

GREENING HEALTHCARE SUPPLY CHAIN
THROUGH CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL
STRATEGIES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY
PERFORMANCE IN THE MALAYSIAN
PRIVATE HOSPITALS

NORZIANIS BINTI REZALI @ ABDUL SUKOR

UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA

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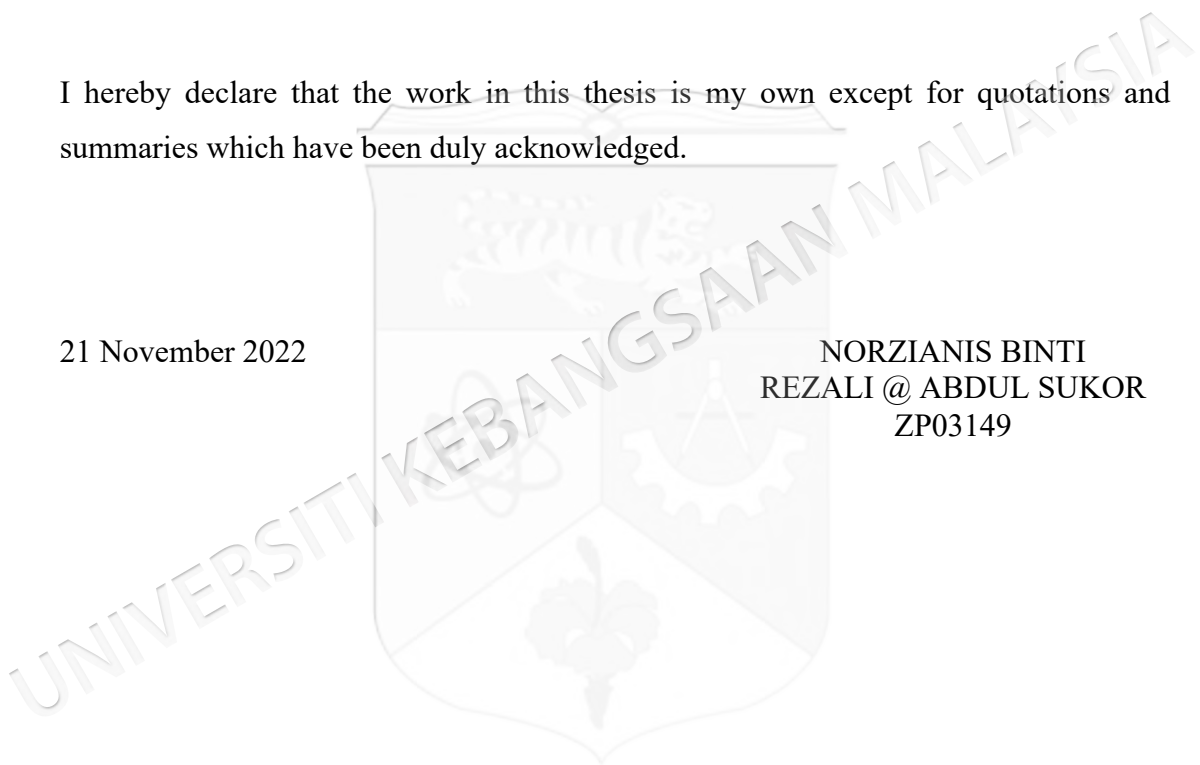
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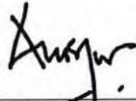
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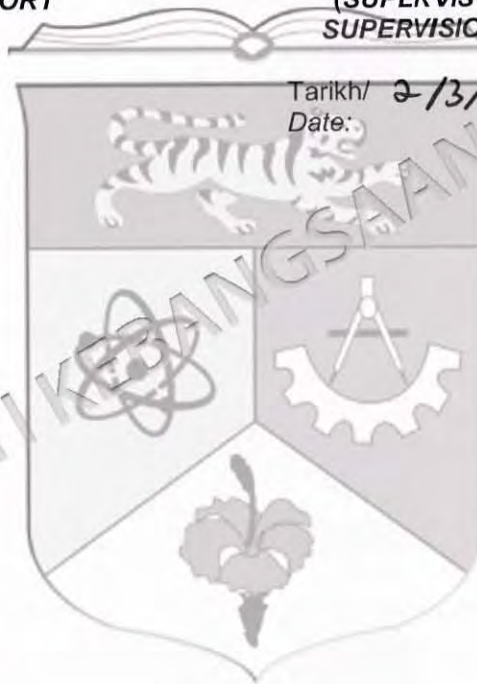
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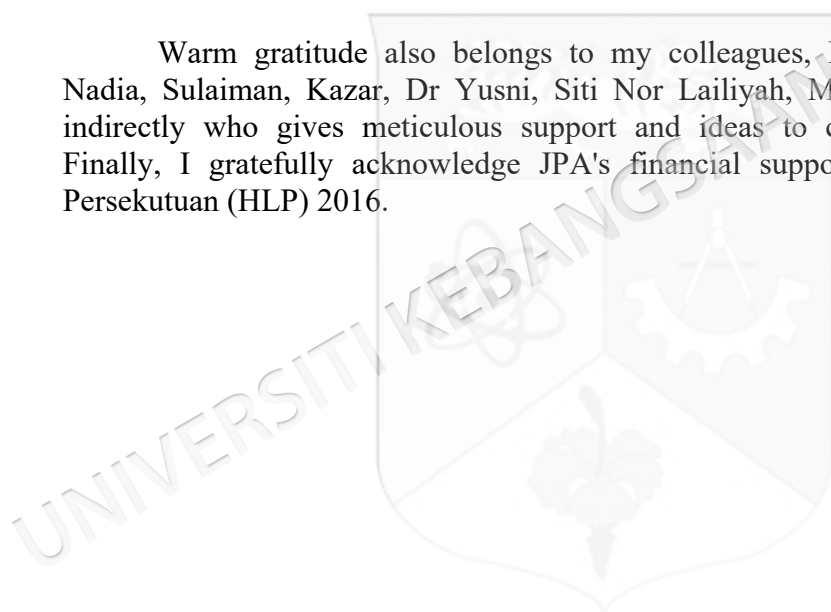
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ABSTRAK

Industri penjagaan kesihatan adalah pengguna sumber asli yang banyak dan ia menghasilkan sisa buangan yang terkawal dan tidak terkawal. Pada masa kini, industri kesihatan sedar akan keperihatinan global terhadap prestasi kelestarian. Dengan perkembangan konsep hospital hijau, amalan hijau rantaian bekalan semakin signifikan dalam industri penjagaan kesihatan. Namun, memandangkan rantaian bekalan penjagaan kesihatan hijau dan kesannya terhadap prestasi berterusan dalam industri penjagaan kesihatan, banyak kajian masih belum dikaji secara mendalam. Kekurangan konseptualisasi rantaian bekalan kesihatan hijau menghalang pembangunan rangka kerja rantaian bekalan kesihatan hijau dan prestasi kelestarian. Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini menerokai keadaan strategi persekitaran korporat semasa melalui rantaian bekalan kesihatan hijau yang menyumbang kepada prestasi lestari dalam industri penjagaan kesihatan. Ia turut berusaha untuk mengungkapkan strategi persekitaran korporat dengan amalan rantaian bekalan kesihatan hijau dan kesannya terhadap prestasi lestari (ekonomi, alam sekitar, dan sosial). Untuk penerokaan, pendekatan kualitatif induktif dan kaedah penyelidikan kajian kes digunakan untuk penyelidikan ini. Enam buah hospital swasta dipilih dari industri penjagaan kesihatan di Malaysia. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan temu bual separa berstruktur. Penyelidikan ini mendedahkan lapan strategi persekitaran syarikat yang menyumbang kepada prestasi lestari: peraturan lingkungan, budaya organisasi, amalan pengurusan alam sekitar, sistem pengurusan persekitaran, kepemimpinan korporat, teknologi hijau, reputasi korporat, dan kelebihan daya saing. Penemuan ini juga dikelompokkan ke dalam tonggak prestasi lestari (ekonomi, persekitaran dan sosial). Oleh itu, kerangka konsep baru strategi persekitaran korporat yang berintegrasi dengan rantaian bekalan kesihatan hijau dibangunkan yang menyumbang kepada prestasi lestari (ekonomi, alam sekitar, dan sosial) secara eksklusif untuk industri penjagaan kesihatan. Oleh itu, strategi persekitaran syarikat yang berintegrasi dengan rantaian bekalan penjagaan kesihatan hijau memberi gambaran kepada hospital swasta untuk faedah jangka panjang.

Kata kunci: Strategi Alam Sekitar Korporat, Rangkaian Bekalan Penjagaan Kesihatan Hijau, Prestasi Lestari, Kajian Kes Pelbagai, Industri Penjagaan Kesihatan

ABSTRACT

The healthcare industry is a sizeable consumer of natural resources and is a generator of both regulated and non-regulated wastes. Nowadays, the healthcare industry is enlightened by the global concern on sustainable performance. With the proliferation of the green hospital concept, green healthcare supply chain practices in the healthcare industry are becoming more significant. However, the growing green healthcare supply chains research field has not been yet mapped on sustainable performance in the healthcare industry. The lack of a green healthcare supply chain conceptualization hinders developing a green healthcare supply chain and sustainability performance framework. Thus, this research explores the current state of corporate environmental strategy through the green healthcare supply chain that contributes to sustainable performance within the healthcare industry. It also seeks to reveal corporate environmental strategy by studying the green healthcare supply chain practices and their impacts on sustainable performance (economic, environmental and social). In this research, an inductive qualitative research approach and multiple case study research methods were adopted. Six private hospitals were selected from the healthcare service providers in Malaysia. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. This research revealed eight corporate environmental strategies that contributed to sustainable performance: environmental regulation, organizational culture, environmental management practice, environmental management system, corporate leadership, green technology, corporate reputation, and competitive advantage. This finding also was further grouped into sustainable performance pillars (economic, environmental and social). Therefore, a new conceptualization framework of the corporate environmental strategies that integrate with the green healthcare supply chain is developed that contribute to sustainable performance (economic, environmental, and social) exclusively for healthcare industries. Hence, the corporate environmental strategies that integrate with the green healthcare supply chain gives an insight to the private hospitals for long term benefits.

Keywords: Corporate Environmental Strategies, Green Healthcare Supply Chain, Sustainable Performance, Multiple Case Studies, Private Hospitals

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Competitive Advantage
CES	Corporate Environmental Strategy
CL	Corporate Leadership
CR	Corporate Reputation
EMP	Environmental Management Practices
EMS	Environmental Management System
EP	Economic Performance
ER	Environmental Regulation
EVP	Environmental Performance
GHSC	Green Healthcare Supply Chain
GT	Green Technology
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JCI	Joint Commission International
MSQH	Malaysian Society for Quality in Health
OC	Organizational Culture
PC	Pollution Control
PP	Pollution Preventive
PS	Proactive Strategy
RS	Reactive Strategy
SCP	Social Performance
SP	Sustainability Performance

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable issues starting from the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED 1987 – Brundtland Commission) entitled 1987 as “our common future.” Sustainable performance (SP) principles have been suggested by Eklington (1998). According to this principle, it is essential to maintain the balance between the natural, social and economic parameters of organizations for decision making to implement sustainability. Nevertheless, scholars have attempted to propose a variety of concepts that embrace and apply sustainable results, for example, according to Asadi, Pourhashemi and Nilashi (2020), SP is defined as a meeting point of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concept of the three dimensions of climate, environment, and society. Meanwhile, Aras, Tezcan and Furtuna (2018) describe an SP as economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social progress as indicators of corporate sustainability. From a corporate perspective, it not only focuses on economic aspects of one’s business but also a need to focus on the sustenance of nature’s resources and the societies the companies serve (Govindan, Rajeev, Padhi & Pati 2020). This essential prerequisite was to create strategies for SP for future generations. Thus, it is time for Malaysia to review our healthcare business strategy whether to adopting sustainable performance to succeed economically and environmentally and socially.

In today’s competitive and dynamic environment, Malaysia as a developing country has moved from an industrialized economy to a services economy is an important engine of global economic development. To compete globally, sustainability has become an important strategy in service industries. The services industry such as healthcare also has become one of the main key drivers for global

economic development. However, today's healthcare industry continuously facing excessively increased costs, declining profitability, administrative inefficiency, and steep regulatory compliance. Besides that, sustainable issues are now a top priority for most companies no matter nonprofits, venture capital, or governments, all are increasingly sought to engage sustainability in their company. Align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) healthcare industries will speed progress towards meeting UN SDGs particularly: Good health and wellbeing (SDG3), clean water and sanitation (SDG6), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), and responsible consumption and production (SDG12). Therefore, healthcare industries are also no exception to shift their paradigm of a strategic blueprint to sustain the business for the long term through the innovative environmental approach that contributes to SP that benefits current and future generations.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Researchers' interest in corporate environmental strategies (CES) has become a central focus of management studies, especially in terms of the green supply chain (Milanesi, Runfola & Guercini 2020; Li, Qiao, Cui & Wang 2020) and sustainable performance (SP) (Amar Hisham, Azlan & Rajadurai 2018; Nwoba, Boso & Robson 2021). CES is described as a collection of strategies to minimize the environmental impact of business through goods, processes, and corporate policies such as reducing energy and waste, using renewable green resources and implementing environmental management systems (Latan, Jabbour, Jabbour, Wamba & Shahbaz 2018). The dimensions of CES are strategy process, strategy content and strategy context (Baumgartner & Rauter 2016; MacKay, Chia & Nair 2020). In this research, CES is defined as "the extent to which an organization is involved in a wide range of organizational and managerial actions on environmental issues" (Mak & Chang 2019; Tienhua, Yen, Chen & Goh, 2014). Recently, CES has received a great deal of attention from industries globally that faced a series of environmental issues, particularly the degradation of resources and pollutions (Latan et al. 2018; Long 2019). Thus, many industries are experiencing growing pressure on climate change pollution as a significant environmental problem, which has triggered a fundamental

change in CES (Fousteris, Didaskalou, Tsogas & Geogakellos 2018; Genc & Benedetto 2019).

Meanwhile, the subject of environmental sustainability is increasingly present in managerial agendas through green effort across the supply chain. Green healthcare supply chain (GHSC) is the creation of something new in the healthcare industry that may relate to changes in processes, operational procedures, business models and business systems that improve performance in the three dimensions of sustainability: social, environmental and economic (Kneipp, Gomes, Bichueti, Frizzo & Perlin 2019). GHSC has been introduced in the healthcare industry as an environmental management innovative solution to mitigate environmental pollution (Dubey, Gunasekaran, Helo, Papadopolus, Childe & Sahay 2017). In healthcare industries, it is well known that consumption of energy and water is high, and that clinical and nonclinical wastes are excessive. These may cause potentially hazardous substances to cause harm to the environment and health (Agamuthu, & Barasarathi 2020). Besides that, various stakeholders (consumer, government and the community) desire healthcare industries to be more competitive in the business world, which has led to a crucial change in CES (Jing, Hing & Yee 2018). Hence, addressing environmental issues and competitiveness in the global environment remains a significant challenge for healthcare industries.

Moreover, global issues such as the environment and the degradation of natural resources have brought about a fundamental change in the industries' strategy. Sustainability awareness has also increased industries' attention to the benefits of environmental, economic, and social performance (Awan, Kraslawski & Huiskonen 2018). Then, sustainability is incorporated with the CES developed in the industry for competitiveness in the business world (Taliento, Favino & Netti 2019). Aligned with global issues, and changes in the healthcare industry environment have significantly pressure private hospitals to pay attention to CES (Rakovska, & Stratieva 2018). Besides, private hospitals are unique, different, and more complicated supply chain, impact human health and the future environment. Thus, to address global issues and being competitive, private hospitals should integrate their CES with sustainability.

In the context of the health sector, supply chain management is defined as an integrated system that regulates product and information flow in order to enable a smooth transition of work operations from manufacturing to distribution to patients. Supply chain structure in health services is as follows in the Figure 1.1. Then, the healthcare supply chain is unique from other practices. The healthcare supply chain is related to the medications starting from being produced, transported, and consumed, hence cannot be reused and must be disposed of (Mathur, Gupta, Meena & Dangayach 2018). It is also related to service that has to deliver on time to fulfill the patient's needs (Polater & Demirdogen 2018). Besides that, the product flow (Figure 1.2) in the healthcare industry begins with the manufacturer and ends with the patient at the healthcare provider. A product can be supplied directly from the manufacturer to the healthcare provider, or it can go through a distributor before reaching the healthcare provider, depending on its category. The misconceptions during the practice of the healthcare supply chain are the biggest challenge for healthcare industries. Santanu (2018) also stated that understanding discrepancies in healthcare supply chain practices are critical to the global market. However, little is understood about the broader impacts of sustainability practices on the healthcare supply chain (Daú, Scavarda, Scavarda & Portugal 2019). Thus, further research in this field are encouraged which then involved assessing methods which focus more broadly on a holistic evaluation of SP.

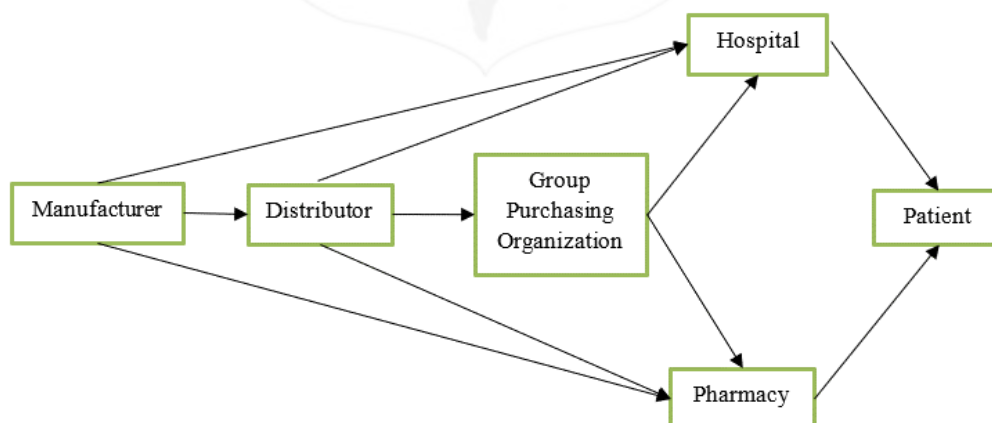


Figure 1.1 Supply chain structure in health services

Source: Adapted from Chakraborty and Zanjurne 2012

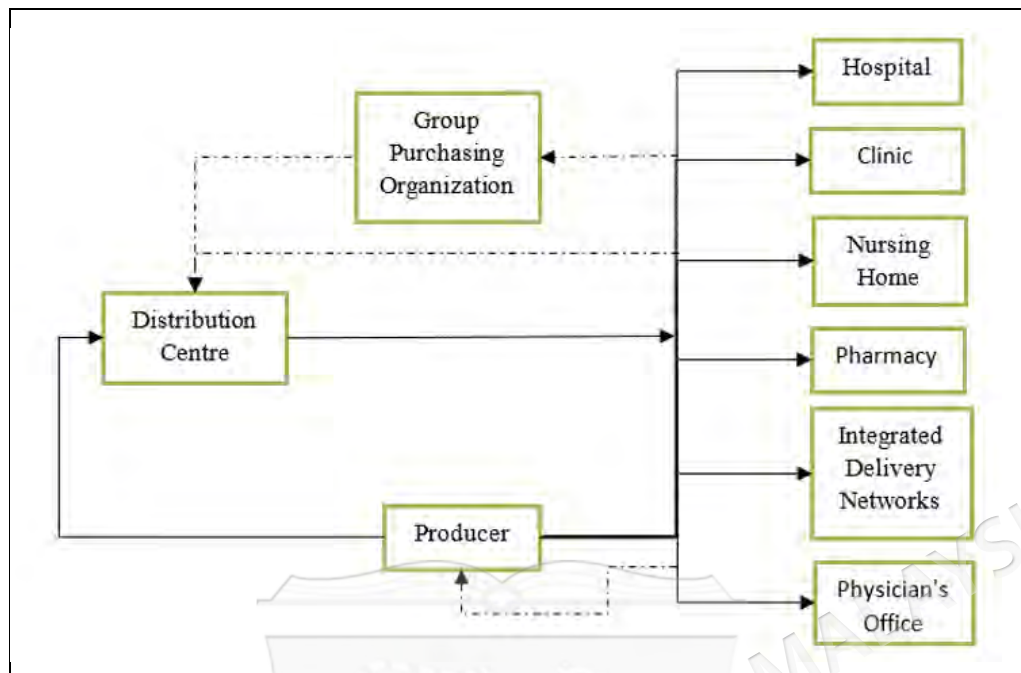


Figure 1.2 Healthcare product flow

Source: Adapted from Mathew, John and Kumar 2013

Besides, the healthcare supply chain consists of four independent stakeholders (producers, purchasers, providers, and patients) who have their interests to protect. An illustration of the healthcare supply chain is shown in Figure 1.3. The healthcare supply chain's first independent stakeholders are producers that produce healthcare products such as pharmaceuticals products and medical devices. The second independent stakeholders are purchasers which consist of group purchasing organizations (GPOs) and distributors who facilitate the payment for and shipment of goods from the producers to the providers. The third independent stakeholders are providers who use producers' goods to provide healthcare services to patients. Lastly, independent stakeholders are patients who are the persons that receive the service from the providers. Since the supply chain objectives of each of the independent stakeholder do not always match with the provider's goal, the mechanism for managing the health supply chain is inefficient and fragmented.

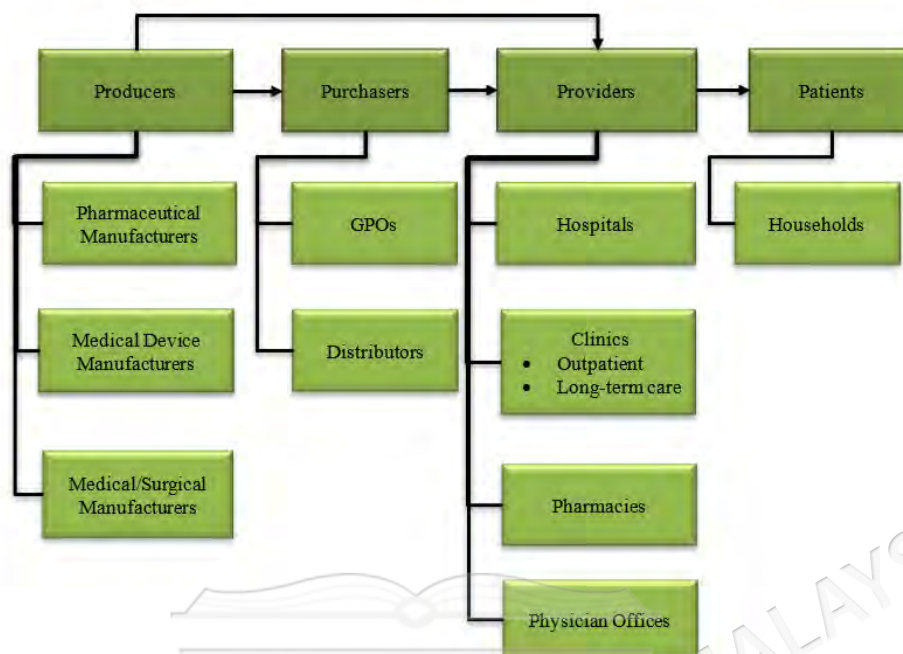


Figure 1.3 Healthcare supply chain
Source: Adapted from Smith et al. 2012

The healthcare supply chain management has become more complicated because it involves human health (patients, employees, and communities) and the environment. Then, the overarching aim of the healthcare organization, in many cases, irrespective of profit, is to improve and save lives. Nowadays, the healthcare industries shifted their healthcare supply chain paradigm towards a SP for the global market's reaction. Healthcare industries are no exception to shifting their strategy to integrate with the healthcare supply chain to SP for more competitiveness. Additionally, the healthcare industries deemed a global agenda related to the natural environment (Ahsan & Rahman 2017). Due to the influence of many factors, the health supply chain has particular characteristics. Despite numerous studies, the findings of the benefits of a green supply chain in various industries, little discussion is in healthcare industries (Lee & Raschke 2020). Therefore, to consider a global sustainability agenda and competitive healthcare industries require an environmentally innovative approach such as a GHSC

Furthermore, to be competitive in the global economy, private hospitals embedded the CES that integrated with the GHSC for reducing wastage and used

excellent resources. Malaysian Health at a Glance:2018 reported that the expenditure in healthcare sectors has increased from 2.9 % in 2004 to 3.8 % in 2018. Besides that, in 2020, clinical wastes increased 27% (Agamuthu & Barasarathi 2020). Meanwhile, private hospitals also lead to a marked improvement in the robust growth of the Malaysian economy (Nurul Fadly, Aqmar Nur Izzah & Nursyazwani 2019). Enlightened with this context, private hospitals should identify potential areas of opportunity to improve SP. Therefore, this research focuses on the CES integrated with the GHSC initiative in private hospitals to investigate potential opportunities for improving SP.

Nowadays, a CES deserves a focused approach distinct from broader environmental issues. Initially, sustainability represents an essential to the CES, which is closely associated with the innovative approach that creates opportunities for business organizations (Calza, Parmentola & Tutore 2017). Attention to sustainability requires immediate action by an organization in its CES that integrates with GHSC to make SP a reality (Luqmani, Leach & Jesson 2017). Consistent with prior research (Kneipp et al. 2019), innovative approaches such as GHSC initiatives improve SP in these three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social. This evidence supports the CES that integrates with an innovative approach, such as a green supply chain contributing to SP in the industry. However, despite CES's growing momentum and perceived benefits to address the innovative approach, the literature is relatively silent about which GHSC contributes to SP (Wijethilake 2017). Therefore, to ensure survival and competitiveness in the industries globally, developing CES is unique to healthcare industries.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In recent years, the corporate world has changed drastically in the issues of sustainability. Besides that, the increasing environmental issues, strict rules and regulations combined with public awareness have altered the business landscape. Concerning this, business organizations can individually play their role in facilitating SP by developing CES to improving their image, working environment conditions and reducing the risks from environmental responsibility. Companies have also realized

that implementing sustainable business strategies leads to better results and opens up new opportunities. Therefore, is it true that developing CES through a green supply chain yield better outcomes? Hence, some industries achieve more incredible sustainability benefits from CES while others do not remain a significant and severe issue incorporating environmental strategies research (Naidoo & Gasparatos 2018; Rodrigues & Franco 2019).

Firstly, there is still a lack of research that addresses the phenomenon of SP through CES in private hospitals. Furthermore, previous research has seldom conducted comprehensive studies of the impact on sustainable performance from a holistic view (al Hammadi & Hussain 2019). Most studies have concentrated on a single factor, for example, economic for reducing cost (Kudlak 2017), environmental for mitigating the pollution (Kumar, Zavadskas, Mangla, Agrawal, Sharma & Gupta 2019) and social for patient safety (Rohaizah, Rosman, Mohd Norhasni & Azziyati 2019). However, a holistic view of the impact on SP is required to identify the associated improvement potential in a private hospital (Fernando, Meyliana, Warnars, & Abdurachman 2020). Thus, this research provides a holistic view of SP through CES by practices GHSC in private hospitals.

Secondly, environmental pollution problems in Malaysia have a long history. Malaysia has also recorded among the countries that faced waste management issues in Asia (Fitriyah, Choong & Dzurlkanian 2019). These are severe problems that have inflicted significant damage on the economy and quality of life. For example, cases particularly in Sungai Kim Kim, Johor and Sungai Gong, Selangor (2019 - 2020) have opened many eyes, especially the authority and the public. Then, time has come for the government to embed sustainability elements as a policy goal (Mohamad Ghazali, Akanmu, & Ahmad Yusni 2018; Hille, Althammer & Diederich 2020). Despite these struggles, decades of scientific monitoring indicate that the industries are no closer to environmental sustainability; the situation has become obstacles that are getting worse (Howes, Wortley, Potts, Dedekorkut, Serrao, Davidson & Smith 2017). The insufficient knowledge and awareness about improper medical waste disposal in Malaysia is challenging to healthcare providers and are hindrances to achieving SP (Nipa, Ahmed, Shahariar, Rahman, Haider & Uddin. 2017). Hence, it is inevitable that

these policies have not been appropriate for achieving the goals of sustainability. Thus, to reduce the burden of environmental impacts on SP, healthcare providers' roles, such as private hospitals, are to embed sustainability in their CES.

Thirdly, despite the benefits of CES, there is need to mitigate the impact of enterprise on the natural environment and performance. Researchers have observed that most industries have not fully taken up the full benefits of CES. A significant dilemma for industries has been the struggle to understand how to adopt and implement CES while meeting the core business objectives of growth (Weissenberger-Eibl, Almeida, & Seus 2019). Indeed, existing research revealed that CES impacts separately on economic (Alsayegh, Rahman & Homayoun 2020), environmental (Saleem, Gopinath, Khattak, Qureshi, Allui & Adeel 2020) and social (Gupta & Gupta 2020). Then, investing in CES through green innovation practices can be extremely expensive to achieve SP (Gong, Simpson, Koh & Tan 2018). Thus, a holistic study on the CES through the GHSC effort could provide a comprehensive understanding of the various conditions necessary for achieving SP (Genç & Benedetto 2019).

Fourthly, private hospitals are experiencing dramatic changes in corporate strategy for a sustainable solution. It received the attention from stakeholders to provide innovative patient care that meets high standards of quality in a cost-effective manner (Selim, Noor Hazilah & Rafikul 2017). The private hospitals also received pressure from stakeholder's for providing compassionate patient care, and it is a more significant effect on CES (Lee, Raja Noriza & Nik Rosnah 2018). However, in fulfilling this critical mission to care for patients, private hospitals impact the natural environment (al Hammadi & Hussain 2019). Additionally, healthcare supply chain management is different from other industries increasing pressure on the private hospitals (Ziat, Sefiani, Reklouli & Azzouzi 2019). This situation has then produced more pressure to pushing the private hospital's entrenched sustainability into their CES as a step ahead for achieving SP.

Lastly, the rapid growth of corporate investment in Malaysian private hospital sector dramatically changes the business environment. In recent years, Malaysia's healthcare sector has been nominated as one of the National Key Economics Areas,

which aims to generate income for the country while maintaining excellent services (Selim et al. 2017). Then, the Eleventh Malaysian Plan is also aligned with SP for ensuring the achieving of quality healthcare (Azyyati, Rohaizah & Rushami Zein 2018). As part of the healthcare industry, private hospitals also indirectly contribute to the government's long-term vision (Lee et al. 2018). This study is incredibly insightful for private hospitals, specifically for the more competitive business world, contributing to the nation. Reflecting on the above problems, it is believed that the alignment of the CES impacts an innovative approach that contributes to SP in private hospitals. Therefore, studying the CES through GHSC initiatives in private hospitals is crucial to achieving the National Transformation 2050.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

Economic globalization and resources degradation spark the industries to have a corporate strategy that integrates with an innovative approach for the long-term benefits of achieving SP. In line with the global issues, Malaysia also emphasizes SP. Unfortunately, despite increasing awareness on long-term sustainability, Malaysia has yet to be still nascent and the awareness level, such as the melting of glaciers, is an obstacle to achieving SP (Mohammad Ghazali, Rahimi, Norani & Yusoff 2016). Then, in 1997, the Malaysian government applied the privatization of medical waste management to healthcare industries (World Health Organization Western Pacific Region 2015). For a reason, privatization is to reduce the government's financial and administrative burden as well as the competitiveness. It also increases the private sector's role in nation-building, and prior to this, provides economic policy (Lee et al. 2018). Although Malaysia has enforced privatization in healthcare industries as a proactive strategy, it still needs an innovative approach such as GHSC initiatives. Thus, it is crucial for the government and public agencies to possess the right supply chain initiatives to enhance policies and regulations as reactive strategies to be successful. Enlightened from these obstacles, it needs to explore the CES through GHSC initiatives in-depth in order to achieve SP.

Moreover, only a few kinds of literature address the CES that contributes to the SP issues related to GHSC initiatives in developing countries (Suryanto,

Muhammad & Nira Hariyatie Hartani 2018). The limited number of research on the CES through GHSC initiatives has a snowball effect on the discussion and understanding. Consequently, it leaves a significant theoretical gap in understanding a holistic CES by GHSC practices (Figure 1.1). Therefore, the point of trajectory of the research is to explore the CES through the GHSC initiatives by answering the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What is the corporate environmental strategy through green healthcare supply chain implementation from the perspective of sustainable performance?

RQ2: Why do private hospitals execute corporate environmental strategy?

RQ3: How does the execution of corporate environmental strategy in private hospitals impact green healthcare supply chain implementation and sustainable performance?

Additionally, in the context of SP, it relates to the firm's ability to perform not only on economic performance, but also on the environmental and social performance (Elkington 2004). Therefore, the GHSC's definition is derived from the definition of the sustainable innovation itself, adding the "healthcare" component. For this research, the definition of the GHSC is "the creation of something new relating to changes in processes, operational practices, business models, thinking and business systems that improve performance in the three dimensions of SP: social, environmental and economic" (Kneipp et al. 2019).

Furthermore, the research's primary purpose is to develop a CES by using the GHSC framework that focuses on the route-map of its application. Triangulation of the literature and the research findings can enhance the understanding of the CES's holistic concept through the GHSC initiatives. This research extends the view of CES by GHSC initiatives that contribute to SP based on their source of origin (Balasubramanian & Shukla 2017). The development of the framework is derived from the following research question:

RQ4: What framework that can explain the phenomenon?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The impact of the environmental issues and global economic crisis on the healthcare provider, mainly private hospitals in Malaysia, requires special attention towards a SP (economic, environmental, social). Then, the market pressure (customer pressure and competitor pressure) also motivates the private hospitals to pursue CES as the competitiveness (Azyyati, Rohaizah & Rushami 2018; Rodriguez, Svensson & Otero-Neira 2019). With regard to the environmental concern that has increased, a proper CES such as reactive and proactive, is expected to be put in place to improve the situation. The research objectives and contributions were as follows:

RO1: To explore and describe private hospital's perception on the impact of corporate environmental strategy execution on green healthcare supply chain implementation and sustainable performance.

The CES findings also contribute to the SP of the healthcare provider, in particular the private hospitals in Malaysia. Therefore, the research findings can also be applied in future research that involves service industries such as green hotel supply chain, green construction supply chain, and green food supply chain. Moreover, there are various corporate environmental strategies through green supply chain practices by other industries, such as collaboration with suppliers and innovation (Jing, Cantor & Montabon 2017). However, little attention has been given to the CES integrated with the GHSC that contributes to SP in the healthcare sectors. Previous research has also stated that the studies is yet to be prevalent in Malaysia (Nor Azah, Tze, Soon, Rosmila & Hassan. 2018). Furthermore, other researchers may also utilise the findings to develop strategic management in other service industries.

RO2: To develop a substantive framework which explains the role of corporate environmental strategy and the impact on green healthcare supply chain and sustainable performance of private hospitals.

Furthermore, through the GHSC framework, the CES is developed based on this research's empirical findings. According to Hahn et al. (2015) the importance of integrating economic, environmental, and social performance at the same time without prioritising one over the other. From the researcher's knowledge, none of the CES through the GHSC framework is found in a healthcare provider. Table 1.1 summary of the research topic, purpose of study, research gaps, research objectives and research questions have been driven to contribute to the theory and practice for the private hospitals in Malaysia.

Table 1.1 Summary of research topic, purpose of study, research gap, research objectives and research questions

Research Topic	
Corporate Environmental Strategy through the practices of green healthcare supply chain initiatives and sustainable performance	
Purpose of Study	
To investigate the corporate environmental strategy by using green healthcare supply chain initiatives that shape the sustainable performance at private hospitals.	
Research Gaps	
Prior research on green supply chain initiatives only discussed the benefits of sustainable performance (environmental, economic, social) separately and while has omitted the study of holistic the perspective of sustainable performance. Then, prior research on the green supply chain initiatives has addressed in various industries such as manufacturing, logistics users and providers, electrical, electronic, and information. However, there has been little discussion in healthcare industries as a service industry.	
Research Objective 1	Exploratory Question
Research Objective 1	Research Question 1
To explore and describe private hospital's perception on the impact of corporate environmental strategy execution on green healthcare supply chain implementation and sustainable performance	What is the corporate environmental strategy through green healthcare supply chain implementation from the perspective of sustainable performance?
	Explanatory Questions
	Research Question 2
	Why do private hospitals execute corporate environmental strategy?
	Research Question 3
	How does the execution of corporate environmental strategy in private hospitals impact green healthcare supply chain implementation and sustainable performance?

to be continued...

...continuation

Research Objective 2

To develop a substantive framework which explains the role of corporate environmental strategy and the impact on green healthcare supply chain and sustainable performance of private hospitals

Research Question 4

What framework that can explain the phenomenon?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Theoretical significance

This present study reflects the limitations of existing CES theories that explore GHSC practices that contribute to SP. This present study aligns with the 'wave' of new management thinking by developing a CES integrated with the GHSC framework for understanding the strategy of business SP. Hence, part of the contribution of this research lies in moving beyond the focus on traditional management theories that characterize most previous work in the domain of business sustainability. Although the concern for sustainability issues in developing countries is increasing, very little research has been reported on the "triple bottom line" in service industries as a holistic approach towards SP (Duque-Urbe, Sarache & Gutiérrez 2019). In fundamental level exploring the issue on environmental strategy, this present study identifies the limitations of existing theoretical perspectives used in this field and contributes new insight on the strategic challenges and develops a CES by using the GHSC framework of successful sustainable business performance.

This present study is believed to be among the first to develop a CES integrated with the GHSC framework towards sustainable healthcare industry performance. The results are expected to provide new evidence that can bridge the gap in theoretical knowledge. This research also addresses a significant research gap by identifying and utilizing two organizational theories (stakeholder and institutional) to support the research framework developed. CES by using GHSC field lacks a sound theoretical basis, which may restrain in-depth understanding of this complex phenomenon (Ting, Wong, Kee, Venus, Lun, Chi & Ngai. 2016). This present study offers a new angle to study CES and GHSC by drawing upon two different theoretical bases of stakeholder and institutional theory. A single theory may have minimal

explanatory power. Instead, combining the doctrines from different theories can generate a thorough understanding and a complete idea to improve theoretical rationale.

1.6.2 Practical significance

The empirical findings contribute to the SP of a healthcare provider in Malaysia as a holistic strategy to motivate the researcher to conduct the research. The empirical findings also benefit the healthcare provider, particularly the 132 private and 144 public hospitals registered under the Malaysian Health Ministry that will contribute to the 2050 National Transformation Plan. As a government sector, the Malaysian Health Ministry benefits the most from this research to enhance the healthcare supply chain's standard regulations in Malaysia's healthcare sector. Moreover, another motivating factor for the researcher to conduct the research is the environmental issues such as pollution caused by the medical waste that affects future generation and the practices of the GHSC that act as a solution. This research can benefit the private hospitals in several ways: Firstly, the appropriate CES will implement GHSC initiatives for competitiveness in the new global economy. The study results provide suggestions to the managers on how to successfully integrate CES with GHSC initiatives towards SP.

Secondly, the findings help private hospitals determine the effective CES that contributes to SP. Additionally, an appropriate combination of existing sets of CES with GHSC initiatives and its potential performance helps private hospitals gain a more comprehensive picture of environmental effects across their supply chain based on the CES framework provided from this research.

Lastly, the closer integration of the CES with GHSC initiatives could benefit the policymakers and accelerate the efforts towards SP. Then, highlighting the impact particularly in terms of social, environmental, and economic performance contribute to healthcare sectors' SP as a holistic strategy. This research's discovery and findings help shape future research, particularly in the CES, green supply chain, and healthcare supply chain field. The CES could also shed light on other researchers and regulators

looking into the healthcare supply chain from reactive and proactive strategy perspectives.

1.6.3 Scope of the study

To understand the concept of CES that is integrated with the GHSC in healthcare industries and how it is different from other industries (manufacturing and automotive). Firstly, in the general concept of the healthcare supply chain is management involves obtaining resources (from the initial origin), managing supplies, and delivering goods and services to providers and patients (consumption). The healthcare industries, mostly healthcare providers such as private hospitals, have different considerations in their healthcare supply chain practices. It is known that the low healthcare supply chain potentially exposes health care workers, waste handlers, patients and the community at large to infection, toxic effects and injuries, and risks polluting the environment. Thus, completing the GHSC involves various stakeholders (manufacturers, insurance firms, hospitals, providers, group purchasing organisations, and many regulatory authorities) for the reason it impacts human health. Therefore, selecting GHSC as proper contexts in unravelling this understanding is essential.

Secondly, this research selects the private hospitals as healthcare providers for the reason private hospitals in Malaysia have different control structures, with implications for the allocation of funds, nature of services and distribution of decision making. It also has full autonomy that addresses the beneficiaries of their returns and losses (for example, non-profit claims, profits, losses and rent), the right to dispose or transfer as well as to determine the users (Rajah, Mukmor Tumin & Abdillah 2009). Then, it is typically developed and implement the strategies by the motivation of profit. Thus, the operationalization of this research is carried out in private hospitals as healthcare providers for healthcare industries. Based on Figure 1.4, there are research focus contexts in the healthcare industries from the healthcare supply chain concept. Thence, careful selection is necessary to fit the research inquiries on the CES by GHSC initiatives that contribute to SP in this research.

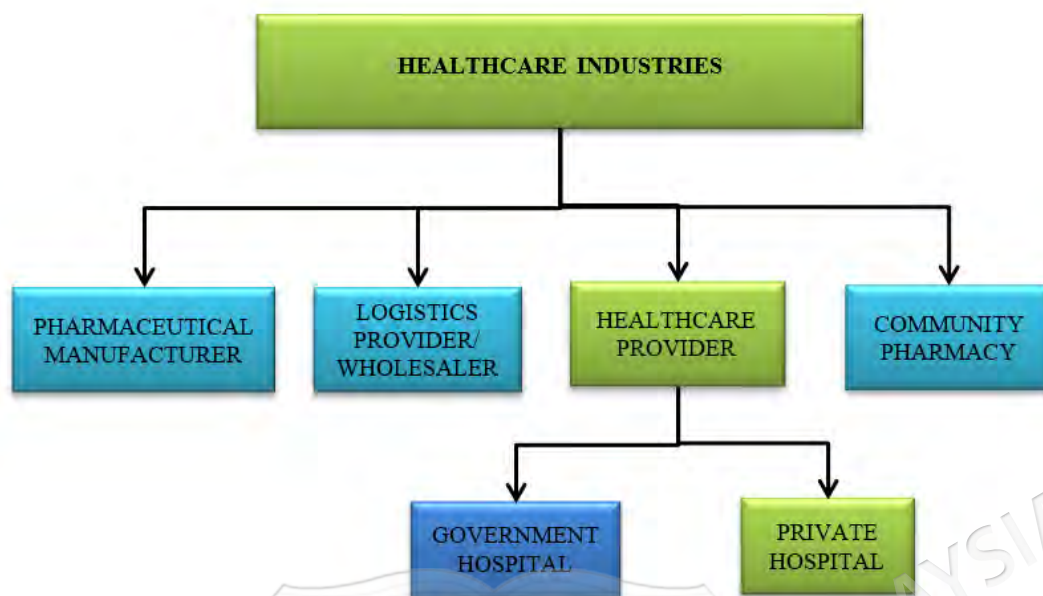


Figure 1.4 — Research focus

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organized into seven chapters:

Chapter One is the introductory chapter that describes the research background, problem statement, research gap overview, research question, research objective, motivation and the significance of the study, the scope of the study, case selection, as well as definition of the terms used in this research.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on CES and green supply chain. It covers and discusses previous studies on concepts and empirical findings of CES integrated with green supply chain to SP typologies. Essentially, the review points out the existing gaps in the CES literature that integrates with the GHSC as a context and private hospitals as cases.

Chapter Three explains the research methodology employed for this research. It describes the selection of the research paradigm, research method, and research design process linked to the research objectives and available theories to build the constructed conceptual framework of this research. The rationale for data collection

and analysis is discussed. The chapter also details the selection of cases for data collection methods and analysis processes.

The next three chapters present the empirical findings of this research based on the research objectives. Thus, Chapter Four presents the within-case analysis from the data of six case studies. Then, the data collected from in-depth interviews of informants from private hospitals in the context of CES through GHSC initiatives. The analysis extends the literature on CES for the private hospitals and the GHSC initiatives influencing corporate response to those sustainability challenges, in particular the stakeholders' points of view.

Chapter Five presents the cross-case analysis from the data of six case studies. This chapter also discusses CES through GHSC initiatives and SP of private hospitals.

Chapter Six from the cross-case analysis and discussion of the findings presents the conceptualization framework drawn from overall findings. This research's findings contribute to current debates on the CES that contributes to SP.

Chapter Seven, as the final chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the overall findings. The research's significance and contribution, implications for policy and business, and future research areas are also presented. The empirical evidence from this research sheds light on private hospitals' role in the community and the contribution to society's cohesion.

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