spots and centres in Nigeria that I could take my family to maybe during the weekends are either not well maintained or you are impeded because of the lack of motorable roads to these places. Even watching movies at home with family is sometimes impossible because the power supply is not constant and not predictable except I have to buy petrol to fuel the generating set. So in cases where I have some time off work to spend with family, the lack of infrastructure is discouraging (Participant 11).

Infrastructure is a big challenge all over the country, which has led to the slow development of the education sector. The main issues facing Nigeria are bad roads, poor internet network, inadequate water supply, and power supply. If these issues are solved, I believe everyone and not just academics, can stand a chance of having a better life and managing work and family duties (Participant 34).

The lack of access to social amenities negatively affects my work-life balance. For instance, without access to good infrastructure, it adds to the pressure that could have been reduced where infrastructure or technology could have made the work easier. So, the issue of fatigue is an impediment because the stress from work due to the lack of the required sophisticated gadgets means that I become grumpy when I feel tired, and that could be transferred to home in the form of aggression... (Participant 16).

Well, a well-relaxed mind, a focused mind, a well-relaxed body that unwinds will actually be very sharp and more ready for the other aspects. But at the same time, when the necessary infrastructure, recreational or social infrastructural facilities are not available or are not accessible, you can only have programmed people who work just to fulfil the hours. But where people are actually well tuned, well socialised and have a robust life, including social, family and work activities, it will make everything easier and increase productivity. So when you have productivity that is afflicted by the lack of social amenities, it is also because the social aspect, which is supposed to be the essential support system, is not robust enough to carry the demands of the varying aspects of human life (Participant 27).

...I also think one of the reasons behind the management's silence to policies like this are the lack of adequate funding, so if it requires the management to fund activities that back the policies, they may become silent about it (Participant 2).

Although remote working or hybrid working could be a way to improve work-life balance experiences for academics, such policy cannot be sustained in this part of the world where the lack of sufficient infrastructure is a big problem. For instance, our students are scattered around the country, so asking them to come in for a few days and virtual other days is not feasible. Even if they are to remain in the hostels, the hostels are not conducive enough to facilitate such because many students' attentiveness in class will decline. More so, the unstable WiFi service will frustrate the entire process. A simple evidence is also the fact that during the pandemic, students' performance was very poor because they were not used to the virtual learning process and some academics' because of the low level of technical expertise in dealing with such a new work environment (Participant 22).

Besides government provision of infrastructure and funding, some participants also mentioned that their organisations also have a role to play in generating revenue to provide adequate infrastructure, especially within the university premises:

Besides the government, institutions also have a role to play in providing social amenities. In my institution, we have a primary healthcare centre, which in my perspective, should be closed up because they also prescribe Panadol, Paracetamol and basic medications, and I don't see that as a real help to staff. Also, we have been clamouring for good health and social package for academics, for instance,

NHIS [National Health Insurance Scheme], which, even though it has been implemented but hardly covers my medical cost in times of major medical needs. In general terms, depending on the government for social amenities is stress on its own... I tend to make provisions for this by myself; for instance, I provide my own water by drilling a borehole, power my generating set with my money and many more basic things that the government has refused to provide us as a nation, which could help ease the way we go about our work and personal life (Participant 36).

Money is a primary reason for the institution's inability to promote WLB policies and practices. It's been worse since the government stopped giving subventions, which means we are solely responsible for generating our own revenue despite being a state university. So in a case where the university is struggling with paying staff salaries, there is no room for funding work-life balance practices or policies (Participant 21).

In sum, infrastructure has since been a challenge to the socio-economic growth of Nigeria (Ede, 2021). While several billions of dollars are allocated to infrastructure in the Nigerian budget annually, not much has been seen to justify the huge allocation over the years, accounting for the infrastructure deficit in Nigeria (Egobueze and Ojirika, 2018; Adekoya, 2019). Studies have attributed the poor infrastructure to poor governance and corruption practices in Nigeria, given that monies allocated to infrastructure and social amenities are siphoned into the personal coffers of those charged with the responsibility to execute the infrastructural projects (Osinubi et al., 2021).

Moreover, the unstable political environment in Nigeria tends to contribute to the poor economic conditions and financial constraint that inhibits the government and organisations from providing adequate infrastructure to meet the demand of society (Ede, 2021). Therefore, the infrastructure deficit is considered a significant impediment to employees' (academics) WLB in Nigeria because they depend on infrastructure to perform their work-related responsibilities and to motivate them towards engaging in social activities with family and friends (non-work activities). For instance, Participant 9 remarked that "if social and infrastructural facilities are adequate at home, there is a likelihood that I would want to spend more time at home since the facilities I need to

work are available”. Moreover, Woodcraft (2012) regards the provision of social amenities and infrastructure as an important factor in the dimension of social sustainability. His studies reveal the importance of providing essential services to individuals that promote welfare as the foundation of a thriving community. Thus, providing basic infrastructure is critical to the survival of humans from which they can exploit to meet other needs and wants, particularly those that are complex as guaranteeing social and economic equality (Gálvez et al., 2020). Also, as the UN SDG ‘9’ indicates, Nigeria must pursue building resilient infrastructure that supports sustainable industrialisation and innovation.

Poverty

‘Poverty’ is another economic challenge for many Nigerians, hence its echoed opinions among some participants. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019), at least 40% (over 80 million people) of the Nigerian population are poor, living below the poverty line of US\$ 381.75 annually. More than half of the participants lamented the meagre salaries they received as academics in Nigeria, much of which goes to paying bills and is barely sufficient to cater to their secondary needs (e.g., social activities). Although the majority were hesitant to reveal how much they earned, the average salary among those that revealed their earnings was between 400 and 500 US dollars monthly.

The following quotes exemplify the shared views:

...At a time, I rented an apartment close to the university where I stayed during the weekdays and then at weekends, I would go back home, but I couldn’t afford it any longer due to the meagre salary that isn’t enough to feed the entire family much less having an extra apartment... (Participant 18).

Poverty is another factor... academics in Nigeria are poorly paid, and the home you are fighting for because you want to spend time with them isn’t accepting of the fact that because you desire to be with them means you shouldn’t do extra work to bring more food to the table (Participant 36).

The wage level is low and does not cater to healthcare, power supply and security for staff because the poor state of the nation means that we need to provide these things by ourselves...How then do you spend 250,000 naira [US\$ 500] monthly on all the things that you need to cater for yourself and family? These things affect academics' ability to perform effectively (Participant 7).

HEIs in Nigeria need to do better with staff remuneration because the take-home pay that I call peanuts can hardly take you home. With my low income, I can't afford to pay for private facilities that might help improve my WLB. For instance, the gym subscription is expensive despite the location being far from where I live, so it means I need to have my private work-out or gym facilities, but they are very expensive in Nigeria. Attending social events and clubs are primarily for the rich, whereas I still struggle to feed my family. Without the purchasing power, there is little that I do (Participant 2).

The state of the economy can significantly affect the wellbeing and productivity of the citizens of that country (Pasamar and Valle Cabrera, 2013). Moreover, organisations operating under poor economic conditions with high poverty are likely to face increased pressure associated with enhancing the quality of life of their employees (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya et al., 2019). Therefore, countries such as Nigeria with high poverty rates find it challenging to promote social sustainability, as well as enhancing its citizens' quality of life (Woodcraft, 2012).

Unemployment, national insecurity and job insecurity

Several other economic issues affecting the socio-economic stability of Nigeria contribute to the poor wellbeing of its academics. Among these are unemployment, national insecurity and job insecurity, which have been ascertained to be major issues impeding the growth of the Nigerian economy over many decades (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014; Ede, 2021). The following quotes exemplify these views:

...Also, educating people about environmental protection cannot be a priority when their safety or protection of lives and property is at risk, given the various killings and kidnappings that have been happening over the years. So, the protection of life and property will always come first before people can think about the environment (Participant 34).

Unemployment is a factor that allows organisations to neglect employee wellbeing because an unemployed individual would care less about the high work demand so long as he can secure a job for survival, but organisations usually exploit such a situation (Participant 44).

...At present, there is no peace because you can't sleep with your two eyes closed, and these insecurity issues contribute to adverse health effects (Participant 2).

The killings and kidnappings by the unknown gunmen, Boko haram and the rest of the so-called terrorists and bandits are problematic for Nigeria's economic growth and development. On top of that, we have unemployment issues, and those with jobs are scared of losing them because the institution can no longer foot the bill alone... With all of these problems, how would you expect people to rest and not overwork themselves to prove themselves worthy of their jobs, even if it is at the expense of having time for their families?... (Participant 35).

Also, some participants talked about how the loss of social values and cohesion has led to insecurities in Nigeria. It reinforces the argument that social sustainability is important for reducing crime rates and insecurity (Mushfiquir et al., 2018). The participant remarked:

In Nigeria, in the old times, we recognise our neighbours as part of our families, but today it's changed because you may not even relate with your neighbour because you spend a large amount of time working, which is a social value that we have lost. Communal living trained us to become what we are today, but as soon as we attained a certain position, we began to disassociate ourselves from the community, and this has contributed to the vices that we experience in society today (Participant 9).

The high rate of crime and insecurity have tendencies to affect work-life balance. For instance, I have had to cancel or reschedule a few of my lectures and meetings because I needed to take a longer route or a diversion due to robbery during daylight on Lagos roads. The roads are not safe, and our lack of social sustainability worsens the situation for academics health and wellbeing as part of social sustainability... (Participant 19).

Despite the country's constitution of 1999 stating that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" (Federal Ministry of Justice, 1999), the rate of insecurity is very high and affects Nigeria's socio-economic development (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014; Ede, 2021). For instance, according to the Guardian news, Nigeria ranks 146 among 163 sovereign nations in the 2021 Global Peace Index (GPI) and 8th among Africa's least peaceful countries (Olaiya, 2021). Over the years, Nigeria

has witnessed several terrorist attacks from different militants and insurgents that threaten its security, including Boko Haram, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Niger-Delta Avengers, and Fulani herdsmen, among others (Bamidele, 2017; Ibrahim and Saleh, 2018; Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2021). From the participants' perspective, these insecurity issues have an adverse effect on their WLB, as well as impeding the achievement of social sustainability in Nigeria. They suggest that where national security is an issue due to poor governance, social sustainability is downgraded as a secondary or non-essential objective of the Nigerian government and HEIs. Therefore, social sustainability as an essential factor that could enhance WLB currently has little or no importance to the majority.

In addition, a Bloomberg report reveals that the unemployment rate in Nigeria stands at 33% as of 2021 (Olurounbi, 2021). These have adverse effects on labour market outcomes in Nigeria, including employment and unemployment, earnings, productivity and labour relations. The job insecurity issues, resulting from high unemployment and underemployment rates, especially among the youths has led to 'living from hands to mouth' for many (Financial Times, 2021), including Nigerian academics who are known to be among the poorest academics worldwide despite the several industrial strike actions embarked on to fight for increases in pay and job security (Mansir, 2020). Therefore, sustaining their positions and employment is more paramount for those who have their jobs, even if it is at the expense of their wellbeing. Hence, even if work-life balance is important to Nigerian academics, job insecurity issues have made them vulnerable to poor economic conditions, such that, as remarked by Participant 57, it is becoming a "battle of the fittest or battle for survival". These findings reveal that Nigeria is yet to fulfil the UN SDG (Goal 9) that emphasises the need to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth through decent work and productive employment. Also, building and promoting

sustainable cities and communities (UN SDG 11) that are safe for individuals is a goal that the Nigerian government and organisations must pursue.

Organisational negligence

Most participants blamed their organisations for being negligent to their needs of achieving a work-life balance. The majority seemed to think that HEIs in Nigeria have become oblivious of the fact that they have a life outside of work that also needs their attention. The responses below elaborate the shared views of the neglect on the part of the organisations:

From my point of view, no institution in Nigeria is actually paying attention to the aspect of work-life balance... The only thing that the institutions do is to engage you within a period of time, believing that the other hours are available for you to do other things. For instance, the same institution that has given you an engagement to work from 9 am to 5 pm requires you to do some extra things beyond that time even though you are compensated with overtime. However, this extended time is supposed to be used to do other things that are not work-related or for my social life (Participant 9).

Employers in this part of the world are concerned with you fulfilling the mandate that is given to you, so it doesn't matter if the home front is taken care of or you don't have sufficient time with your family members or friends (Participant 21).

...For private institutions, they are more interested in getting the most use of their academics in return for profit and revenue generation, so the more work you do, the better for them... (Participant 10).

In addition, there is a common view that Nigerian HEIs lack the appropriate policies and practices that support employees' wellbeing or quality of life:

I do not see my institution making any effort either by policy or intentional practice to ensure that employees have time to concentrate on other things besides work. Compared to when I was working in the bank, social events are used to compensate for the fact that they eat into my time dedicated to family or social life (Participant 7).

...Also my institution's policy is to resume work at 8 am and close at 4 pm, but this is only on paper because I often work till around 8 or 9 pm on some days. As a

consequence, my social life is lagging, and yet the institutions expect more from you (Participant 10).

There is no document that precisely draws the line for academics in my institution. The practice in my institution is often not accommodating of work-life balance. For example, official emails fly around till 9 pm, and then you are tempted to check because you are not sure if an emergency meeting has been scheduled for the next day (Participant 16).

There is no uniformity in the work-life balance policies and practices in most Nigerian higher institutions. This could be because of the insufficient resources needed to cater to activities that could help facilitate WLB. For instance, my university provides accommodation for staff, but they are only a few, and you still find a larger number of academics having to live off-campus, which is even more expensive compared to on-campus accommodation. This could have been a better way to help every academic because then, those of us living off-campus do not need to wake up as early as 5 am to beat the traffic or arrive at work at 8 am besides that fact that not having enough sleep and driving in traffic leads to fatigue that you hardly have the energy to do anything else when you get back home (Participant 43).

Some organisational policies are silent, they might exist, but it is only written on paper without adequate communication to staff members, and this may be the case in my institution regarding family-friendly policies. So the lack of awareness is a problem in academia, even though it shouldn't be the case (Participant 50).

Most participants' responses point to organisations' negligence to provide, implement, and create awareness of policies and practices that could enhance social sustainability and WLB. Although, as Participant 7 commented that "the developmental stages of many universities in Nigeria is a hindrance to implementing policies", Nigerian HEIs must rapidly 'rise to the occasion' by implementing policies that could better the lives of academics. More specifically, as some participants complained about the uncommunicative nature of their organisations regarding the relevant policies – mostly referred to as being 'silent policies' – the availability of policies is insufficient without adequate awareness and proper implementation. In most cases, Nigerian HEIs are not oblivious of the necessary policies; however, even when available, they have become silent and are not deliberately communicated except if the staffs make a conscious effort

to dig out the policies wherever they have been written. More so, the uncommunicativeness is primarily due to the cost of funding such policies and practices, and as previously highlighted, most Nigerian HEIs lack sufficient funding, leading to the poor state of education in the country (Ede, 2021). Thus, academics may not consider requesting and taking up such practices even if they are available, fearing that they may not be supported by their organisations.

The conservative culture of Nigerian HEIs

The culture inherent in an organisation has been previously linked to work-life balance. Prior work-life balance studies have surmised that organisational culture impacts employees WLB because they infer repeated practices that either support or undermine the utilisation of work-life balance policies (Adisa et al., 2017; Brough et al., 2020). Moreover, extant research has also suggested that organisational culture affects the implementation rate of social sustainability, influencing the reality of the improved quality of life for employees (Weerts et al., 2018; Oriade et al., 2021). The majority of the participants felt that the culture in the Nigerian HEIs did not ultimately support WLB and social sustainability. Some of the participants pointed to the conservativeness of Nigerian HEIs as a culture that impedes WLB and social sustainability. They reported that their organisations find it challenging to evolve and embrace change, instead they prefer the traditional and old-fashioned methods and approaches. The following quotes are typical of the shared views:

Academia in Nigeria appears to be too conservative and not too change-friendly. They are very conventional and tend to be strict with how things are done or the traditional structural process of doing things, even when they know that you can work better if changes are implemented. Universities in this part of the world refuse to change to meet the demands of the job and the industry. That conservative, rigid attitude is part of what is affecting changes that could have reflected positively on

employee wellbeing. However, until something unprecedented like the COVID-19 pandemic hits the industry, you don't tend to see a lot of changes (Participant 9).

This is Nigeria, and we are still a developing economy, so systems are unlikely to work as they do in developed countries. We have become too rigid in this sector, unlike other sectors that have successfully moved along with recent trends... It is sad that we call ourselves [HEIs] "a citadel of learning", yet we recycle the traditional ways of doing things and you will also see that reflected in the curriculum... (Participant 22).

I can't really say that social sustainability and green HRM in academics here in Nigeria is well pronounced even though it should be encouraged. The university should be a system and institution that embraces social values and activities that promotes the continuous existence of social relations. However, what we tend to witness is more of a strict working business-like attitude... I mean that the university is mainly concerned about how you do your work and not the social relations that come afterwards. If you decide to socialise, that is not the concern of the university, it is an individual choice to do so. Therefore, you do not find intentional structures put in place by the universities to facilitate socialisation or social sustainability as you may put it (Participant 54).

...it has gotten to that stage that I believe HEIs in Nigeria is like a transactional relationship where the priority of the management is concerned with completing the work that I'm paid to do and not issues with work-life balance or social sustainability... The culture here is to face your work because the change you are requesting is very unlikely to happen, at least not in my lifetime (Participant 42).

Organisational culture is expected to shape how the organisation communicates and actively practices necessary actions to achieve its objectives (Globocnik et al., 2020). Therefore, the pre-determined objectives must be backed by a company-wide goal that integrates into every aspect of its business activities, such that it becomes a norm or corporate behaviour among the members of the organisation (Oriade et al., 2021). It is echoed by some of the participants that their organisations are resistant to change, such that they have become too conservative and somewhat transactional to meet their demands for an enhanced quality of life and personal wellbeing. Consequently, the conservative culture impedes social sustainability efforts to promoting WLB for Nigerian academics.

High job demands and expectations

The participants bemoaned the stress they face in their HEIs resulting from the increasing job demands and expectations they are expected to meet, especially for those seeking career advancement. As previously mentioned, Nigerian academics have three primary roles (teaching, research and community service), and for those with administrative responsibilities, the job is even more demanding. Most participants lamented the nature of their jobs as causing excessive stress and time-consuming, which sometimes leaves them incapacitated in their non-work roles. Thus, they identified three main issues that impede their ability to enhance their quality of life, including long working hours, physical presence at work and high workloads. These views are exemplified by the following quotes:

In academia, the job demands are quite high, especially in Nigeria, where you have close to 300 students in a class and sometimes thousands in a general course like general studies (GNS)... (Participant 1).

The high workload and long working hours of academics make achieving work-life balance challenging... I often work at least 9 hours in the office besides taking work home or during the weekends... I sometimes have to leave my house around 5.45 am or 6 am to make my 8 am classes because the journey that should take less than an hour could take me more than 90 minutes due to the state of the road. However, I think we need more hands to measure up to the large number of students that we have because it is a big stress to teach a very large class for many hours (Participant 32).

The volume of work is a primary hindrance to managing other areas of my life. In my institution, lecturers are made to work from Monday to Sunday because we run different academic programmes to generate revenue and yet limited staff to teach on these programmes. How then do you expect that staff will not be stressed... For example, I have seen some junior colleagues who already have grey hairs not because they dyed their hair but because of the stress from teaching on a wide range of programmes that do not bring in extra income and those that bring extra income are meagre wages. Moreover, the high volume of work harms the time we devote to research because the time that is supposed to be used for researching is used for teaching and other administrative duties. This means that many who can not squeeze out time for research will be deprived promotion and squeezing out time

means doing research at night, which not only hinders the time for family but also for having adequate sleep (Participant 44).

...for academics, even though we work 8 am to 4 pm, we tend to go beyond that and even sometimes work on Saturdays and Sundays. You understand lectures go beyond four o'clock, and in some cases, depending on what you think you need to or cover and some other exigencies that may come up unplanned or even planned in some cases, you need to put in more extra hours. So, on average, I will say that I put in 52 hours in a week. In some cases, I've seen myself putting in 60 hours in some weeks... (Participant 25).

The demands of the job is a critical factor that hinders being able to achieve work-life balance. You leave home very early in the morning and return late at night because there are quite a lot to cover at work that you don't want creeping into the next day that's already fully packed with work. Moreover, I sometimes don't have the opportunity to say good morning to my children because I have to leave home early, and then I also get back late (Participant 8).

Some emphasised the problem of being physically present at work:

If not for the pandemic, working from home wouldn't have been an option for us as lecturers in Nigeria because the facilities were not available... So, there's this culture of wanting you to be physically present at all times because that's how the institution can manage to monitor what we are doing and the possible way to do my work as a lecturer... (Participant 40).

...the situation here in Nigeria is pathetic because the education sector is lagging in many areas. One of the problems I face is the need to be physically present at all times to teach and sometimes do my research if time permits. That is just the way universities operate here; you have to be present on campus to teach and attend to student problems and admin work (Participant 2).

This is Nigeria, and you have to make do with what you have to survive in this sector. Imagine having to do maybe 40% of one's work from home, I think that would reduce the stress we face as academics... You must clock in at 8 o'clock and clock out no earlier than 4 pm, so there is no way you wouldn't want to be present at work... (Participant 17).

Among the factors that increase the workload of academics, a few participants lamented the lack of competent colleagues as adding pressure and stress:

...Also, where your colleagues are falling in their responsibilities, it causes a strain on my ability to get certain aspects of my work done as when due or as planned in order to not collide with other things... (Participant 9).

The lack of competent staff is a primary deterrent for achieving WLB. For example, the pressure on the few that are competent leads to increasing workload and being over laboured... (Participant 3).

From the responses of the participants, academics are faced with poor working conditions that strain their ability to manage their work and non-work responsibilities. Like in some other professions, working for long hours has since been a problem in academia, and most academics have learned to accept it as one of the characteristics of their job and sometimes an embedded culture that they must come to terms with or accommodate. The current findings corroborate Sang et al. (2015) findings that “being an academic is not a 9–5 job” because it is characterised by work intensification and working longer hours than usual. More specifically, from the participants’ responses, Nigerian academics work averagely at 52 hours weekly. The least working time recorded was 48 hours weekly, excluding working on the weekends. Besides, most of those with administrative responsibilities claim to have no regulated working time because they find themselves responding to emails even late at night. Also, in many cases, the time for undertaking research and community service is not included in the working time/hours, as teaching, lecture preparation, and student contact hours filled up the working time indicated. Therefore, for these academics, working for long hours is due to the cultural and structural changes associated with HEIs, especially in Nigeria, where the necessary facilities to facilitate work within and outside the office are either insufficient or substandard. Nevertheless, like previous studies (e.g., Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra, 2013; Adekoya et al., 2019), the long work hours culture inhibits the academics from achieving WLB, strains their relationship with people outside of the work environment and generates health problems (i.e., physical, mental and emotional).

In addition, besides the high workloads and long working hours, the infrastructure deficit in Nigeria leads to constantly requesting and expecting that academics are physically

present on campus to perform their jobs. Although this is not entirely peculiar to Nigerian academics, the lack of sophisticated digitised systems in Nigeria often means that academics cannot effectively teach remotely; hence they are required to use the available resources located on the campus. Notwithstanding, some HEIs made provisions for remote working during the pandemic, this was soon ended, and academics were requested to return to physical classes, while some other HEIs halted the academic session from their failure to implement virtual learning (Okocha, 2020; Iseolorunkanmi et al., 2021). More so, it further exposes the conservativeness of the Nigerian HEIs to change and why these old-fashioned working structures may still be existent, irrespective of the harm it poses to academic's work-life balance and quality of life. Thus, where appropriate structures are put in place, work-life integration may become a possible way of managing work and non-work affairs and reducing the prevalent conflict.

Breaching human rights

As previously highlighted, social sustainability encompasses the protection of human rights. While a few participants felt that some human rights are upheld by their HEIs, more than half bemoaned the failure of their HEIs to protect their fundamental human rights. The following quotes are typical of the participants' shared views:

Promoting human rights as part of social sustainability is a critical challenge in Nigerian HEIs. Academia in Nigeria is influenced by so many ethnic discriminations that are unethical and leads to crises in institutions like mine... Working in a state or federal university comes with its organisational politics. For instance, I have worked in a state university that favours citizens of that state in their recruitment over non-citizens even when they are less qualified for the job. There are some positions that are reserved for specific ethnic tribes (e.g. the Vice-Chancellor). So the zoning of power or positions exists in many Nigerian HEIs, and it is a big problem for educational development in the country as a whole. Transparency and fairness in Nigerian universities are poor... For instance, a female applicant for the VC position in my current institution was denied the position all in the name of wanting a male in that position and its dumbfounding

for me to see the level of gender discrimination... such is a demotivation for women in academia (Participant 2).

...Also, my institution is lagging when it comes to consideration of disabilities among staff because it requires special facilities, which cost money, and the institution isn't buoyant enough to fund such. So, in a way, I could see it as indirect discrimination against the disabled because whether or not there is funding, there should be inclusiveness (Participant 26).

Organisations should be seen as championing social sustainability factors like promoting human rights. It is not enough for the government to make policies if the HEIs fail to adhere to them. Issues relating to gender equality, giving specific attention to those with disabilities by making provisions for their convenience should be imbibed... There are some policies that support social sustainability, but the implementation at the organisational level is very weak because we seldom pay attention to them (Participant 9).

It is worrisome and very sad that while my institution is relatively new, there are no provisions for people with disabilities despite the clamour for installing ramps in the new buildings before they commenced construction. No single building, even those currently in construction, is disability-friendly... An issue that I find in Nigerian HEIs is the political sentiments. For instance, in state universities, in particular, you may not rise to the highest ranks if you are not an indigene of the state because such positions are solely reserved for the indigenes of that state (Participant 44).

In terms of gender equality, my organisation has not been able to achieve much. For instance, my department is the largest in the entire university, meaning that we have the most academic staff, yet I am the only female academic, and it cuts across several other departments. It has never been balanced when it comes to gender equality, although it doesn't mean that being the only woman in my department, I am treated unfairly or unjustly, but I believe that the department could employ more female academics (Participant 20).

...I don't think there is any policy to support people with disabilities. For instance, in my department, I have a colleague who is visually impaired and still teaches, although he conducts his lectures in his office because he only teaches about six students and there are no special facilities or gadgets for him to do his job (Participant 16).

In the part of the country where I work, there's always this view of considering some people above others as long as you belong ethnic-wise or religion-wise and that has affected the rights of some people. So, there seems to be not much equality, especially if you do not belong ethnic-wise or religion-wise. For instance, during the era of my previous VC, I suffered a lot of discrimination and disadvantages because I'm a Christian, and my institution is based in an Islamic state where most times, the VC is also a Muslim. When people get to positions, they tend to pull

people up who are of the same religion or ethnicity... In terms of disability, my university has little to do for people with special needs. Our facilities do not support mobility for those who have special needs (Participant 21).

Gender equality, fairness, transparency and support for people with disabilities have been previously highlighted in the participants' definition of social sustainability. However, the current study finds that many Nigerian HEIs breach human/employee rights to suit their political agenda and sentiments. Moreover, religious sentiments are sometimes used to decide the fate of academics in some HEIs, as the above quotes illustrate. Likewise, the ethno-religious influence on Nigerian politics (Onaga, 2015) can also be found in some HEIs, leading to a struggle over claim to power, status, resources and preferences. The prevalent discord among ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria paves its way into Nigerian HEIs, deciding who deserves a particular position or status and how resources are distributed among academics in Nigeria. These issues forestall some academics from achieving work-life balance and hampers efforts of social sustainability across several Nigerian HEIs. While some HEIs might decide to hide under the pretence of having no recourse to funds as an impediment to social sustainability or promoting WLB, it may as well be a strategy to breach the fundamental human rights of the marginalised or minority in society due to the ethno-religious crises. Moreover, the government's lackadaisical attitude towards updating the Nigerian constitution also contributes to the violation of human rights and exacerbates the problem of disunity (Onaga, 2015; Ogunde, 2019). Thus, Nigerian organisations and the government have a lot to do in order to fulfil the UN SDG that emphasises gender equality, reduced inequalities within the country and promoting peace, justice and strong institutions for sustainable development and individual wellbeing (Goals 5, 10 and 16 respectively).

Personal ambition

Some participants indicated that their personal ambitions and strive for career advancement contributed to the conflict between their work and non-work domains. Thus, academics make personal choices that affect their WLB and ability to sustain social relationships outside their work environment. However, there are mixed reactions to why these personal choices are made, including the need to show extreme dedication and commitment to work, pushing for promotion and as a consequence of human rights violation, which forces the minority to work harder than others in order to get their desired status. These views are illustrated by some of the participants' quotes:

...however, enforcing human rights may also be individualised because you sometimes need to take personal decisions to get justice from the system because if you do not push very hard, I mean very hard [emphasis is placed] nothing might be done (Participant 24).

My ambition impedes achieving WLB such that meaningful social interaction is almost lost. If you really want to compete with others, you must outdo others; if you do the minimum, then don't expect the maximum outcome. I am the kind of person that creates new challenges every time, and wanting to get to the peak of my career means that I can only devote very little time to family and more to work. It is very important because political sentiments in Nigerian HEIs require that you work hard to the extent that even the blind can feel the work you do, meaning that no one will be able to ignore or deny the significance of the work that you do when it comes to the time for compensation or being rewarded...and as I do say, "the reward for being hardworking is more work" [laughs], if you are hardworking, you should expect more work (Participant 44).

My family knows the nature of my job, and they are aware that it requires long working hours and sometimes working at the weekends. It is the price that I have had to pay to get to the level that I currently occupy. Once you have the ambition to excel or pay more attention to your work than others do, you should expect a reward except if there is discrimination or political sentiments as we know it in Nigeria (Participant 2).

...for me to get to this professorial status, it took me a long time and severe struggle with the politics in academia. You have to be able to play politics, and it exists everywhere, even outside Nigeria... It took me several years to get to this level and hard work. There are countless times that I have deprived my family of my presence,

and it tells on the kind of relationship that I have with them, especially my children... If you want to get to the top, you must be able to sacrifice heavily, so, in academia, you might need to make your job the first love and family next, and that's the price that I have had to pay (Participant 51).

In addition, two participants motioned that the level of ambition among genders often plays a role in how much time that they devote to work and non-work domains and why some perceived gender discriminatory practices may not necessarily be discrimination:

Sometimes you cannot blame the university for being gender-biased. To be fair, most of our male colleagues put in more hours, work and shifts than we females do, and unfortunately, that is what counts in many cases. This is not our fault as females too, but because we have many other things to do at home that may not allow us to put in the same efforts as the men do. For instance, a man can afford to get home late, but as a woman in this society, you are bound to lose your family because you must feed the children and husband and maintain the cleanliness of the home. Men in this part of the world are not used to doing things like these, so neither gender can be blamed for the conditions that we find ourselves in (Participant 19).

...Also, in terms of gender equality and equal opportunities, despite supporting that women should be accorded equal opportunities as men, I do not agree with giving undue opportunities to women if they have not paid their dues. For instance, if men could work longer hours just in the effort to assume higher positions, a woman who is not willing to do the same shouldn't expect the same opportunity. However, my institution is trying in regards to equal opportunities, and there is no position that a male can get that a female can't if they put in the same shift or level of work (Participant 44).

Personal choices often lead academics to value their work more than family, even though they may be instigated by the need to contend with political sentiments inherent in Nigerian HEIs. Therefore, regarding work as their 'first love' or as a primary focus and family as a secondary focus have positive and negative effects on the quality of life of academics. On the one hand, when work is prioritised over family, it connotes the individual's dedication and commitment to their work, which may fetch them their desired status or promotion. On the other hand, it sometimes exacerbates WLC as academics may find it challenging to reconcile their work and non-work domains. Thus

integrating the work and non-work domains may be needed to create the needed balance even though personal choices may sometimes prioritise one domain over the other.

In addition, the current study resonates with the concept of an ‘ideal worker’, where individuals have a clear and relentless dedication to paid work (Sang et al., 2015). Organisations also paint the picture of an ideal worker as one who is ‘disembodied’ and not constrained by domestic obligations or other non-work affairs, showing total commitment (through long working hours and presenteeism) to their work (Acker, 1990; Drago et al. 2009; Brumley, 2014). Therefore, Nigerian female academics often claim that their inability to be considered an ideal worker is due to their inability to devote long hours to work as their male counterparts because they have more responsibilities at home than men. Thus, being constrained by domestic duties due to the patriarchal settings evident in Nigeria results in being marginalised even in the workplace. It exempts many female academics in Nigeria from being perceived as an ‘ideal academic’. This finding corroborates Steele (2019) that women are perceived as highly unpromotable because they are not potential ideal workers. Thus, the power structure and hierarchy that exist in academia and expectations frame a discriminatory environment for women and breed inequality based on the gendered perception of an ideal worker (Brumley, 2014; Lester and Sallee, 2017).

Individual ignorance

The notion of individual ignorance among the participants reveals why some academics find it difficult to achieve work-life balance and promote social sustainability. The following statements from some participants express this notion:

One particular problem is that we fail to know and understand our rights because the state of the country makes it look like knowing your right is meaningless and guarantees you nothing. But one must show that you know your right and stand by

it at all costs to get justice even though it may cost your time, money and even your job in the worse case depending on the kind of leadership (Participant 13).

...Also, the ignorance on the part of employees regarding their employment rights leads to management exploitation and overburdening employees, so organisations play on the ignorance of employees (Participant 44).

The community is supposed to contribute to work-life balance, but we have since lost our social values. Everyone is concerned about self-survival, so there is no time for community socialisation as we used to have them back then... In fact, one problem I have is that there are numerous churches and mosques planted around my residence and the noise pollution that they cause because they have their speakers outside the premises hinders me from having enough rest when I have the resting time, but there is nothing much that I can do because that is the culture. So, shouldn't we as individuals be self-aware of the hindrances that we cause to ourselves in having a good life? Individual orientation is needed, we can't always depend on the government and organisations if we as individuals are ignorant (Participant 2).

Work-life balance practices start with you as an individual... One has to be able to understand that although these two aspects of one's life are cohabiting, they should be regarded as different entities that require different approaches. Being ignorant isn't an excuse, and one must be clear about which aspect is more important (Participant 16).

As the above statements illustrate, failure to be informed about organisational policies and practices or general knowledge on matters associated with social sustainability leads to a deteriorated quality of life. Apart from the negligence of some organisations to the topical issues that affect employee wellbeing, individual ignorance to ways of coping or promoting wellbeing, even in a little way, may be problematic (Villadsen, 2017).

Also, to an extent, the findings reveal a case of pluralistic ignorance – “a situation in which almost all members of a group privately reject group norms, yet believe that virtually all other group members accept them” (Miyajima and Yamaguchi, 2017, p.5). For instance, in their study, Miyajima and Yamaguchi (2017) found that men often refuse to take paternity leave because they erroneously overestimated other men's negative attitudes towards paternity leave. In this current study, some participants fail to own up to their views because they believe it is against the beliefs of others. Moreover, being

ignorant to challenging one's rights based on the perception that it may be termed 'meaningless' or 'irrelevant' by others leads to pluralistic ignorance among some Nigerian academics.

Labour unions frailty

Most academics in Nigeria are members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) that serve as the umbrella bodies for defending workers' (e.g., Academics) interests by raising issues related to the economical and political concerns and welfare of their members. However, the participants also point to the weakness of the labour unions in creating an effective bargain between their employers and themselves, such that it promotes work-life balance and social sustainability. The following quotes exemplify the participants' shared views on the role and frailty of labour unions:

The labour union has tried in their ways to represent academic staff by fighting for our rights. However, the union struggles to achieve this because of the uncivilised nature that the government treats issues, which is why every year and sometimes multiple times in a year the academic staff union embarks on a national strike (Participant 9).

The labour unions are trying, but like I do say, "they can only bark, not bite". This is because the bargain between the unions, government and institutions have over time being futile. For instance, the union might table different issues regarding academics' welfare (e.g., increased income, welfare packages, NHIS), but these are agreed to after several weeks and months of strike action, and then the agreements are defaulted by the implementing party [government], which then leads to any strike action (Participant 52).

In my opinion, the academic labour unions in Nigeria are 'confusionists' [a Nigerian term used to refer to someone who causes confusion] and have lost focus because they have refused to change from the traditional methods of bargaining...things have changed, and they can't keep applying the old methods and expect a different outcome. They go on incessant strike and this is killing for academics and rather than finding solutions, they are creating more problems. For instance, the last ASUU strike lasted over 6 months and many academic staff were not paid because the government demanded that "no work, no pay". So, if there is

a strike today, I will go to work because I don't trust the unions to represent my interest (Participant 44).

I am a comrade, a great advocate of unionism. I have always stood behind the academic staff union to ensure that as academics, our wellbeing is prioritised and that the government and management of the institution do the needful. However, dealing with the government, in particular, is sometimes a river to cross because you reach an agreement today and tomorrow, the written agreement is disputed, leading to months of industrial strikes (Participant 17).

Well, the academic staff union in my organisation is involved in the protection of the interest and promotion of the interest of the workforce. You would expect that these are some of the things that will be part of the mission, vision, and commitment of the union, but it is not always on the front burner or top of the agenda (Participant 27).

My institution, in particular, does not allow joining any labour union because they are scared of the effect of having to deal with the collective demands of the staff. Although the academic union (ASUU) is prominent in Nigeria, the management of my institution does not support the union activities. With that being said, I do not have the backing of any union to speak on our behalf to the management in promoting WLB or social sustainability (Participant 34).

The challenges faced by Nigerian academics who can barely rely on the labour unions to fight for their rights as employees affect their quality of life. Fajana et al. (2011) surmised that the weakness of the Nigerian labour and trade unions to act as an intermediary between the employers and employees exacerbates the welfare issues in Nigeria. As illustrated by the quotes, most participants also blamed the Nigerian government for the frailty of the unions because the government is deemed to default in its promises and signed agreements with the unions. However, distrust in the labour unions is echoed by many participants who believe that the unions have failed to change their bargaining strategy over the years, knowing fully well that the present strategy (strikes and shutting down schools) has since become ineffective. Most participants feel that their interests are not covered by the unions or made a priority. At the same time, some accused the union leaders of being involved in corrupt practices that inhibit them from making progress in their collective bargaining. Interestingly, most participants that are local leaders in their

respective labour unions also confirmed that work-life balance and social sustainability are not primary issues of focus that are discussed in labour union meetings. It further points to the weakness and negligence of the unions to the welfare of their members and neglect of their roles as representatives of employees in the negotiation or bargain with employers.

7.3 IMPACT OF GREEN HRM ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The findings show overlaps between some of the factors that impact green HRM on WLB and social sustainability on WLB. Nevertheless, to determine the extent to which green HRM practices can hinder or promote WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions, the findings are divided into two: factors that promote the impact of green HRM on WLB and factors that hinder the impact of green HRM on WLB. Also, it should be noted that there is a scarcity of literature on green HRM's impact on WLB; however, this study, in its aim to be unique and original, discusses the phenomenon as it relates to the understudied context.

7.3.1 Factors that Promote the Impact of Green HRM on WLB

There are two main factors that promote the impact of green HRM on WLB, including remote working practices and community development services.

Remote working practices

Despite previously highlighting in the findings that remote working practices across Nigerian HEIs are predominantly due to environmental determinism resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working contributes to WLB and environmental sustainability (Chandra, 2012; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). For instance, some participants mentioned that working remotely, especially during the pandemic, enabled

them to focus on other non-work responsibilities. They also allude to the reduction in carbon footprint to promote environmental sustainability as a result of remote working.

The following quotes are typical of the participant's shared views:

...so because it is believed that our jobs are flexible, HEIs in Nigeria do not take it upon themselves to implement modern WLB practices or policies. Nevertheless, with the advent of COVID-19, most of the work was done online, and that was one way that we could do other things besides working all the time. Besides the fact that working from home reduces the stress of travelling long hours to work and allows me to do other things apart from work, I believe it also reduces the amount of pollution to the environment... (Participant 11).

Teleworking or remote working was only initiated during the pandemic. To my knowledge, most of my colleagues seemed to enjoy this form of work because it was less stressful; however, we went back to face-to-face teaching when the COVID-19 cases were conducted reduced drastically (Participant 46).

Despite the fact that working from home only started in my institution due to the coronavirus lockdown at the time, I could say that I did actually enjoy working from home. It gives me time to do other work (e.g. researching), and then I could also attend to things outside work, such as family matters... Another good side of working from home is that since you have fewer cars on the road, the carbon emission reduces even though it might not be a significant reduction... (Participant 52).

From the above quotes, on the one hand, organisations that implement flexible working practices (e.g. remote working) directly and indirectly contribute to environmental sustainability (Singh and Bhatnagar, 2015). This is because remote working significantly reduces carbon footprints since the majority do not have to travel far or leave their homes, contributing to environmental sustainability (Chandra, 2012). On the other hand, allowing employees to choose a conducive environment to work by working remotely increases their sense of autonomy and control over their lives, as well as enhancing their wellbeing and wellness (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016; Amrutha and Geetha, 2020). Therefore, a conscious process for implementing remote working as a green HRM practice in Nigerian HEIs, with increased investment in the required technologies, will promote healthy work and healthy life for academics in Nigeria.

Community development services

Similar to the participants' views that community development is a crucial element of social sustainability and triggers positive outcomes, such as increased social relations between academics and their communities, as well as work-life balance, the participants also hold the view that community development services can contribute to environmental sustainability and work-life balance:

... In academics, we have what we call community service, and it is one of the promotion criteria to show our contribution as academics to the immediate community in the form of CSR, so maybe that way green HRM is practised because sometimes, the service rendered might be in the form of telling the public how to dispose waste or keep the environment clean. Apart from the fact that we seldom talk about the need for environmental cleanliness, I think it also, in a way, helps us to interact with others and learn a thing or two. So, while one may be engrossed with teaching and research, the community service might seem as a way to also create that social relationship with others that we often lack because we spend most of our time working, forgetting that there are other things to life than work (Participant 53).

One can view community service as an aspect of humanity that combines caring for the environment and the people who live in it. In as much as we don't have deliberate GHRM policies in my institution, indirectly, community development service promotes life inside and outside of work. I mean that community development service is a work-related programme but performed outside the work environment with people in the community. Going by that explanation, one could say it helps fulfil our desires to think and do things that are not necessarily work-related as academics (e.g. talking to people about environmental pollution) and build social relationships with the people we interact within the community (Participant 9).

The quotes above illustrate the view that community development services could promote WLB for employees in HEIs that also practice it to increase environmental awareness. This view is based on the perspective that some community development services are considered green initiatives that promote human wellbeing and environmentalism. This perspective aligns with previous findings suggesting that employees who leverage social

and environmental resources can achieve WLB through interacting with people in their communities (Robertson and Barling, 2013; Amrutha and Geetha, 2020).

7.3.2 Factors that Hinder the Impact of Green HRM on WLB

There are three main factors that hinder the impact of green HRM on WLB, including poverty, organisational negligence and absence of green organisational culture, and individual ignorance.

Poverty

Similar to the previously reported evidence in the findings that high poverty rates in Nigeria constrain the impact of social sustainability on WLB, some other participants claimed that poverty is also the cause of the environmental sustainability problems facing academics and Nigeria at large:

...Also, you cannot be discussing environmental protection when people have not eaten and hungry because you will be seen as unserious... so poverty is a critical factor that affects our consciousness of the environmental concerns that we face today... (Participant 52).

If you ask me, I would say that we have more problems in our hands than focusing on environmental pollution or sustainability. Be that as it may, the government is doing a few things, though insufficient to reduce environmental pollution, but the focus would generally be on reducing poverty because many people are hungry in this country, and it includes lecturers because the salary or take-home pay can't even take you home (Participant 28).

...come to think of it, all you hear all over the country is hunger, hunger and hunger. Poverty has taken over, and the current government is doing nothing really to alleviate poverty because it's only gone worse... How then do you tell a hungry man that environmental protection is the next agenda, knowing fully well the saying that "a hungry man is an angry man"? I don't think it [environmental sustainability] would be a priority for Nigerians and not even in the universities where lecturers are also complaining of hunger because the salaries are nothing to write home about... (Participant 57).

While poverty alleviation and zero hunger are Goal 1 and 2 in the United Nations SDGs respectively (UN, 2021), it is deeply rooted in Nigerian society (Adekoya, 2018). This is

reinforced among a few participants who motioned that poverty and hunger constitute a primary impediment to green HRM and environmental protection practices in Nigeria. It is believed that there are more critical issues (e.g., poverty and hunger) than raising concerns about environmental sustainability. Therefore, in this context, where academics are subjected to poor economic conditions like poverty, they often disregard and care less about environmental sustainability, which is regarded as secondary or unimportant.

Organisational negligence and absence of green organisational culture

Most participants acknowledge that their organisations have failed to implement green HRM policies and practices, and the few attempts to facilitate some practices and initiatives in other HEIs are considered inadequate and ineffective. For most participants, the neglect of their organisations to implement green HRM policies and practices is a major deterrent to promoting healthy work and healthy life. The following quotes are typical of the participants' shared views:

While working, the environment must be perceived to be conducive, which is why the concept of green HRM is germane and needs to be further preached in Nigeria. The awareness needs to be increased because ensuring an environmentally friendly campaign would lead to a long lifespan and the ability to live a healthy life, which is most needed for the work front and family front. It is only when you are healthy that you can work or play with the children or socialise with friends (Participant 32).

Nigerian HEIs are not conscious of the need to implement policies that support social and environmental sustainability... (Participant 25).

...if the university organises programmes that educate us on things that we should be doing to ensure a clean and healthy environment beyond the school premises, others in society might find it worth emulating, which could spread through the community and country. By this, we can live in good health be able to do work as when due and devote other time to family and friends for relaxation or leisure. But in a case where I fall sick, or my children fall sick because of environmental pollution, which is a major cause of malaria and cholera, it would disrupt our work and private lives (Participant 14).

The issue is ignorance and indifference or lack of concern on the part of the universities. If the university fails to implement and create an awareness of policies or initiatives that are socially sustainable and can contribute to green practices, it would be difficult for employees to imbibe a culture of social responsibility (Participant 23).

My university does not have anything on paper or in practice regarding green HRM. It's basically because, especially when it comes to being environmentally responsible, it is seen as we are here to do our work as academics, and it is left for the organization to do its part in talking about the environment, but that is because we are made to see the environment as just an extra add-on and not see the component of the environment in everything we do, whether you're talking about plastic use or carbon footprint or renewable energy. Those are the aspects that the school is yet to actually incorporate and bring onboard (Participant 33).

From the above statements, it is evident that organisations' negligence to policies, practices and initiatives that can enhance WLB and green HRM are detrimental to the quality of life of its members. Moreover, the absence of green culture in Nigerian HEIs contributes to many Nigerian academics' lack of environmental awareness. As previously highlighted, the conservativeness of Nigerian HEIs hinders its transition from the traditional to modern methods of operations. This old-fashioned approach has led many HEIs in Nigeria to continue to use manual teaching methods (i.e., chalk and board) instead of a digitised teaching method (e.g., smart screens, projectors, virtual teaching). In most cases, the recruitment process also contributes to stress and exorbitant cost for academics who have to make hard copies of their application documents and travel long distances multiple times during the recruitment process. The following statements exemplify the participants' shared views:

Some HEIs here in Nigeria still use chalk and blackboards or whiteboards, and many still dictate notes to students, which is why it takes a long time to deliver lectures or cover a particular topic... This old teaching method is very stressful and needs to be changed (Participant 30).

I remember before joining the institution, I was requested to make 35 copies of my credentials and application documents, same as during my promotion, I was asked to make 21 copies of the required documents (Participant 55).

...For instance, my organisation still requires hard copy or paper submissions for any process, either recruitment or promotion... This is largely because we don't have access to good internet where the recruitment or promotion assessment could be done virtually, so the institution requires that hard copies of your documents are forwarded (Participant 19).

...Also, being an academic in Nigeria is not easy because the level of technological advancement is poor compared to countries in the developed world. For instance, many lecture theatres do not have overhead projectors, so it is still the traditional teaching style like dictating notes or giving handouts (lecture materials) to students to photocopy. Little things like this contribute to the stress that we face as academics in Nigeria (Participant 57).

The traditional culture of performing work as an academic in Nigeria can be stressful due to longer working hours or extended lecture periods, leading to less time for other non-work activities. In addition, the absence of green culture engendered by Nigerian HEIs' conservative culture also affects its green potential. For instance, there were several reports of job applicants submitting up to thirty copies of application documents for recruitment purposes. The paper-based recruitment process, among other paper-based operations, shows the extent to which Nigerian HEIs have remained resistant to change, especially in facilitating a digitised working environment that makes work easier and quicker, saves time for other non-work-related activities and promotes environmental sustainability.

Individual ignorance

The findings suggest that aside from organisations' neglect or ignorance concerning green practices, individuals are also ignorant of promoting practices that directly or indirectly contribute to environmental sustainability:

I like to think that promoting environmental sustainability starts with the individual. For instance, the way you handle your home reflects how you handle the environment. Individual culture plays a huge part in this because even if the organisation trains and orientates staff, the individual culture and how they have been trained while growing up is fundamental to sustaining the knowledge passed to you as an individual. So, it takes a conscious effort of individuals to ensure a

sustainable environment. For instance, you travel by road to work, and someone throws out a plastic bag after eating a snack or drinking water, organisations can't monitor such behaviour. The organisation plays its part by providing waste bins but cannot force you to use those outside its premises (Participant 18).

There is no environmental orientation in my institution that intentionally communicates the need to be environmentally friendly... I think the institution expects that individuals have a common sense that we should be environmentally sensitive, so if we are ignorant of these things, the organisation absolves itself of the blame. Moreover, the earlier we come to terms with our actions or inactions, the better our lives will be (Participant 20).

Practices that support environmental sustainability promotes a conducive environment for work and healthy life to partake in non-work-related activities (Chandra, 2012). However, where such practices are neglected due to individual ignorance, they exacerbate unhealthy work and health problems for individuals. Again, the case of pluralistic ignorance is evidenced as a factor that impedes environmental sustainability. For instance, having 'common sense' concerning being proactive to environmental concerns, as Participant 20 remarked, is a subjective opinion rather than objective. Individuals often behave differently to others or have different levels of knowledge or understanding about a particular issue (e.g. environmental sustainability) to others. In essence, in adherence to the UN SDG (Goals 12, 13, 14 and 15), individuals should also be made responsible for being informed about the need to foster wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the findings from the interviews and analysed the results based on the interview excerpts. The interview findings have been divided into three main themes. The first theme analyses the notions of the participants as it relates to work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. It revealed that Nigerian academics define WLB as time allocation between work and non-work roles, integration of all aspects of human life, increased autonomy and control, absence of work-life conflict, and healthy

work and non-work experience. They also defined social sustainability as a social value system, social engagement and cohesion, social wellbeing, protecting human rights, a component of CSR, and availability and access to social amenities. Lastly, green HRM was defined as HRM strategies for promoting environmental sustainability and a component of corporate social responsibility.

The second theme presents the impact of social sustainability on work-life balance. On the one hand, it highlights the factors that enhance the impact of social sustainability on WLB, including informal support through dependence on spousal and family member support, self-induced social support through dependence on social relations outside the work environment (e.g., social activities with friends and religious activities), flexible workplace policies and practices, community development services and promoting social justice. On the other hand, it underscores the factors that constrain the impact of social sustainability on WLB, including inadequate infrastructure, poverty, unemployment, national insecurity and job insecurity, organisational negligence, Nigerian HEIs' conservative culture, high job demands and expectations, human rights breach, personal ambition and individual ignorance.

Lastly, the third theme highlights the impact of green HRM on WLB. On the one hand, it highlights the factors that promote the impact of green HRM on WLB, including remote working practices and community development services. On the other hand, it underscores the factors that hinder the impact of green HRM on WLB, including poverty, organisational negligence and absence of green organisational culture, and individual ignorance.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

8.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to discuss the findings and implications, following the empirical data gathered from the interviews to investigate the meanings of WLB, social sustainability and green HRM to Nigerian academics, as well as the extent to which green HRM and social sustainability inhibit/promote work-life balance in Nigerian HEIs. Therefore, the researcher discusses the findings in light of the research objectives as guided by the research questions:

- a) What does work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM mean to academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?
- b) How does social sustainability efforts enhance work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?
- c) To what extent does green HRM practices hinder/promote work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?

8.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What does work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM mean to academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?

This research question aimed to understand how Nigerian academics define the three overarching concepts (work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM) explored in this thesis. Despite several definitions identified in the literature, it was important to understand how Nigerians (especially academics) define these concepts. Unlike in the western context, where they are more pronounced, these concepts (especially social sustainability and green HRM) are new to most Nigerian academics. Therefore,

understanding how the concepts are construed based on individual and collective experiences within the Nigerian (non-western) context could help identify the similarities or differences in the meanings within the western context.

First, the findings revealed five categories of the definition of work-life balance from the perspective of Nigerian academics. One of the main definitions of work-life balance relates to allocating quality time between the work and non-work roles of Nigerian academics. Nigerian academics understand that time is of the essence and requires making effective use of time to perform work-related and non-work-related responsibilities. Thus, the consequence of not having adequate and quality time to perform these two important roles could lead to a lack of satisfaction in one or both domains. It could also lead to work-life conflict – another dimension of the definition of work-life balance that means the absence of compatibility between work and non-work demands, making it difficult to meet the demands of one domain at the expense of the other (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).

Moreover, the importance of time spent in each domain is also emphasised in the WLB literature (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014; Chung and van der Lippe, 2018). In essence, the findings revealed that while time is identified as being crucial to achieving WLB, many Nigerian academics experience time-based conflict primarily due to long working hours and excessive demands from work and non-work domains. Thus, time-based conflict arises when they are unable to allocate sufficient time to one domain (e.g., non-work) to meet specific demands because of time pressures from another domain (e.g., work) (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Akkas, 2015). In addition, effective time allocation also means that Nigerian academics can realise WLB when they have a healthy work and non-work experience void of stress, anxiety, tension, burnout and other health impaired conditions. Consequently, the absence of healthy work and non-work conditions for

Nigerian academics could engender strain-based conflict – the situation where the performance demands in one role begin to affect the performance in other roles (Edward and Rothbard, 2000). Like the academics infer, WLB cannot be achieved where there is poor healthy relationships at work and home.

Interestingly, the findings revealed that most Nigerian academics find it challenging to separate their work from non-work domains. The fact that time is a scarce resource makes it challenging to apportion sufficient attention and involvement in both domains in a separate setting. Thus, for these academics, WLB means integrating the work and non-work domains such that there is an increased permeability between the domains to allow a temporary movement or crossing from one domain to another. In essence, this means that while at work, academics can attend to some non-work responsibilities that may not necessarily require their physical presence (e.g., sorting out personal and home bills, speaking to family and friends, etc.). Likewise, in their non-work space, academics often bring work home and find time to do them while attending non-work activities. This perspective reinforces the argument against a complete segmentation of both domains and support for work-life integration as a solution to managing the conflict that may arise from combining work and non-work responsibilities (Groysberg and Abrahams, 2014; Foucreault et al., 2018). However, note that work-life integration does not guarantee the absence of conflict, rather it enables those who prefer to make frequent transitions and interruptions between work and non-work domains even when it could lead to role ambiguity or role blurring (Basile and Beauregard, 2021). Thus, in the study context, the preference for work-life integration probably indicates that while performing their administrative and teaching/research roles in the work environment, academics could take time to attend to some private issues and vice versa.

Nevertheless, to ensure an effective work-life integration, individuals (e.g., academics) must have autonomy and control over work and non-work domains (Basile and Beauregard, 2021). Hence, this reflects why the participants' define WLB as having increased autonomy and control. The scheduling flexibility and control over their work and non-work domains mean that academics can use their discretion to plan different activities that are either work or non-work-related to fit their strategies for managing both domains. Moreover, prior WLB studies in the western context have pointed to work autonomy and control as primary determinants of WLB and greater job performances for academics (Bell et al., 2012; Johari et al., 2018).

Second, the findings revealed six categories of the definition of social sustainability from the perspective of Nigerian academics. A primary perspective is that social sustainability means a long-lasting and sustained social value system that portrays specific cultures, traditions, norms and beliefs that govern society. It sets the principles, standard of behaviour and perception of what is considered acceptable within the society. As previously reported in this study's findings that Nigerian social values are taught across several social institutions (e.g., schools, family, religion and community), it demonstrates the extent to which they are considered an important and integral part of Nigerian society. Thus, being able to sustain the value system inherent in the country is of utmost importance for achieving social sustainability.

Moreover, it links up with the second definition of social sustainability – social engagement and cohesion. From the findings, most participants opined that the collectivist nature of the Nigerian social value system could enable social sustainability. Although while Nigerians are known to be particular about attending social events, most Nigerian academics find it challenging to attend these events due to the nature of their jobs, making it difficult to find adequate time to socialise outside the work environment.

Interacting and connecting with family and friends or others within their immediate community proves difficult for Nigerian academics, yet they desire such to be able to build sustainable relationships outside of their work domain. More so, sustaining interactions and connectivity with people outside the work environment has been linked to positive ‘social wellbeing’ (Rogers et al., 2012), which is the third definition of social sustainability among Nigerian academics. Embracing work at most or all times could engender social isolation for academics, making it difficult for them to maintain good hygiene and sanity (Mantai, 2019). Hence, social sustainability also means being able to manage one’s interactions with others to promote good health and wellbeing (Amrutha and Geetha, 2020).

Furthermore, like prior studies on social sustainability (e.g., Boyer et al., 2016; Mushfiqur et al., 2018), Nigerian academics also understand social sustainability to mean the protection of human rights, including gender equality, fairness and transparency, and supporting people with disabilities. In the aim to ensure that people sustain their social relationships with others, they must have a sense of belonging, be it at work or outside their work environment. Moreover, the social culture in Nigeria has been regarded as one that is presently influenced by westernism and globalisation (Oghi, 2014). Thus, in accordance with the findings, the western culture influence on Nigerian society has brought significant changes to its traditional social system, thus affecting the collective culture for which Nigeria is known. For instance, rather than encourage its indigenous languages, the English language has become the most acceptable and dominant form of communication, thus eroding cultural values that were previously taught (Akanji et al., 2019; Sani, 2021). While it may be justified that having over 500 languages spoken in Nigeria calls for a unified language, hence why the English language (due to British colonisation) is adopted as the official language in Nigeria, indigenous languages are

rapidly eroded. Another example is the Nigerian culture becoming more accepting of tattoos and body piercings, which have significantly replaced the inscription of tribal marks (Adisa et al., 2021). Thus, as some of the participants inferred, sustaining the social value system remains a determinant of achieving social sustainability.

Sustaining the social value system and promoting continuous social interaction within society requires the relevant social amenities and infrastructure. The findings revealed how participants feel that infrastructure is needed to improve social cohesion and engagement. Thus, providing access to sophisticated infrastructure to meet the needs of the changing environment such that social values are sustained is essential for achieving social sustainability (Roelich et al., 2015; Sierra et al., 2018). It means providing and granting access to social facilities that promote socialisation. For instance, this must include good roads and transport networks that encourage people to want to socialise without fearing for their lives; constant electricity, and accessible and affordable internet connectivity to increase academics' willingness to spend more time at home relaxing with family and friends, and; access to free or affordable leisure facilities to increase socialisation within and outside the work environment. Thus, while it promotes social sustainability, providing infrastructure also increases economic wellbeing and the quality of life of the populace (Schwarz et al., 2016).

Third, while green HRM is an uncommon term among Nigerian academics and probably Nigerians in general, the findings revealed that it is defined in two parts by academics. On the one hand, green HRM refers to HRM practices, initiatives and functions that are implemented to promote environmental sustainability, as well as leveraging a healthy environment to promote healthy employees. The participants strongly motioned the need to be sensitive to their environment as a significant part of green HRM. Moreover, these definitions resonate with the underlying principles of the green movement and green

HRM in particular (Renwick et al., 2013; Mishra, 2017). On the other hand, CSR was considered an integral part of green HRM and the sustainability agenda. As the literature has identified, CSR doubles in its significance for social sustainability and environmental sustainability (i.e., green HRM). While it is regarded as an integral component of the sustainability agenda (Boyer et al., 2016; Park and Kim, 2019), the participants also identified CSR as a way to promote social sustainability and an avenue to practice green HRM such that it increases their pro-environmental behaviour (Bux et al., 2020). In addition, the findings corroborate Orlitzky and Swanson (2006) that organisations pursuing the social and environmental objectives using the corporate social responsibility dimensions tend to depend heavily on corporate values that help improve social sustainability and increase employees' consciousness of the environment. Thus, CSR remains critical for organisations that have a genuine concern for the environment, as well as their stakeholders and the wellbeing of the larger society.

8.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: How does social sustainability efforts enhance work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?

It is evident from the findings that social sustainability plays a significant role in promoting the wellbeing of individuals (e.g., academics) within a livable community. Prior studies have suggested that the informal and formal processes and structures that promote a socially sustainable society will contribute to the current and future continuity of a healthy community that supports socially sustainable work and living (Rogers et al., 2012; Mushfiqur et al., 2018; Sundström et al., 2019). The findings from this study align with the definition of social sustainability from Social Life – a renowned UK-based social enterprise:

“Social sustainability is a process for creating sustainable, successful places that promote wellbeing, by understanding what people need from the places they live and work. Social sustainability combines design of the physical realm with design of the social world – infrastructure to support social and cultural life, social amenities, systems for citizen engagement, and space for people and places to evolve” (Social Life, 2012, p.16).

The present study finds that social sustainability is a crucial determinant of how individuals live, either poorly or healthy, and how the social structures, systems and processes help to enhance sustainable living and sustainable work. For instance, Nigerian academics feel that the lack of sustainable work and living negatively affects their work-life balance and overall wellbeing. This is evident in their perception and definitions of social sustainability as a sustainable social value system, promoting interdependence through social engagement and cohesion, facilitating social wellbeing, protecting human rights, driving CSR, and the availability and access to social amenities. It reinforces the notion that to promote individual/employee wellbeing, organisations (and the government) must understand what people need in the workplace and community where they live (Social Life, 2012). This includes the social infrastructure needed to function as a society and allow people to evolve and integrate different aspects of their lives.

For Nigerian academics, social infrastructure is a major challenge they face in their everyday lives, constraining them from effectively managing the two important domains (work and non-work). According to SGS Economics and Planning (2020), social infrastructure is the “glue that holds communities together”; it ensures social stability and enhances the quality of life (Frolova et al., 2016). In a sense, the lack of adequate infrastructure is the biggest challenge for Nigerian academics irrespective of the category of HEIs (i.e., federal, state or private) because it affects all other core parts of social

sustainability. For example, without infrastructure, academics find it difficult to sustain their social value system because the deplorable state of the current infrastructure makes it challenging to maintain their traditional way of life and sense of shared history (i.e., the collectivist culture). Also, the infrastructural decay impedes social capital – “the quality of relationships between residents that give a community the capability to be supportive and empowered, and a rich cultural life” (Woodcraft et al., 2011, p. 32). Therefore, the loss of social values (social and cultural life), as mentioned by the participants, results from the lack of social infrastructure to support sustainable social systems and practices (Palich and Edmonds, 2013). It also impedes building profitable relationships and integration with wider neighbourhoods and erodes the feelings of inclusivity and safety. Therefore, with the existence of a social breakdown – a loss of community and socio-cultural structure, relationships and practices – sometimes due to globalisation and the replacement of traditional values and social relationships with westernised culture and lifestyles, people often find themselves in precarious work conditions and poor living environment exacerbated by various social ills, including crime, anti-social vices and violence (Rogers et al., 2012).

Moreover, in communities or organisations where people’s rights are violated and rendered voiceless as a result of inequality, injustice, prejudice, discrimination and inequity, the quality of life and individual wellbeing is usually low (Magee et al., 2012; Boon et al., 2019). This is perhaps the reason for many Nigerians’ low quality of life (including academics) and weak human capital development (World Bank, 2020). Therefore, Nigerian HEIs and government must increase efforts to improve academics’ lives. For instance, they must create decent jobs and inclusive workplaces that reduce work stress and pressure and allow academics greater control and active participation in their non-work domain. In essence, making strategic investments and promoting policies

and practices that enhance social sustainability is required to achieve work-life balance. As Chandra (2012) suggests, organisations need to rejuvenate the current policies within the centrality of social sustainability, especially those that need a restructuring of the workplace culture to enable employee engagement/participation, empowerment, equal opportunities, individual growth and quality of life. Such policies are expected to facilitate the transformation from focusing merely on economic prosperity and short-term gains towards long-term concerns and goals that include personal, family and community wellbeing (Mushfiqur et al., 2018).

Furthermore, social sustainability underlines the importance of living in sustainable ways that are healthy and satisfying for individuals and the larger society (Jones et al., 2014). It necessitates providing physical, social and emotional needs that support social structures and institutions and reducing behaviours that lead to poor health, personal and social conflict, and emotional distress to promote a thriving society (Demsey et al., 2011; Fisher et al., 2019). In addition, achieving a state of comprehensive wellbeing is concerned with the practicality of what Nigerian academics are subjected to in the workplace and their immediate community. There is a clamour for safer workplaces and communities, reasonable working hours, job security, justice and fairness that increases mental wellbeing, so that stress is replaced by tranquillity, frustration by pleasure and satisfaction, and sympathy by empathy. Social sustainability can help academics enjoy integrating their work and non-work lives when they have adequate time for rest, recreation, leisure, comfort and interactions with family and friends. In essence, social sustainability can promote work-life balance by allowing people to leverage the social aspects of their life to increase job satisfaction and overall wellbeing.

8.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: To what extent does green HRM practices hinder/promote work-life balance among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?

Although most Nigerian academics are new to the term ‘green HRM’, this present study finds that they recognise the importance of being environmentally sensitive and promoting pro-environmental behaviours. Therefore, for these academics, nothing can be compared to working in a conducive and healthy environment. Some participants have a shared notion that the nature of their jobs that requires working for long hours also requires working in a conducive environment. Therefore, the majority desire a work environment that motivates them to derive the best job outcomes and enhance their chances of living a good and healthy life. They opine that where green HRM is practised, there is a potential for increasing the longevity of life and good health for performing work and non-work responsibilities, even in an integrated way. In essence, they suggest that green HRM practices can enhance their ability to achieve work-life, as some referred to the popular saying that “health is wealth” – meaning that only people in good health have the propensity to create wealth (from work). Therefore, a healthy academic is more likely to work effectively and contribute to their organisation’s productivity than one with ill health, especially in a few cases where some academics reported the death of colleagues due to work stress and an unhealthy environment.

This study’s findings align with the literature on green HRM and environmental sustainability that a healthy environment leads to economic, physical, mental, social and environmental wellbeing (Renwick et al., 2013; Esteva, 2014; Boyer et al., 2016). Moreover, Rogers et al. (2012) suggest a cause-and-effect link between individual wellbeing and the environment, where personal wellbeing depends on effective operational ecosystems. An operational system should include an interconnected system

between organisms (e.g., humans, animals and plants) and the physical environment and extend to reinforce a sense of meaning and identity, peace of mind, and emotional stability (Rogers et al., 2012). However, these can mainly be achieved with access to wildlife, natural environment, outdoor leisure facilities and an enabling work environment that considers the impact of business activities on the environment (Boyer, 2015; Markkanen and Anger-Kraavi, 2019).

In addition, promoting healthy work and healthy life in Nigeria, where environmental sustainability issues are yet to be prioritised, may be problematic. It requires the willingness and capacity to develop a 'Green Economy' as a means to facing the challenges of transitioning to social and environmental sustainability (Rogers et al., 2012). First, creating awareness for environmental sustainability is imperative for making this transition. More so, it involves implementing policies and practices that ensure a successful transitioning from carbon-intensive to green technologies in different industries (e.g., higher education). Nigerian organisations must be responsible managers who are intentional in encouraging a conducive environment for their employees and address the fundamental socio-economic drivers that affect the welfare of individuals and communities. HEIs must value green activities and seek ways to reduce the negative consequences of their actions on the environment by creating a green culture through their HRM arm. This green culture could include implementing a digitised system of operations, encouraging remote or hybrid working, and incentivising academics to exhibit or demonstrate pro-environmental behaviours (Wesselink et al., 2015). This way, HEIs stand to benefit from a healthy workforce and contribute to corporate social responsibility.

8.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study helps to better understand the underlying principle of the work-life integration theory, which is to create an interrelationship or overlap between the work and non-work domains, where they become complementary of the other to reduce the conflict that exists between the two domains (Bailyn, 2011). Therefore, rather than creating competition (of time, attention, involvement and satisfaction) between the two domains, integration proposes a complementarity of the domains (Kossek et al., 2005; Morris and Madsen, 2007; Kelliher et al., 2019). In essence, integration engenders more synergies between the different aspects of life, including work, personal commitments, family and the larger community (Perlow and Kelly, 2014). Ramarajan and Reid (2013) suggest that work-life integration shatters the myth of separate worlds by ensuring that organisations recognise non-work identities. Thus, instead of a complete segmentation of the two domains, they should be regarded as inseparable. This perspective is reinforced within the present study context, where most academics alluded to the inseparability of work and non-work roles. In fact, it is worse for married-female academics who shoulder a substantial amount of unpaid household work/chores and are left with little or no option than to integrate both domains.

The present study agrees with prior research that advocates for blurring the borders to allow increasing permeability and flexibility between the work and non-work domains. Also, Nigerian academics feel that work-life integration reduces the effort to transition from one domain to the other. It suggests that the two domains co-exist, and individuals should be allowed temporary movements across the domains to maintain certain aspects of their work and non-work identities and reduce the conflict that emerges when separated. Therefore, it corroborates Sirgy and Lee (2016) findings that allowing overlap between the two domains may yield satisfaction spillover across the domains when

individuals have control and autonomy over them and can decide when to switch on or off a particular role, so that they derive considerable satisfaction between the two roles. Moreover, technology has provided new mechanisms and alternatives for working and collaborating virtually, increasing schedule flexibility (Foucreault et al., 2018; Wepfer et al., 2018). In some countries (mostly industrialised countries), organisations provide support in the form of wellness programmes and child/elder care support to enhance work-life integration in the workplace (Philipsen, 2020). Thus, organisations have to increase their support through effective policies, practices, and culture for work-life integration to be effective. However, the critiques against work-life integration argue that its increased permeability leads to intrusions and limits psychological detachment from one domain when functioning in another domain. For instance, individuals tend to anticipate their plans for the next working day during rest or leisure periods, leading to role conflict (Butts et al., 2015; Foucreault et al., 2018).

As previously highlighted, human life is not restricted to work and family only; it also encompasses one's personal commitment to self or personal wellbeing and that of the larger community. Thus, the present study implies that integration should be seen as a holistic approach, where individuals are perceived to contribute to the sustainability of personal/family goals, as well as collective goals within society. Being part of the community means that individuals have a role to play in sustainable community development. Therefore, as the study finds that community development services are embedded in HEIs requirement for promoting academics and organisations' CSR agenda, it supports a holistic work-life integration for academics in particular, who through their community development activities, can also increase their engagement with people outside of their workplace. Therefore, the findings extend the work-life integration agenda, which serves an important role to ensure sustainable development with the

inclusion of social sustainability and environmental sustainability (through green HRM). In a sense, the practices of social sustainability that includes enhancing the social value system, social cohesion, social engagement, promoting equitability in human rights and access to social infrastructure, social wellbeing and community development, will support the work-life integration agenda where individuals can imbibe these practices to better their work and non-work lives. In addition, part of the work and non-work responsibilities include activities that promote environmental sustainability, which are facilitated through green HRM practices and individual pro-environmental behaviours. Thus, incorporating these social and environmental sustainability practices allows for a holistic approach to the work-life integration agenda, as shown in figure 14.

8.5 PRACTICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has some significant practical and managerial implications, given the insights gained from the study's findings. It is highly imperative that higher education institutions (HEIs) encourage responsible management and consider the negative effect of their decisions and actions on academics' wellbeing and quality of life. Several practices from the study stress the significance of employee flexibility by allowing them to freely choose when, where and how to perform their work-related duties in line with the organisation's goals and fit their non-work obligations. Thus, providing flexible working options and formal and informal support (e.g., on-site childcare and accessible work leave arrangements) for academics will foster work-life balance, enhance employee wellbeing and quality of life.

A responsible organisation/management should be willing to accommodate workers' needs and make provisions for their needs. Managers (including those in Nigerian HEIs) must recognise that while employees have collective needs, they also have personal needs

that might affect their job performance if neglected. Understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing employees' needs is a first step to becoming responsible managers, which is why a personal needs assessment is required to be carried out continuously. The common perception among Nigerian academics that HEIs are only concerned about work outcomes and not the processes for getting the work done shows poor managerial responsibility. More so, implementing clear-cut policies and practices to support work-life balance, social sustainability and environmental sustainability is essential to reduce the notion of individualised practices and increase organisational practices that prove greater organisational support across Nigerian HEIs.

In addition, while performing workforce planning and job design and analysis, HEIs should review certain aspects of academics' job roles that need restructuring to allow integrating work and non-work responsibilities (Foucreault et al., 2018; Basile and Beauregard, 2021). For instance, redesigning the traditional physical workplace and implementing hybrid workplaces in ways that accommodate academics' non-work obligations and promote work-life balance or work-life integration. Making it clear to existing employees and potential employees (during recruitment) that the organisation supports flexible working and integration will allay the fear of job insecurity, increase talent attraction, enhance job satisfaction and improve overall employee wellbeing. HEIs must be responsible for encouraging academics' socialisation during non-work hours by providing clear guidelines on when work starts and stops. Importantly, HEIs must recognise that as academics progress to higher positions and take on more responsibilities, their life circumstances are bound to change. For instance, academics with increased financial stability due to being promoted with higher pay may decide to get married or bear more children. This increases their home and private demands as spousal, childcare and eldercare support may increase due to taking up more responsibilities in their non-

work domain. Thus, HEIs should consider a continued assessment of person-organisation fit and the chance to resolve misfits when the case arises so that employees' wellbeing and productivity are not adversely affected (Basile and Beauregard, 2021).

Furthermore, responsible management is not restricted to HEIs only but also to the government and labour unions, as well as individuals themselves. Therefore, there are some (policy) implications that are associated with these other stakeholders. For instance, social sustainability should be promoted through socially oriented policies, practices and initiatives geared towards addressing social issues and managing the risks of violations to human rights, uneven development and accessibility to social infrastructure and several unsocial patterns of advancing individual welfare (Grum and Kobal Grum, 2020). More so, all the stakeholders mentioned are responsible for promoting all 17 UN SDGs (see UN, 2021) so that there is responsible management for attaining sustainable development for all and sundry. This should include government and organisational policies aimed at reducing poverty and hunger and promoting good health, wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, decent work and fairness.

Specifically, it is viewed from the study's findings that labour unions in Nigeria are weak and thus have very low bargaining power, especially within the education sector. This is evidenced in the incessant strike actions that often lacks a definitive result and puts more pressure on academics. Thus, the Nigerian labour unions (e.g., ASUU) should become more creative in their bargaining and intensify efforts to ensure that academics' concerns regarding their human rights and overall wellbeing are pursued efficiently and fulfilled.

Finally, promoting green HRM as a strategic approach for increasing employee awareness and enhancing employee pro-environmental behaviours is essential to achieving environmental sustainability in Nigeria. In the attempt to contribute to the clean and safe

environmental agenda of the UN SDGs (especially goals 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 and 15), it is important for individuals, organisations and governments (federal, state and local) to take deliberate action to ensure that human actions in the environment foster healthy work and living. First, the acquisition of knowledge and skills can influence employees' green abilities. Therefore, as an integral element of green HRM practices, green training and development can help employees develop the skills necessary for reducing environmentally harmful activities (Guerci et al., 2016). A thorough hiring process, in which green behaviours are included in an organisation's recruitment and selection criteria, also contributes to the level of green skills among employees, as well as evaluating employees' abilities and environmental proactiveness through green performance management (Jabbour and Jabbour, 2016). Second, when employees are not motivated, using green skills to promote pro-environmental activities may be insufficient (Masri and Jaaron, 2017). Sathasivam et al. (2020) suggest that providing employees with incentives can boost high performance at work. Hence, motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging pro-environmental behaviours among employees (Rayner and Morgan, 2018). Also, increasing employees' awareness of the socio-economic benefits of environmental greening could increase their motivation and lead to a higher propensity to becoming eco-friendly. Third, green skills and motivation may be irrelevant when employees are not presented with the opportunities to demonstrate pro-environmental behaviour (Guerci et al., 2016). This entails providing them with the infrastructure and communication systems necessary for promoting green behaviours (Roscoe et al., 2019). For instance, if an organisation lacks recycling facilities or fails to encourage flexible work arrangements to reduce its carbon footprint, it may be counterproductive for employees, organisation and the larger society (Renwick et al., 2013; Hameed et al., 2020).

8.6 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the discussion of the findings from the previous chapter and provided theoretical, practical and managerial implications. The summary is presented in the table below.

Research Questions	Findings	Implications
(a) What does work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM mean to academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?	<p>Nigerian academics define WLB as time allocation between work and non-work roles, integration of all aspects of human life, increased autonomy and control, absence of work-life conflict, and healthy work and non-work experience.</p> <p>Social sustainability was defined as a social value system, social engagement and cohesion, social wellbeing, protecting human rights, a component of CSR, and availability and access to social amenities.</p> <p>Green HRM was defined as HRM strategies for promoting environmental sustainability, and a component of corporate social responsibility.</p>	The definitions of the concepts infer that Nigerian academics desire more from their organisations. WLB, social sustainability and green HRM are important for HEIs in Nigeria to enhance the quality of life of academics.
(b) How does social sustainability efforts enhance WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions?	Nigerian academics do not enjoy a considerable amount of social sustainability. However, social sustainability can help academics enjoy integrating their work and non-work lives when they have adequate time for rest, recreation, leisure, comfort and interactions with family and friends. Also, social sustainability can promote work-life balance by allowing people to leverage the social aspects of their life to increase job satisfaction and overall wellbeing.	Social sustainability should be promoted by implementing socially oriented policies and practices that address social issues and manages the risks of violations to human rights and access to social infrastructure.
(c) To what extent does green HRM practices hinder/promote WLB among academics in Nigerian higher	Despite the unfamiliarity of most Nigerian academics to the term 'green HRM', the study finds that they recognise the importance of being environmentally sensitive and promoting pro-environmental behaviours. The findings indicate that where green HRM is deliberately and	Promoting green HRM should be a strategy for increasing employees' awareness, enhancing eco-friendly behaviours and environmental

education institutions?	effectively practised, academics will enjoy healthy work and healthy life, increasing the propensity to achieve WLB.	sustainability in Nigeria
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CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

9.0 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter gives a summary of the entire thesis. It presents the research overview, main conclusions, contribution to the study, research limitations and suggestions for future research.

9.1 THESIS OVERVIEW

This qualitative study aimed to establish what work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM entail in Nigeria's context; and the extent to which green HRM and social sustainability inhibit/promote work-life balance in the country. It started with the introductory chapter (Chapter One), which presented the background of the study and introduced the study's three overarching concepts – work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. This progressed into stating the research problem followed by the research questions, aim and objectives. The objectives included to critically examine the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions; to investigate if and how social sustainability efforts can constrain/enhance WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions, and; to determine the extent to which green HRM practices can hinder/promote WLB among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions. The chapter highlighted the significance of the study, followed by an overview of the research framework, and concluded with the layout of the thesis structure.

In the next chapter (Chapter Two), the thesis presented the research context (Nigeria). It provided a brief history of the country, followed by a synopsis of the Nigerian economy and its challenges. Afterwards, the characteristics of the Nigerian education sector and its

higher education institutions were highlighted, being the main focus of the research. In the final section, the study presented a background of the human resources management practices in Nigeria and connections to the three main concepts examined in this study.

The following chapters (Chapter Three and Four) progressed into reviewing relevant literature on work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. The chapter discussed the historical backgrounds of the three concepts, their conceptualisations and several key themes to enhance the understanding of the concepts and their inter-relationships. The next chapter (Chapter Five) provided an understanding of the theoretical framework of the study. It discusses the integration theory and how it links with the study's three main concepts.

The description of the research methodology was presented in Chapter Six. It provided a detailed understanding of the adopted philosophy, research approaches and strategies, data collection methods and data analysis procedures. This progressed into presenting the findings and analysis (Chapter Seven). The findings were grouped into three main themes, including the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among Nigerian academics; the impact of social sustainability on WLB, and; the impact of green HRM on WLB. In the penultimate chapter (Chapter Eight), the findings were discussed in light of the research objectives as guided by the research questions. This was followed by highlighting the theoretical, practical and managerial implications of the study.

The main conclusion from this thesis is that it draws attention to the existing inter-relationships between work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. It emphasises the importance of sustainable social relationships to promoting work-life balance, as well as the significance of green HRM policies to supporting environmental sustainability and advertently work-life balance. Moreover, the varied perceptions of the

three overarching concepts among Nigerian academics reinforce the notion of integration in achieving work-life balance. Given the several roles and responsibilities that academics perform, there is a consensus that the work and non-work domains can not be separated if conflicts are to be reduced or avoided.

The researcher ascertains that the Nigerian education sector (especially HEIs) contributes significantly to the Nigerian economy, given its position as the citadel of learning. However, Nigerian academics struggle to manage their work and non-work responsibilities due to the myriad challenges facing the sector, as highlighted in the study's findings. More so, these challenges impede Nigerian academics from enjoying a considerable amount of social sustainability. The study acknowledges that social sustainability can help academics enjoy integrating their work and non-work lives when they have adequate time for rest, recreation, leisure, comfort and interactions with family and friends. Also, social sustainability can promote work-life balance by allowing people to leverage the social aspects of their life to increase job satisfaction and overall wellbeing.

In addition, the study discovered that most Nigerian academics are unfamiliar with the term 'green HRM'. Still, to an extent, they recognise the importance of being environmentally sensitive and promoting pro-environmental behaviours even when environmental sustainability is not considered a national or organisational priority (Ifegbesan and Rampedi, 2018). Thus, the negligence of individuals, organisations, and the government has triggered negative consequences for the overall wellbeing and economic viability of the country (Leke and Leke, 2019). The study indicates that where green HRM is deliberately and effectively practised, academics will enjoy healthy work and healthy life, increasing the propensity to achieve WLB.

9.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO STUDY

Focusing on three fundamental concepts – work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM, this study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions.

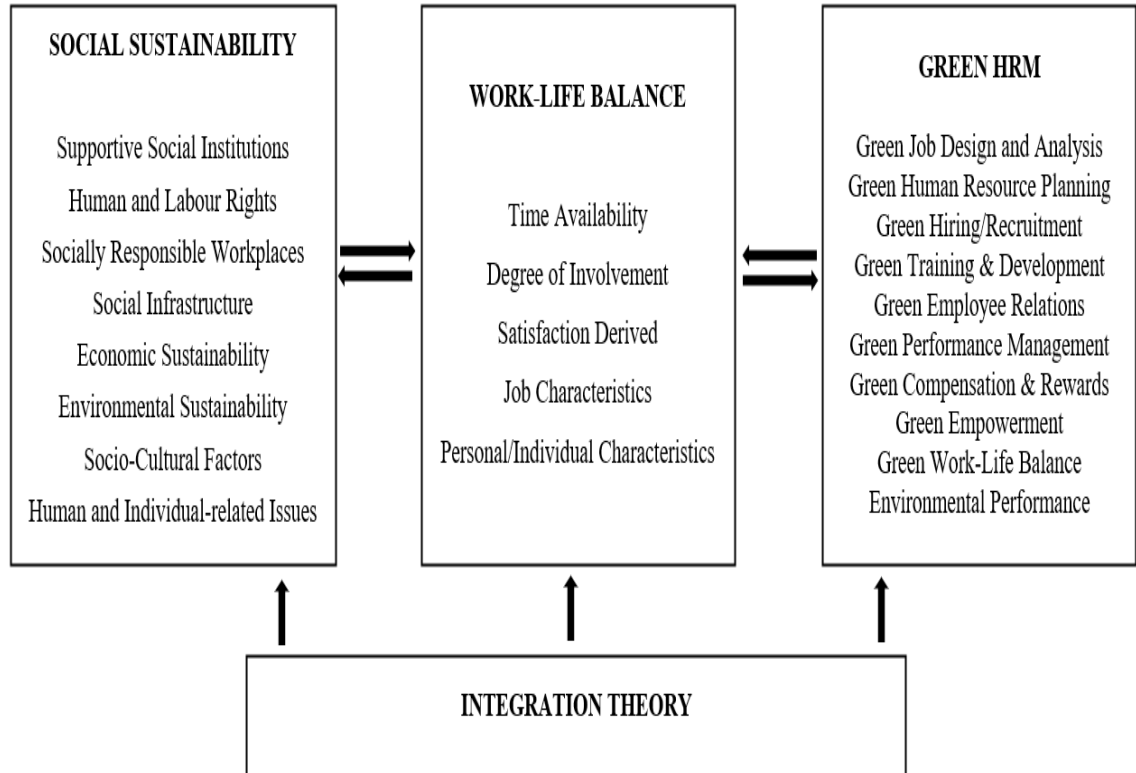
9.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

Some studies have provided initial support for the integration theory to create interventions for individuals' work-life challenges in combining their work and non-work roles and responsibilities (e.g., Morris and Madsen, 2007; Bailyn, 2011; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015). These studies have advocated the integration perspective as an important structure for supporting other contexts, like community, within the work-life balance discourse (Morris and Madsen, 2007). However, the study contribution aligns with the call of Sutton and Noe (2005) that integration should illustrate a holistic strategy that enables the effectiveness and efficiency of coordinating efforts and synergies among all stakeholders who share the benefits of an employee's ability to navigate their personal, work and community responsibilities. The addition of the community to the work-life model is made easy with the influence of integration (Morris and Madsen, 2007). With integration, key stakeholders are viewed as active partners in the recognition, re-examination and re-organisation of the traditional assumptions and expectations about the work-life terrain, whilst transforming into a holistic, healthy and productive system for the benefit of all stakeholders (Voydanoff, 2005; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006).

Therefore, in support of a holistic approach, the study proposes an extension to the integration model of work-life balance, otherwise, work-life integration. It builds on the integration model to include elements of social sustainability and green HRM as facilitators of work-life balance and to reinforce the overlap and inter-relationships that exist therein. Therefore, it promotes elements of social sustainability and green HRM

within the integration framework, especially with the inclusion of the community as a system of social networks into the work-life balance discourse. On the one hand, social sustainability takes shape within the argument, where social networks (within communities) shape the patterns of work and life domains (Mushfiquir et al., 2018). On the other hand, organisations are expected to facilitate their employees' participation in activities that support a healthy community and active engagement in community development (Chaudhary, 2020); this can be achieved through the role of green HRM in its prospects to champion sustainable environmental or community development. This leads to proposing a model that may establish a link between work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM through the integration approach (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Pictorial Representation of the Proposed Model Linking Integration Theory with Work-Life Balance, Green HRM and Social sustainability



Source: Researcher's Findings

In addition, the proposed model substantiates previous studies that have called for the transformation from the “dual-agenda” (Rapoport et al., 2002) to a “triple-agenda” where integration provides opportunities for an equitable living for employees to fulfil greater potentials and demands that enable effective workplaces, families and community (Morris and Madsen, 2007). In addition, integration encapsulates a “triciprocal” relationship (Morris and Madsen, 2007) that exist within the three domains (i.e. work, personal or family and community) to generate a mediating effect which can be positive or negative (Lewis et al., 2007; Kelliher et al., 2019). Therefore, it brings to the fore how social sustainability and green HRM practices could foster work-life balance. For instance, since the notion of ‘life’ is not restricted to work and family only, it also encompasses one’s personal commitment to self or personal wellbeing and that of the larger community achieved through social sustainability and green HRM. Every individual has a responsibility to community development because sustainable community development increases the quality of life of the populace and ensures a safe and well-functioning eco-system. Essentially, this holistic approach to the integration model aligns with the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental). Moreover, it advocates a mechanism through which the 17 UN sustainable development goals may be achieved in favour of the 3Ps – prosperity, planet and people.

9.2.2 Practical Contributions

This study provides practical contributions, given its implications for employees, managers/organisations, labour unions and the government as discussed in the practical and managerial implications (see section 8.6). Notably, this empirical study expands our knowledge of the concepts of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. Essentially, it offers empirical data to understand the perceptions and reality of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM in a non-western context (Nigeria). It

advocates the need for organisations to increase their support through implementing effective policies and practices that promote WLB, green HRM and social sustainability. For instance, providing equitable access to flexible work arrangements and family-friendly options could help increase work productivity and enhance employees' overall wellbeing. Social sustainability should be promoted by implementing socially oriented policies and practices that address social issues and manage the risks of violations to human rights and access to social infrastructure. Likewise, promoting green HRM should be a strategy for increasing employees' awareness, enhancing eco-friendly behaviours and environmental sustainability, especially in Nigeria.

9.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Common to all studies are research limitations that may be out of the control of the researcher. However, where there are limitations, it often creates opportunities for future research to explore areas that have been unexplored or underexplored (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The main limitation of this present study is its methodological choices. For instance, the adoption of the qualitative approach lacks generalisation compared to the quantitative approach, given that the outcomes may be restricted to a specific demographic or research setting and not all because of the differences in perceptions (Saunders et al., 2019). Although adopting qualitative research was deliberate to investigate the conceptual areas within an under-researched research setting or context where the concepts are yet to be fully understood.

More so, the interpretivist philosophy has its limitations, given that it is based on the subjective views or perceptions of the participants and interpretations of the researcher to understanding social phenomena (Saunders et al., 2020). Therefore issues of bias in

perceptions and interpretations are likely to surface even though they have been largely addressed in section 6.5 that considers the mechanism for ensuring the quality of the research.

In addition, although this present study investigates a non-western context where work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM are yet to be popularised, future research can explore other non-western contexts, including other African countries, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East regions. Future research in these regions could be used to compare the findings from the present study to ascertain whether there are similarities or differences and other peculiarities that may be gleaned from the findings in other contexts. In addition, future studies may consider and compare if the experiences are different between academic and non-academic staff in HEIs.

9.4 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

This doctoral journey has been filled with mixed emotions. While it presented some challenges in the course of undertaking the research, I have also come to the point of self-actualisation, having derived satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment. First, undertaking research of the nature that requires my time, attention, dedication, and commitment was sometimes overwhelming. However, it challenged me to prioritise my needs and time for what seemed important at various points in time. It has also stretched my abilities in the aim to become more reflective and self-aware of several issues that I did not consider important at a time. For instance, my communication skills have been refined, given that I had to be able to maintain effective conversations with the research participants to seek detailed explanations of their experiences. Also, it opened doors to contributing to some other research with other esteemed scholars who helped refine my thoughts, knowledge and understanding in other areas.

More importantly, was the ability to spread the knowledge of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM to individuals who were unlikely to be familiar with one or more of the concepts. I also derived satisfaction at most participants wanting to learn more about the concepts and requested that I send them some relevant materials that would fulfil the purpose. Moreover, some participants, particularly those who held high positions in their organisations and in public, were eager to begin working on ways to bring the knowledge of the three concepts to the larger society, in order to make an impact on wellbeing and environmental sustainability. Thus, it shows the extent to which the present study may have impacted the participants, which brings me considerable satisfaction as a researcher.

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Appendices

Ethics and Consent Form

University of East London

Royal Docks School of Business and Law

Research Integrity

The University adheres to its responsibility to promote and support the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research; observing the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks.

The University is committed to preserving your dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing and as such it is a mandatory requirement of the University that formal ethical approval, from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee, is granted before research with human participants or human data commences.

The Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

Dr Toyin Adisa

Royal Docks School of Business and Law

tel:+442082234890/t.adisa@uel.ac.uk

Student researcher

Olatunji David Adekoya

Royal Docks School of Business and Law

U1934939@uel.ac.uk

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title

Responsible Management: Promoting Work-Life Balance through Social Sustainability and Green HRM

Project Description

This research aims to investigate the relationship between work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM. The objectives, therefore, include to critically examine the notions of work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM among the workers in the education sector of Nigeria; to identify the factors that promote or hinder work-life balance, social sustainability and green HRM practices in the Nigerian education sector; to assess the link between work-life balance and social sustainability in the Nigerian education sector; to determine whether Green HRM promotes work-life balance and social sustainability in the Nigerian education sector.

You will be asked some questions relating to your understanding and experience of work-life balance, social sustainability and green human resource management within the context of the Nigerian Higher Education Sector.

You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview upon an agreed date which may also be followed-up with a telephone interview should more information be needed afterwards. Your participation will involve a minimum of one (1) face-to-face interview lasting not more than one hour per session and telephone interviews if necessary.

This research is unlikely to pose any hazard or risk to the participants as it complies with the UK Data Protection Act 2019. During the interviews, there are no foreseeable risks.

Confidentiality of the Data

This research is also meant for academic purposes only and not for commercial purposes; therefore, your data will be protected in line with the UK Data Protection Act 2019.

Participants' confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority.

Data will be stored on the University's secured data storage system (OneDrive). Data will be protected according to the confidentiality statement above. After the programme completion, data will be retained for two years. However, the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Location

The research will be carried out through virtual means by using Microsoft Teams.

Disclaimer

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time during the research. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Please note that your data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis – after this point it may not be possible.

University Research Ethics Sub-Committee

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

**Catherine Hitchens, Research Integrity and Ethics Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43
University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD
(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk)**

For general enquiries about the research please contact the Principal Investigator on the contact details at the top of this sheet.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants.

Please tick as appropriate:

	YES	NO
I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.		
I confirm my consent to being audio and video recorded.		
I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. <i>(Please see below)</i>		
I understand that maintaining strict confidentiality is subject to the following limitations: Participants' confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority.		
I consent to the use of my data as anonymized quotes in publications.		
As a participant, I have the option to be named in publications		
Research findings will be forwarded to the participant through a link or downloaded copy.		
I confirm my consent for the researcher(s) to use the data in future research.		
I confirm my consent to be contacted for future research studies by the researcher(s).		
It has been explained to me what will happen once the programme has been completed.		
I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis and that after this point it may not be possible.		

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.		
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Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Participant's Signature

Investigator's Name
OLATUNJI DAVID ADEKOYA

Investigator's Signature

Date: 02/07/2021

Dear Olatunji David

Application ID: ETH1920-0025

Project title: The Nexus between Work-Life Balance and Social Sustainability: The Mediating Role of Green HRM

Lead researcher: Mr Olatunji David Adekoya

Your application to University Research Ethics Sub-Committee was considered on the 11th of February 2021.

The decision is: **Approved**

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 4 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the secretary for the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research project you must complete '[An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application](#)'.

The approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research site: The research will take place in Nigeria but online via Microsoft Teams

Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator: Mr Olatunji David Adekoya

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice for Research and the Code of Practice for Research Ethics](#) is adhered to.□□

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research project should be reported using the University's form for [Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction](#).

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Research Ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of the project

Yours sincerely

Fernanda Silva

Dear Olatunji David

Application ID: ETH2122-0087

Original application ID: ETH1920-0025

Project title: Responsible Management: Promoting Work-Life Balance through Social Sustainability and Green HRM

Lead researcher: Mr Olatunji David Adekoya

Your application to Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee was considered on the 21st of December 2021.

The decision is: **Approved**

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 4 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the secretary for the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research project you must complete '[An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application](#)'.

The approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research site: The research will take place in Nigeria but online via Microsoft Teams

Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator: Mr Olatunji David Adekoya

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice for Research and the Code of Practice for Research Ethics](#) is adhered to. □ □

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research project should be reported using the University's form for [Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction](#).

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Research Ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of the project

Yours sincerely

Femanda Silva

Administrative Officer for Research Governance