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Sustainability drivers and practices in Vietnamese manufacturing: a multiple-case study through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix

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Sustainability drivers and practices in Vietnamese manufacturing: a multiple-case study through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix

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CERTIFICATION

I, Dinh Van Dien Mike, declare that this thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the Doctor of Philosophy, from the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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ABSTRACT

The present rate and extent of the Southeast Asia region's economic expansion, social disintegration, and environmental destruction necessitate additional academic research and industry action. The importance of exploring the Marketing function in the pursuit of sustainable development (SD) by the private sector has called for the discipline's innovative ideas to address pressure from stakeholders not only on firms' economic, but also social and environmental performance. Emerging economies, such as Vietnam, present dilemmas since rapid mass economic development aimed at lifting standards of living creates serious threats to social imbalance and environmental health. Although businesses in Vietnam have been increasingly recognising their role in contributing to SD, little is known about the driving forces of sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing firms, and how they integrate sustainability practices from the marketing's viewpoint via its ten controllable elements designed for the purpose of achieving SD- the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) which is an extension of the classic '4Ps'. The research aims to have a novel and timely contribution to the literature of the Marketing discipline and assist managers to improve their sustainability performance.

This research investigates six Vietnamese private manufacturing firms to answer three research questions (RQs):

1) How do Vietnamese private manufacturing firms view sustainable development?;

2) Why are certain sustainable development goals featured in Vietnamese manufacturing?; and

3) How are Vietnamese private manufacturing firms strategically managing sustainable development through their market-facing activities?

A qualitative multiple-case study across firms' organisational levels (i.e., strategic-level management, tactical-level management, and operational-level employees) is employed to collect data through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The data will then be categorised

into themes using Nvivo 12, the latest computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) available at the time of writing the thesis, for thematic analysis which results in a conceptual model that aims to address the RQs. The findings of this study grounded in the data from the investigation of six Vietnamese private manufacturing firms are intended to add to the literature on sustainability and sustainability marketing (SM), with the aim of matching Marketing's critical role as one of the fundamental activities and core competencies of businesses in creating and delivering value to the society at large via the ten marketing controllable variables presented in the SMM framework.

Theory will be informed through the results of the research by 1) presenting a comprehensive model for drivers of sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing like no others before in extant literature; 2) being the first study to employ the SMM to investigate sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing; 3) filling the knowledge gaps of sustainability-oriented matters in Vietnamese manufacturing; and 4) enriching the literature gaps of sustainable development and Marketing for sustainability with findings grounded in the data from field research which highly reflects real-life situation. Practice will also be enhanced by offering marketing managers a fresh viewpoint to help their firms become more sustainable via 1) identifying common driving forces of sustainability initiatives, which help keep firms informed and, therefore, better prepared in pursuing sustainability in a more systematic and harmonious manner; 2) providing valuable insights of real-world sustainability strategies and practices carried out by leading firms in Vietnamese manufacturing so that other organisations, in Vietnam and other emerging countries, could relate to and learn from if they wish to become more sustainable and efficient in integrating sustainability activities into their business operations; and 3) using the SMM as a lens to monitor, manage and improve sustainability planning and activities that enable a more holistic connections with the marketplace and stakeholders in order to realise the impact of sustainability efforts. The research will conclude by presenting its limitations and pointing to future research directions.

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Table of Contents

TERMINOLOGIES AND THEIR USAGE IN THIS RESEARCH

Glossary	
Term	**Definition**
Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of the present generations while not compromising the needs of future generations (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).
Sustainability Marketing	"Planning, organizing, implementing and controlling marketing resources and programmes to satisfy consumers' wants and needs, while considering social and environmental criteria and meeting corporate objectives." (Belz & Peattie 2009, p. 31).
Small firms	Family-owned businesses with fewer than 250 employees.
Big firms	Organisations that won the "Vietnam Top 100 Sustainable Businesses" award in 2018.
External influences	Pressures that come from outside of a company such as: 1) government pressure via policies and campaigns; 2) customer expectations; and 3) community expectations.
Internal influences	Driving forces that emanate from within an organisation such as: 1) top management's commitment; and 2) resources available/ allocated.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of problem

It has been recognised that with the current rate and degree of economic expansion, society is substantially deteriorated (i.e., immoral activities and unjust working treatment) and the environment is tremendously harmed (i.e. pollution, the destruction of ecosystem, climate change). The Earth cannot sustain "its carrying capacity for humanity ad infinitum", hence, "humanity itself is in danger" (McDonagh & Prothero 2014, p. 1186). Given the rising demand for natural resources, this presents a significant challenge for businesses, particularly those in the manufacturing sector (Herrmann et al. 2014). Research shows that stakeholders are increasingly concerned about firms' social and environmental responsibilities, in addition to their business economic performance. According to Cone Communications (2015), markets are more likely to have a positive image, trust, and loyalty to companies that support social and environmental issues, with nine out of ten just as likely to purchase as to boycott. Another survey by Weber Shandwick (2018) found that 83% would support firms which they believe "do the right thing" (p. 4), matching actual practices with sustainability reporting. However, it is not an easy undertaking to implement the sustainability concept into practice at the business level. Ongoing socioecological concerns, such as climate change and non-sustainable practices, are difficult to resolve because they are firmly ingrained in society structures and organisations (Rotmans, Kemp & Van Asselt 2001).

As the term 'sustainability' has joined the language of academics, business practitioners, and lawmakers, these audiences are coming to realise that if economic growth is to be sustained over time, it must account for its impact on its surroundings (Connelly, Ketchen & Slater 2011). On national level, for instance, the sustainable development (SD) programme is seen as a vital instrument for all United Nations (UN) member states in their pursuit of (economic) development.

Understanding the importance of addressing sustainability issues, Vietnam has made significant efforts and achieved notable results (i.e. SDG Index rank 51/165, SDG Index Score 72.8, etc.) in sustainable development, as evidenced by The Sustainable Development Report (2021)- a worldwide evaluation of countries' advancement towards achieving the SDGs which is intended to supplement the official SDG indicators as well as voluntary national reviews. One of the main drivers of the modern environmental movement and future sustainability is consumers' growing awareness of environmental and sustainability issues; and this is also happening in Vietnam. According to Escoto, Gebrehewot and Morris (2022), consumer purchasing trends have resulted in a transition in consumer behaviour, with an increasing focus on sustainability. “Nearly two-thirds of consumers across six international markets believe they ‘have a responsibility to purchase products that are good for the environment and society’ - 82% of consumers in emerging markets and 42% in developed markets” (Whelan & Fink 2016).

Sustainable development is given such high priority because it tackles the threat to global long-term stability and survival posed by environment degradation (Perez-Batres, Miller & Pisani 2011) as a consequence of rapid economic expansion. Such an imbalance is intricate because it has occurred mainly due to the accumulative impacts of industrial growth by the developed economies, which have gained their wealth at the expense of the planet (Carley & Christie 2017). Promoting sustainable practices, thus, has become a vital task that necessitates unprecedented collaboration from academics, industries, and civil society organisations (Clark et al. 2016). As a result, it is critical for newly industrialised countries, such as Vietnam, to learn from such mistakes in order to avoid repeating them as they seek to advance into the stage of heavy industrialisation.

The Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) provides a new perspective in marketing theory to address the complexities of sustainability while also adding managerial significance to marketing for sustainable thinking. Bridges and Wilhelm (2008) state that sustainability marketing requires "consideration of environmental and social issues in all elements of marketing strategy planning, from objective setting to target market selection to strategic

and tactical decisions regarding each of the marketing mix variables" (p. 34). As a result, sustainability must be pursued at all levels of a company's strategic planning. Despite its popularity, the traditional marketing mix provides limited managerial decision-making areas (Baker & Saren 2016) and is thus increasingly incapable of addressing the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Peattie & Belz 2010). The SMM's ten controllable marketing variables will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. This approach is critical not only for achieving sustainable marketing, but also for ensuring the sustainability and development of marketing as a discipline.

1.2 Background of the research

1.2.1 Sustainability: An increasingly important business focus

The United Nations 2030 Agenda features 17 sustainable development goals (UNSDGs) as an action plan to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda (United Nations General Assembly 2015b). These 17 UNSDGs demonstrate the integration, indivisibility and balance of SD's three dimensions: the social (UNSDGs 1-7); economic (UNSDGs 8-11 and 16); and environmental (UNSDGs 12-15) (United Nations General Assembly 2015a). The 2030 Agenda is applied to both developed and developing countries from 2016, focusing on "areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet" (United Nations General Assembly 2015b, p. 1). All 193 member nations, including Vietnam, formally committed to embark on the journey towards sustainable development (SD), with each country devising UNSDGs tallying with its domestic political and social context, while deciding on how to integrate UNSDGs into the process of planning national development strategies and policies (United Nations General Assembly 2015b). The 17 UNSDGs serve as a guideline for both the public and private sectors to align themselves and create multi-faceted impact.

The then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that:

> *"Governments must take the lead in living up to their pledges. At the same time, I am counting on private sector to drive success. The UNSDGs are unprecedented in their ambition – but the fundamental ways that business can contribute remain unchanged. In short, companies must not make our world's problems worse before they try to make them better"* (United Nations News Centre 2015).

Consistent with this view, Helen Clark, former Head of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), emphasised that the new sustainable development agenda cannot be realised without the participation of businesses (United Nations News Centre 2015). Given the pressing needs of SD, numerous scholars have conducted studies in relation to the incorporation of sustainability practices into business strategies from the perspective of different aspects of a company's system, such as operations and production- including product development, energy sources, materials, and technologies (DeSimone & Popoff 2000; Doppelt 2017); management and strategy- such as business values, vision and mission, planning (Quazi 2001), investment and profit (Dyllick & Hockerts 2002; Hopkins 2002; Robèrt et al. 2002), transparency and ethic in decision-making (Coelho, McClure & Spry 2003; Robèrt et al. 2002), stakeholder engagement/management (Doppelt 2017; Hopkins 2002; Langer & Schön 2003); organisational behaviour and human resource- such as people, culture, leadership, problem-solving approaches (Doppelt 2017), human resource development, change management and innovation (Benn, Dunphy & Griffiths 2006); procurement and supply chain- such as inbound and outbound logistics, transportation (DeSimone & Popoff 2000); and accounting and assessment- including reporting (Bass & Dalal-Clayton 2012; GRI 2018), risk disclosures and accountability (Moratis & Cochius 2017). Nevertheless, these proposals lack systematic explanation on how social, economic and environmental aspects of SD are addressed in each area of business operations. Thus, pursuing SD proves significant challenges because of the sustainability complexity and its multi-dimensional issues (Langer & Schön 2003).

1.2.2 Progress of sustainable development around the world

Proactive action by businesses is essential to achieving a sustainable future. More than three decades after the publication of the Brundtland report, Kiron et al. (2017) report that almost 50% of companies across industries in 118 countries have "changed their business models as a result of sustainability opportunities" (p. 12). In another report, it finds that 85% of the Standard and Poor's (S&P) 500 index corporations published annual Sustainability Reports in 2018, up from less than 20% in 2011, in addition to their financial reports (Governance and Accountability 2018). Business leaders around the world are increasingly demonstrating a higher level of attitude towards corporate sustainability. A global CEO study on sustainability and UNSDGs found 87% of the world's leading CEOs believe that SD provides a genuine opportunity to rethink their approaches to sustainable value creation, and 89% say commitment to sustainability is translating into real impact in their industry (Accenture 2016). The Business and Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC) provides a business logic to these responses as it estimates potential US$ 12 trillion of new business each year by 2030 by contributing to the SDGs, particularly in the developing and emerging economies (Avery 2017). Therefore, development on incorporating SD into business operations has been taken up by global organisations (ranked by Corporate Knights) and think tanks *(e.g. Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany, and Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden)* to come up with practical approaches *(McGann 2019)* because there is a growing consensus that "there's no alternative to sustainable development" (Nidumolu, Prahalad & Rangaswami 2009, p. 57).

Despite the growing favourable attitude, a report by professional consulting firm Accenture (2016) shows that just 10% of CEOs surveyed mention investor pressure as a top three factor motivating them to take sustainable action, and less than half (49%) view business as the single most important player in achieving sustainability. In line with these findings, Kiron et al. (2017) find while 90% of CEOs believe sustainability is essential, only 60% of businesses have a sustainability strategy in place, and only 25% have established a clear business case for their sustainability initiatives. This unintentionally creates an opportunity for corporations to label themselves sustainable despite carrying on business as usual.

Additionally, Kiron et al. (2017) suggest that companies must address the potential consequences of economic, social, and environmental factors all at once by fundamentally changing how they operate in the decades ahead. Until businesses globally go beyond mere awareness and actually incorporate sustainability into their operations, the much-talked-about SD remains impossible. This situation, from both academics and industry's perspectives, highlights the urgent need to better understand businesses' efforts toward SD beyond reporting, by investigating their real engagement with sustainable practices via all market-facing activities.

The attention is inevitably drawn to the Southeast Asian region due to its enormous contribution to the world's economy through significant industrialization, which results in rapid economic expansion while also raising social and environmental problems.

1.2.3 Progress of sustainable development in the Southeast Asia region

The Southeast Asian region is expected to be the fourth largest economy by 2030 (only behind the EU, the US and China) with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 10 trillion (Tan 2017). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967, consists of ten member countries, namely Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. With over 90 million people still living in poverty (Tanoto 2018), the region's challenges are often unique from one nation to the next which makes it challenging for the ASEAN to solve common problems. It, thus, is an incredibly complex, diverse and rapidly evolving region. The economic development brings serious social and environmental concerns to its member countries due to, for example, rapid urbanisation and emerging demographic shifts (Nazeer & Furuoka 2017). Therefore, much of the international discussion in the formation of the UNSDGs has naturally focused on the evolving needs of the emerging economies, as well as the support they will need from the international community in achieving the goals (Osborn, Cutter & Ullah 2015). As an effort to address SD's challenges, these Southeast Asian countries are implementing the two parallel but interrelated processes: the UN 2030 Agenda and the ASEAN Vision 2025. While the former provides the regiron with an

unprecedented opportunity to make a fundamental shift to align closely with the world's common values and operational principles (United Nations ESCAP 2017), the latter serves as a roadmap presenting the ASEAN's goals and aspirations, reflecting the determination of member countries towards a community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated, and socially responsible (ASEAN 2015). Five priority areas for SD in the region have been identified as:

1) poverty eradication,

2) infrastructure and connectivity,

3) sustainable management of natural resources,

4) sustainable production and consumption, and

5) resilience (United Nations ESCAP 2017)

These priority areas are interlinked; hence, addressing one of them can lead to addressing other multiple cross-cutting issues, and actions taken under these themes would simultaneously lead to implementation of an important subset of both the ASEAN 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, the composite nature of the priority areas suggests that potential trade-offs should be carefully thought out, to avoid situations where impacts of action addressing one thematic cluster cancel out or have negative effects in another area.

Amongst the ASEAN members, Vietnam is the fastest growing economy with projected growth of 6.9% in 2018 (OECD 2018), making a significant contribution to the implementation of the ASEAN 2025. However, at the same time, Vietnam is facing the same dilemmas because of industrialisation, modernisation, and urbanisation, all while attempting to combine continued economic expansion with social progress and environmental protection (Jayanti & Gowda 2014).

1.2.4 Sustainable development in Vietnam

Being a notable emerging economy, Vietnam is experiencing tremendous potential for development, as well as challenges for its society, economy and the environment. Bordered by China to the north, and Laos and Cambodia to the west, Hanoi in the north is the country's capital and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) in the south is its largest commercial city. After the Vietnam War (usually referred to as the American War by the Vietnamese) in 1975, Vietnam's economy was among the world's poorest (Vanham 2018). In 1986, the Economic and Political Reforms (Đổi Mới) started the significant development period as the nation gradually transformed from a centrally-planned economy to a socialist-oriented market-based economy (Kroll 2018), providing an opportunity for private businesses to operate across industries with less bureaucratic intervention. As a result, Vietnam started engaging actively in competitive, export-oriented and service industries.

In 2007, Vietnam's global position substantially accelerated as it became the 150th member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Since then, Vietnam has experienced some of the fastest economic growth in the world. According to the professional consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC 2018), Vietnam's economic expansion is forecasted to sustain 6.1% until 2025 (see figure 1.2.4) and economists predict that Vietnam will become the 20th largest economy globally by then. Vietnam is, hence, the Southeast Asian region's most dynamic emerging economy (World Bank 2019), experiencing rapid economic growth while having income per capita of a low to middle income country (Pilbeam 2018).

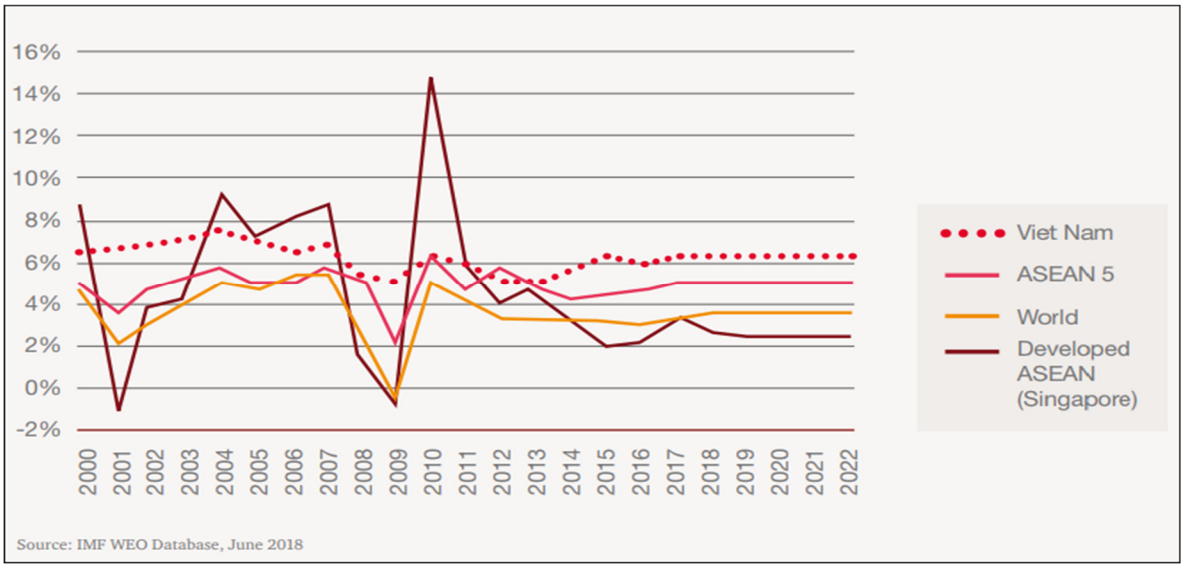

Figure 1.2.4 Prediction of Vietnam's economic growth (PwC 2018)

Witnessing relatively fast economic growth and improving the population's living standards, with tens of millions of people lifted out of poverty (World Bank 2019), however, do not come without trade-offs. Prolonged war and intensive exploitation of resources have led to environmental destruction (e.g. dioxin spots from Agent Orange/ herbicide used by American military forces cause hereditary diseases and birth defects) and degradation (i.e. depleted mineral and non-mineral resources and polluted air/ water) of natural capital (Schmittmann, Corvino & Katagiri 2017). Rapid industrialisation benefits Vietnam economically, but, at the same time, makes it "one of the most affected countries by climate change" (United Nations HLPF 2018, p. 12). By the end of the century, sea levels are expected to rise by up to a meter and "would then cover 40% of the Mekong Delta area (where half of the country's rice is produced), 3% of coastal provinces and 20% of HCMC, impacting directly 10–12% of the population and reducing GDP by 10%" (Schmittmann, Corvino & Katagiri 2017, pp. 3-4).

Seeing SD as an inevitable route ahead, the Vietnamese Government and businesses are, therefore, placing SD and SDGs at the core of the development agenda (United Nations HLPF 2018). With support from the UNDP, Vietnam established the Vietnam Sustainable Development Goals (VSDGs), based on the 17 UNSDGs, featuring 115 targets (instead of

169 targets set out by the UN) relevant to the nation's development context and priorities (United Nations HLPF 2018). For example, while the UNSDG 1 includes targets aiming at lifting individuals (i.e. per capita) out of poverty, VSDG 1 sets out targets focusing on helping households overcome poverty, especially those with disabilities and of ethnic minorities (Open Development 2018). As a result, SD principles have been mainstreamed into Vietnam's National Social and Economic Development Strategy for the following decade of 2021-2030 (United Nations HLPF 2018) with a focus on the cooperation with the private sector.

1.2.5 Progress of sustainable development: amongst Vietnamese businesses

It is evident that Vietnam's strong economic progress comes at a great cost in terms of major social and environmental deterioration. In 2016, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the Vietnam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD), in collaboration with several ministries, introduced the annual 'Vietnam's Top 100 Sustainable Businesses Award' event. These government departments partner up to address the diverse fields of SD and build joint efforts towards the nation's pursuit of sustainability. VBCSD engages the Corporate Sustainability Index (CSI), the first ever Vietnamese-language index, as the evaluating framework that focuses on three core elements: the economic index, the social index and the environmental index to assess and, accordingly, rank sustainable firms operating in Vietnam. The CSI, created in 2014, keeps evolving over time following international standard while reflecting the political, social and economic situation of Vietnam (VBCSD 2015). At the time of writing, the 2018 CSI- consisting of 131 criteria addressing firm's governance/strategy and activities in the pursuit of the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability- is consistently reviewed and fine-tuned so that "it could be applied to micro, small and medium enterprises" (Bizhub 2017).

As of December 31 2018, according to the General Statistics Office (2020), Vietnam had 714,755 active firms, with over 99% of them being private enterprises, thus the focal point for this research. Officially, the private sector contributed more to budget revenue than the

state sector, at 14.72% versus 10.74%. Moreover, the private sector contributed 42.1% of GDP and employed 83.3 percent of Vietnam's labour force. Thus, the private sector has a significant impact on the Vietnamese economy and; as a result, has a massive effect on the country's efforts towards sustainability. According to Vo and Chu (2020), state-owned businesses were regarded as a major contributor to Vietnam's economic development. However, as the state sector becomes more inefficient and Vietnam becomes more integrated globally, the private sector expands.

Based on a research conducted by Vietnam's School of Economics at the National Academy of Politics in HCMC, 90% of private manufacturing firms in Vietnam have owners/ CEOs come from technically specialised backgrounds, who have solid products knowledge, but possess limited managerial skills, experience and business vision; hence, the lack of flexibility in adapting to new information and practices such as those required for sustainable development (Do 2018). As a result, despite encouraging effort in recognising and adopting better practices so far at this early stage, there is still a big gap between sustainability reporting (i.e. box-ticking practices) and actual actions (i.e. sustainability initiatives) amongst private manufacturing firms in Vietnam (Vietnam Investment Review 2013).

1.3 Why is Vietnam chosen as the context of this investigation?

Vietnam is a prominent emerging economy in Southeast Asia, and as a result of its fast economic growth, it is confronted with social and environmental challenges (Frijns, Phuong & Mol 2000; Shultz & Peterson 2017). Inequality is escalating in Vietnam (Oxfam 2018), with women across the country being "disadvantaged in their ability to advance their skills and employment opportunities" (p. 11), and ethnic minorities are amongst the most vulnerable groups. The pollution in its major cities, such as Hanoi and HCMC, is at levels above health standards set by the World Health Organisation (GreenID 2018). Given the highly concentrated population and economic assets located in coastal lowlands,

Vietnam is listed among the top five countries most likely to be severely impacted by climate change (GFDRR 2015). Having said that, the shortcomings of the Vietnamese Government's policies and command result in an unhealthy environment such as unreliable laws, ineffective bureaucracy, corruption, opaque/unfair competition system (Linh 2018). Due to the complex and sensitive nature of the topic, several academics, such as Nguyen (2015), admit that sustainability is relatively a new concept to the private sector in Vietnam, with just a handful of studies have been conducted in this subject. Lin, Tan and Geng (2013), for instance, choose the Vietnamese motorcycle industry to examine how green product innovation and market demand are correlated. Other research, such as the empirical examination on sustainability practices at Vietnamese coffee-growing farms (Ho et al. 2018), or interviews with experts and comprehensive group discussions about the sustainability practices of rural tourism (Nguyen & Nguyen 2018), or a survey of aggregates mining companies in Hoa Binh Province to find out the technological characteristics of production facilities alongside economic and environmental factors (Schneider et al. 2018), are some examples of more recent studies regarding implementation of sustainable-oriented practices into business operations. Because these studies are often product-specific, the research findings and applications are limited.

Given its pressing needs, more studies about sustainability are expected to be conducted over coming years, if not decades. Thus, this research is a timely investigation since Vietnam is at a crossroad, presenting an interesting situation of an emerging economy in transition, and at risk of repeating all the industrial mistakes of others in regards to SD.

1.4 Methodology and the research process

A qualitative, multiple case studies strategy will be employed to address the "Why" and "How" research questions (RQs). This method allows the researcher to analyse data both inside and across scenarios (Yin 2009). When the cases are compared to one another, the researcher may also offer the literature with an essential influence from the differences and similarities (Vannoni 2015). As a result, multiple case studies allow for more exploration of research questions and theoretical advancement (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt &

Graebner 2007). Hence, in order to explain SD from the respondents' perspectives, six Vietnamese private manufacturing firms will be investigated through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) in order to explore a common phenomenon: the pursuit of sustainable development via the Marketing functions. Data collection will be carried out through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with eighteen interviewees (i.e. three employees from each firm across strategic, tactical and functional levels) and observation of real settings to obtain empirical evidence (Alvesson & Karreman 2000). Triangulating with other artefacts (i.e. firms' websites and sustainability-related documents) whenever possible, the in-depth interview approach is chosen as the appropriate data collection method for this study because it allows the participants to express their insight using their own words, without imposed pre-defined terms. Interview protocol is developed to ensure comparability and equivalence between the English and Vietnamese language versions via consultations with bilingual native speakers of both languages, as well as a pilot study conducted with an Australian (Director of a manufacturing firm located in Australia) of Vietnamese descent to ensure that words and phrases carry the same meaning across the two languages. The data will then be entered into *Nvivo*, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), to aid in the development of themes before analysis, which will be further elaborated in Chapter Four (Methodology).

1.5 The Purpose and contribution of this research

The main challenge is putting sustainability concept into practice, especially with regard to the three aspects of SD, namely social, economic, and environmental (Perez-Batres, Miller & Pisani 2011; Swanson & Zhang 2012; Windolph, Schaltegger & Herzig 2014). This thesis investigates the driving forces of SD amongst Vietnamese private manufacturing firms, as well as how sustainability practices are embedded into their market-facing strategies. This study is relevant since Vietnam is at a critical point, representing a fascinating situation of an emerging economy in transformation, at risk of duplicating all of the industrial missteps of more-developed nations when it comes to sustainability. In addition, this study seeks to underline the critical role of marketing in the

quest of sustainability, as marketing resides at the intersection of the firms' operations and the marketplace, and consider how organisations' marketing departments might develop a fuller propensity to drive corporate sustainability performance, alongside corporate financial performance.

The following research questions (RQs) are investigated in this research:

1) How do Vietnamese private manufacturing firms view sustainable development?

2)Why are certain sustainable development goals featured in Vietnamese manufacturing?

3) How are Vietnamese private manufacturing firms strategically managing sustainable development through their market-facing activities?

This study's findings are expected to have implications for both sustainability marketing (SM) theory and practice. Theory will be informed through the results of the research by

1) presenting a comprehensive model for drivers of sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing like no others before in extant literature;

2) being the first study to employ the SMM to investigate sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing;

3) filling the knowledge gaps of sustainability-oriented matters in Vietnamese manufacturing; and

4) enriching the literature gaps of sustainable development and Marketing for sustainability with findings grounded in the data from field research which highly reflects real-life situation

While Marketing's definition has evolved to reflect contemporary attitudes to business and its role in societal, as well as economic capacity building, there has not been a corresponding guidance on how this new approach, as reflected in the re-definition of

marketing by the American Marketing Association (2013), might be executed in practice; in particular, via the concept of the marketing mix, or how value for society as a whole can be identified, described, and then managed, as the SMM permits. The findings of this research, therefore, aim to enrich the literature of the Marketing discipline in order to meet its critical position as one of the key activities and core competencies of business in creating and delivering value to "consumers, clients, partners, and society at large." (American Marketing Association 2013).

Practice will also be enhanced by offering marketing managers a fresh viewpoint to help their firms become more sustainable via

1) identifying common driving forces of sustainability initiatives, which help keep firms informed and, therefore, better prepared in pursuing sustainability in a more systematic and harmonious manner;

2) providing valuable insights of real-world sustainability strategies and practices carried out by leading firms in Vietnamese manufacturing so that other organisations, in Vietnam and other emerging countries, could relate to and learn from if they wish to become more sustainable and efficient in integrating sustainability activities into their business operations; and

3) using the SMM as a lens to monitor, manage and improve sustainability planning and activities that enable a more holistic connections with the marketplace and stakeholders in order to realise the impact of sustainability efforts.

The thesis structure will be outlined below.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

There are seven chapters in this thesis. Chapter One (Introduction) sets out the objectives, research questions, potential contributions and the structure of the thesis. Chapter Two

(Literature Review) examines the progress of knowledge on sustainable development (SD), sustainable practices, and sustainability marketing in the manufacturing industry. Chapter Three (Whole-system Sustainability via Marketing) outlines a strategy for business managers to fully implement SM while attempting to bridge a knowledge gap in the Marketing philosophy. Chapter Four (Methodology) provides an explanation of the inductive approach adopted in this study, an explanation of the cases selected followed by the data collection methods, the process of data analysis adopted in this study, as well as a consideration is given to the issue of determining the quality of any qualitative research. Chapter Five (Results) presents the major themes that emerged from data analysis and coding, providing insights into the key drivers of sustainable practices in the Vietnamese manufacturing firms investigated. Chapter Six (Discussion) describes the study's conceptual model that shows how the various themes and their components drive sustainability efforts across the case organisations when viewed through the lens of the SMM. It will also compare the model to the existing SD literature with an emphasis on several key models that capture the main themes of sustainability. The final chapter (Conclusion) concludes the study by presenting how it addressed the RQs and the importance and implications of the research's results. It will then describe the research's contribution to *sustainability* and *sustainability marketing* practices and literature, before addressing the study's limitations and pointing to future research directions.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The progress of knowledge about sustainable development (SD) and sustainability practices through marketing of manufacturing industry will be examined in this literature review. The purpose of this chapter is to critically review the extent of the current understanding of: 1) the background of the SD concept; 2) factors of SD in business; 3) barriers and drivers of implementing sustainability initiatives in manufacturing firms in Asian emerging economies; and 4) overview and knowledge gaps. Each section of this chapter will be presented in a chronological order. First, scholarly works on the evolution of the SD concept from 1970s. Secondly, it will review studies on common factors of sustainability initiatives experienced by businesses. The third section will consider past research on obstacles and facilitators faced by manufacturing firms in Asian emerging markets when trying to shift their business operational activities from conventional to sustainable ones. Finally, it will address knowledge gaps, particularly in relation to marketing's role in achieving sustainability in emerging economies.

2.1 Background of the concept of sustainable development

There is a considerable amount of literature on the concept of *sustainable development*, and the 1990s was the first decade that saw an unprecedented growth of attention and research in relation to this topic. Basiago (1995) presents the progress of SD from when it first emerged during the Stockholm Conference by the United Nations (UN) in 1972. The scholar states because the concept is future-oriented, the Brundtland Commission (1987) defined SD as “development which meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Also, he highlights that The European Union (EU) affirmed the precautionary principle in its Bergen Declaration on SD in 1990, which demands ecological protection in circumstances of scientific uncertainty where substantial or permanent damage is threatened. Besides, Basiago marks 1992 as the year that The Earth Summit established *sustainable development* as the most important policy of the 21st century, announcing a new paradigm of economy, society, and

environment. In the following years, the EU's Fifth Environmental Action Programme (1993) pursued sustainability in industry, energy, transportation, agriculture, and tourism, and the Clinton Administration (1994) embraced SD as one of its latest commitments. Following these occurrences, the term 'sustainability' has become widely used in biology, sociology, economics, ethics, and other fields. It is viewed as a new philosophy not only beyond mere principles of development science, but also a universal methodology for determining whether human choices will result in social and environmental vitality. This work presented a fundamental overview of the history and growth of the idea of SD as we approached the twenty-first century. It demonstrates the urgency of the situation and, as a result, calls for the attention and shared obligations of all entities towards humanity's common future. Nevertheless, the concept of sustainability is intuitively understood, but it is difficult to describe it in practical, operational terms.

In his cutting edge paper, Hart (1997) was amongst one of the first to believe that "companies must become educators rather than mere marketers of products" (p. 75). One of the arguments he presents in this paper is that enterprises bear a big share of the responsibility for ensuring a sustainable world.

> *"In the 1920s and 1970s, corporations were in a state of denial regarding their impact on the environment… Today many companies have accepted their responsibility to do no harm to the environment. Products and production processes are becoming cleaner; and where such change is under way, the environment is on the mend. In the industrialized nations, more and more companies are "going green" as they realize that they can reduce pollution and increase profits simultaneously"* (Hart 1997, p. 67)

Presenting both sides of the coins, it considers enormous opportunities (i.e. major source of revenue growth from technology development), as well as challenges (i.e. increasingly difficult for corporations to do business due to degraded environments and unraveling

societies) in the pursuit of sustainability. The author asserts the leading role of enterprises in the mankind's pursuit of a "*sustainable global economy*" (p. 67), which comprises of overlapping economies, each facing its own sets of challenges (see figure 2.1.1) while influencing the others.

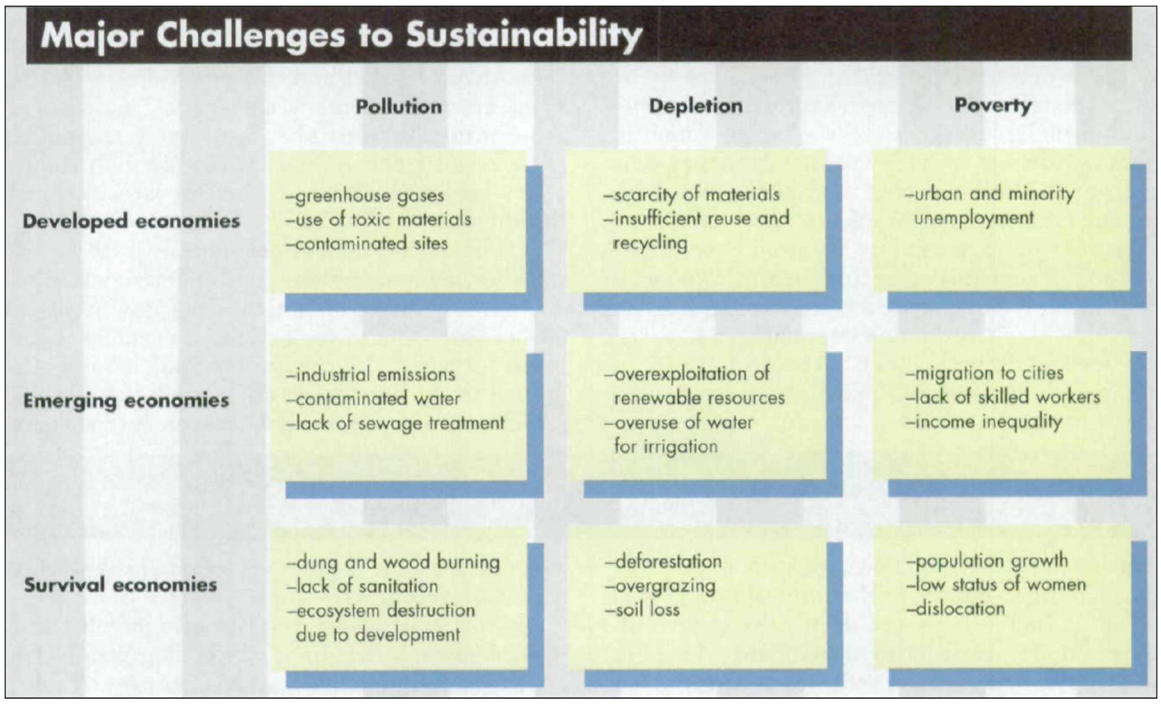

Figure 2.1.1 Major challenges to sustainability (Hart 1997)

Notably, Hart (1997) presents the differences amongst the economies and demonstrates the interdependencies of the "*nature's economy*, which consists of the natural systems and resources that support" (p. 69) the other economies. Accordingly, he states that while "the *survival economy*: the traditional, village-based way of life found in the rural parts of most developing countries" (p. 69) carries out activities that damage the environment in the long run due to short-term survival pressure, it is "the *market economy*… comprising both the developed nations and the emerging economies" (p. 69) causes the majority of environmental pollution, resource depletion and poverty. He highlights that although developed economies account for "more than 75%" of the world's ecological footprint, they enjoy relatively low level of pollution "at the expense of the environments in emerging

economies" (p. 68), in which actual commodity processing and heavy manufacturing activities take place. With this in mind, it points out not only difficulties faced by the emerging economies towards sustainability, but also states that the developing nations can benefit by learning from developed ones to avoid repeating "the mistakes of Western development" (p. 70) in regards to social and environmental damages.

> *"Taking the entire planet as the context in which they do business, companies must ask whether they are part of the solution to social and environmental problems or part of them problem. Only when a company thinks in those terms can it begin to develop a vision of sustainability- a shaping logic that goes beyond today's internal, operational focus on greening to a more external, strategic focus on sustainable development"* (Hart 1997, p. 71)

In addition, Hart (1997) introduced a *sustainable portfolio* framework (see figure 2.1.2), which consists of a three-stage strategy (1) pollution prevention; 2) product stewardship, and 3)clean technology) coupled with a sustainability vision, acting as a roadmap to guide enterprises towards sustainability. He argued that companies, especially those in emerging economies, could apply this framework in order to incorporate sustainability into their strategic thinking and monitor their business operation activities, else "their impact will dissipate" (p. 73).

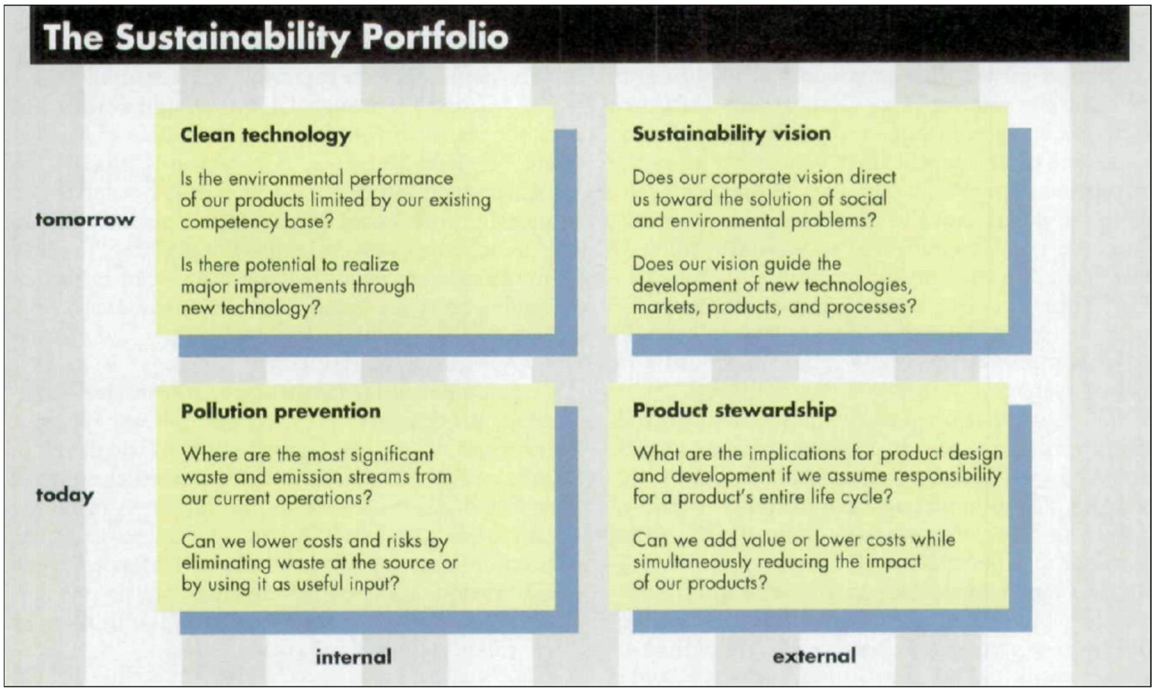

Figure 2.1.2 The Sustainability Portfolio (Hart 1997)

Hart suggest that any organisation can use the framework as diagnostic tool to determine if their strategy is sustainable. Firms can rate their competencies on a scale of 1-non-existent, 2- emerging, 3- established, and 4- institutionalised by answering the questions in each box. While most companies are thought to be substantially leaned to the lower left-hand quadrant due to pollution prevention spending, unbalanced portfolios can occur for a variety of ways. That is, a bottom-heavy portfolio indicates a strong position today but potential fragility in the future. On the other hand, a top-heavy portfolio suggests a vision of sustainability but lacks the operational or analytical abilities required to put it into action. A portfolio skewed to the left side of the chart indicates an obsession with dealing with the environmental challenge through internal process improvements and technology development activities. Finally, a portfolio tilted to the right, despite being very transparent and public, risks being dubbed a "greenwash" because the underlying plant operations and fundamental technology continue to do significant environmental harm. The paper is concluded by projecting the prospect of direct correlation between the rapid growth in emerging economies and mounting social and environmental deterioration, and affirming the need to develop strategies for a future that is sustainable. This work remains one of the

most extensively cited and well-regarded works to date that highlights the advancement of our knowledge and attitude towards sustainability. What Hart added to the field of SD has guided future research by framing the conversation and calling out companies on their credible investment in the area and not attempting to "greenwash" the issue.

Elkington (1997) made substantial contribution to the knowledge of sustainability and set up the language to discussing this topic in *Cannibals with Forks*. He enlarged the concept of 'sustainability business' beyond merely ecological matters, and introduced a broader picture which incorporates three aspects of performance that a social responsibility agenda should include 1) economic prosperity; 2) environmental quality; and 3) social justice - the element which business had preferred to overlook. He starts out the book by questioning about the sustainability of capitalism in its current form. Elkington points out a significant shift in governance: international organisations are gaining more and more control, while governments' power is dwindling. Thus, as corporations play a more central role, they must take responsibility for their actions. He concludes that, in view of this shift of influence, as well as global demographic and ecological changes, capitalism will need to reconstruct itself in a sustainable manner. What is more, to confirm this statement, he discusses the three waves of environmentalism from 1970 to 1997, as well as the evolution of the greening capitalism movement in its early phases. With this in mind, he presents the idea of shared zones between economic, environmental, and social factors, before moving on to introducing a novel principle in order to transform the existing financial accounting-focused corporate system to a more holistic approach to measuring impacts and success.

Elkington coined the term *triple bottom line* (TBL) to refer to a sustainability accounting framework in which the three components profits-planet-people are interrelated and interdependent, and should be treated in a balanced and harmonious manner. That is why, the TBL dimensions are also known as the *3Ps* (see figure 2.1.3).

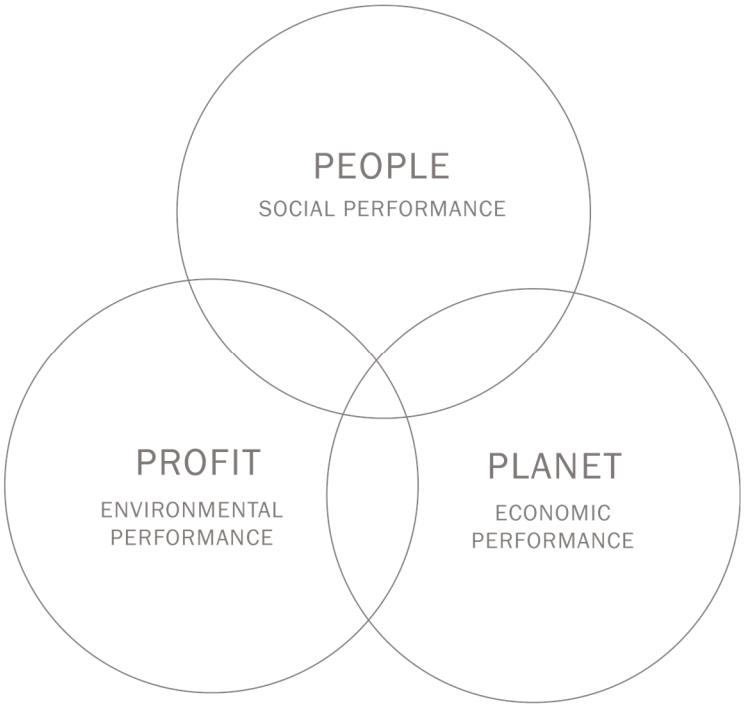

Figure 2.1.3 The Triple Bottom Line (Elkington 1997)

> *"Triple bottom line focuses corporations not just on the economic value they add, but also on the environmental and social value they add – and destroy. At its narrowest, the term 'triple bottom line' is used as a framework for measuring and reporting corporate performance against economic, social and environmental parameters."* (Elkington 1997)

According to the TBL rhetoric, the pursuit of sustainability is, hence, based on balancing of the three areas of responsibility: 1) profit sustainability refers to the requirement to ensure the company's long-term economic performance; 2) people sustainability involves benefits with a positive social impact both inside and outside the organisation; and (3) planet sustainability is concerned with lowering environmental impact by using materials and natural resources more efficiently. Besides, Elkington addresses a set of issues for each of the seven revolutions- markets, values, transparency, life-cycle technology, collaboration, time, and corporate governance- and attempts to provide a suitable response. In addition, he offers 39 steps that firms can implement to become more sustainability-oriented. He also

offers his thoughts on how an effective regulatory framework can be constructed, as well as a list of market reforms that will be required throughout the transition. In the final chapter of the book, the author focuses on strategies to measure organisations' performances, emphasising the importance of sustainability auditing in making businesses more transparent.

Elkington (1998) elaborates on the TBL framework, stating that organisations who want to comprehend the full scope of the sustainability-related challenges need to undertake an audit against the TBL framework's updated standards and expectations.

> *"In the spirit of the management dictum that what you cannot measure you are likely to find hard to manage, we should first ask whether it is even possible to measure progress against the triple bottom line."* Elkington (1998, p. 19)

He believes that progress can be measured against the TBL and adds that the metrics will continue to evolve substantially if they are to be regarded in an integrated manner (Elkington 2013). When implemented correctly, the principle of the TBL framework should improve organisations' economic, social, and environmental outcomes in a harmonic manner. That said, the author recognises that the framework has been reduced to an accounting and reporting tool, which has been cleverly leveraged by businesses to demonstrate how great they are while keeping profit as major focus. As a result, Elkington (2018) later suggests to "recall" the TBL concept. Not because he thinks it is no longer relevant, but because the challenges it addresses are becoming more pressing than ever, yet the notion has drifted away from its original purpose.

> *"It was originally intended as a genetic code, a triple helix of change for tomorrow's capitalism, with a focus on breakthrough change, disruption, asymmetric growth (with unsustainable sectors actively sidelined), and the scaling of next-generation market solutions… It was supposed to provoke deeper thinking about capitalism and*

its future, but many early adopters understood the concept as a balancing act, adopting a trade-off mentality." (Elkington 2018)

Many firms claim to follow the TBL model without actually changing their behaviours nor being evaluated by an outside party. These businesses could preach about the TBL while doing nothing to back up those claims. Despite lacking guidelines on where to start or how to track sustainability progress, Elkington's *Triple Bottom Line* impact assessment has revolutionised how businesses, organisations, and governments design, monitor and evaluate decision-making, as well as performances towards SD. The principle of the TBL serves as an important starting point and sets up the common language for both academia and industry to discussing this topic.

A major milestone in the evolution of the sustainability notion, as well as the TBL concept, when they are applied by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to develope a method for assessing countries' progress towards objectives for SD (United Nations 2001). It offers crucial guidance to decision-makers in a number of ways. It can convert physical and social scientific knowledge into manageable units of information that can assist in decision-making process. It can help in measuring and calibrating progress towards goals of SD. It can serve as an early warning system, raising the alarm in time to prevent economic, social, and environmental consequences. It is also a useful instrument for communicating ideas, opinions, and values. Beginning with Agenda 21's demand for SD indicators, a list of 134 indicators are issued covering economic, social, environmental, and institutional elements of sustainability.

A hierarchical framework divides these indicators into 38 sub-categories and 15 main categories based on four dimensions of sustainability (see figure 2.1.4): social, environmental, economic, and institutional. The fourth dimension, institutional sustainability, has been proposed to urge for the adoption of national SD strategies and consideration of socio-economic and environmental factors in decision-making.

Institutional sustainability can be addressed proactively by companies through 1) mentioning and incorporating sustainability ideas into business strategies (e.g., vision, mission, business goals, etc.) that are consistent with national and international governments; 2) expressing openly support for international agreements; 3) linking external goals for sustainable development into internal research and development; and 4) setting aside resources to address sustainability challenges that are beyond the company's direct control.

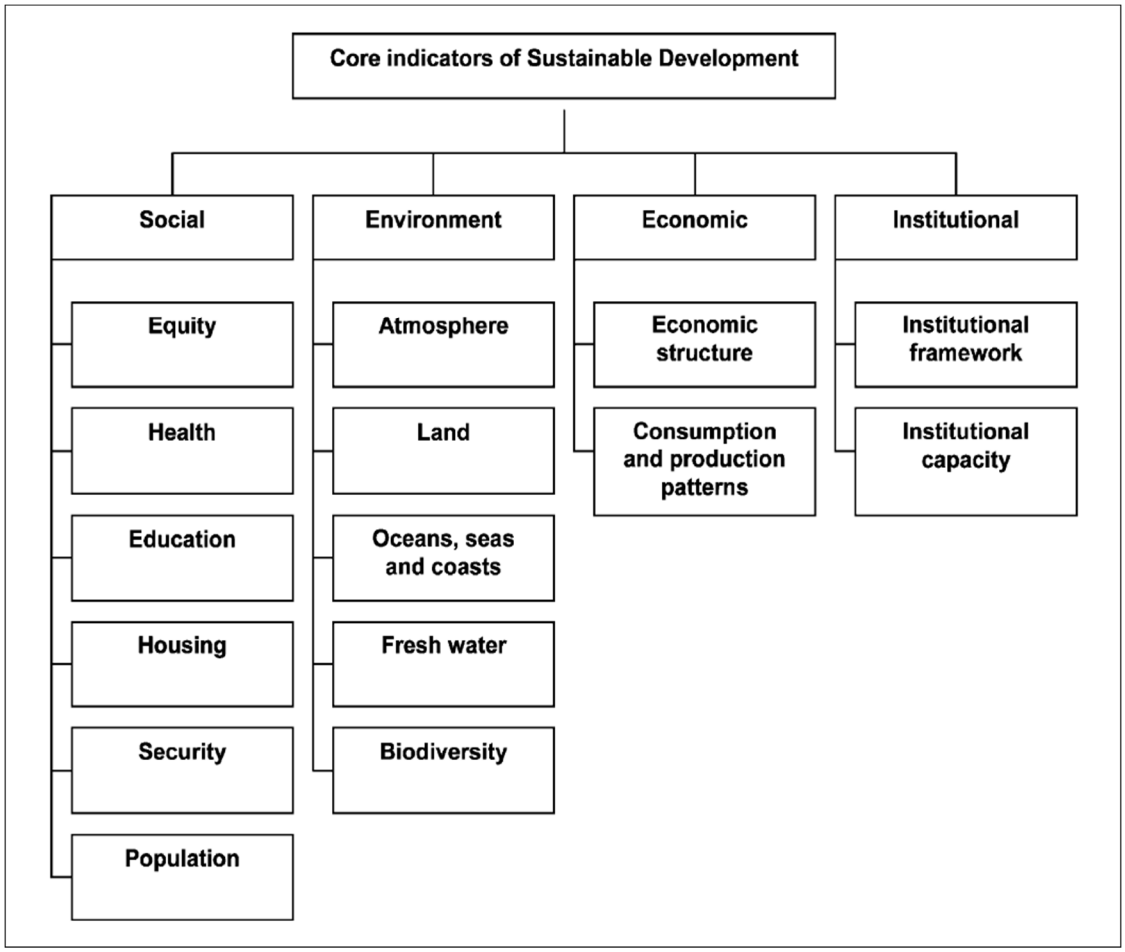

Figure 2.1.4 The CDC theme indicator framework (United Nations 2001)

> *"The term driving force represents human activities, processes, and patterns that impact on sustainable development either positively or negatively. State indicators provide a reading on the condition of sustainable development, while response indicators represent societal actions aimed at moving towards sustainable development."* (United Nations 2001, p. 19)

This framework outlines the harmonisation of regional, national, and global initiatives to generate SD indicators. It is aimed to aid governments in developing their own national indicator programmes to serve as a foundation for tracking the achievement of important national goals and objectives for sustainability. Between 1996 and 1999, 22 nations from across the world volunteered to participate in the review process in order to acquire experience with the selection and development of sustainable development indicators, as well as to assess their applicability and suitability for use in national decision-making. The results were presented to CSD during its Seventh Session in 1999, and they were evaluated at an international workshop in Barbados. Overall, the experience was well received by the participating countries, particularly in terms of capacity building. However, studies revealed that some countries recognised gaps in the framework where adequate indicators were lacking, which hampered the selection of national indicator sets. Another common criticism was that the working list of indicators was too long, making it difficult to examine and refine all of them in a national setting. Regardless, this was one the earliest model introduced by the UN aimed to provide a practical and agreed-upon set of indicators that are appropriate for country-specific situations and can be used to track progress towards SD. Because the framework was created to evaluate performance at the national level, it is not fully utilised for analysing and discussing sustainability for the business community. More research on the institutional aspects of sustainability is, thus, required to aid managers at the operational and project levels in their pursuit of SD, as well as contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject.

In light of that, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards were created as a technical document for practitioners at the corporate level that introduces the GRI guidelines and

explains how to use them. The GRI was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economics (CERES), a non-governmental organisation based in the United States. Representatives from industry, non-profit advocacy groups, accounting agencies, investment organisations, trade unions, and others have actively supported and participated in the project. These multiple parties have collaborated to reach an agreement on a set of reporting guidelines with the goal of obtaining global acceptance. GRI's purpose is to improve the quality, rigour, and utility of sustainability reporting. The GRI standards, hence, place a high emphasis on reporting practices. It employs a hierarchical structure with more than 100 indicators in three key areas: social, economic, and environmental (GRI 2002) (see figure 2.1.5). This approach marked a significant step forwards in the advancement of the notion as it applies to industry. It helps businesses in presenting a fair and balanced view of their operational performance across the three pillars of sustainability.

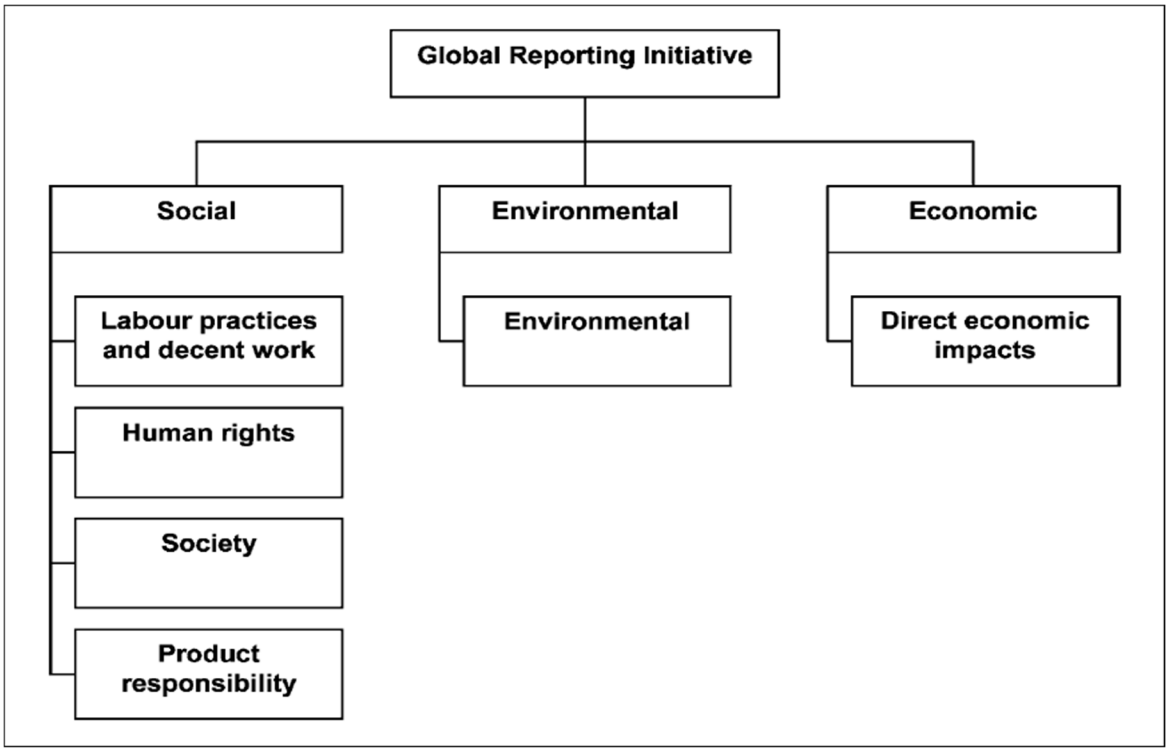

Figure 2.1.5 The hierarchical structure of the GRI framework (GRI 2002)

> *"The GRI Guidelines organise "sustainability reporting" in terms of economic, environmental, and social performance (also known as the "triple bottom line"). This structure has been chosen because it reflects what is currently the most widely accepted approach to defining sustainability."* (GRI 2002, p. 9)

The GRI standards enhance sustainability report comparability while taking into account the practical issues of releasing information across a wide range of organisations, many of which have vast and geographically scattered operations. They advocate for benchmarking and assessing sustainability performance in terms of codes, performance standards, and voluntary efforts. As a result, the GRI standards function as a tool to facilitate stakeholder involvement. GRI acknowledges that creating a globally acceptable reporting system would take time. In 1999, the first set of GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines was released as an Exposure Draft. The GRI issued the June 2000 Guidelines after assessment and public discussion. A modification process began immediately and extended over the following two years. The approach has benefited greatly from considerable public comment from stakeholders and think tanks all across the world. Every comment was carefully discussed, evaluated, and a decision was taken on which to include. The GRI Board's view of a consensus on a reporting framework that is a blend of a varied range of opinions at this moment in time is reflected in the 2002 Guidelines. These have become the global standard for corporate sustainability. That means reporting against the GRI indicators at the project level typically results in alignment between project and corporate sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs). Nevertheless, not all of the indicators are practical to evaluate and no direction on how to choose between the indicators is provided. This helps to frame future research questions and necessitates further studies into the need of addressing all elements of sustainability in business operations.

Instead of concerning solely on profits, which are often short-term in nature, sustainable business practices necessitate a longer-term and systems perspective of how a firm's operational activities affect the environment and society at large. Organisations would benefit from systems thinking if they were mindful of their operational environment and

consequences. Thus, systems perspective could assist managers in considering how the long-term implications of their activities affect the context in which they operate.

Littlejohn and Cameron (1999) present a dynamic systems perspective, which involves a set of things that interact with one another within an environment to form a larger sequence that reflects how business actions impact not only internal operations and outcomes, but also external outcomes- that is, the environment and the sustainability of the natural and social systems in which businesses operate.

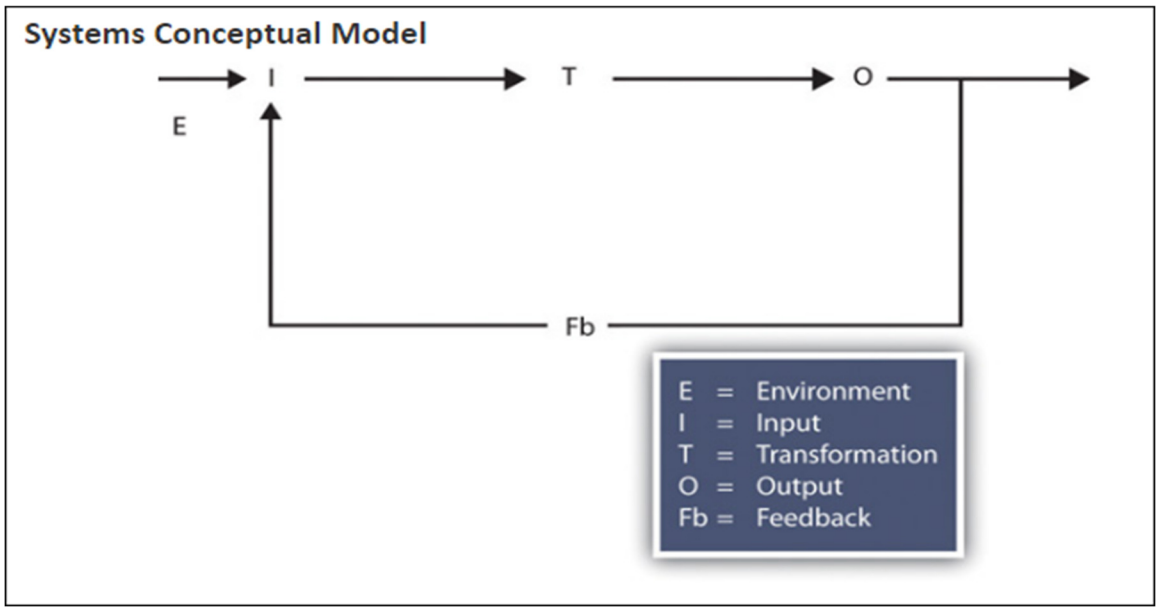

Figure 2.1.6 Systems Conceptual Model (Littlejohn & Cameron 1999)

The conceptual model helps businesses recognise their position and relationship in the larger environmental and social system, including their reliance on inputs and how their output and resource use impacts the overall system and the system's elements.

> *"When a well-run business applies its resources to problems it understands and in which it has a stake, it can have a greater positive impact on social good than any other institutions or philanthropic organization."* (Porter & Kramer 2006)

Hence, private firms could perhaps develop self-sustaining solutions to environmental problems; and when a large number of companies do so, society benefits greatly.

Labuschagne, Brent and Van Erck (2005) highlight that there has been increased pressure on businesses to extend their responsibilities beyond economic result for shareholders to sustainability outcome for all stakeholders. Companies, especially those competing on a worldwide scale, are increasingly being required to commit to and report on the overall sustainability performance of operational efforts. The study presents a framework of criteria (see figure 2.1.6) which can be used to analyse the sustainability practices of manufacturing firms in South Africa, an emerging economy. It is tailored to the needs of developing countries and places a strong emphasis on manufacturing operational activities.

The authors suggest 'corporate responsibility strategy' to be the first level of the proposed sustainability assessment system. This indicates that a strategy which recognises a company's duty and critical position in communities in which it operates, as well as in the global environment, is a precondition for all sustainability. A company's objective at this stage is to make a positive contribution in three areas of influence: 1) core business activities through responsible execution; 2) poverty-focused social investment and charity initiatives; and 3) institution building and public policy conversations.

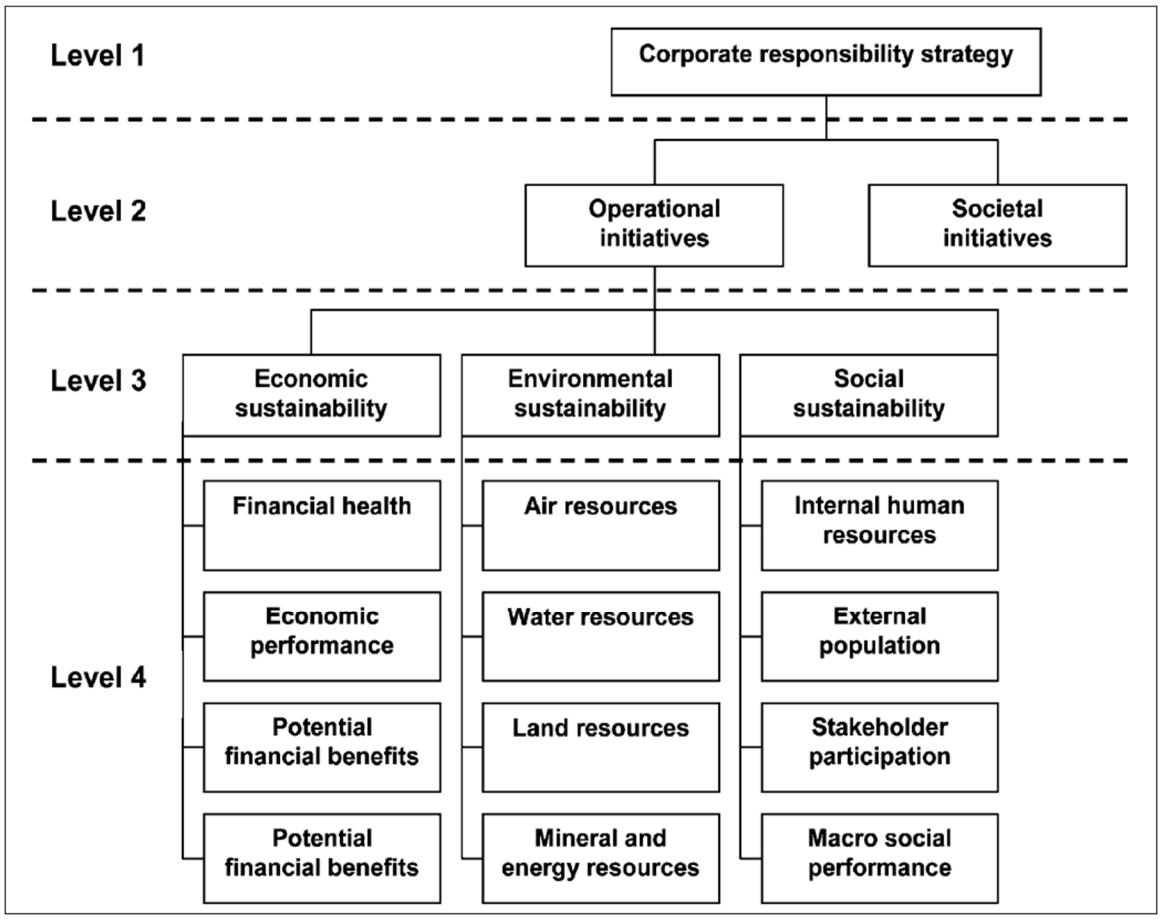

Figure 2.1.7 Levels 1-4 of the proposed operational sustainability framework (Labuschagne, Brent & Van Erck 2005)

On the second level, the 'corporate responsibility strategy' is divided into two parts: 'operational initiatives' and 'societal initiatives'. Operational initiatives (such as company's key operations, projects, and so on) should be evaluated in terms of the three dimensions of sustainability, while corporate social investment (CSI) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes are examples of social initiatives. It is important to note that the social sustainability of operational initiatives is not to be assessed in terms of the overall company's social initiatives via CSI and CSR focused-projects. The third level presents the three components of sustainability, which are further divided into categories on level 4, sub-categories on level 5, and so on. These authors argue that the economic sustainability assessment framework focuses on internal economic contributions, whereas external

economic contributions (or burdens) are allocated to social sustainability (that is, socioeconomic issues). Moreover, the paper claims that businesses are increasingly focusing on the social dimension of SD, due to a shift in stakeholder pressures away from environmental issues and towards social concerns. The social dimension of the proposed framework is concerned with the company's impacts on the social systems in which it operates, as well as the company's relationships with its various stakeholders. The goal of the framework is to evaluate the sustainability performances of operational initiatives across profit, people and planet dimensions of the TBL concept. This article advances the knowledge for both industry and academia, by providing a framework for assessing sustainability performances in the manufacturing sector in a developing nation. Nonetheless, it does not go beyond the context of South African manufacturing sector. Future studies can, therefore, extend the framework to various industries and/or in different countries and regions of the world to examine the model's practicality and advance the knowledge for this topic.

Slaper and Hall (2011) state that while understanding the concept of the TBL is not too hard a task, measuring it is much more challenging due to different unit of measure for the 3Ps. The paper argues while profits are measured in dollars, it is not the case for social capital, as well as environmental or ecological health. The scholars admit the difficulties to establish a consistent unit of measurement across the profits, people and planet components. They suggest that there is no universally agreed standard for the metrics that make up any of the three TBL categories; and that this flexibility allows a user to adapt the TBL framework to their case-specific requirements.

> "*The set of measures will ultimately be determined by stakeholders and subject matter experts and the ability to collect the necessary data. While there is significant literature on the appropriate measures to use for sustainability at the state or national levels, in the end, data availability will drive the TBL calculations." (Slaper & Hall 2011, p. 3)*

Table 2.1 below presents sustainability measures which have been validated through scholarly dialogue.

Table 2.1 (Slaper & Hall 2011)

Measures	**Profits/ Economic**	**People/ Social**	**Planet/ Environmental**
General examples	Dealing with the bottom line and the flow of money.	Dealing with measurements of education, equity and access to social resources, health and well-being, quality of life, and social capita of a community or region	Dealing with measurements of natural resources and reflect potential influences to its viability
Examples for businesses (i.e cascade Engineering)	Amount of taxes paid	Average hours of training/employee From welfare to career retention Charitable contributions	Safety incident rate Lost/restricted workday rate Sales dollars per kilowatt hours Greenhouse gas emissions Use of post-consumer and industrial recycled material Water consumption

			Amount of waste to landfill
Examples for Non-Profits (i.e The Ford Foundation)	Food and Agriculture (economic): Explore new economic models that support sustainable food and agriculture while raising public awareness of the value of organic and biodynamic farming	Education and the Arts (social): Fund education and arts projects that are holistic and therapeutic	Ecological Stewardship (environmental): Provide funding to organisations and projects devoted to sustaining, regenerating and preserving the earth's ecosystems, especially integrated, systems-based and culturally relevant approaches
Examples for Government (i.e the Grand Rapids region, Michigan)	Personal Income: personal income per capita Unemployment: unemployment rate Redevelopment, Reinvestment and Jobs: results from brownfield redevelopment	Safety and Security: crime statistics Educational Attainment: degree attainment levels Health and Wellness: infant mortality rate and blood lead levels trends Quality of Life: home ownership, poverty,	Waste: trends in recycling, refuse and yard waste Energy: energy consumption, natural gas consumption and alternative fuel usage Water: water consumption Air Quality: toxic release inventory and number of air

	investment and job creation Knowledge Competitiveness: third-party report ranking U.S. regions	and reduced price and free lunches trends Community Capital: 211 calls for assistance, voter participation and population and ethnicity	pollution ozone action days Built Environment: number of LEED registered and certified projects Land Use and Natural Habitat: inventory of land use and forest canopy Transportation: public transportation ridership

The article claims that the TBL's three dimensions have been adopted, developed and evolved to shape initiatives for several remarkable organisations and agencies around the globe to the needs of different entities and geographic boundaries, as well as various projects and policies. Notably, Dow Jones Sustainability Indices and The Global Reporting Index (GRI) are mentioned as examples of significant institutions which use economic, environmental and social criteria, and then further break each of the aspects down into sub-categories for reporting purposes. Also, the paper quotes the United Nations' (UN) announcement during the 2005 World Assembly:

> *"Sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities."* (United Nations 2005).

It concludes by affirming that beyond the core of measuring sustainability practices on three areas of responsibility- profits, people and planet- the TBL approach's flexibility allows organisations to tailor the idea to their unique needs. This article lays the groundwork for future research on assessing firms' sustainable-oriented performance in terms of economic, social, and environmental impacts.

Reviewed is the academic literature discussing the development of the sustainability concept which provides various models on how organisations can become more sustainable. The next section reviews the important factors that have contributed to the evolution of sustainability in business.

2.2 Factors of sustainability in business

Epstein and Roy (2001) state that a growing number of organisations understand the need of developing a sustainability-oriented strategy. However, they often struggle to turn the ideas into practice which balances the economic, social and environmental needs. The authors believe that managers can make a substantial contribution to both their company and society at large by carefully identifying, evaluating and managing the drivers of sustainability performance, as well as the broad implications of that performance on various business stakeholders. This greater understanding, hence, allows for better integration of sustainability practices into business operational activities and the institutionalisation of attention towards SD across the firm. Also, they argue that the macroeconomic definition of *sustainable development* by Brundtland Commission (1987) does not provide much guidance on how to put this notion into practice at the corporate level. As a result, managers continue to wonder how to put a plan in place in order to foster corporate sustainability when there are so many competing organisational restrictions and impediments to implementation. In addition, managers must also comprehend how social and environmental initiatives affects overall long-term profitability, as well as how to communicate the relevance of such impacts to top executives and other managers of different departments across their enterprises in plain language.

"Given their functional responsibilities, human resource managers tend to focus on employee satisfaction and marketing managers focus on customer satisfaction – but neither examines the impacts on overall corporate profitability." (Epstein & Roy 2001, p. 587)

With this in mind, Epstein and Roy introduce a framework (see figure 2.2.1) aimed to help managers better understand the impact of firm products, services, procedures, and other activities on either the external or internal environment (including all of the numerous corporate stakeholders) or on the company in order to make effective decisions.

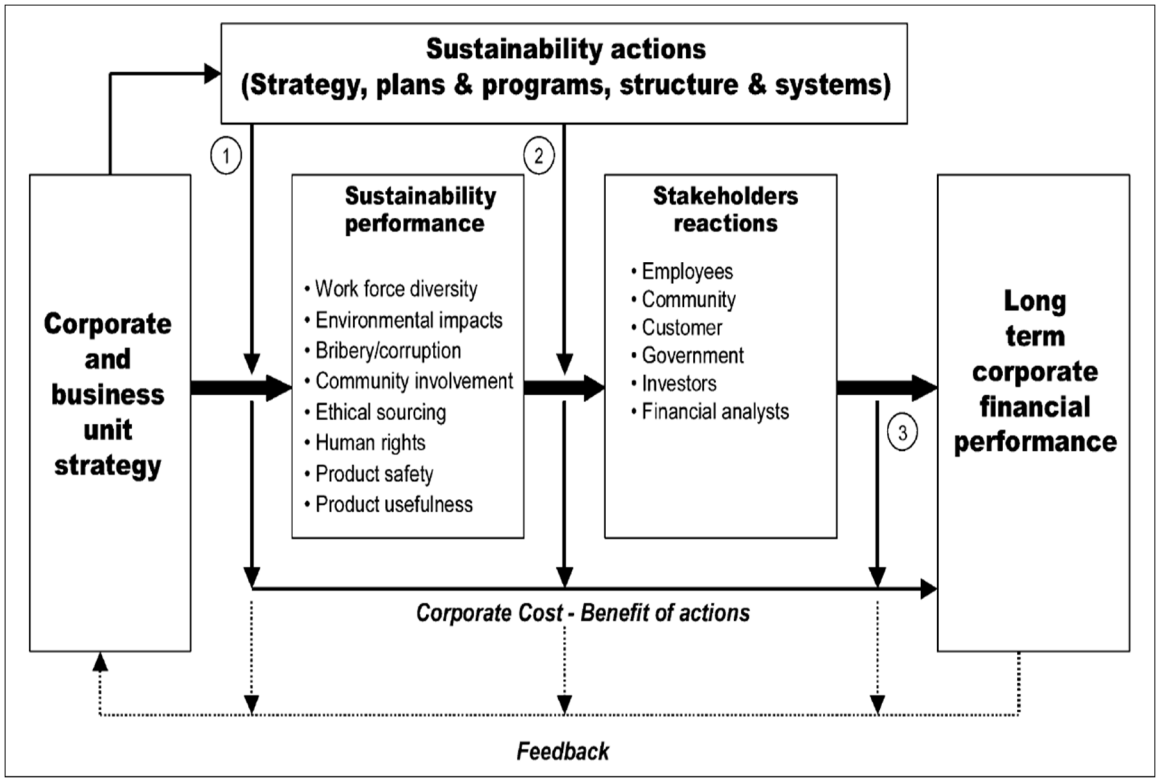

Figure 2.2.1 Drivers of sustainability and financial performance (Epstein & Roy 2001)

The drivers (boxed) indicate sustainability initiatives that result in sustainability performance, which in turn leads to stakeholder reactions and financial performance.

Arrows 1 and 2 represent places/times at which actions might take place, while arrow 3 depicts how reactions can have an impact on company financial performance and serve as feedback to amend corporate strategy. To apply this framework, Epstein and Roy suggest that an organisation can start with corporate and business unit strategy and then moves on to the second component, sustainability actions. Once the organisation has determined which sustainability initiatives to pursue, it may begin to develop the links between the actions and sustainability performance, stakeholder reactions, and corporate profitability. The framework's corporate financial performance component then flows back into the business strategy to both improve and challenge strategies and assumptions. The framework outlines the systems, structures, and measures required to alter organisational culture and procedures in order to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes. It focuses on establishing links between firm operational activities and profitability as they relate to social and environmental responsibilities. It also concentrates on specific actions and their payoffs. Managers must tailor this generic framework to their own sector or business situation, creating a corporate performance framework that underpins their specific drive for sustainable performance. Besides, the authors emphasise that managers must quantify the relationship between one variable and another until the link to profit is evident. For instance, in measuring sustainability actions, the strategy must be converted into measurable targets, such as a certain level of safety performance decrease. Metrics to evaluate plans must also be established, and they will frequently include the degree of spending on social and environmental activities, as well as technology.

> *"A fundamental aspect of our framework is the distinction between intermediate results and financial outcomes."* (Epstein & Roy 2001, p. 589)

Intermediate outcomes, such as improved environmental and social performance, improved public image, and greater market share, must be tracked to assess whether management is operating well within the framework. Assumptions regarding these relationships, as well as every other relationship in the framework, play a big role in strategy creation and implementation. Furthermore, Epstein and Roy highlight that

businesses tend to address issues that result in obvious and short-term costs and benefits. As a result, many social and environmental effects are routinely overlooked in formal decision-making processes since they are less visible and more difficult to measure and link to financial performance. They conclude that few costs can be classified as wholly external in the long run, and that disregarding external costs entirely is a poor long-term strategy. This paper was amongst the first to outline the factors of sustainability practices that managers may employ to impact the economic, social, and environmental consequences of their organisations. The framework establishes the groundwork for future research to develop sustainability models in order to improve applicability to business operational activities, as well as contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject.

Following the worst environmental disaster in US history at the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico, which killed 11 platform workers, injured 17 others, and caused a massive ongoing offshore oil spill, Epstein and Buhovac (2010) were amongst scholars that assert alignment between formal and informal systems is vital for efficiently implementing sustainability initiatives aimed at improving social and environmental protections. They state that processes, performance measurement, and incentive systems (formal systems) are required by businesses in order to evaluate success and offer internal and external responsibility. At the same time, they also require leadership, culture, and people (informal systems) to support the implementation of sustainability. According to the authors, despite the fact that academics had paid close attention to the concept of sustainability and that extensive research had been conducted, it was still not valued or included in corporate strategy. SD was just considered as something that had to be done frequently in order to respond to community and external pressures to be good corporate citizens, even when senior management was not on board. Nevertheless, they claim that most businesses nowadays view sustainability as a ‘‘business case”, in addition to just being the right thing to do. In other words, organisations place an emphasis on sustainability. Whether it is concern for society and the environment, government regulation, stakeholder demands, or economic profit, most managers understand the significance of having sustainability planning and implementation.

Expanding on Epstein's and Roy's (2001) framework, the article proposes a novel corporate sustainability model (see figure 2.2.2), arguing that it may help firms execute sustainable initiatives more effectively.

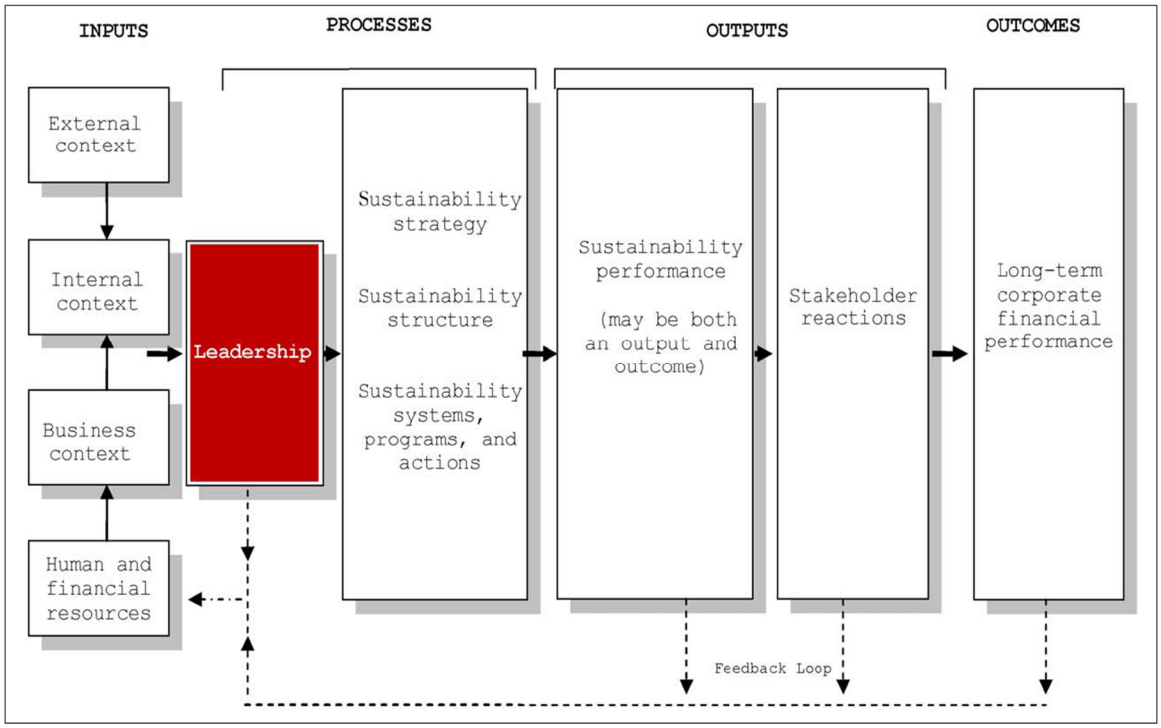

Figure 2.2.2 The Epstein Corporate Sustainability Model (Epstein & Buhovac 2010)

The model aims to improve knowledge of 1) the role of multiple drivers (inputs and processes) in sustainability; 2) the causal relationships between the different actions that can be performed; 3) the influence of these activities on sustainability performance; 4) the potential reactions of the business's numerous stakeholders; and 5) the prospective and actual implications on financial performance. The authors suggest that the leadership function is central to the concept. They believe management commitment to sustainability as a fundamental value, as well as management understanding that sustainability may provide financial benefit for the company through increased revenues and/or decreased expenses, are crucial. External context (regulatory and geographical), internal context

(company mission, strategy, structure, and processes), business context (industry sector, customers, and products), and human and financial resources accessible to the organisation for sustainability objectives are among the inputs. The paper suggests that leaders establish suitable strategies to promote sustainability after carefully analysing the inputs and their expected implications on sustainability and financial performance. Managerial decisions, accordingly, have a positive or negative impact on sustainability outcomes and stakeholder responses. These are the intermediate results, or outputs, that have a long-term impact on a company's financial success (outcomes).

The paper claims that many firms have significantly improved the quality and amount of contacts they have with various stakeholder groups over the years in order to get a deeper understanding of stakeholders, their requirements, and how they are likely to respond to sustainability performance. It, thus argues that the proposed framework may be used for the international manufacturing standards, ensuring fair treatment of people and environmental preservation. Moreover, the scholars discuss the challenges of integrating sustainability into business operations. To begin with, establishing clear and quantifiable goals can be tricky. The objectives of sustainability are to attain excellence in social, environmental, and financial performance at the same time. The social and environmental consequences of business operations are generally longer-term and more difficult to assess than the majority of the impacts that managers normally face. Second, there are financial incentive pressures, since all levels of management are under pressure to improve short-term profitability. When activities boost both social and financial performance at the same time, such as reducing energy consumption, waste, or toxics, this is easier than when enhancing social or environmental performance comes at a significant financial cost. Managers are confronted with a dilemma in such instances, unsure of how to make decisions and what steps to take. Finally, the attitudes of stakeholders to varied sustainability activities and performance over time are unpredictable. Corporate and social agendas shift frequently, as do the expenses associated with pursuing sustainability. All of these factors make decision-making related to sustainability implementation particularly challenging. By presenting the corporate sustainability model and highlighting the basic

problems in adopting sustainability in business, this article contributes to the conversation and knowledge of the topic.

More literature will be discussed below on the barriers and drivers of implementing sustainable practices into business operational activities in the manufacturing sector, particularly in Southeast Asian emerging economies.

2.3 Barriers and drivers of implementing sustainability initiatives in manufacturing firms in Southeast Asian emerging economies

There has been considerable research on the constraints that businesses encounter while implementing sustainability initiatives. Notably, Ghazilla et al. (2015) recognise that the manufacturing industry struggles to adapt to rigorous environmental standards due to scarcity of natural resources, global warming, and waste management problems. They use the term 'green manufacturing' to describe a manufacturing approach that employs different green strategies (objectives and principles) and initiatives (technology and innovation) (Deif 2011) to prevent pollution. These practices include involve minimising energy usage, raw materials, and solid waste, reusing products, and recycling water, as well as employing renewable resources, eco-friendly energy, rethinking products and processes, and training employees on product stewardship procedures. According to these scholars, many small firms do not consider their environmental effect to be as substantial as that of bigger corporations (Van Hemel & Cramer 2002), while big firms are more driven to innovate green-oriented product, services, and processes since they are more influential with superior organisational management and financial stability (DeSimone & Popoff 2000). They state that, because small enterprises lack the data, resources, technical knowledge, and experience necessary to execute green initiatives, the barriers and drivers to incorporating green operation and manufacturing standards differ from those for large organisations. The article identifies a list of barriers and drivers that impact the implementation of green practices in small firms using literature such as scholarly publications, journal articles, and conference papers. It then employs the Delphi survey method to evaluate the key barriers and drivers based on the perspectives of experts from

industry, academia, and government organisations, via semi-structured questionnaires as the research instrument. The early findings of the study result in a list of variables which obstruct and stimulate the implementation of green manufacturing practices in Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as described in Tables 2.3a and 2.3b, respectively:

Table 2.3a Barriers which obstruct the implementation of green manufacturing practices in SMEs (Ghazilla et al. 2015)

No.	Barriers
Organizational	
1	Weak organizational structure to support GMP
2	Lack of empowerment to support GMP
3	High internal politics which delay execution of decisions concerning GMP
4	Management has high resistance towards GMP
5	Difficulties in transforming positive GMP attitudes into actions
6	Existence of owner-manager leadership issues which hinder GMP
7	Restrictive company policies towards products/process stewardship for GMP
8	High hesitation to convert traditional practices to GMP
9	Limited resources which affect the organization's ability to adopt new GMP practices
10	Perception of 'out-of-responsibility' zone towards GMP
11	Undeveloped organizational GMP culture
12	Loss/lack of GMP champion
13	Improper communication structures to support GMP
14	Disbelief regarding the benefits of GMP
15	Difficulties in allocating resources for GMP
16	Lack of technical expertise in GMP
17	Lack of corporate social responsibility for GMP
18	Lack of involvement from external stakeholders
19	Lack of management and/or staff time for implementation and maintenance of GMP
Environmental Knowledge	
20	Existence of attitude and perception issues regarding GMP
21	Lack of GMP knowledge
22	Lack of access to external GMP technical support
23	Difficulties in obtaining GMP information for potential improvements
Business Environment	
24	Weak market positions for GMP-based products/processes
25	GMP tools, business case measurements and verification procedures are primarily aimed at large businesses
26	Lack of influence on GMP strategic adaptation competence against changes in SMEs
27	Lack of market preferences/demands for GMP-based products/processes
28	Nature of business which is industrial-specific, leading to low green manufacturing practices
29	Lack of awareness regarding the impact of GMP on business
30	Inadequate industrial self-regulations for GMP
31	Lack of effective GMP measures
32	Distortion in the verifier market for GMP
33	Lack of experienced GMP verifiers
34	Lack of legitimacy for GMP
35	Less competitiveness due to GMP
Societal Influence	
36	Society with low green attitudes
37	Lack of awareness on green products/processes among customers
38	Weak public pressure towards green products/processes
Technology	
39	Inadequate R&D, design and testing within the organization to support GMP
40	Lack of new technology, materials and processes to support GMP
41	Lack of additional infrastructure requirements to support GMP
42	Unavailability of GMP-based alternative solutions
43	Complexity of design to support GMP

44	Lack of flexibility to switch over to GMP-based systems
45	Limited range of technological competencies in GMP
46	Lack of innovation capabilities in GMP
47	Lack of flexibility in the manufacturing process with regards to implementing GMP
48	Lack of GMP technological capabilitis
49	Lack of GMP human resource capabilities
Regulation/Government	
50	Lack of environmental enforcement for GMP
51	Lack of support and guidance from regulatory authorities on GMP
52	Lack of GMP training courses/consultancy provided by the government
53	Absence of financial incentives and policies for implementation of GMP
54	Lack of GMP implementation guidelines
Financial	
55	Existence of sunk costs in GMP which can cause organizations to incur losses
56	Difficulties in acquiring financial capital for GMP initiatives
57	High initial capital cost to implement GMP
58	Limited financial resources
59	Poor financial performance to initiate GMP
60	Lack of financial gains through GMP
61	High cost of GMP certification/verification which disproportionally penalizes small organizations
Suppliers	
62	Supply barriers (difficulties in obtaining green technological information, raw materials and finance)
63	Poor supplier commitment towards GMP
64	Problems arising from maintaining awareness of GMP among suppliers

During the first round of the Delphi survey, the authors collect scholars' thoughts on a list of hurdles to integrating green manufacturing practices in SMEs through questionnaire. The 64 barriers are divided into eight categories, with top key barriers to green manufacturing practices implementation including a lack of sustainability-supporting organisational structure, as well as insufficient R&D, design, and testing within the business. Moreover, the scholars state that SMEs in Malaysia are generally owned by families, and management concentrates largely on daily business operations, with a tendency to respond only to urgent crises. Due to a lack of finances and technical competence in green practices, SMEs end up having insufficient R&D support.

Table 2.3b Drivers which stimulate the implementation of green manufacturing practices in SMEs (Ghazilla et al. 2015)

No	Drivers
Legislations	
1	Voluntary GMP regulations and standard (e.g. ISO 14000 and Eco Labelling`)
2	Compulsory GMP regulation mandated by local government (e.g. hazardous and toxic regulation)
3	GMP regulation in place by other countries (e.g. WEEE, EU Directive)
4	Financial incentives or penalties from the government (e.g. tax, rebate, soft loan) for GMP
5	Compulsory or voluntary corporate social responsibility pushed by authorities for GMP
Organizational Style	
6	Type of organizational culture supportive of GMP
7	Self-directed and facilitated organization facilitating GMP
8	Organisational Commitment for GMP
9	Owner values or employee aspirations towards GMP
10	Internal organizational capabilities to support GMP
11	Internal sustainable efforts toward GMP
12	GMP awareness within organization's management
13	Awareness of GMP impact throughout the organisation
14	Good community and employee relations supportive of GMP
Eco Knowledge	
15	Availability of Comprehensive training and education in GMP
16	GMP education are part of organisational training
17	Availability of GMP information
Business Environment	
18	Commitment from various business stakeholders towards GMP
19	Professional network to support GMP
20	New market opportunities towards GMP
21	Competitors pressures towards GMP
22	Industrial sectors initiatives for GMP
23	Support from external stakeholders for GMP
24	Business to business pressure from larger organizations towards GMP
25	Promotion of successful GMP practices as case examples
Society Influences	
26	Public awareness to Green initiatives
27	Customer's demand of Green products/process
28	Customer collaborations towards green initiatives
29	Socio cultural responsibility towards Green Practices
Financial Incentives	
30	Financial incentives (penalties, support) from government for GMP
31	Organizational belief of cost reductions through
Innovation	
32	Holistic intervention programs
33	Organizational belief of innovation opportunities through GMP
34	Better competitiveness through GMP
35	Improved company image through GMP
36	Desire to promote environmental benign product
37	Perception of increase product quality
38	Business performance commitment

According to the study's preliminary findings, the top essential factors that motivate green manufacturing practices in SMEs are better business image, increased competitiveness, and improved product quality through these initiatives. Typically, SMEs' dedication to environmental efforts such as green manufacturing techniques is motivated not just by economic considerations, but also by a desire to earn public support. Furthermore, the study claims that because SMEs receive less media coverage than large corporations, the general public may be unaware of their existence. As a result, the adoption of green manufacturing practices in SMEs may be one of the elements that attract public attention, as potential buyers have become more environmentally conscious over time. These authors, thus, think that by implementing green manufacturing practices, SMEs may enhance their performance, boost profits, and raise their competitiveness in local and worldwide marketplaces. The article, which is based on a comprehensive literature review, gives an overview of the barriers and drivers that Malaysian SMEs experience when it comes to implementing green manufacturing practices. It lays the groundwork for future research aimed at assisting the manufacturing industry in identifying and prioritising the important elements that will impact the adoption of sustainable practices. Nonetheless, the notion of green manufacturing methods in this article, which focuses on environmental preservation, overlooks the people component of the TBL, such as cultural components and organisational human well-being. Future research is, hence, required to provide insight into all three aspects of sustainability and in different settings, such as how large organisations may transform their business operations activities from traditional to more sustainable ones.

Even after data collection, more literature is continually reviewed to ensure that knowledge of this subject is kept up to date and the thesis remains relevant. Notably, Zimon, Tyan and Sroufe (2020) offer a new conceptual model and a dynamic framework for a three-phased approach for implementing effective sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) efforts, in which manufacturing is a big part of. For this reason, although the article is beyond the Marketing viewpoint, the review is worthwhile to gain latest knowledge

regarding sustainability concerns across the value chain. The article reaffirms the understanding that incorporating sustainable solutions in business operations would not only benefit the environment and improve the organisation's image, but it could even also bring financial benefits to enterprises (McKinnon 2010). This broadly accepted argument is acknowledged not only by businesses but also by external stakeholders across the supply chain. It is the authors' motivation to carry out studies on what drivers, practices, and barriers enable comprehension of sustainable activities, as well as their connections to the 17 UNSDGs which have been intended to engage with industry and enhance synergistic economic impacts (Willis 2016). Having said that, it suggests UNSDGs' broad scope makes incorporating them across the value chain tricky (Russell, Lee & Clift 2018). Because of this complexity, management decision makers often face several barriers and constraints throughout the implementation of supply chain sustainability objectives. The authors, hence, propose a framework (see figure 2.3.1a) that seeks to assist the integration process and make it simpler for corporate decision makers to pick the best action plan for the UNSDGs.

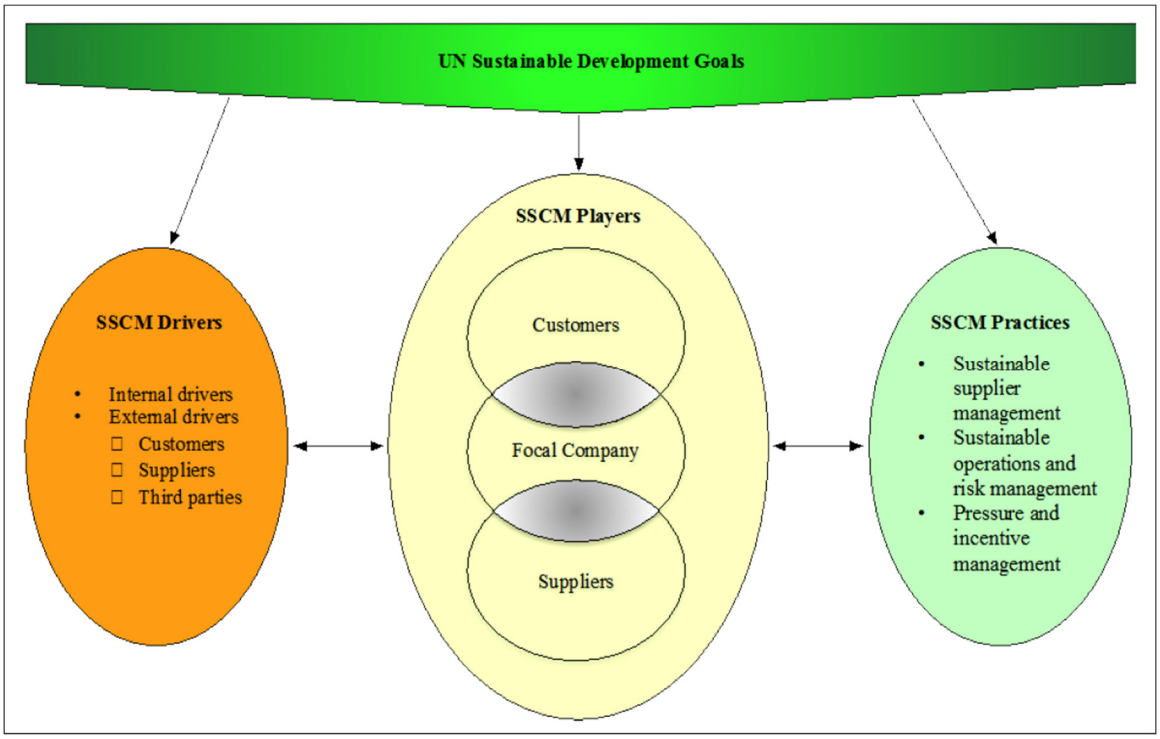

Figure 2.3.1a Sustainable supply chain implementation framework (Zimon, Tyan & Sroufe 2020)

The paper claims that the 17 UNSDGs can serve as a guiding principle for aligning different aspects of SSCM implementation. To improve the applicability of the original UN guideline, the authors propose that these SDGs can be grouped, for example, based on functions such as 'Energy and climate' (SDGs 7 and 13), 'Agriculture, food, and terrestrial' (SDGs 2 and 15), or 'Economic development and equity' (SDGs 1, 5, 8, 9, and 11). Alternatively, the UNSDGs may also be categorised based on the three dimensions of the TBL (Körfgen et al. 2018), such as 'Social goals' (SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, and 10), 'Economy targets' (SDGs 8, 9, 11, and 12), or 'Environment objectives' (SDGs 13, 14, and 15). The SSCM drivers, consisting of 1) company internal drivers (i.e. management commitment, supportive culture, waste elimination); 2) customers' and suppliers' drivers (i.e. customer and supplier involvement, social and environmental regulation compliance); and 3) SSCM third parties' drivers (i.e. competition, regulatory pressure) set the stage for developing and implementing new practices. Under these influences from government and other stakeholders, sustainable supply chain partnerships are formed among SSCM player (that is, a focal firm, suppliers, and customers) to enhance overall value chain economic, social and environmental performance. Moreover, from a strategic thinking viewpoint, the paper argues that it only makes business sense for SSCM players to identify sustainability objectives (i.e. towards profit, people, planet), before deciding what SSCM practices to apply.

The article then introduces a three-phased strategy to executing effective SSCM efforts: 1) practice identification; 2) alignment with SDG targets; and 3) a process model for implementation. First of all, the paper reviews the literature covering a wide range of SSCM management approaches. It summarises and classifies the SSCM practices in table 2.3.1a according to the aspects of sustainable supplier management, sustainable operations and risk management, as well as pressure and incentive, which are comparable to supply chain setup of upstream, focal company, and downstream viewpoints. While most SSCM practices can be clearly classified, those that overlap with several aspects are grouped together at the bottom of the table.

Table 2.3.1a Summary of SSCM practices (Zimon, Tyan & Sroufe 2020)

Sustainable supplier management (upstream)	**Sustainable operations and risk management (focal company)**	**Pressure & incentive management (downstream)**
• Green purchasing • Green raw material procurement • Green packaging • Green transportation • Material recycling • Strategic supplier collaboration • Supplier sustainability assessment	• Green product design • Green process design and planning • Green manufacturing • Product recovery and remanufacturing • Waste, water, and air management • Energy consumption and emissions reduction • Green packaging	• Collaborative inventory management • Green warehousing • Green shipping and distribution • Reverse logistics • Product recycling • Corporate green image management
↳ Green product innovation and design ↳ Supply chain integration system (technological and physical level) ↳ Collaborative supply chain planning ↳ Strategic supply chain collaboration ↳ ISO 140001 environmental management system ↳ Corporate social responsibility		

In the second phrase, the authors then attempt to align those SSCM practices with the UNSDGs by combining the 17 goals into three groups: 1) "efficient allocation to build a living economy" via SDG 7-9 and 11-12 describing the economic dimension of sustainability; 2) "fair distribution to protect capability for flourishing" through SDG 1-5, 10 and 16-17 reflecting the social dimension of sustainability; and 3) "sustainable scale to stay within planetary boundaries" through SDG 6 and 13-15 representing environmental dimension of sustainability. The UNSDGs are linked to relevant SSCM practices based on their scope and goals, illustrating the SSCM practices' connection with the UNSDGs and their sustainability elements (see figure 2.3.1b). The article notes that the same procedure may be used to align SSCM performance measures with the UNSDGs. It argues that this process can help businesses discover prospective SSCM practices and then connect them to their SDGs of choice, providing fresh insights into the alignment and/or gaps of present activities and long-term objectives. Furthermore, the article states that while choosing

SSCM implementation practices, a focal firm is primarily concerned with two opposing forces: external push pressures (i.e. SSCM drivers such as local law and regulation, corporate social compliance requirements from the marketplace, and environmental conservation pressure from local communities) and internal pull constraints (that is, competing company's internal resources such as financial, technical and human resources). Businesses, therefore, must select the most suitable implementation strategy to realise its SSCM goals and contribute to the larger UNSDGs after a deliberate process of balancing demands and restrictions.

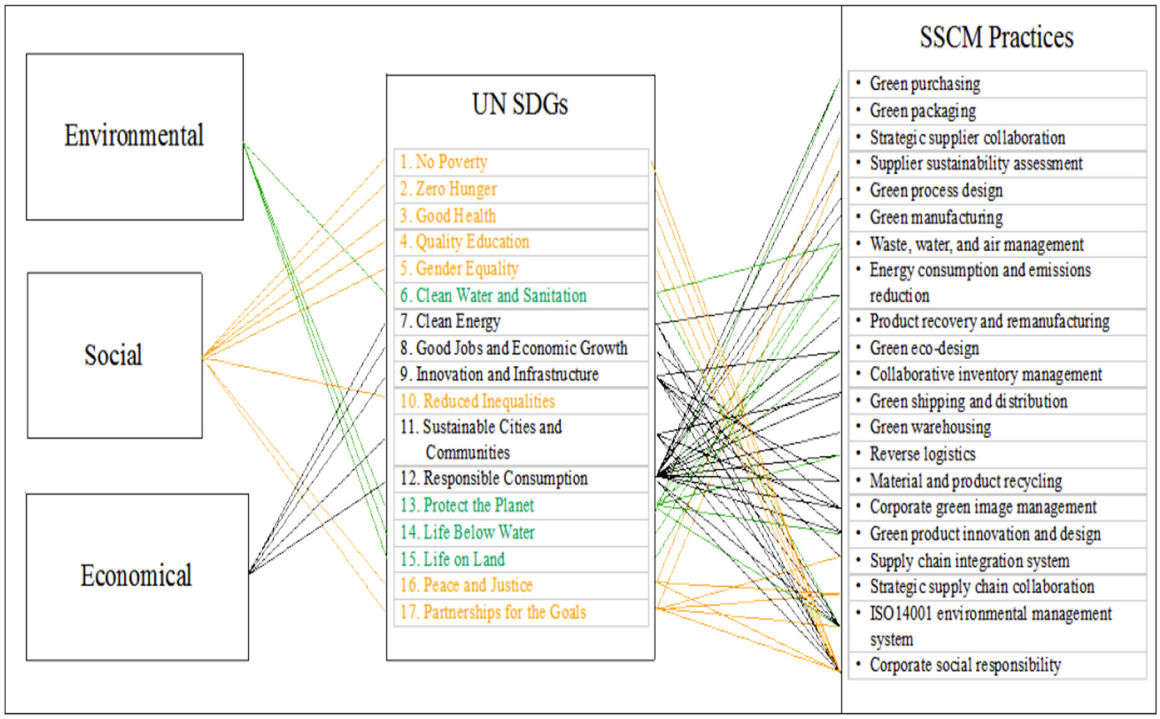

Figure 2.3.1b SSCM practices alignment with UNSDGs (Zimon, Tyan & Sroufe 2020)

In the final phase, understanding the challenges businesses face in determining what options to deploy and when, these authors introduce three incremental implementation models aimed to assist in understanding the mentality, focus, management philosophy, and complexity involved in the selection of SSCM practices, as seen in table 2.3.1b.

Table 2.3.1b Implementation process model of SSCM practices (Zimon, Tyan & Sroufe 2020)

Perspective	**Reactive model**	**Cooperative model**	**Dynamic model**
Mindset	Risk avoidance	Capability enhancement	Value creation
Focus	Economic	Environmental	Social
Management philosophy	Regulatory compliance	Business collaboration	Business opportunity
Supply chain complexity	Low	Medium	High
UNSDG alignment	Limited	Mostly environmental	Environmental, social and financial alignment

When external pressures are low and internal resources are minimal, the reactive model is the lightest implementation strategy. In this model, the strategy to SSCM is risk minimisation in order to comply with regulatory requirements. Thus, green raw material procurement, green manufacturing, waste/ water/ air management, green shipping and distribution, and other similar options are suggested as a minimal set of sustainability practices. The performance measurements of this model might include compliance with environmental requirements, green purchasing/ manufacturing level, as well as waste reduction, depending on the selected sustainability activities. On the other hand, the cooperative model implies a shift in attitude from reactive to proactive, with the focal firm viewing sustainable-oriented initiatives as a capability improvement rather than merely external obligations. As a result, sustainable development (SD) is considered as corporate strategic partnership and the resources required to incorporate sustainability initiatives into business processes are allocated accordingly. In this model, the focal firm can extend its

actions both upstream and downstream. Additionally, the implementation of SSCM infrastructure such as a supply chain integration system, ISO 14001 environmental management system, and strategic supply chain cooperation is suggested to improve overall sustainability performance. Finally, the dynamic model broadens the scope of capability advancement to include value creation, with firms embracing sustainability as a new business opportunity. Hence, the focal firm actively engages on value creation processes with its upstream suppliers and downstream consumers. Green product innovation and design, as well as corporate green image management are examples of new prospective sustainability practices. Therefore, the new performance measures include the amount of green design, relationships with community stakeholders, and green imagery and marketing. The article claims that this model may transform sustainability efforts into a competitive advantage for businesses by focusing on the social aspects of sustainability via innovative solutions. Moreover, the article highlights that the potential offered by integrating mindsets, focus, and management philosophy is essential for any business because it connects the requirement for both vertical and horizontal alignment of sustainability activities within a value chain. Organisations may use sustainable strategies as a catalyst for change in their business operations to better connect sustainability within company, society, and the SDGs. Managers, for instance, may adopt an integrated understanding and corporate vision/mission of to achieve both strategic and competitive objectives. Additionally, the paper suggests that the dynamic model better fits with large organisations with a well-established position in which environmental and social concerns are significant. This model's assumptions align with elements of the SDGs in many ways and, thus, require only minimal changes.

The article’s proposed implementation framework and strategies serve as a foundation for developing explanatory theory and providing practitioners with a roadmap for managing sustainability performance. This paper is useful to both managers and scholars since it provides concepts and models of which application may ease the selection and execution of a long-term, SDGs-aligned strategy for managing a sustainable supply chain. Having said that, the study's focus is on the entire value chain, and the major players, manufacturing firms, may find the recommendations difficult to implement. Besides that,

the proposed framework in this study is based primarily on the UNSDGs, which are not always the sets of goals for sustainability selected by all businesses. In other words, organisations with their own sustainable-oriented goals and targets that differ from the UNSDGs may find it troublesome to relate, let alone implement, the recommended models. As a result, research in a more specific context (for example, private manufacturing firms in Southeast Asian emerging economies) is necessary to add to knowledge and practice in the direction of normalising sustainability in business operations.

In light of that, more literature on sustainable manufacturing from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries during the last decade are reviewed. These academic publications reveal that the member countries are eager to develop more environmentally friendly businesses and industries to help protect the planet. Qureshi et al. (2020) systematically examine 115 research articles (from 2011 to 2020) on sustainable manufacturing in the Southeast Asian region using PRISMA framework, seeking to explore and categorise present practices in order to highlight the potential for and barriers to achieving manufacturing sustainability in ASEAN member nations. The paper acknowledges that the manufacturing sector consumes the most resources in the economy (Linke et al. 2013); hence, the pressing need for better understanding on how enterprises in the industry take up sustainability initiatives. The manufacturing sector, which accounts for 36% of CO2 emissions worldwide, contributes to economic progress while posing severe social and environmental risks globally (Qureshi et al. 2019); and notably in the Southeast Asian region. As a result, ASEAN member countries are concentrating their efforts on implementing sustainability in manufacturing processes through partnerships.

This article claims that Malaysia's research on SD is noteworthy when compared to other ASEAN countries, with 38 published records in sustainable manufacturing in particular. Also, it emphasises that the remaining ASEAN member nations, including Vietnam, have made minimal progress in sustainable manufacturing research studies during the preceding decade. Furthermore, the majority of the literature addressed manufacturing engineering, green and sustainable science and technology, environmental sciences, and mechanical

engineering, accounting for 13%, 12%, 10%, and 9% of the total papers included in the review, respectively (see table 2.4). Notably, Marketing did not make it to the list.

Table 2.4 Distribution of published records according to research discipline from 2011 to 2020 (Qureshi et al. 2020)

Web of Science Categories	Records	Percentage
Engineering, Manufacturing	15	13%
Green & Sustainable Science & Technology	14	12%
Environmental Sciences	12	10%
Engineering, Mechanical	10	9%
Engineering, Environmental	9	8%
Engineering, Multidisciplinary	9	8%
Materials Science, Multidisciplinary	8	7%
Management	9	8%
Chemistry, Multidisciplinary	3	3%
Engineering, Chemical	3	3%
Engineering, Industrial	3	3%
Automation Control Systems	2	2%
Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence	2	2%
Environmental Studies	2	2%
Multidisciplinary Sciences	2	2%
Operations Research & Management Science	2	2%
Thermodynamics	2	2%
Biotechnology & Applied Microbiology	1	1%
Business	1	1%
Computer Science, Interdisciplinary Applications	1	1%
Energy & Fuels	1	1%
Humanities, Multidisciplinary	1	1%
Materials Science, Biomaterials	1	1%
Materials Science, Composites	1	1%
Metallurgy & Metallurgical Engineering	1	1%
Total	115	100%

The authors examine those publications using content analysis to explore the research categories. The study covered 115 records in all, and the most common 241 keywords repeated in at least ten papers were chosen. In order to determine the present practices of

the manufacturing industry, the authors observe three significant clusters (see figure 2.4) of study: 1) research on the sustainable product development process; 2) research on environmental management practices in the manufacturing process; and 3) research on sustainable manufacturing performance. Literature of the first cluster focused on the development of sustainable product manufacturing in ASEAN countries. Nugroho and Zhu (2019), for example, primarily focused on the establishment of a sustainable supply chain for the biofield platform. This study's results suggest that biofuel platform planning and product distribution have a major impact on economic growth, while also lowering environmental consequences and assisting local community development. Another research looked at public and private collaborations in the pharmaceutical industry in Singapore. Innovative and multidisciplinary solutions to achieve sustainable manufacturing in the pharmaceutical sector in Singapore were created via collaboration with the university to address the industry's challenges in achieving sustainable manufacturing (Dell'Orco et al. 2012; Ying et al. 2012).

By highlighting some key articles about production-related processes and product life cycle, the authors underline the TBL concept's role at the core of the manufacturing process and how it is utilised to evaluate overall business operation. They, however, argue that all these studies are primarily assessed through trial-and-error basis, which leads to inefficient resource usage, increased waste, and energy inefficiency.

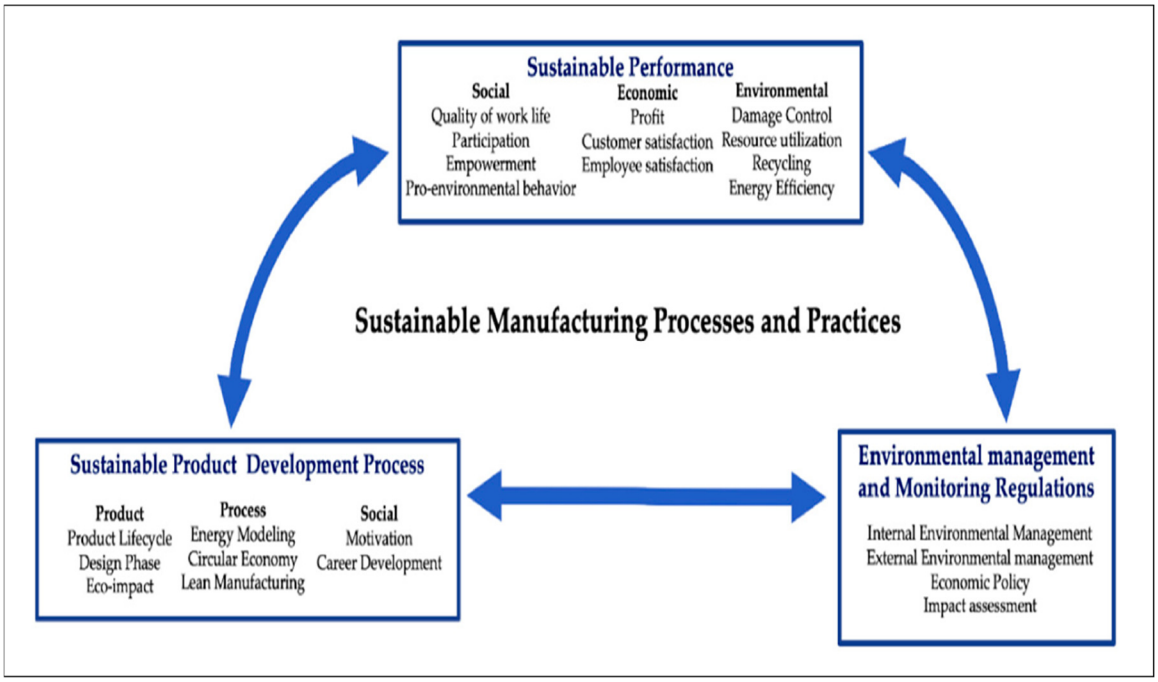

Figure 2.4 The three major literature clusters on sustainable manufacturing practices (Qureshi et al. 2020)

The second cluster of studies on environmental management and regulation shows that the enforcement of laws and policies in ASEAN nations to regulate the internal environment of the organisations and external natural environment is largely developed in Malaysia and Singapore, demonstrating the effort made by these two countries' academics in comparison to other Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam. The papers also reveals that, eco-friendly practices have yet to materialise significantly in business ethics when dealing with water, land resource, and ecological concerns (Jain & Hazra 2020; Nujoom, Mohammed & Wang 2018) despite being the most frequently discussed topic in the region. The final research cluster examines enterprises' implementation of sustainable manufacturing practices, such as energy-efficient manufacturing technologies (Dawal et al. 2015; Yasir, Rasli & Qureshi 2017), in order to minimise the environmental impact throughout business operational processes. The authors note that, although companies are becoming more aware of the economic and other socio-ecological rewards that these sustainable-oriented technologies offer, environmental initiatives remain challenging from a decision-making

standpoint, especially amongst the SMEs (Hami et al. 2019), because it is hard to identify and prioritise the right factors that have a significant impact on firms' environmental performance (Hami et al. 2018; Hassan, Nordin & Ashari 2015; Pipatprapa, Huang & Huang 2018).

Nonetheless, the academic publications reviewed in this paper pay little attention to a holistic approach to manufacturing efficiency. Hence, further research is necessary to investigate how managers can control sustainability initiatives across all aspects of their companies' operational activities (Iqbal & Al-Ghamdi 2018); particularly amongst the Southeast Asian nations where the notion of SD is still in its infancy (Abdul-Rashid et al. 2017; Dawal et al. 2015). In addition, the majority of the articles examined in this paper are concerning the Malaysian manufacturing sector, with a heavy focus on large enterprises. As a result, additional contributions to the knowledge about the other ASEAN member countries in regards to sustainability's challenges are required in order to provide the essential understanding that will assist companies to become more sustainable. The gaps in existing knowledge will be addressed next, particularly those pertaining to businesses' whole-system pursuit of sustainability through marketing.

2.4 Additional literature review of recent studies

Ahmadi-Gh and Bello-Pintado (2022) investigate the impact of various sets of sustainability practices on sustainability outcomes and manufacturing firms' competitive advantage by differentiating between internal, external monitoring, as well as external collaborative sustainability practices and outcomes. The purpose of this paper is to improve understanding of the reasons for manufacturing sustainability by creating a philosophical framework that incorporates transaction cost theory (TCT), the natural resource-based view (NRBV), and social exchange theory (SET).

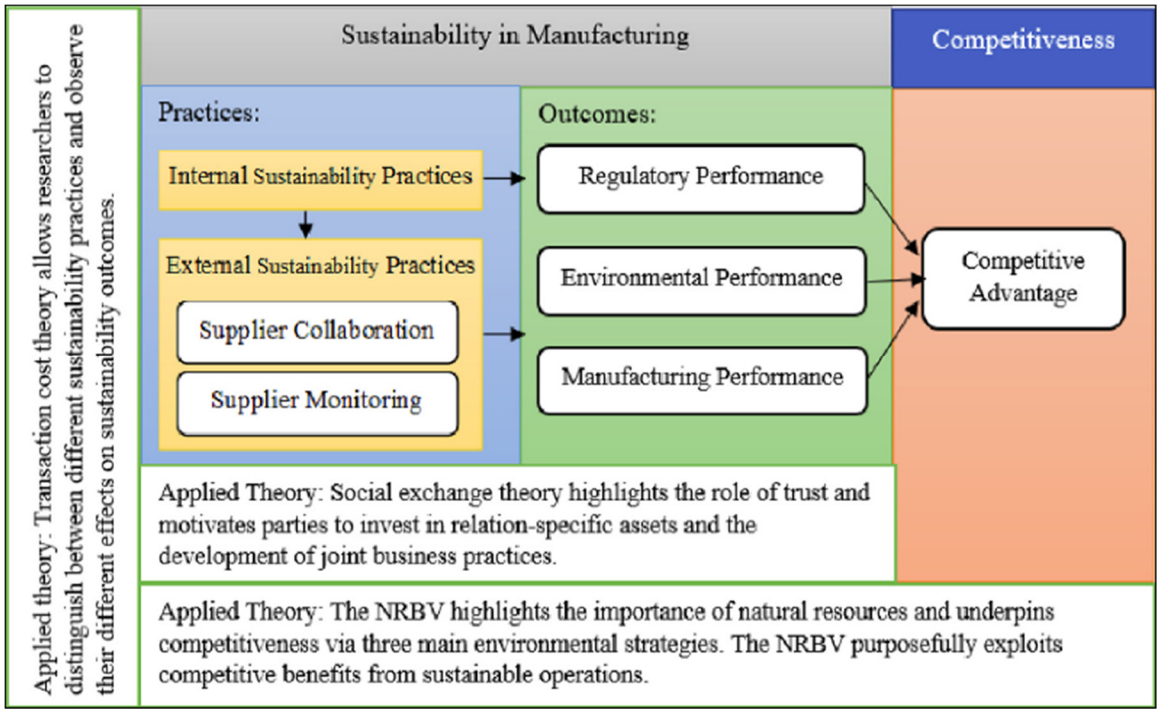

Figure 2.4.1 Structural model (Ahmadi-Gh & Bello-Pintado 2022)

The authors offer theoretical and empirical arguments to help comprehend the connection between sustainability practices, sustainability performance, and competitive advantage. The TCT classifies sustainability practices into three categories: internal, external monitoring, and external collaboration. While internal sustainability practices focus solely on waste reduction, pollution prevention, and improving the workplace environment, external sustainability practices involve other stakeholders, particularly suppliers, to improve the overall supply chain's performance on sustainability matters. Besides, according to the NRBV, by aligning sustainability practices with proactive approaches, a business may proficiently utilise competitive resources and establish environmental capabilities, resulting in greater competitive advantage. Furthermore, the SET suggests that advancing the sustainability emphasis to the supply chain allows partners to participate in social responsibility practices by promoting intangible assets such as buyer–supplier relationships, confidence, and collaborative learning about sustainability, which allow enterprises to stay ahead of their competitors.

Ahmadi-Gh and Bello-Pintado (2022) offers empirical insight into the role of individual companies in attaining long-term sustainability goals by going further in connecting sustainability practices and competitive advantage in manufacturing. It takes into account the individual and combined impacts of multiple sets of sustainability practices on sustainability outcomes and competitive advantage. It lays the groundwork for future research into other complex manufacturing concepts using the same methodology.

The article by Khan et al. (2021) uses qualitative methodology and an interpretivist paradigm to investigate the major themes of green human resource management (HRM) practices, environmental management systems (EMS), and organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE), as well as how these themes impact the environment and discuss sustainable performance among ISO14001-certified Malaysian manufacturing firms. The three most important Green HRM Practices are 1) green recruitment and selection; 2) green training and development; and 3) green assessment and rewards.

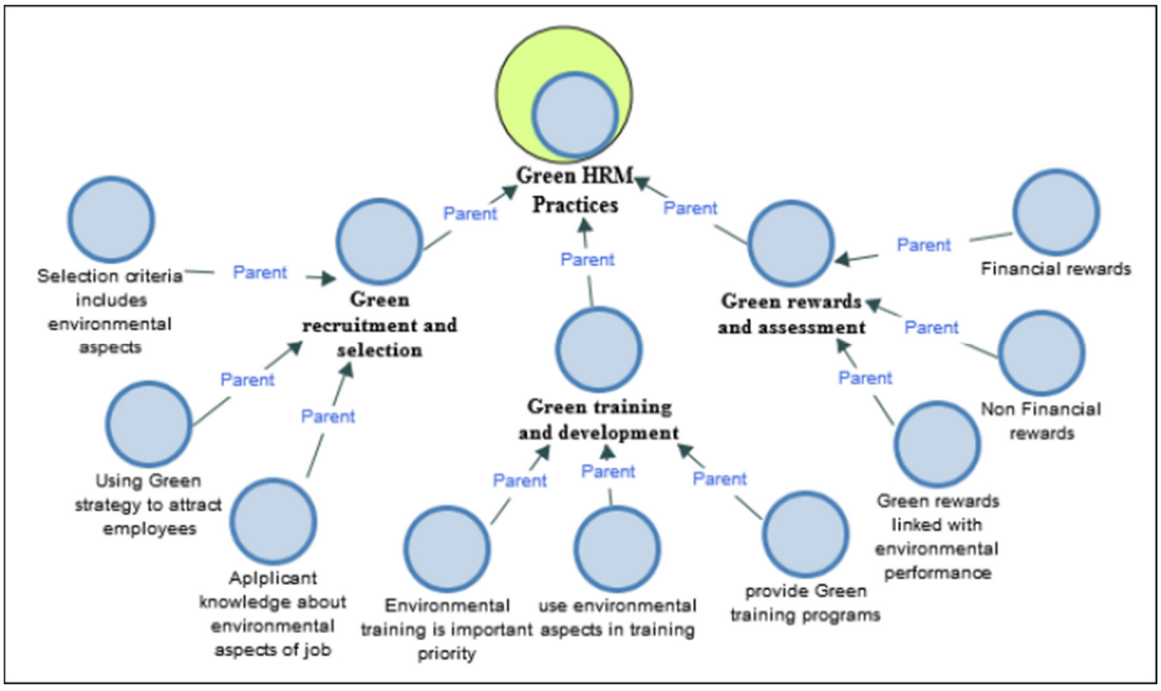

Figure 2.4.2 Green HRM Practices Themes (Khan et al. 2021)

The Green HRM Practices themes explain the sustainability performance of Malaysian manufacturing firms. The paper then discusses the primary motivations and advantages of incorporating an EMS to enhance sustainability-related efficiency. Using thematic analysis, the authors identify three major themes: 1) EMS ISO14001 is a credible certification for manufacturing firms; 2) EMS generates key benefits; and 3) EMS key motivations have emerged.

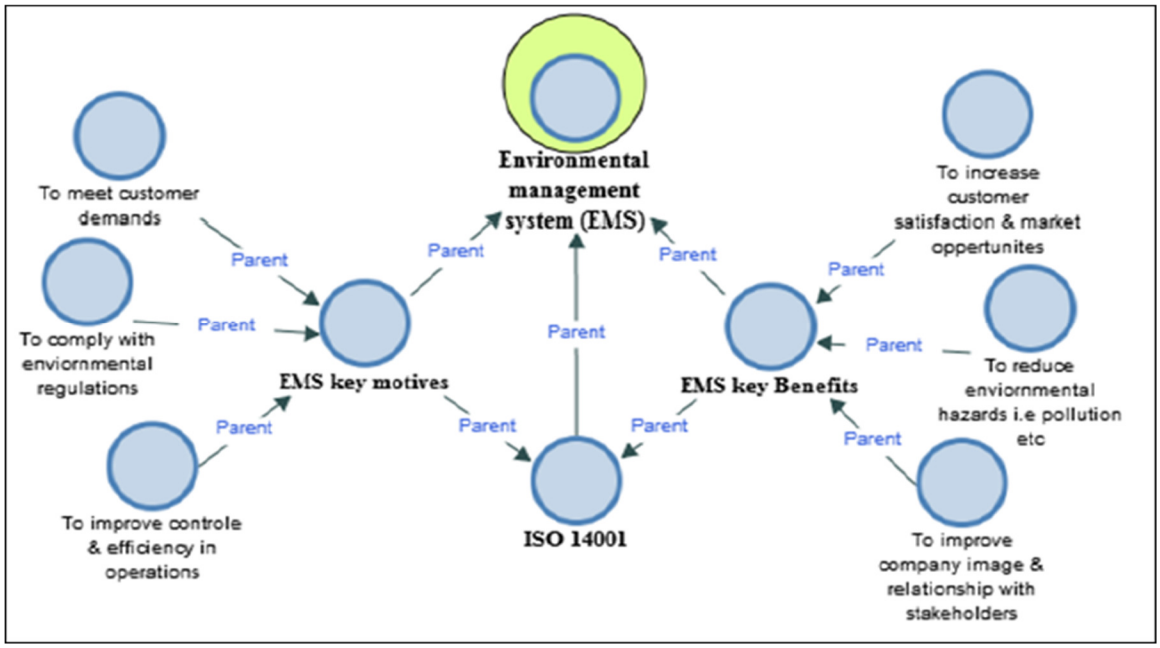

Figure 2.4.3 EMS Themes (Khan et al. 2021)

The thematic analysis investigates the adoption of EMS ISO14001 since some EMS key motives and benefits describe the sustainability initiatives of ISO14001-certified Malaysian manufacturing firms. The study then highlights the important role of OCBE in evaluating sustainability performance. The three major themes of the OCBE are as follows: 1) eco-helping behaviour; 2) eco-initiatives behaviour; and (3) eco-civic engagement behavior.

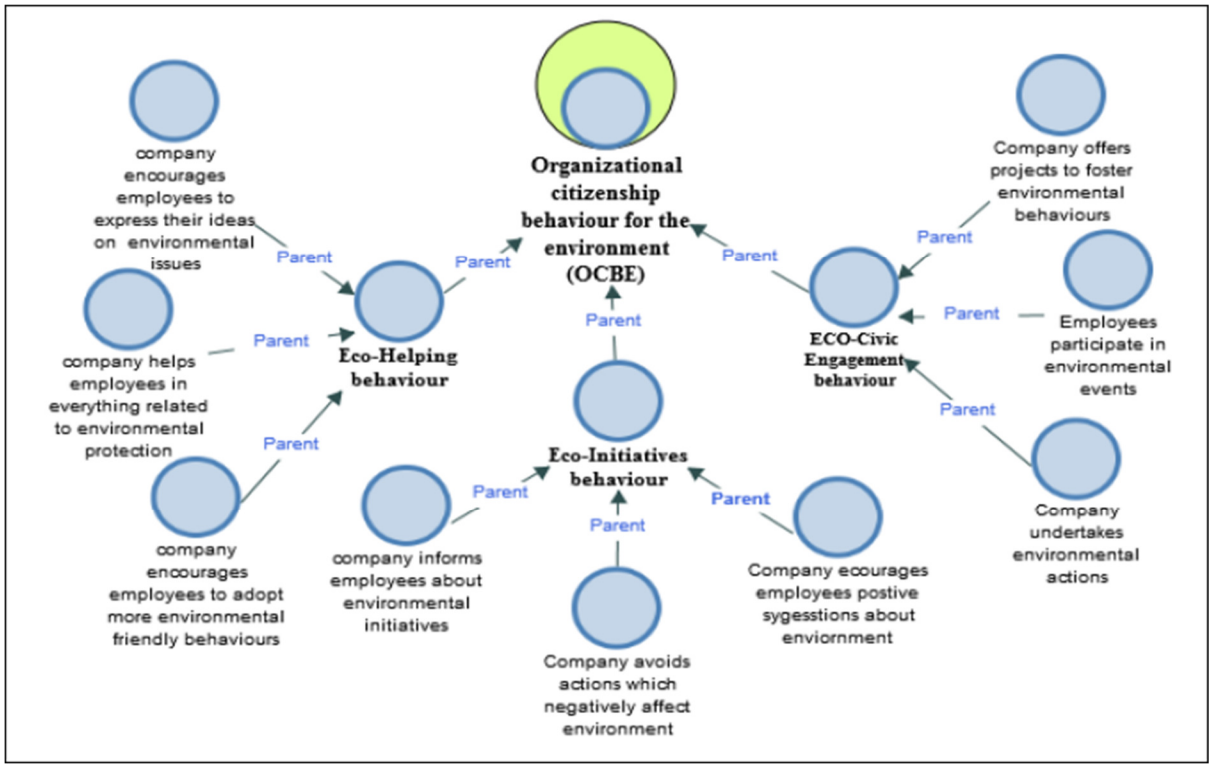

Figure 2.4.4 OCBE Themse (Khan et al. 2021)

In order to enhance sustainability performance, manufacturing firms must incorporate effective green HRM practices, implement EMS (i.e. ISO14001), and encourage OCBE, according to the study. The authors argue that widespread adoption of green practices will close the economic-environmental performance gap. Support, involvement, and encouragement from management are critical for increasing employee participation in sustainability efforts. It should be noted, however, that they only work well when managers take their eco-friendly evaluations seriously.

Ndubisi, Zhai and Lai (2021) systematically introduce and summarise top ten academic articles (via a blind review process) on sustainable economic development (SED) and the role of small and medium manufacturing enterprises (SMMEs) in Asia in the International Journal of Production Economics (IJPE). The authors acknowledge that Asian nations have witnessed unparalleled rapid economic expansion, as well as a significant disparity

between such growth and human welfare. As a result, there was an urgent need for original research and review manuscripts examining the (past, present, and future) role of SMMEs in Asia's sustainable economic development on potential topics such as: Environmental quality and resource sustainability management in SMMEs in Asia; Green sourcing, green logistics, and green manufacturing by SMMEs in Asia; Human resources management and productivity in SMMEs in Asia; Logistics and supply chain management in SMMEs in Asia; Manufacturing technology implementation and management in SMMEs in Asia; New product development and performance of SMMEs in Asia; Small business and consumer economics in SMMEs in Asia; and Sustainability practices and development in SMMEs in Asia.

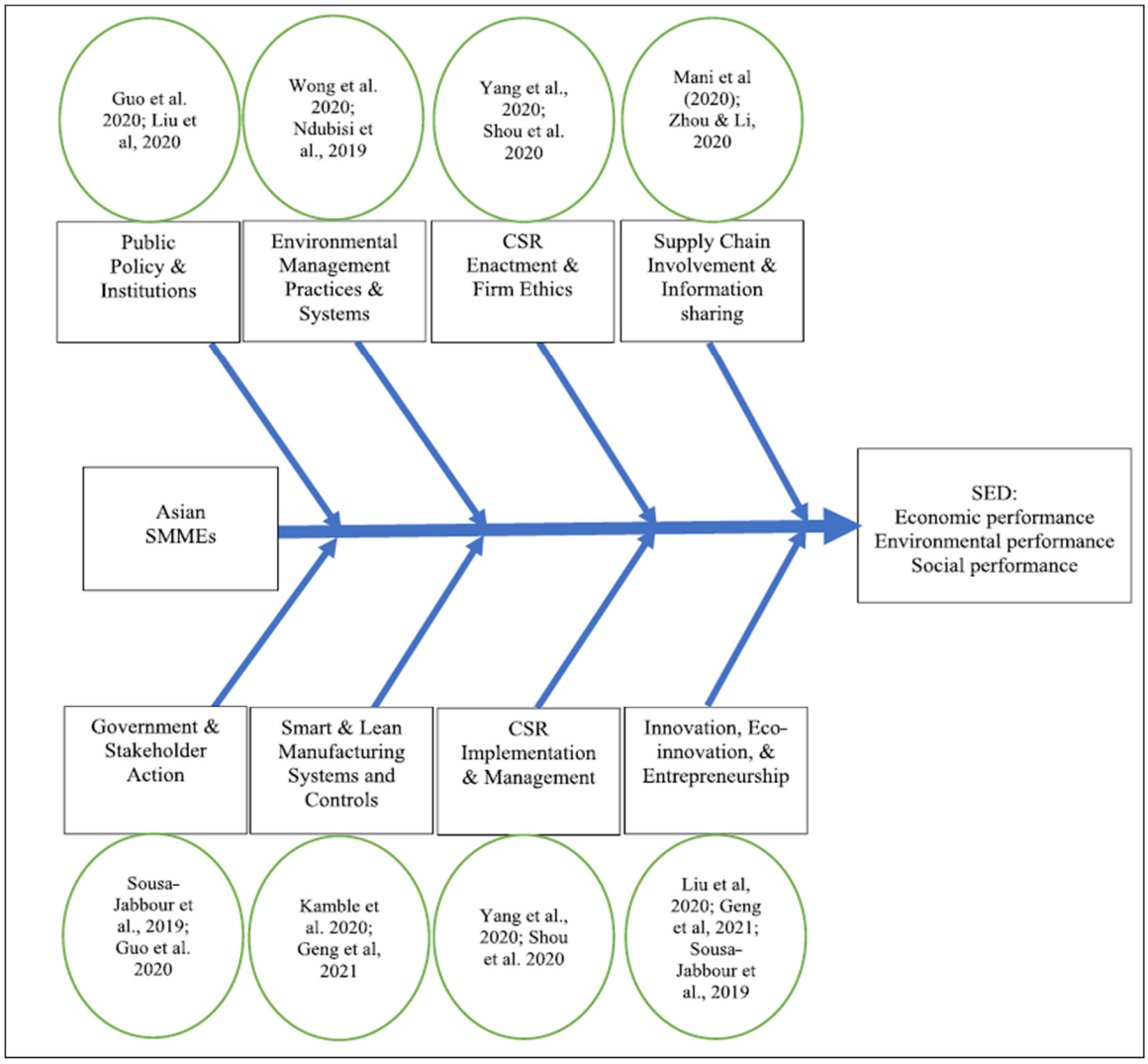

Figure 2.4.5 Drivers of Asian SMMEs contributions to SED (Ndubisi, Zhai & Lai 2021)

The first paper by de Sousa Jabbour, Ndubisi and Seles (2020) begins the discussion by looking at the progress made in understanding the subject and outlining intriguing future research directions. According to the authors, Asian SMEs are critical to both economic development and the fulfilment of the region's sustainable development goals. Based on the findings of previous studies, the paper identifies the factors that impact the environmental, social, and financial performance of Asian manufacturing SMEs. They recognised innovation and entrepreneurial orientation, governmental actions, and the lean manufacturing system as some of the notable factors driving Asian SMEs' financial, social, and environmental performance through a holistic literature review. In the second paper, Geng, Lai and Zhu (2021) look at eco-innovation and its contribution in strengthening performance in Chinese small and medium-sized manufacturing firms. Using contingency theory, the authors suggest the existence of various SMME firm groups based on their level of eco-innovation application, and claim that the performance improvement relating to eco-innovation practices is dependent on the firm clusters and traditional environmental management practices, namely internal source reduction, external compliance and communication, and internal management and control. Their findings indicate two SMME firm clusters (eco-innovation adopters and planners) distinguished by three kinds of eco-innovation implementation (technology, management, and marketing). They conclude that implementing certain eco-innovation practices in combination with traditional environmental management (TEM) practices boosts performance.

The third paper by Liu et al. (2020) identifies the need for more research into how regional environmental mechanisms influence the link between new product development (NPD) and business performance of SMMEs in Asia's fast-pace business environments. To fill this research gap, the study applies the dynamic capability perspective, along with institutional and entrepreneurship theory, to examine how the unique regional characteristics of the intranational market in which SMMEs operate, as well as SMME dynamic capability, impact the relation between NPD and firm performance. Based on a survey of 1321 SMMEs, the study reveals that regional institutional forces, regional entrepreneurial intensity, and dynamic capability moderate the effect of NDP on firm

performance by reducing SMMEs' underlying insufficiency of and heavy dependence on firm-specific resources. In the next article, (Mani, Jabbour & Mani 2020) shift the focus to supply chain practices and their implications on sustainability performance in India. They analysed data from 327 respondents via semi-structured interviews with supply chain managers and practitioners, followed by a survey using a structured questionnaire. Their findings point to a link between social sustainability practices and supply chain performance, which is facilitated by customer, supplier, and operational performance. Furthermore, firm size and investment determine supplier performance, operational performance, and customer performance, as well as chain performance.

Continuing with sustainable supply chain practices and performance, Zhou and Li (2020) investigate the impact of supply chain practices and quality management on firm business performance, including market share performance and innovation performance. Their findings show that supply chain information sharing has a substantial positive effect on quality management practices and supplier specific investment, and that quality management practices and supplier specific investment have a considerable positive impact on both market share performance and innovation performance. According to Kamble et al. (2020), a critical area that has received insufficient attention is how smart manufacturing systems (SMS) compare to traditional systems in improving the performance of SMEs. The authors employ an exploratory and empirical research design to identify and validate performance measures relevant to SMS investments in auto-component manufacturing. They noticed that an SMS offers more competitiveness than a traditional manufacturing system, and planned SMS investments can be assessed on ten performance dimensions, including cost, quality, flexibility, time, integration, productivity, real-time diagnosis and prognosis, computing, social, and ecological. They propose a smart manufacturing performance measurement system (SMPMS) framework based on their findings to help practitioners evaluate their SMS investments.

Wong, Wong and Boon-itt (2020) claims that small and large businesses employ various resource allocation patterns to benefit from integrating environmental management practices (EMPs) and environmental management systems (EMS). The conclusions of their

multigroup structural equation analyses of their survey data from manufacturing firms in Hong Kong and Thailand justify the resource allocation arguments: large firms use resource-demanding EMPs such as green product design and green production to improve outcomes in environmental, cost reduction, and business performance, whereas small firms choose resource-light EMPs such as green logistics and green packaging to achieve only environmental and cost advantages. As a result, different resource allocation patterns emerge, allowing policymakers to resolve various allocation of resources restrictions among small and large firms. The final paper by Guo et al. (2020) contends how financial slack impacts the performance of SMMEs. The authors argue that financial slack improves the performance of SMMEs, that R&D investment facilitates the effect of financial slack on firm performance, and that government incentives and market-supporting institutions positively moderate this mediating effect by incorporating the literature on financial slack and the institutional perspective. Their research shows that financial slack boosts firm performance, and R&D investment helps to mediate the relationship. Furthermore, high levels of government subsidies deteriorate the relationship between financial slack and R&D investment, while high levels of government subsidies and market-supporting institutions strengthen the relationship between R&D investment and firm performance.

Ndubisi, Zhai and Lai (2021) concluded the study by stating that in order to achieve economic growth, many Asian economies have sacrificed social and environmental well-being. Existing research primarily focuses on large corporations and their roles in unsustainable economic development, inadvertently or intentionally vindicating SMEs, particularly those in manufacturing. The authors go on to suggest that manufacturing SMEs account for a large portion of the world's resource consumption, air and water pollution, and waste generation, causing more environmental harm than their larger counterparts in some sectors. As a result, sustainable economic development requires the active participation and commitment of small businesses in general, and the manufacturing sector in particular. Manufacturing SMEs must simultaneously improve their profit, people and planet-related performance in order to achieve sustainable development. The study confirms the contribution of this PhD thesis.

2.5 Overview and knowledge gaps

From this review, it is clear that the body of knowledge regarding the pursuit of SD has developed steadily since the late 1980s, beginning with an early recognition that there were pressing necessities for the preservation of humanity's living conditions into the future, as well as accountabilities and benefits for organisations by incorporating sustainability initiatives into their business development. Much of the study focus has been on developing sustainability implementation models, as well as their challenges in providing organisations with information on planning, conducting, evaluating, and managing their efforts to achieve the TBL. According to the existing literature, an increasing amount of information on sustainability application was regularly recommended as an appropriate way to improve managers' understanding and foster enhanced economic, social, and environmental performance. However, the absence of 'whole-system' as a main explanatory methodology in the literature is evident, particularly across vertical organisational levels. Recent research indicates that addressing sustainability with fragmented view and execution does not ensure relevance and usefulness in both theory building and industrial application towards SD (Thomas 2018; Webster Jr 2009). Studies examining organisations' efforts to embed sustainability initiatives have observed that cases of whole-system, meaning implementing sustainability-oriented practices across key business operational functions (that is, market-facing activities) and organisational levels, altogether at the same time, are more likely to result in firms' desired economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Nevertheless, there has been little study addressing whole-of-enterprise viewpoints. As a consequence, theoretical and practical knowledge of the complex interplay dynamics that result in effective whole-of-enterprise progress toward sustainability is limited.

Moreover, there is a significant gap of knowledge and guidance in the Marketing discipline about marketing managers' responsibilities and interaction with other divisions for SD across functions (that is, whole-system viewpoints) within an organisation. According to scientific literature, Marketing has a long record of theoretical and practical breakthroughs that are always evolving to stay up with new trends and events in the marketplace, both

domestically and globally. (Doyle 1995; Lusch 2007). Extant research suggests that marketing develops strategies based on competition and other environmental evaluations, which it then integrates with other strategic elements (such as financial, research and development, and human resources) to provide an integrated strategic plan. (Jobber 2016). Thus, Marketing is a natural home for achieving greater whole-system sustainability through functional and strategic partnerships with all internal divisions of businesses, as well as market and ecosystem stakeholders. Nonetheless, despite various debates that have taken place within the wider marketing discipline, sustainability is not seen as a pressing issue by all marketing academics, as demonstrated by the little, and largely management-focused, research published in the major Marketing journals (McDonagh & Prothero 2014). Therefore, marketing scholars need to explore further into these issues. Studies that continue to examine diverse marketing strategies and the importance of sustainability in them should be promoted.

With that in mind, the purpose of this research is to look into the whole-system incorporation of sustainability initiatives into enterprises' business operations via the prism of a broader, more sustainability-focused marketing mix. The Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) (Pomering 2017) enables the researcher to examine more firms' decision-making areas and market-related issues, such as operation processes, market positioning procedures, and relationship management with other members of the value chain, allowing for a wider and deeper evaluation of the businesses' efforts toward SD. The findings of the study aim to provide innovative suggestions to firms, particularly those in the manufacturing industry, in order for them to become more sustainable throughout their operational activities. As a result, this study seeks to bridge a knowledge gap in the sustainability marketing literature by investigating the whole-system integration of sustainable practices of both small and big manufacturing firms in Vietnam's emerging economy, a unique context in which enterprises at various phases of development place *people* at the heart of the TBL. The chapter that follows will provide the background of sustainability marketing as well as the argument for why marketing (mix) provides the most appropriate perspectives for understanding how SD functions in a more holistic manner.

CHAPTER 3: WHOLE-SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY VIA MARKETING

This chapter outlines a strategy for business managers to fully implement sustainability marketing (SM) while attempting to bridge a knowledge gap in the Marketing philosophy. Most marketing research is data-driven rather than theory-driven (Webster Jr 2009), which may result in a fragmented view of sustainability concerns in marketing, underlining the need for a robust theoretical foundation that permits a holistic understanding of the interplay between sustainability and marketing. Also, numerous scholars have developed a range of models for assessing organisations' efforts to achieve sustainability development (SD). However, little study has been undertaken on how SM might benefit the manufacturing sector in Asian emerging economies, both managerially and theoretically.

In light of that, this is the first study to propose using the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) (Pomering 2017), an innovative sustainability-oriented framework advanced on the classic ‘4Ps' conceptualisation (McCarthy 1960), as a standalone marketing toolbox that managers may use to examine, analyse, and control the integration of sustainability initiatives in their business operational activities in an effective and comprehensive manner. The investigator's goal is to answer the thesis' research questions (RQs), fill this specific gap in Marketing discipline knowledge by offering a fresh contribution to marketing theory and practice, taking a step towards normalising sustainability issues in organisational operations. To do so, this chapter presents four main sections: 1) the pursuit of sustainability via marketing; 2) the relevance of the Marketing Mix concept in today theory and practice; 3) the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM); and 4) why this is the chosen marketing toolbox for this study. It will begin with the review of past research on the roles of Marketing in the quest of SD. Secondly, it will examine the Marketing Mix concept's relevance in terms of the Marketing discipline as a whole, as well as in terms of sustainability. Finally, it will present the SMM and argue how investigating firms’

sustainability practices via the prism of this framework would shed fresh light on the topic's knowledge.

3.1 The pursuit of Sustainability via Marketing

3.1.1 The relationship of Marketing and Sustainability

Research shows that society and stakeholders have been increasingly supporting firms that carry out an active approach regarding the principles of SD (Gomes et al. 2015). A comprehensive review by Lim (2016) is used here as the theoretical base to examine the relationship between marketing and sustainability in order to address sustainability dilemmas. Covering literature from 1970s up to 2015, the article seeks to provide answers to the possibility of combining sustainability with marketing, as well as a roadmap for future SM research and practices. The paper points out that both marketing scholars and practitioners often struggle to grasp how sustainability concepts may be successfully integrated into marketing practice. It identifies three major shortcomings in SM-focused research: 1) confusing sustainability marketing with green marketing and environmental marketing (Charter 1992; Fisk 1974; Ottman, Humphrey & Group 1993); 2) providing a one-sided focus on sustainable organisational practices with profit and long-term survival goals being primary concerns (Connelly, Ketchen & Slater 2011); or 3) focusing on one and/or two dimensions of the triple bottom line (TBL) rather than all three aspects as a whole (Nolan & Varey 2014; Peattie & Peattie 2009). It suggests a research strategy that covers multiple conceptual boundaries in order to create a holistic approach to sustainability research in the marketing discipline. This article acknowledges that defining the notion of *sustainability marketing* is, however, challenging given the presence of conflicting connotations. Marketing, in practice, urges people to buy items they do not need by presenting products in a way that makes them appealing (Palmer 2012). On the other hand, the academic perspective traditionally sees marketing as playing a critical role in identifying and profitably fulfilling market's demands, and it marshals resources to meet changing wants, such that customers and their satisfaction are key to marketing efforts (Jones et al. 2008). Thus, gaining a full view of sustainability challenges, let alone overcoming them, is complex.

The focus of 'sustainability' differs in marketing literature. A fundamental issue is that the sustainability concern is caused by a number of variables rather than a single or selected set of factors. Therefore, the article suggests that knowledge building is a necessary first step towards achieving a comprehensive view of SM. The challenges that sustainability and marketing face are not only multifaceted, but also interconnected. In order for scholars to find solutions, the relationships between these notions must first be clarified by addressing the following four questions:

First of all, *"is marketing an antithesis of sustainability?"* Many people believe that marketing and sustainability are as fundamentally opposed as chalk and cheese, and continue to portray marketing for its role in driving global consumption growth (Peattie & Peattie 2009); whereas, others reaffirm the potential for marketing to contribute solutions, as evidenced by the growing benefits between the two concepts (Ferdous 2010). The task now is to figure out how to combine marketing and sustainability in order to drive desired behavioural change and normalise sustainable activities (Rettie, Burchell & Riley 2012; Thøgersen & Zhou 2012).

So, *"what does sustainability offer marketing?"* A closer examination shows a number of compelling reasons about what sustainability can provide marketing. Adopting sustainability practices 1) helps businesses reduce cost and enhance productivity by minimizing environmental impacts and achieving lower staff turnover; 2) encourages access into new markets through environmental improvements as well as benefits to the local society and economy; 3) decreases risk by involving stakeholders; 4) boosts its reputation by improving environmental efficiency; 5) fosters human capital development through improved human resource management; 6) facilitates access to capital through productive governance; and 7) generates new opportunities via community development, environmentally responsible offerings, and sustainable choices (Prakash-Mani , Thorpe & Zollinger 2002). Sustainability, thus, provides marketing with a comprehensive perspective based on two arguments: pragmatic and ethical. The pragmatic argument suggests that

because the global society is complex and interconnected, outcomes in one area of interest cannot be delivered effectively and efficiently without accounting for other happenings in the rest of the ‘‘system"—the social and environmental dimensions (Elkington 1998; Sutton 2004). The ethical view asserts that if organisations care about their customers and communities in the ecosystem, they must take into account their business activities because they have impacts on and, in turn, are impacted by all components of the system in which they operate. As a result, sustainability provides a win- win outcome for marketing by delivering value co-creation that can be perpetuated over time, which is consistent with the underlying notion on which marketing is built (Vargo & Lusch 2004).

Similarly, *“what does marketing offer sustainability?”* While some, such as Robert Nuttall- brand communication strategist for Marks & Spencer’s, believe that responsibility for sustainability is divided among various functions within an organisation, others, like Keith Weed- Unilever’s CMO, argue that sustainability strategies are best addressed via marketing because the facilitation of sustainable production and consumption efforts is one of the marketing department's inherent responsibilities. To progress toward sustainability, it is necessary to understand the function of marketing in influencing corporate perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (Jones et al. 2008). Marketers are regularly in direct contact with stakeholders (Merrilees, Getz & O'Brien 2005), indicating that marketing is at the forefront of understanding the critical role of all stakeholders in decision-making (Clulow 2005). As a result, internal marketing generally involves understanding and changing organisational culture, whereas marketing campaigns may focus on communicating that culture to the markets and communities where the company operates. Furthermore, marketing has had a long tradition of theoretical and practical advancements, which are always changing to keep up with new trends and happenings in the marketplace, both domestically and internationally (Doyle 1995; Lusch 2007). Marketing generates strategies based on competition and other environmental assessments, which it then incorporates with other strategic inputs (such as financial, research and development, and human resources) to offer an integrated strategic plan (Jobber 2016). Thus, marketing is a natural home for the achievement of greater sustainability, particularly as it aims for functional and effective partnerships with all market and ecosystem players. Therefore, claims that marketing stifles

sustainability are unsubstantiated. It has been proven that marketing's creative and inventive character ultimately pushes for better, smarter, and more efficient ways for organisations to operate. The combination of marketing and sustainability allows businesses to boost global sustainability performances. Marketing, hence, potentially plays a significant role in driving humanity toward a more self-sufficient and sustainable future.

That said, *"does sustainability sell?"* Based on extensive research, McCann-Erickson (2002) asserts that it does. This principle has been demonstrated by a number of major companies. IKEA, for example, is at the frontline of the furniture business, promoting a more sustainable approach to furniture production and selling. IKEA's sustainability efforts included removing polyvinyl chloride (PVC) from almost all of its products, increasing the use of energy-efficient light bulbs, and incentivising recycling efforts, such as by giving store-wide gift vouchers to customers who returned Christmas trees purchased from IKEA or other retailers for recycling. This example demonstrates how a comprehensive approach to sustainability helps businesses gain economically while reducing negative environmental and social effects.

In light with that, Lim (2016) proposes a set of dimensions including economic, environmental, social, ethical, and technical elements that constitute SM (see figure 3.1.1) which considers five identified aspects to achieve better sustainability. This model demonstrates a "transconceptual approach" to SM (applicable to a wide range of stakeholders, including individuals, businesses, governments, nongovernmental organisations, and community groups) that builds on the TBL approach to organisational and societal success. The article highlights that SM is a modern description of an economically, ecologically, socially, morally, and technologically informed approach to Marketing, based on a theoretical conception. As a result, achieving economic viability, environmental health, social fairness, broad moral practices, and technology innovation and acceptance are critical.

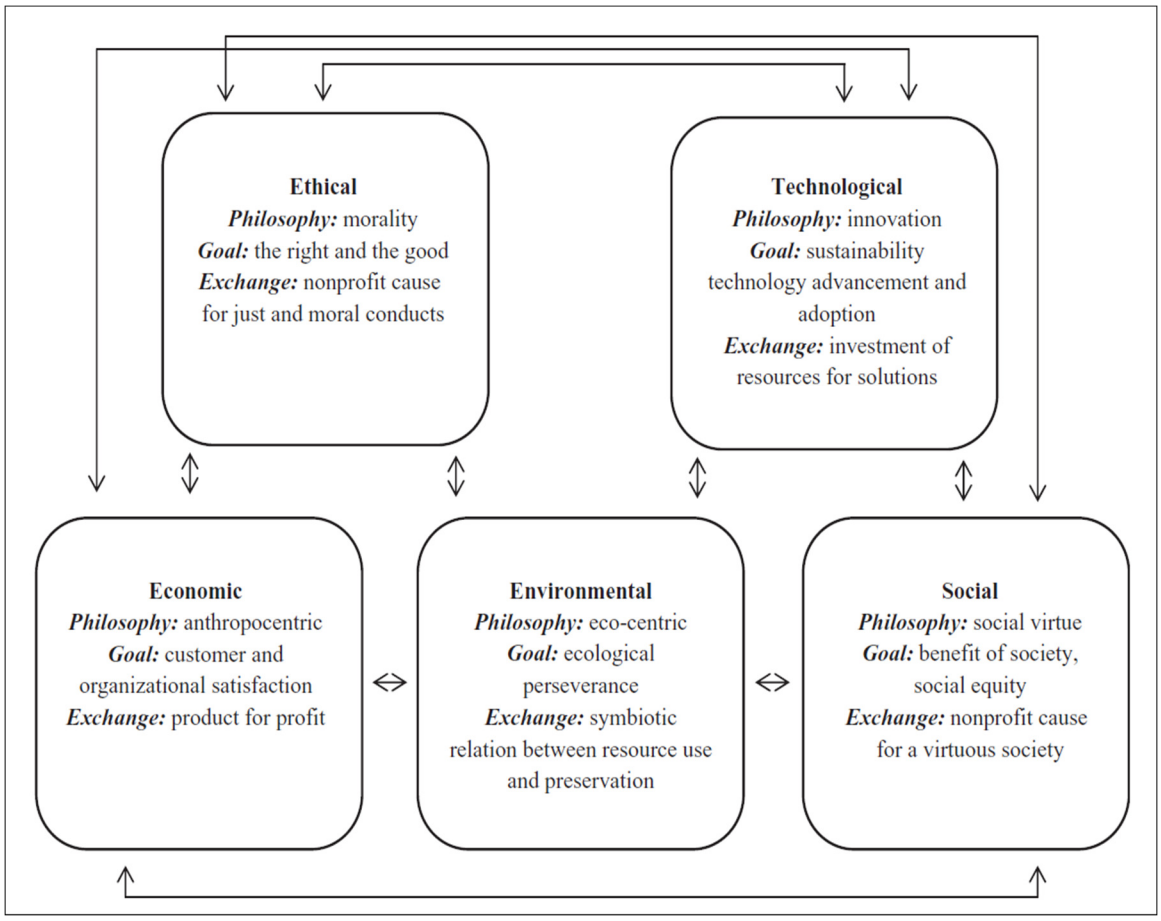

Figure 3.1.1 The five dimensions of sustainability marketing (Lim 2016)

Also, the paper states that marketers who implement SM strategies should possess a better corporate image, while warning the need to avoid SM myopia caused by unfounded claims about socio-ecological benefits made by incompetent and unethical marketers, who fail to find the proper balance between sustainable performance attributes and benefits to the society as a whole. In order for effective SM strategies to be created and executed, marketers, companies, and government agencies must behave themselves ethically. Despite the complexity of determining what is fair under the philosophies and ethics of sustainability, the focus of ethical approaches is on practical action, with their core concept focusing on the right and the good. A particular scenario may be argued to be ‘‘right" if it results in positive outcomes for all humans involved, preferably resulting in the greatest good for the largest number of people. The issue here is the extent to which moral rightness

or wrongness (which may be based on cultural beliefs or religious commitments) is considered, allowing for further discussions over the ethical side of SM. Moreover, the increased connectivity enabled by the technological innovations (e.g. the Internet, smartphones, social media platforms, etc.) contributes to 1) raising awareness among stakeholders, keeping them informed of sustainability issues; and 2) encouraging co-creation of solutions to ongoing problems of unsustainable production, consumption, and practices, making the goal of achieving sustainability more promising than ever. Nevertheless, when technology is used incorrectly, it can have a negative impact on sustainability. Thus, marketers must ensure that technological options offered and used strengthen not only the sustainability of selected dimensions, but all sustainability aspects collectively in order to obtain greater sustainability, furthering the need for a comprehensive approach to understanding, planning, and managing SM strategies.

Prior research proposes that sustainability is multifaceted, and the notion of sustainability is about expanding rather than restricting possibilities. This serves as a guideline for future SM studies by assisting scholars and practitioners in identifying possibilities to improve sustainability value and building their own SM rhetoric. In view of this, this investigation strives to pave the way for broader, deeper, and more concrete improvements in SM by establishing comprehensive key marketing variables for planning, monitoring, and improving the efficacy of sustainability programmes towards the sustainable development goals (SGDs).

3.1.2 The concept of sustainability marketing

This thesis use s*ustainability marketing* to aim at "creating customer value, social value and ecological value" (Belz & Peattie 2009, p. 139). These scholars explain sustainability marketing in two parts. Firstly, sustainability marketing is about

> *"planning, organising, implementing, and controlling marketing resources and programmes to satisfy consumers' wants and needs, while considering social and environmental criteria and meeting corporate objectives."* (Belz & Peattie 2009, p. 31)

Second, the focus is on long-term relationships, with the goal of "building and maintaining sustainable relationships with customers, the social environment, and the natural environment." (Belz & Peattie 2009, p. 32). Also, they recommend the term 'sustainability' because they believe the adjective 'sustainable' can be perceived as marketing that promotes long-lasting development (i.e. staying in business). They highlight that this is a subtle but crucial difference that can be made without any specific reference to *sustainability*.

In other words, it is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to the market in such a way that both human and environmental capital are protected or improved throughout, so that all market-facing activities are environmentally and socially friendly while contributing to the development of a community in which pursuing for sustainability is the standard (Martin & Schouten 2011). Marketing is oriented towards the TBL and reflects the concept that sustainability is a long-term perspective concerned with future generations' interests and rights (that is, sustainable value). In addition to meeting the requirements and generating value for individual consumers, the American Marketing Association's (2013) revised definition of Marketing considers responsibility and value for the broader society. As a result, businesses must focus on changing their activities across the board and finding new ways to deliver value "to customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (2013).

Marketing's new definition also confirms the significance of partners and the need for the co-creation and delivery of environmental and social value for society (Mittelstaedt, Kilbourne & Shultz II 2015; Pomering 2017; Webster & Lusch 2013). This value for

society as a whole will permit marketing to move from displaying scant concern for the externalities "which lie at the centre of many of the issues we now face" (Layton 2016, p. 3) to address, inter alia, "rethinking sustainability and its impacts" (p. 5). In light of that, Gomes et al. (2015) highlight society and stakeholders are increasingly supporting organisations that adopt an active approach to sustainability principles. It is because they recognise that while businesses are operated to create value (Porter 1985; Porter & Kramer 2006), they may also be seen to do harm (Polonsky, Carlson & Fry 2003). Nevertheless, even in their revised article, Porter and Kramer (2006) did not provide any comment around how firms might address the simultaneous creation of harm along with value; and hence the contribution of the Sustainability Marketing Mix (Pomering 2017) as discussed in greater detail below in section 3.4.

As a result, marketing, with its creative and innovative characteristics, is ideally positioned to seek sustainability through more responsible business operations. (Jones et al. 2008). Marketing scholars and practitioners believe that marketing is not only a functional area within an organisation, but also a philosophy that should permeate all areas of the organisation (Layton 2016; Löbler 2016). Marketing's role and accountability must thus infiltrate all aspects of the business. By necessity, this whole-of-enterprise perspective positions SM in the realms of brand positioning, corporate identity, and corporate marketing (Pomering 2017).

3.1.3 The evolution of sustainability marketing

Gordon, Carrigan and Hastings (2011) are amongst notable scholars who raised the concept of *sustainability marketing*. These authors argue that, despite Marketing being criticised as an impediment to sustainable living, it also holds many potential solutions to some of society's sustainability challenges. They suggest that a SM strategy necessitates a departure from the mainstream managerialist mindset, as well as consideration of theories and impacts from various disciplines of science. The article states that pursuing a long-term, multi-faceted, research-driven marketing strategy for sustainability that uses green

marketing, social marketing, and critical marketing (see figure 3.1.3) and leverages the power and potential of Marketing can have a positive impact on sustainability efforts.

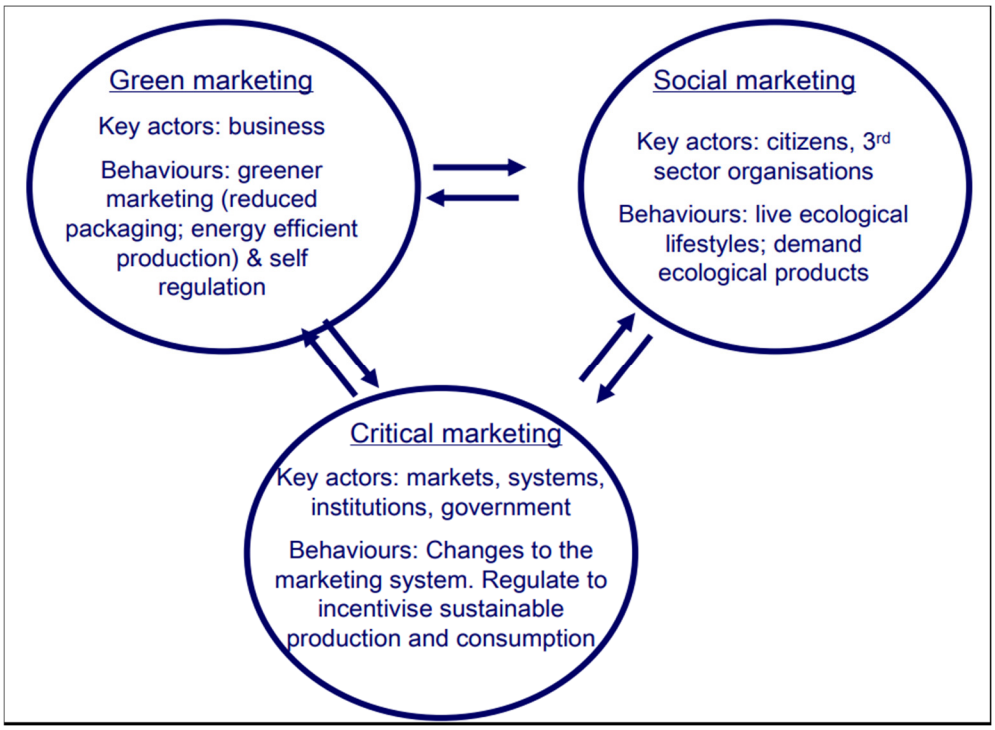

Figure 3.1.3 A Framework of Sustainable Marketing (Gordon, Carrigan & Hastings 2011)

The authors claim that green marketing allows for the introduction of sustainable products and services into the marketplace. They argue that, although the potential of green marketing efforts has yet to be realised which has resulted in 'greenwash,' the notion still has utility as it provides consumers with more sustainable options, thereby reducing the negative consequences of marketing activities on sustainability. At the same time, social marketing can leverage marketing power to encourage sustainable behavioural change has been discussed, while critical marketing can be used to challenge conventional marketing theory and practice, moving the emphasis away from encouraging and expanding consumption and towards other objectives such as quality of life, contentment, and sustainability.

> *"Embedding more sustainable marketing processes and practices from the product 'cradle to the grave', while building sustainability into the core aspects of marketing efforts and indeed business strategy will fundamentally contribute towards sustainable marketing. Such efforts could ensure that product design and development, manufacturing, distribution and promotion are made sustainable, thus limiting consumption and waste."* (Gordon, Carrigan & Hastings 2011, p. 26)

Also, they highlight the critical involvement of key parties: individuals, businesses, governments, and the non-profit sector, whose cooperation must be in a strategic manner. Therefore, it is essential on all stakeholders to work together to ensure that sustainable marketing evolves in accordance with the sustainability agenda. The proposed framework provides a compelling justification for the advancement of marketing for sustainability. It is useful for focusing research on critical elements to ensure not only that SM is realised, but also that Marketing as a discipline is sustainable and can thrive. Nonetheless, while pluralism in research should be promoted (Möller, Pels & Saren 2009), its pragmatic approach does not clearly describe how the framework would overcome old paradigmatic methods, such as green marketing's heavy usage of positivism. Future research cannot examine the components, functions, and processes of the marketing system in isolation; there is a clear need to adopt whole systems thinking to address the systemic aspect of sustainability challenges.

Developing on prior studies, McDonagh and Prothero (2014) conducted a critical review of SM literature published in 18 marketing journals between 1998 and 2013, confirming the necessity to take the "wake-up call" of unsustainable practices more seriously than ever before, as well as the urgency to confront this "megatrend" (Lubin & Esty 2010) on both a managerial and theoretical level. The sustainability debate is multidimensional, with several and contested perspectives ranging from the national to the business level, as well as various regulations and policy measures to address the sustainability challenge. From the Marketing discipline's viewpoint, the authors recgonise that sustainability plays an important role in the sense that its impact on value creation for customers, clients, partners,

and society at large (American Marketing Association 2013), Marketing's raison d'être, is now deemed significant. As a result, there has been a substantial research into SM. Using Kilbourne and Beckmann's initial classifications (1998) as a starting point, this article aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the streams of research addressed, rather than individual papers, in order to build up an assessment of marketing discourse in the SM topic.

Of five streams, four are: 1) individual consumer concerns, behaviour and practices; 2) environmental laws, regulations and policies; 3) reframing sustainability- institutional, societal and systems perspectives; and 4) organisational sustainability strategies and sustainability markets (see table 3.1). The fifth stream of research covers the literature review and assessment of sustainability, notably by Kilbourne and Beckmann (1998) and Leonidou and Leonidou (2011), and is also included by the authors.

Table 3.1 (McDonagh & Prothero 2014)

Stream of research	Examples	The authors' highlights of discussions
Individual consumer concerns, behaviour and practices	consumer attitudes, consumer behaviours, consumer preferences, consumer values- (sustainability) anti-consumption, sustainable consumption	It focuses on numerous green consumer classifications and profiles, as well as how these have evolved into environmentally conscious behaviours such as recycling and engagement in voluntary simplicity, sustainable consumption, and/or anti-consumption (with a sustainability focus) behaviour. Further research on individual concerns, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as research into sustainable consumption habits, is still

		needed. For example, the need to learn more about the conditions that enable society to embrace the ‘less is more' philosophy.
Environmental laws, regulations and policies	social marketing and environmental labelling policies	The focus of the discussion is on the role of public policy and social marketing initiatives in addressing environmental issues. Future research is needed to determine how public policy and marketing strategies may be used to affect genuine cultural change.
Reframing sustainability-institutional, societal and systems perspectives	dominant social paradigm, marketing ideology, theory	The articles discuss the challenge of redefining sustainability from institutional, sociological, and systems perspectives, as well as theoretical and marketing philosophy perspectives. The authors believe that future research should shift away from a limited, managerialist perspective and towards research where "marketing must be willing to challenge its own premises" and critically examine marketing's interaction with the natural world.
Organisational sustainability strategies and sustainability markets	marketing communications, market orientation, branding, new product	These arguments raise questions about how businesses operate and, more crucially, what organisations are for, such as the TBL or doing business differently through the adoption of a social enterprise model.

	development (NPD), product design	Despite numerous discussions which have progressed throughout the larger marketing academy, sustainability is not viewed as a pressing issue by everyone in the marketing academic circles, as evidenced by the limited, and mostly management-focused, research published in the major mainstream marketing publications. Marketing scholars must, therefore, delve deeper into these topics. Research that continues to investigate various marketing strategies and the significance of sustainability in them is to be encouraged.

Amongst the five streams, reframing sustainability-institutional, societal, and systems perspectives, as well as organisational sustainability strategies and sustainability markets, are particularly pertinent to this thesis. The discussions are occurring in standard Management disciplines, and there is a need to have them in Marketing as well. The nature and role of marketing theories and practices will evolve as the nature and role of organisations change. However, according to the authors, there has been some, but very limited, study that has addressed the core issue of marketing ideology and how it is at conflict with the sustainability practices. Besides, there is a disconnection within marketing, where the mainstream sustainability literature maintains its narrow, managerialist focus, leaving more specialised forums to tackle SM from critical, institutional, and systems perspectives.

> *"Key questions still remain; if sustainability is a megatrend, how will it be embedded throughout the entire organisation, and what does this mean for sustainability marketing?"* (McDonagh & Prothero 2014, p. 1204)

This paper argues that the social sciences have fully embraced sustainability as a topic worthy of investigation. According to the author, if the Marketing discipline is serious about contributing to conversations about living differently, it must consider how SM research is conducted, as well as how the findings and recommendations might be implemented in the marketplace and added to further theoretical discussions. As a result, these authors conclude that the most important issue at hand is to further investigate sustainability from a marketing perspective- one that includes both theoretical and practical elements.

Based on the existing knowledge, Thomas (2018) seeks to create a more realistic whole systems approach by using realism's ontological paradigm to provide an inclusive metatheoretical foundation. Via SM, the paper seeks to develop systemic theories of change in order to better comprehend and perhaps free society from unsustainable paths. The main objective of this study is to provide an alternative metatheoretical framework that is "both multilevel and integrative", coherent while remaining inclusive, in order to put SM in a better position to handle what are commonly recognised as very complicated unsustainable market-related problems. The article claims that, on the surface, the broad strategy of SM may appear to be rationally adapted to dealing with the extremely complex challenges of sustainability. However, despite the fact that its different study streams obviously pertain to the same research topic, namely sustainability and marketing, this article argues that its umbrella method is problematically fragmented, preventing a more realistic whole systems approach. It, thus, offers a critical realist (CR) systems approach to not only integrate, but also bridge and extend the SM field, with both "rapprochement and integration in mind" (p. 1532). It states that while highly complex multilevel interactions offer significant job possibilities, the industry's true cost is not reflected in the price of products. Externalities, both social and environmental, such as human health costs and the industry's absorbed carbon footprint, stay unaccounted for (Armstrong & LeHew 2011).

The paper suggests that a whole systems approach would help improve understanding of the field's philosophical potential. It highlights that the problem is obvious as these multiple entities and forces – micro, meso, and macro in size – intertwine and interact in extremely complicated ways, with both intended and unintentional repercussions, beneficial and harmful. Given that the customer has typically played a major role in marketing theory and practice, it is not surprising that consumer behaviour at the micro level has perhaps garnered the most attention in sustainable marketing. Nevertheless, despite its important contributions, this article argues that micro-marketing is limited by a lack of systems thinking. Macro-marketing, on the other hand, investigates marketing systems, embraces complexity, and entails identifying both system drivers and the systemic consequences of trade (Mittelstaedt, Kilbourne & Mittelstaedt 2006). Thus, modern macro-marketing techniques use systems thinking to address the massive challeneges faced by all sustainability scientists towards economic, social, and environmental issues (Raworth 2017). Having said that, the article argues, in terms of SM, its applications are mostly on a macroscopic scale, rather than on a whole systems level in order to truly bring micro, meso and macro processes together. Furthermore, right in the middle of the micro and macro scale, SM functions at the meso level placing an emphasis on an organisation, its structure, and culture (Jeurissen 1997). The article highlights that there is an increasing number of businesses and scholars adopting sustainability as a strategic marketing strategy (Rivera-Camino 2007) due to the growing understanding that sustainability may provide a competitive advantage (Connelly, Ketchen & Slater 2011). At this business level, sustainable design is frequently seen as the primary strategic starting point (Bhat 1993). According to Thomas (2018), green branding, pricing strategies, distribution strategies, and promotion, including advertising, and the entire marketing mix are all being studied. For instance, Leonidou, Katsikeas and Morgan (2013) experimentally illustrates the effects of greening the whole marketing mix on business performance.

In view of the fact that the marketing mix is the primary tool for altering market-facing activities in order to obtain wanted results (Baker & Saren 2016), it is where strategic marketing strategy is put into action, connecting the firm's value-deliver network, which is made up of partners (i.e. suppliers, manufacturers, distributors) that work together to

generate and deliver value to the marketplace, stakeholders and society at large (Kotler & Armstrong 2018). Its applicability and potential contribution to the body of marketing theory, particularly when expanded to include all decision-making areas pertaining to market-facing concerns in the quest of sustainability, will be addressed further below.

3.2 Recent studies on sustainability marketing

Tollin and Christensen (2019) identifies levels of corporate sustainability commitment in marketing, processes associated with sustainability marketing commitment, sustainability marketing drivers at the functional level of marketing, and its organisational context. Looking at the two ends of the spectrum, the authors notice three key characteristics: a proclivity to play a champion role for corporate sustainability in the company, involvement in promoting and managing sustainability-led new product development projects, and initiatives to foster relations with multiple organisations that actively encourage sustainability-led innovation in business and society. Thus, sustainability marketing involves marketing mix management with a TBL approach, but it is also a process that needs efforts outside of the marketing management field. This study shows that the potential for this capability to create and reinforce is largely dependent on the ability of marketing departments within companies to consistently achieve, create, and seize new insights, thereby incorporating knowledge of consumer values and processes into innovation activities. Furthermore, the findings indicate that marketing managers must promote marketing capabilities related to initiating, driving, and managing new development projects because they provide feasible pathways to success for not only the marketing function but the company as a whole. Considering the significance of innovation and corporate sustainability in business, the strong relationship between marketing capabilities oriented towards exploration and marketing's influence, as detailed in this study, should aid managers' initiatives to develop innovation as a central dimension of their marketing logic. The link between sustainability marketing commitment and brand performance provides yet another reason to prioritise innovation and marketing capabilities geared towards exploration at the top of the management agenda.

Kelleci (2021) suggests a four-stage value creation framework that provides a synthesis strategy based on the value phenomenon from a comprehensive viewpoint, aiming to shift from a firm-centric to a society-centric approach in order to improve societal well-being. In doing so, the four-stage model utilises a classification that logically and causally combines various concepts into a coherent and explanatory set of types.

Table 3.2 Four-stage Model of Value Creation for Sustainability-oriented Marketing (Kelleci 2021)

Phase	Dominant Economic Paradigm	Sustainable Value Creation Type	Level of Involvement	Sustainability-Oriented Marketing Approaches	Network Structure
Phase 4: Introductory	Commons Economy	**Value-in-Participation**	++++ Participation	**Participatory Marketing**	Online multilateral decentralized participation
Phase 3: Growth	Sharing Economy	**Value-in-Access**	+++ High interaction	**Access-Based Marketing**	Online trilateral centralized interconnection
Phase 2: Growth	Reuse Economy	**Value-in-Reuse**	++ Moderate interaction	**Second-Hand Marketing**	Offline/online bilateral/ trilateral centralized interconnection
Phase 1: Maturity	Functional Economy	**Value-in-Utility**	+ Limited interaction	**Functional Marketing**	Offline/online bilateral interconnection

At Phase 1, functional marketing serves as a link between traditional value creation and modern value creation to sustainable value creation. It is based on a functional economy that seeks to decouple economic value from material and energy consumption. In general, functional marketing is based on one-to-one marketing, with a strong focus on bilateral interplay that aims to customise products and services to develop customised or personalised customer value. Thus, value takes place between the firm and its customers, and does not imply the coordination and alignment of other potential external value-adding partners, thereby neglecting the utilisation of various network properties of sustainability marketing. As a result, functional marketing is regarded an oversimplified strategy to sustainability, as the connection between the firm and its customers is limited. At Phase 2,

reusing items significantly reduces waste because it does not require extra resources beyond transportation, resulting in lesser materials being sent to landfills. Enterprises have already begun to implement a second-hand marketing strategy in response to consumers' shifting attitudes towards second-hand consumption. However, it remains a limited strategy to sustainability due to the fact that interactions do not adhere to "active-collective-participatory" patterns. As networks, relationships, and interactions are stagnant, passive, and defined within a narrower context, second-hand marketing is a piecemeal sustainability solution.

At Phase 3, the sharing economy drives access-based marketing, which is stimulated by advancement of information and communication technology as well as changing consumer habits and preferences. In essence, access-based marketing should be focused on facilitating and expanding external interactions rather than increasing sales and profitability, as opposed to product-centric marketing based on value-in-exchange. Three parties involved create a trilateral engagement in access-based marketing: service facilitators (e.g., Uber, Airbnb), service providers (e.g., driver, host), and customers (e.g., rider, guest). Because more participants (e.g., service facilitators, service providers, and customers) are involved in the system, this trilateral interaction is a more sustainable approach to marketing than functional marketing. Second, access-based marketing is based on the temporary use of services rather than ownership. As a result, resource consumption can be reduced while unused resources are maximised, as most assets are underutilised. Nevertheless, it cannot be regarded as fully sustainable because access to these platforms is dominated by tech monopolies. In other words, these digital multinational corporations manipulate users' purchase preferences through product recommendations while controlling centralised platforms under a single authority. Finally, while these platforms allow interactivity via an ecosystem strategy, interactions, in and of themselves, do not lead to a transformed society. At Phase 4, participatory marketing based on "value-in-participation" is grounded in the commons economy, which aims to develop distributed or inclusive value for society as a whole, and is strengthened by Open Value Networks (OVNs). This necessitates collaborative participation in a thriving and ever-changing network of partnerships dedicated to a common goal. This is in contrast to the long-

standing economic systems of the industrial era's traditional downstream marketing concepts. P articipatory marketing aims at promoting "active-collective-participatory" macro-level consumption patterns as opposed to "passive-individual-private-alienated" patterns of functional, secondhand, and sharing economies. Modern business strategies are more concerned with creating value for society as a whole rather than just the firm and its customers.

The article demonstrates the four-stage value creation model for sustainability-oriented marketing, from Phase 1 to Phase 4. Participatory marketing in Phase 4 is the ideal sustainability-oriented marketing strategy, with the potential to boost marketing's role in changing consumer subjects to construer subjects or true citizen subjects in an emerging economic framework of a common's economy. The author states that this transition has increased societal well-being, promoted inclusive growth, and managed shared wealth and assets in accordance with the tenants of participatory culture. As a result, organisations must redefine and re-systematize their market strategies based on value-in-participation, as consumers with post-materialistic values may also take activist positions, which could be disadvantageous to the presence of market entities in the era of sustainability.

Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021) examine how sustainable marketing concerns have grown, but not to the point where they have become the driving force behind markets and business practices that meet sustainability goals. The paper proposes a system for promoting sustainable consumption through corporate marketing strategies and appropriate government interventions.

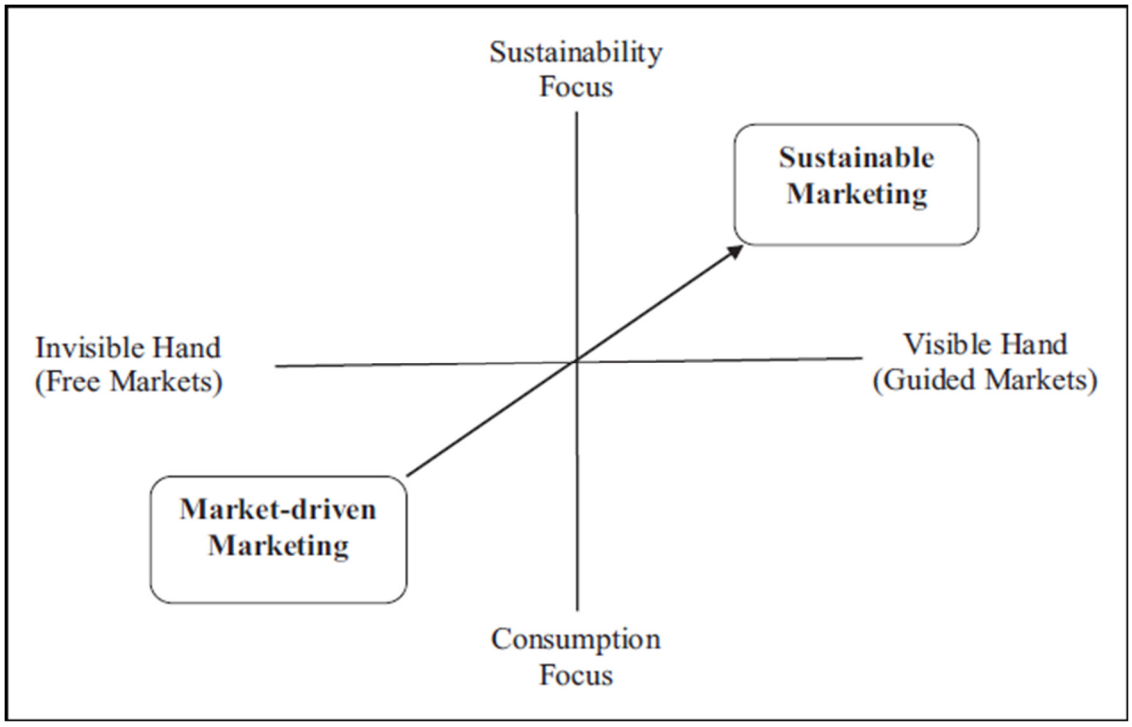

Figure 3.2.1 From market-driven to sustainable marketing- two-dimensional shift (Sheth & Parvatiyar 2021)

According to the study, marketing requires a two-dimensional shift in focus from consumption to sustainability, as well as a transition from a free-market perspective to a guided market strategy with active policy intervention. While governments work to translate policy commitments and sustainability priorities, corporate marketers must incorporate transformative practices to evolve business operations, particularly those associated with unsustainable production, distribution, and consumption systems. It cannot continue to be market-driven and reactive to market forces. It must actively shift markets towards more sustainable behaviour, incorporating sustainability goals into business objectives. SDGs will be challenging to attain without these two concurrent interventions at the enterprise and government levels. Although consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the impact of their consumption on environmental systems and human life, the authors believe it is still insufficient to create a market force sufficient to ensure sustainability. As a result, more deliberate and conscientious institutional interventions are required.

3.3 The relevance of the Marketing Mix concept in today's theory and practice

Borden (1964) claims to be the first to use the term 'marketing mix', and that it is inspired by Culliton (1948) view of a business leaders when he states that an executive is "a mixer of ingredients, who sometimes follows a recipe as he goes along, sometimes adapts a recipe to the ingredients immediately available, and sometimes experiments with or invents ingredients no one else has tried". Since, the marketing mix management paradigm has significantly evolved and shaped marketing theory, research and practice (Grönroos 2006), and as a source of differentiation (Kotler & Armstrong 2018; van Waterschoot 2000). It is widely defined as the:

> *"mix of controllable marketing variables that the firm uses to pursue the desired level of sales in the target market"* (American Marketing Association 2016).

Consistent with this definition, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) consider the marketing mix as the set of tactical marketing techniques that a company employs to generate the desired reaction in its target market. In light of that, the marketing mix can include whatever a business can do to boost demand for its product (Kotler & Armstrong 2018) and can be used to build both long-term strategies and short-term tactical plans (Palmer 2012). As a result, the marketing mix is a appropriate toolbox to examine and offer suggestions about marketing's role in ensuring SD because it consists of the controllable (therefore, manageable) aspects that marketing managers employ to attain their goals.: creating and delivering value to the society as a whole, rather than just segment members. The marketing mix has been, thus, significant in informing the development of both marketing theory and practice (Möller 2006) as it 1) simplifies the handling of marketing; 2) sets marketing aside from other activities of the firm and the delegation of marketing tasks to specialists; and 3) the components of the marketing mix can change a firm's competitive position (Gronroos 1994). Because all managers must allocate resources across various demands, the marketing manager will distribute resources available amongst marketing

mix elements in order to contribute to the creation/co-creation and delivery of individual and social value. (Grönroos 2006). In doing so, it instils the marketing philosophy inside the organisation.

The marketing mix concept is considered as “quintessential to marketing” (van Waterschoot & De Haes 2008, p. 48) because it is inherent to market-facing circumstances. Several marketing mix experts attempted to put together a list of controllable variables that may be used by organisations to achieve their desired outcomes. Frey (1956) and Borden (1964), for example, used a checklist system. Similarly, some scholars strive to provide concise and convenient categories that may be easily memorised. Only McCarthy's (1960) ‘4Ps’ marketing mix concept has been regarded as the dominant design amongst numerous models (Constantinides 2006). It features four marketing tools (that is, marketing decision-making areas) under four headings beginning with the letter P: Product, Price, Place and Promotion- as a means of translating marketing strategy into action.

However, more academics, such as Grönroos (2006), have recognised the necessity for marketing mix variables to be context-specific rather than generic, arguing that it should include what must be planned and implemented to support value formation. As a result, various variations of the marketing mix have been developed over the years, frequently by adding one or more ‘P' components to represent the peculiarities of a given field of application. In retail marketing, for example, a fifth ‘P' element is frequently added to signify Personnel/Personal selling, and a further ‘P’ is also included to denote the Presentation matter of products as well as the store layout (Ster 1993). Similarly, in service marketing, three additional ‘P’ components have also been suggested to represent Participants (later referred to as ‘people’), Physical Evidence and the Process aspect (Booms & Bitner 1981). In keeping with this pattern, Pomering (2017) introduces a novel set of marketing mix variables for the aim of achieving sustainability, which is termed in this thesis as the Sustainability Marketing Mix.

3.4 The Sustainability Marketing Mix

The Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) directly connects sustainability practices to corporate strategy. Its purpose is to manage the firm's activities in order to

> *"minimise harm creation, which is typically borne by society at large, and thereby maximise the creation of individual and societal value"* (Pomering 2017, p. 158).

The SMM comprises ten marketing decision-making areas (see figure 3.2.2) that businesses may manage in the quest of creating and delivering value to consumers, clients, partners, and society as a whole. The SMM emphasises marketing's role in co-creation and value delivery to the marketplace and society at large. In addition to the four traditional 'Ps' (Product, Price, Promotion, and Place) and three service marketing mix variables (Participants/People, Physical Evidence, and Processes) that have been modified for the purpose of sustainability, three new elements are introduced: Principles, Promise, and Partnership (Pomering 2017). These ten controllable marketing tools, when cross-referenced against the TBL model, enable firms to reach out to all marketing decision-making areas in order to effectively manage the planning and implementation of their business operations toward the SDGs.

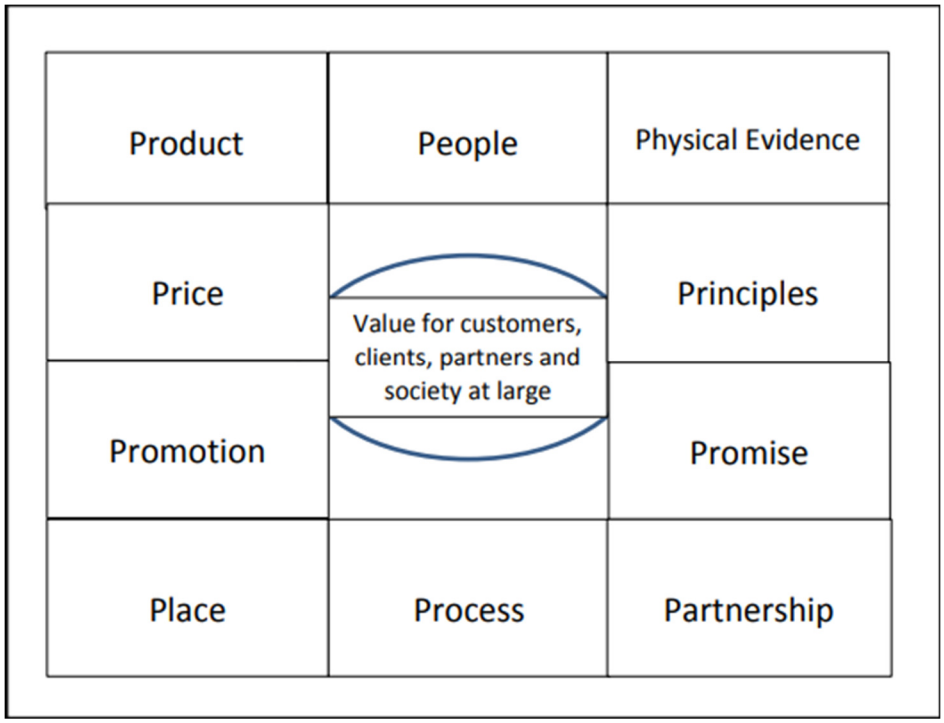

Figure 3.2.2: The ten elements of the sustainability marketing mix (Pomering 2017)

Taking precautions against the field of marketing becoming increasingly scattered into a number of increasingly separate sub-fields, each responding to a narrowly defined range of interests with often very specific methodologies, as this is likely to limit our capacity to respond holistically to the types of challenges we now face (Layton 2016), the ten variables of the SMM complement but are more extensive than previous frameworks, considering that marketing connects the firm's activities with suppliers on one end and the market on the other. Despite the popularity of the '4Ps', the traditional marketing mix offers limited managerial decision-making areas (Baker & Saren 2016) and, hence, is increasingly unable to address the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Peattie & Belz 2010). Consistent with the argument made by Adams et al. (2016), generating social and environmental value on top of economic interests requires radical shifts in an organisation's philosophy and values, as well as its products, processes, or practices. The SMM offers a new viewpoint in the marketing theory towards addressing the complexity of sustainability, as well as adding managerial significance to marketing for sustainable

thinking. The ten controllable marketing variables of the SMM are discussed in depth below.

i. Product

Product is anything that can be provided to a market to meet a demand or need. It is defined as “a bundle of attributes (features, functions, benefits, and uses) capable of exchange or use; usually a mix of tangible and intangible forms” (American Marketing Association 2016). Because product is also used to represent the value generated and "provided by the organisation to the market" (Kotler & Armstrong 2018; Porter 1985), the harm caused by this process (externalities) should be considered (Polonsky, Carlson & Fry 2003). In manufacturing, materials (i.e. recyclable/sustainable materials) and processes (i.e. reduce, reuse, and recycling to minimise energy usage and discharge of industrial smoke, waste water) have varying environmental and human health consequences (Belz and Peattie, 2009). For example, Dell, a computer manufacturer, incorporates alternative, recycled, and recyclable materials into the design of its products and packaging, as well as advances in energy efficiency and design for end-of-life and recyclability (Ceres 2014).

ii. Price

Price is a strategy for influencing demand by determining the selling price to the market, establishing trade margins and setting credit conditions (Lovelock & Patterson 2015). Price is an important factor in determining a product's and brand's positioning as viewed by the market in comparison to rivals (Kotler & Keller 2006). Therefore, firms set prices in response to competitive and economic conditions in order to match them with market's perceptions of the product's value (Kotler & Armstrong 2018). According to Kotler et al. (2015), cost-based pricing, in which a markup is applied to the cost of the product, is considered as the simplest of the primary pricing strategies. Pomering (2017) highlights the full cost (to the environment and society at large i.e manufacturing and delivering of products), however, is rarely accountable in price-setting decisions. This argument is consistent with Martin and Schouten (2011), who state that “a sustainable price accounts

fully for the economic, environmental, and social costs of a product's manufacture and marketing while providing value for customers and a fair profit for the business" (p. 171). As a result, the price of a product should include the cost of the externalities of the manufacturing process. Furthermore, sustainability innovation may boost labour productivity by lowering intangible costs (which helps increase profit) due to more efficient utilisation of resources that, at the same time, helps lessen impacts on the planet (Woo et al. 2014). Thus, sustainability-oriented firms should be able to reduce both types of expenses by rigorous management across all parts of the marketing mix. Because product price decisions entail "a clear understanding of the value of the service from the customer's point of view" (Booms & Bitner 1980, p. 348), full-cost pricing must be supported by consumer education (Pomering 2017); which is one of the roles of Promotion.

iii. Promotion

Promotion is the communication process through which businesses strive "to inform, persuade, and remind consumers – directly or indirectly – about the products and brands that they sell" (Kotler & Keller 2006, p. 536). It is the brand's voice to improve market interactions and play an educational role that might save both businesses and the market from the tragedy of the commons (Pomering 2017)- a model that forecasts the ultimate overexploitation or deterioration of all shared resources (Hardin 1968). Firms might have a dual emphasis for sustainability promotion, such as using social media to start discussions with the market about the sustainability solutions the company delivers through its products, as well as with other stakeholders about the firm as a whole (Belz & Peattie 2009). Hence, sustainability promotion can increase transparency, foster relationships, raise the bar on what might be considered industry standards and minimum expectations, and overcome the barriers of consumers' perceived quality trade-offs and scepticism when confronted with sustainability-oriented marketplace options (Matthes & Wonneberger 2014; Wymer & Polonsky 2015). For instance, Nike, the sports-gear multinational company, incorporates sustainable design throughout its product line and, in 2013, launched the Making app, which made the data in its materials sustainability index public (Ceres 2014). This enables designers from throughout the industry and beyond to make

more sustainable design decisions, resulting in lower-impact products. According to Pomering (2017), it is critical that the mode of promotion be sustainability-oriented in order to demonstrate the firm's dedication and professionalism in the pursuit of sustainability.

iv. Place

Place, also known as marketing channels or distribution, refers to the business logistic and marketing operations involved in producing and delivering products to target markets (Borden 1964). It is a range of "independent organisations involved in the process of making a product or service available for use or consumption" (Kotler & Keller 2006, p. 468). These organisations, who are part of the value delivery network, offer value while also causing environmental and/or social harm through their activities. Although physical distribution operations are still required in the marketplace, businesses' methods of service are changing faster than ever before. This may be observed in the influence of the internet on information and education (Pomering & Johnson 2018). This means that organisations might possibly save a great deal of cost in terms of resources while also providing more convenience to their clients and increasing their long-term profitability.

v. Participants

While Participant is originally introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981) especially for the service industry, it is modified here to apply to the manufacturing sector when interaction and collaboration (via Partnerships, the tenth component of the SMM) between members of the value delivery chain are taken into consideration. It highlights the human actors, to include the firm's personnel/ human resource management (i.e. training, discretion, commitments, appearance, interpersonal behavior) and other stakeholders (i.e. behavior, degree of involvement) who play a part in value delivery. Consistent with Pomering (2017), the term 'Participants' is use in this thesis to differentiate firms' employees and clients from the work 'People' which refers to the society at large (as in the people aspect of the TBL). This SMM element is vital because "an integral part of business sustainability is to remember that 'people are the business' and they have to implement change" (Charter et

al. 2002, p. 29). Firms' personnel should be committed to the principles and promises established by their firms towards SD so that to contribute to sustainability-oriented innovation processes (Pomering & Johnson 2018). As a result, efficient internal marketing campaigns to employees, such as presentations, seminars, online resources, and newsletters, are more necessary than ever in encouraging them to participate in environmental and social initiatives. Participants are, hence, the co-creators of value who need to be carefully selected, educated and managed.

vi. Physical evidence

Physical evidence, similar to Participant element, is originally introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981) especially for the service sector. It refers to the setting in which the interaction between the service provider and its clients takes place, as well as any physical components that support service delivery or communication (Wilson et al. 2012). For the manufacturing industry, they might be tangible clues within the firm's factories (e.g. layout of factory facilities, atmosphere, personnel appearance, advertising materials, invoices, written communication) and via collaboration between members of the value chain (e.g. third-party endorsements). These have a significant impact on market' perceptions of the quality of the product they receive and the firm's professionalism (i.e. how closely the firm's physical evidence matches with its promotion/promises). Furthermore, physical evidence such as ingredients, country of origin, packaging materials, and other brand features on products demonstrate the firm's sustainability approach. According to Pomering (2017), it could overlap with other variables of the SMM, such as Processes and Promotion, because it offers consumers with the indications they are increasingly looking to the back-stories behind the array of market products they are presented with. Physical evidence, when well planned and implemented, is walking the talk (i.e. Promises, Principles, Promotion) regarding sustainability to persuade the market and partners of the firm's commitments to creating and delivering values to society at large.

vii. Processes

Process, originally introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981) referring to the procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities by which the service is acquired, provides significant opportunity for sustainability improvement, typically with immediate effect (Pomering & Johnson 2018). Process is the “how to” of every other variables of the marketing mix. It might be the process of sourcing resources, logistics, production, pricing, communication, establishing distribution channels, selecting partners, and accurately charging consumers in the case of manufacturing. A poorly designed processing system makes it difficult for market and society as a whole to trust the firm's principles and/or be convinced of what the firm promises. Process improvements may reduce resource consumption and enhance business performance, thereby leading to improved economic, social, and environmental consequences.

viii. Principles

Principles is the first innovative variable introduced by Pomering (2017) for the SMM, which refers to “the firm’s values” as reflected “both in the organisation’s mission statement and corporate communications, including its corporate website and reporting, and often in marketing communications, such as its advertising and public relations” (p. 162). According to Gonzalez et al. (2004), when a company's mission serves as the foundation for its marketing strategy and is paired with an appropriate manufacturing process, a successful product may be envisaged. Having sustainability-oriented principles is essential for a firm 's identity in order to differentiate and get an edge over competitors in terms of brand image regarded as sustainable. (Cone Communications 2017). Principles might begin with attempts to reduce externalities produced by the business's activities in order to create shared value in order to improve the social, economic, and environmental situations of the communities in which the firm operates, or society as a whole. These principles might serve as the cornerstone for the company's promises.

ix. Promise

Promise, the second sustainability-oriented marketing variable of the mix suggested by Pomering (2017), can be descried as “the expectations associated with the corporate brand” (Balmer & Greyser 2006, p. 736). According to (Sull & Spinosa 2007), promises are "pledges" or "commitments" made by a business to resolve issues both within and outside the organisation. They connect activities in organisations and bring individuals from various backgrounds together to achieve a shared sense of what has to be done. Promises concerning sustainability might be made in terms of the TBL and/or the SDGs. Several studies have been conducted to examine the impact of good and bad promise-related management on the success and failure of enterprises. Promise management, the foundation of sustaining relationships with key stakeholders, such as consumers, is highlighted by Grönroos (2006). Similarly, Sull and Spinosa (2007) argue that when a employees fail to deliver on promises, their firms’ performance would suffer, and that promises are the fundamental units of interaction in organisations. Pomering (2017) adds that promises might be used as yardsticks for future planning as well as standards against which to assess present performance. As a result, promise should be included into businesses' vision, projecting its path in the minds of employees, clients, and other stakeholders.

x. Partnership

Partnership, the final element of the SMM, is critical for addressing environmental and social concerns in a whole-systems approach since it guarantees sustainability resonates across the whole value delivery network (Gallear, Ghobadian & Chen 2012). Pomering (2017) states that while *internal partnerships* rely on “internal marketing and human resource management” to educate, recognise, and reward employees for sustainability practices, *external partnerships* include “the traditional members of a firm’s value-delivery network, that is, suppliers, channels, and customers, but might also include those with expertise who might assist the organisation achieve its sustainability goals” (p. 163). Given the complexity of the challenges that firms will face in their quest of sustainability, partnership will be fundamental to the notion of co-creation of environmental and social

value, and relationship management will be a crucial facet of this marketing variable. (Grönroos 2006). Companies that create cooperative strategies will be more likely to succeed, as long-term solutions will necessitate new kinds of collaboration. Partnerships may be required to address mutual environmental and social concerns, with competitors to decrease impacts, with consumers to discover new methods to satisfy requirements or recycle resources, or with former critics to develop novel solutions to long-standing problems (Charter et al. 2002). These "sustainability-enablers" will collaborate and assist for the firm to move away from "business as usual" (Pomering 2017, p. 163). Thus, firms that have sustainability-oriented principles, promises, and goals should find it simpler to develop successful relationships with internal and external audiences in order to co-create and achieve SD.

Each of the ten SMM variables discussed above is not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary and often overlapping. Each of the decision-making area presented is, in fact, interrelated. All ten must occur in a strategic and multi-faceted effort for marketing to position sustainability at the core of its philosophy, principles, and practices for sustainable marketing to become a reality. This approach is critical not only to achieving sustainable marketing, but also to ensuring that Marketing as a discipline is sustainable and can develop.

3.4 Why is the Sustainability Marketing Mix chosen for this study?

According to Bridges and Wilhelm (2008), SM necessitates "a consideration of environmental and social issues in all elements of marketing strategy planning, from objective setting to target market selection to strategic and tactical decisions regarding each of the marketing mix variables" (p. 34). Hence, sustainability concerns must pervade all levels of a company's strategic planning. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no variant of the marketing mix goes as far as the SMM in including all manageable tools to achieve this. The ten-element SMM are designed to overcome any managerial hurdles in the pursuit of sustainability that might result from the limitation of "a discipline-imposed toolbox of just four instruments" (Pomering 2017, p. 164), by providing more decision

areas with greater clarity and flexibility. Moreover, while most sustainability monitoring frameworks are industry-specific, the SMM is intended to provide a whole-of-enterprise overview for organisations of all sizes and industries; hence, it might contribute a viable alternative of a universal framework to analyse businesses' sustainable performance. Based on current marketing knowledge and practice of how proactively managed marketing's externalities improve both individual and societal well-being, the SMM rethinks how marketing is operationalised to encourage sustainability considerations and practices to become mainstream in business operations. As it is linked to organisations' vision/mission, the SMM directs attention from the strategic to the tactical and operational levels. The ten controllable elements might be used to analyse a firm's present condition as well as a roadmap to reaching SDGs for businesses through different market-facing operational areas.

Through the lens of the SMM, this research presents an opportunity to investigate the level of effort and adaptability amongst private manufacturing firms in incorporating sustainable practices into their business operational activities in Vietnam's emerging economy. The SMM approach to sustainability marketing takes a holistic strategy in order to give a unique theoretical viewpoint on marketing for sustainability. This investigation, hence, seeks to make a contribution to the marketing community, both academically and practically. As a result, the conceptualisation of the SMM would better enable researchers and practitioners to strive towards greater marketing-sustainability outcomes. The following chapter describes the methodological process of this research.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

As there is no perfect research design, researchers must select the most appropriate design based on their individual research questions. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2003; Gummesson 2001; Lukas 2004). Research problems and questions often occur as a result of reading (and noticing a gap in) the extant literature on a topic, or reflecting on an unresolved issue (to some extent) in society (Bryman 2016). These circumstances can ignite an interest in an investigation in order to address emergent (research) problems and questions. In this study, the topic of interest is researching the driving forces of sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing firms via semi-structured interviews with their personnel through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix.

The systematic review of the extant literature described in the previous two chapters shows a clear gap in the literature around identifying and understanding the drivers of sustainable development in Vietnamese manufacturing firms (both small and large). This lack of understanding leads to what, how and why questions that are best investigated through a qualitative research approach.

In the sections that follow, an explanation of the inductive approach adopted in this study is provided, an explanation of the cases selected is outlined followed by the data collection methods, the process of data analysis adopted in this study and finally a consideration is given to the issue of determining the quality of any qualitative research.

As a result of an extensive study of the extant literature, an appropriate research design is selected to provide relevant clues about the substance that a researcher is aiming to assess (Yin 2017). For this study, the investigator will employ a qualitative, multiple-case study method. Data will be collected via: 1) semi-structured in-depth interviews with employees of six private manufacturing firms in Vietnam; and 2) various artefacts through the

investigator's observations and documentary evidence (e.g. firms' websites and annual reports). The study aims to gain an understanding about the sustainability initiatives and related business operations and management matters (i.e. firms' interpretation/ motivation/ barriers in the pursuit of sustainability) amongst private manufacturing firms in the emerging economy of Vietnam, from a fresh perspective of *Marketing*. The Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) (Pomering 2017) framework will provide a 'lens' through which to view and investigate the phenomenon under study by guiding the semi-structured interview questions and protocol.

According to Sarantakos (1998), the research design process starts with the selection of an appropriate paradigm, followed by choosing a suitable research methodology, then the selection of a method of data collection and analysis. This approach is show in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Research design process (Sarantakos 1998)

Stage	Definition
1. Paradigm	"A set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived" (p. 31)
2. Methodology	"A model, which entails theoretical principles as well as a framework that provides guidelines about how research is done" (p. 32)
3. Method	"The tools or instruments employed by researchers to gather empirical evidence or to gather data" (p. 32)

When looking through the research onion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), this thesis 'methodological approach could be divided into more in-depth stages ranging from the philosophy to the time horizon and techniques and procedures.

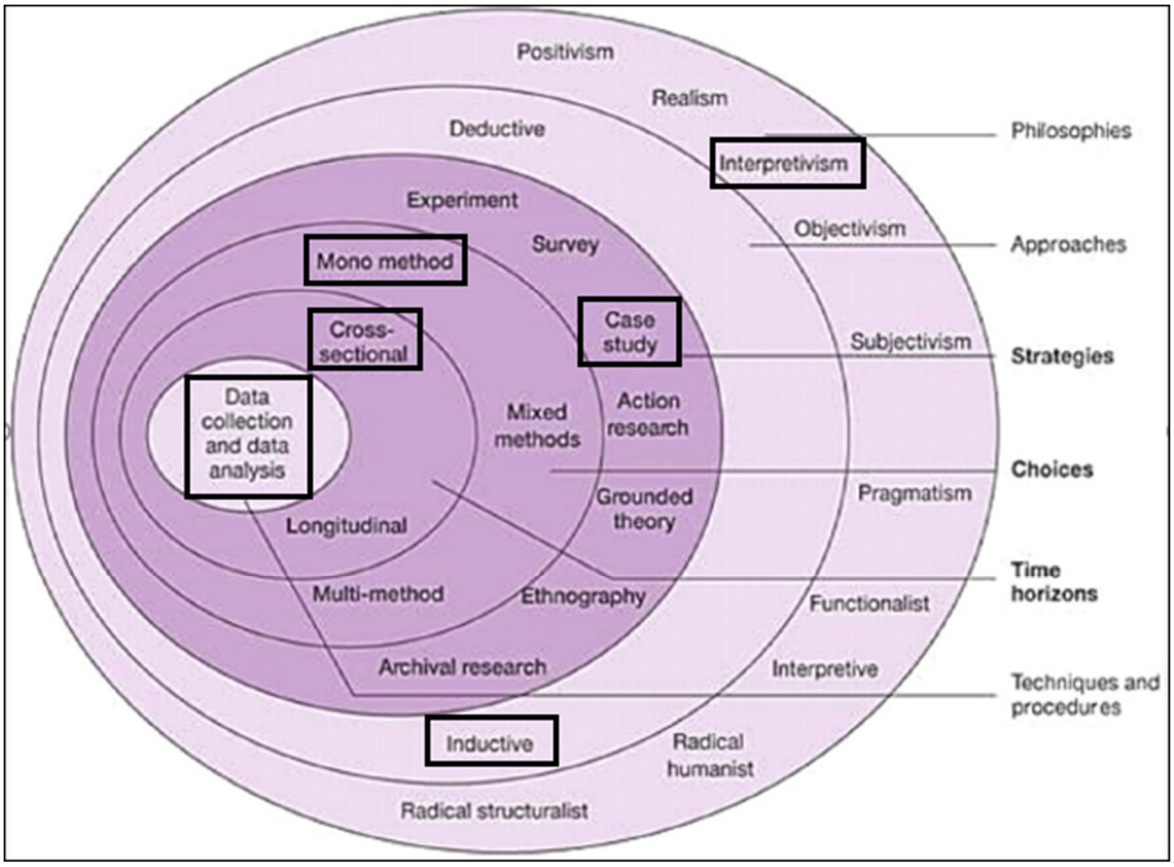

Figure 4. The research onion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016)

The researcher and the research objectives influence the selection (i.e. highlighted options) of this study's research methodology model.

4.1 Paradigm: Interpretivism

The paradigm must be chosen carefully since it influences the second and third research stages which are the research methodology and research method, respectively. The three popular world views in social science are positivism, critical theory and interpretivism (Sarantakos 1998). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), *positivism* "entails working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalisations" (p. 135), while *critical (realism) theory* "focuses on explaining what we see and experience, in terms of the underlying structures of reality that shape the observable events" (p. 138), and *interpretivism* "emphasises that humans are different from physical phenomena because

they create meanings… and that social worlds cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena" (p. 140). Interpretivism, thus, differs from positivism and critical theories in that this approach does not accept making broad conclusions, but offers deeper understanding of a particular situation (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta 2007).

Interpretivism is selected as most appropriate for this study, which involves observation and communication with employees of private manufacturing firms, who will express their understanding and sense-making about sustainability practices in their firms. Interpretivism seeks to gain knowledge about a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially-constructed (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta 2007). Interpretive theorists view reality as created in the minds of people, that is, the interviewed employees in this investigation. Sarantakos (1998) defines *reality* as "internally experienced, socially constructed through interaction… and is based on the definition people attach to it" (p. 36), and accepts that *knowledge* "is not derived through the senses only; understanding meanings and interpretations is more important" (p. 38). Consistent with this view, Crotty (1998) recognises "different people construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon" (p. 9) as he argues that truth/meaning "comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities of our world" (p. 8). Interpretive researchers approach the reality from subjects, typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group or culture (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta 2007). Therefore, interpretive research is more subjective than objective. The goal of interpretivism is to value subjectivity (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta 2007) and "interpretivists eschew the idea that objective research on human behaviour is possible" (p. 110).

The interpretivist approach is also called a naturalistic approach, denoting a natural setting in which researchers need to operate in order to gain trust, participation, access to meanings and in-depth understanding (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Interpretivism is often associated with qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln 2011), of which the case study is

one of the five major methodologies (Creswell & Poth 2017). This approach will be elaborated upon in the next section.

After selection of the paradigm, the second stage of research is to determine an appropriate methodology.

4.2 Methodology: Qualitative Multiple-Case Study

In this study, data will be collected from six Vietnamese firms, each representing a bounded 'case'. The data collected from each case is then compared and contrasted looking for similarities and differences.

4.2.1 Why multiple-case study approach for this thesis?

The five major social science research methodologies are: experiments; surveys; archival analysis; histories; and case studies (Yin 2017) (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Relevant situations for different research methodologies (Yin 2017)

Method	Form of Research Question	Requires Control of Behavioural Events?	Focus on Contemporary Events?
Experiment	how, why?	Yes	yes
Survey	who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	yes
Archival Analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	yes/no
History	how, why?	No	no
Case Study	how, why?	No	yes

The first condition for selection of an appropriate methodology covers the thesis research questions (RQs). As the RQs have been formulated with "why" (e.g. Why do manufacturing firms in Vietnam take up sustainability practices?) and "how" (e.g. How do manufacturing firms in Vietnam integrate sustainability practices into their marketing management strategy?), which are more exploratory, in order to get a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Hence, according to Yin (2017), the *Survey* and *Archival analysis* strategies are not applicable to this study.

For the second condition, the investigator is not looking to control the behaviour, nor does he want to manipulate it somehow in this study; hence, the *Experiment* strategy is excluded, leaving *History* and *Case Study* as the last 2 options. When the last condition is taken into consideration, since this research focuses on a contemporary event (concerning sustainability practices at the time of the investigation), the *History* strategy is eliminated as a result, leaving *Case Study* (CS) appears as the most appropriate and the preferred strategy for such a study as this.

A CS approach is defined as "a research strategy which focuses in understanding the dynamics present within single settings" (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 534). According to Yin (2017), a CS is an empirical methodology that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context; especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 45). The features of a CS methodology are to:

1) "copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points";

2) "benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection, and analysis"; and

3) “relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (p. 46)

Despite the advantages, the CS methodology has its limitation. Three types of arguments against the CS research are:

1) it is often accused of a lack of rigour, as Yin (2017) notes that sloppy investigators at times have allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings, and conclusions;

2) it provides very little basis for scientific generalisation because of small number of sampling cases, especially in the case of a single case (Yin 2017); and

3) it is often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing a massive amount of documentation (Yin 2017). The danger comes especially when data is not managed and organised systematically.

The CS methodology is employed for this study because it is considered ideal when an in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg 1991; Yin 2017). The CS methodology is often selected for organisational research because:

1) it is able to capture aspects and meanings of real-life events’ characteristics such as organisational strategies and managerial processes (Yin 2017);

2) it provides ability to focus on relationships and processes; and

3) it offers “the opportunity to explain why certain outcomes might happen” (Descombe 2003, p. 31)

The CS methodology differs from other forms of investigation in that it:

1) “studies whole units in their totality and not aspects or variables of these units”;

2) “employs several methods primarily to avoid or prevent errors and distortions”;

3) “perceives the respondent as an expert not just as a source of data”; and

4) “studies a typical case” (Sarantakos 1998, p. 192)

A CS methodology, therefore, could advance the understanding of individual, organisational, social and political phenomena as it facilitates a deep investigation of a real-life contemporary phenomenon in its natural context (Yin 2017).

The next research stage is the selection of research method, including sample (cases) selection, data collection and procedures, and data analysis method, which is elaborated upon in the following section.

4.2.2 Selection of cases

According to conventional wisdom, a small number of cases allows an in-depth study in order to address the RQs and to meet research objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Thus, six manufacturing firms (research cases) appear to be appropriate for this investigation. For simplicity, they will be broken into two groups for a compare-and-contrast analysis, in order to deal with the dynamic nature of the emerging market structure of Vietnam.

Firms are to be selected for this study using a *purposeful sampling* approach via a criteria-base selection process (LeCompte 1994) taking into consideration that practical (and inevitable) issues could influence a research design, including access, constraints of time and geographical logistics (Dawson 2003; Phillips & Hardy 2002). The criteria utilised are:

1) geographically operating in Vietnam;

2) privately owned;

3) half of which (three cases) are big firms amongst the 2018 'Vietnam Top 100 sustainable businesses' while the other half (three cases) are small enterprises (i.e. family-owned busoinesses with fewer than 250 employees); and

4) agreeable to the fundamental research interview requirements such as voice recording for data transcript and analysis purposes, willingness to share sustainable development-related matters and evidence, allowing three employees to have a minimum one hour face-to-face and in-private interview each interviewee.

Three interviewees, one from each organisational level (of strategic, tactical and operation), are chosen to represent each case organisation horizontally and vertically.

4.3 Primary Method of data collection: Semi-structured In-Depth Interview

Interviews enable the participants to present their insight in their own words without imposed pre-define terms (Alvesson & Karreman 2000). Hence, the interview approach is selected as the primary data collection method, together with other artefacts (observation, documents, websites etc).

Data is collected via fieldwork which takes place in real-world settings in an "uncontrolled *in situ* environment" and "within the context of a scientific investigation by observation and recording" (Yin 2017, p. 138). Data is collected using all four "potential data collection methods" both in the form of primary data via "in-depth interviews, direct observation and feeling", as well as secondary data, through "collecting and examining" documentation, archival records provided by participants and publicly available data which are relevant to the topic being investigated (Yin 2017, p. 138). Such a multiple-source data collection method is referred to as data triangulation (Patton 2002), which allows the investigator not

only to gather relevant information more holistically but also to cross-check the data's consistency for better robustness of findings.

Interviews facilitates the interviewees to share their perspectives, stories and experience-their sense of reality, regarding a particular social phenomenon being observed by the interviewer. The participants, who are the practitioners in their fields, will pass on their knowledge to the investigator through the conversations held during the interview process (Boeije 2010). Via face-to-face interviews with the practitioners, qualitative researchers could better understand the current state of real-world practices (Parker 2003). The interview procedures include stages as below.

4.3.1 Selection of the interview type

One-on-one, semi-structured in-depth interviews ensure data obtained from a specific individual is not potentially influenced by other respondents (Aaker, Kumar & Day 2008). With a clear focus, a semi-structured interview (rather than an unstructured interview) is chosen "so that the more specific issues can be addressed" (Bryman 2016, p. 472). Semi-structured interview typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a list of questions systematically planned to ask the same predetermined questions to all participants in the same order, "but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply" (Bryman 2016, p. 471).

The questions are frequently somewhat more general in their frame of reference from that typically found in a "structured interview schedule, which is likely to be encountered in survey research and in quantitative research generally" (Bryman 2016, p. 212). During a semi-structured interview, the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies (Bryman 2016). It starts with this question in mind: "What do I need to know in order to answer each of the research questions I'm interested in?" (Bryman 2016, p. 473). The semi-structured interview also ensures cross-case comparability at a later stage.

4.3.2 Designing the interview guide and questions

Interview questions are phrased clearly without theoretical concepts and/or jargon, since the interviewer's understanding of such terms may vary from that of the interviewees. Where specific terminology needs to be used, the interviewer will have to make sure that both parties have the same understanding. Interview questions are designed to be open-ended and should be asked in a neutral tone of voice to avoid displaying any bias. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) suggest that long questions and double-barrel questions (those that are made up of two or more questions) should be avoided so that each aspect can be addressed and explored.

Probing is an integral part of in-depth interviews. Probing questions are prepared in order to "explore responses further that are of significance to the research topic… and to produce a fuller account… as they seek an explanation where the interviewees' responses are not fully understood" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, p. 407). The intention of these supplementary questions is to encourage exploration of the point made without offering a view or judgement on the interviewer's part.

The list of questions (appendix 1), the "interview guide" (Bryman 2016, p. 471), is designed to start off with general questions to capture the more general big picture before easing into more specific ones, offering the interviewees "a great deal of leeway in how to reply" throughout the entire interview. The first six warm-up questions, covering face-sheet information of the case organisation and the interviewee, do not only serve as ice-breakers but also are "useful for contextualising people's answers" in later parts of the interview (Bryman 2016, p. 473).

In this study, the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) is the lens through which SD in the six firms is being examined. As a result, the SMM is used to help formulate the semi-structured interview questions. By using the same set of questions, and allowing probing questions when necessary, the data gathered covers the same topics across all interviews.

4.3.3 Conducting the pilot interview

A pilot interview is useful to test one or more aspects of the interview questions and procedures prior to the formal case study "in terms of its design, fieldwork procedures, data collection instruments, or analysis plans" (Yin 2018, p. 39). Its purpose is to refine the interview guide so that interviewees will have no difficulty in understanding the questions as the interviewer intended, and answering the questions along those clear lines, and there will be no problem in recording the data. Preparation is needed to find out any relevant issues in the CS design, and to seek to address them before starting the actual data collection stage. Yin (2018) also suggests that specific preparations for data collection activities include reviewing the original CS proposal, CS protocol, sample reports, and the like. The pilot interview helps test how well the interview flows and how efficient the research instruments work, and provides another opportunity to practise (Bryman 2016).

After several pre-tests with colleagues and friends, a pilot interview is conducted face-to-face and in-private with a bilingual Vietnamese-Australian CEO, whose manufacturing firm operates locally in Australia, and who is proficient in both the Vietnamese and English language, for more accurate tests on how the wordings of the interview questions are perceived and/or understood. The pilot study aims to:

1) experience the whole interview in Vietnamese language as it will be during the data collection stage in Vietnam;

2) be able to compare and confirm the meaning of the questions in both languages of English and Vietnamese;

3) save time and cost as the pilot interview can be carried out in Australia; and

4) test the clarity of the interview questions for necessary amendment before the actual fieldwork.

The selection of the pilot interview in Australia is guided by Yin's suggestion that "in general, convenience, access and geographic proximity can be the main criteria for selecting a pilot case" (2018, p. 148).

Several meetings are set up prior to the pilot interview so that the investigator could build rapport with the interviewee. Face-to-face meetups are chosen instead of telephone conversations, since in the former the interviewer is able to pick up clues from the interviewee's body language/ facial expressions in response to the questions and, accordingly, offer visual cues of friendliness such as smiling and maintaining good eye contact, which are conducive to gaining and maintaining rapport (Bryman 2016). Such relationship should be established and maintained to "encourage the respondent to want to participate in and persist with the interview" but must be "a delicate balancing act" to avoid response bias, because "the mood of friendliness may result in the respondent answering questions in a way that is designed to please the interviewer" (Bryman 2016, p. 218).

The pilot interview is conducted in a manner as close as possible to the actual fieldwork interviews in order to test the accuracy of wording and time management, keeping in mind that it is not a pre-test or "full dress rehearsal" of the interview protocol (Yin 1994, p. 74), but a built-in component of developing the interview protocol, that is, of the "play writing" process in order to amend and optimise the next iteration (Perry 1998). The pilot interview, hence, helps reflect on the lessons identified and appropriately provides directions towards the actual fieldwork to follow.

4.3.4 Amending the interview guide

After the pilot interview, the interviewee's responses provide an idea of the reliability and suitability of the questions. Following the suggestions by (Bell 2014), the investigator amended the interview guide and questions, based on:

1) how long the interview took to complete;

2) the clarity of the questions;

3) which, if any, of the questions the interviewee felt uneasy about answering;

4) whether there were any major topic omissions; and

5) and any other improvements needed

Amended questions were then finalised and submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration and approval.

4.3.5 Applying for research ethics committee approval

In order to assure respondents' confidentiality and minimise potential bias, firms' and participants' names will not be used and, instead, only referred to as A1, A2, A3, and so on. The letters (A to F) represent the participating firms and the numbers (1 to 3) represent the interviewees. Participants are kept anonymous throughout the conduct and report of this research. Instead, descriptors such as firm size, industry sector, and individual's role will be mentioned where needed. In brief, anonymity was a condition of reporting the results of this study.

Prior to contacting the potential research case organisations, a standard application process of research ethics is carried out to be considered and approved by a research ethics committee from the University of Wollongong (UOW). The university's Code of Ethical Practice requires all research involving human participants to be considered and approved before fieldwork can take place. It requires the investigator to state clearly all research-related matters, such as how data will be stored, whether they will be kept subsequently, and under what conditions, in order to ensure the continuing anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of their data. The investigator needs to be aware of and abide by the ethical requirements of UOW and obtain a research ethics approval number prior to sending

out invitations of participation to prospective firms. These conditions were met in this thesis study.

4.3.6 Conducting the actual interviews

The semi-structured interviews will be supplemented with direct observation and archival material and other artefacts deemed relevant (Gillham 2000), such as annual reports, organisational strategic plans/ brochures, newsletters, websites, etc., to not only provide additional data but also to assist with triangulation (Chad 2010). A direct approach is used as the purpose of the research is disclosed to the participants (Bryman 2016).

Interviews start with employees from the strategic level (CEO or equivalent), then move down to the tactical level (head of department or equivalent), and then involve the operational level (front-line worker or equivalent), covering various levels of management/ responsibilities (vertical coverage) across different functional areas (horizontal coverage) to obtain a holistic perspective (Steinman, Deshpande & Farley 2000; Webb, Webster & Krepapa 2000). The times and venues of the interviews are decided by the participating firms, taking privacy, safety and convenience for all parties involved into consideration.

The protocol for conducting a semi-structured interview follows the suggestions of Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) in order to "avoid forms of bias that would affect the reliability and validity of the data produced" (p. 404). These include:

1. Ensuring that the interviewer's appearance is appropriate to gain "credibility in the view of interviewees" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, p. 405). The investigator chose an outfit consisting of a blue suit, a light blue shirt without a tie, and a pair of brown leather formal shoes to project a professional and climate-suitable appearance.

2. Starting the conversation right is crucial because the moment of truth affects the investigator's credibility and the level of the interviewee's confidence. Despite

being unfamiliar to the setting, the interviewer needs to take charge to shape the start of the interview by making sure that "these opening moves demonstrate credibility and friendliness, and to relax and develop a positive relationship" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, p. 405). The investigator should allay the interviewee's uncertainty about providing data and express the commitment to confidentiality by ensuring that participating individuals and organisations are kept anonymous throughout the research and report. "This should increase the level of the confidence in the investigator's trustworthiness and reduce the possibility of interviewee or response bias" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, p. 405).

3. Interview questions need to be asked and phrased clearly so that the interviewee can understand them. The investigator should maintain a neutral tone of voice and non-verbal behaviour to reduce the scope for bias (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Appropriately worded probing questions can follow, whenever necessary, to explore the topic and to produce a fuller account. To make sure that the responses are grounded in the real-life experience rather than being discussed as abstract concepts, evidence and example of actual actions are asked to the interviewees to support their answers. The interviewer's posture and body language, such as sitting slightly inclined towards the interviewee while adopting an open posture, should provide signal of attentiveness and enthusiasm to the interviewee throughout the entire conversation.

4. Attentive listening skills after asking questions are just as important as, if not more than, techniques of asking questions itself. Eventually, "the purpose of a semi-structured interview will be to understand the participant's explanations and meanings" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, p. 410). The investigator needs to attend to and be sensitive to the interviewees by spending the time needed to listen to them to build the understanding. That means at times, he will need to hold back his own thoughts where these would compete with those of the interviewees'.

5. Audio-recording the interviews is beneficial but needs participants' consent beforehand. In this study, the investigator informs about and request for permission of audio-recording in the invitation letter of participation, explaining why it should be beneficial and to offer guarantees about the participants' rights over its use (refer to appendix…). Disadvantages of audio-recording, such as: (1) it may adversely affect the relationship between interviewee and interviewer due to possibility of the audio-recorder distracting the interview process; (2) it may inhibit some interviewee responses and reduce reliability; and (3) possibility of a technical problem, are known to and considered carefully by the investigator. However, audio-recording is chosen due to its advantages outweighing the disadvantages, such as: (1) it allows the interview to concentrate on questioning and listening; (2) it accurately records the interviews without bias; (3) it allow direct quotes to be transcribed and translated (Vietnamese to English); and (4) it can be replayed multiple times for data analysis at a later stage (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016).

6. Observation is executed via different phrases as the investigator needs to become familiar with the setting in which he is carrying out the interview prior to focusing on those aspects that will allow him to answer the research questions and meet the study objectives (Robson & McCartan 2016). In descriptive observation phrase, the investigator has his focus on observing and describing the physical setting and activities that take place; before moving on to the focused observation phrase in which he focuses on the insights which help develop a framework or theory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). What the investigator sees and hears would yield data that need to be recorded right away, or at least noted down soon afterwards. These rough notes will then be turned into systematic data for analysis in a later stage.

The investigator interviewed the informants and cross-check the information on the firms' websites and archival materials (that is, data triangulation). During the interviews, participants also presented confidential documents (as shown in the table below) to the investigator for examination and as evidence supporting the firms' statements. Due to

confidentiality, the investigator was not permitted to photograph or make copies of the archival documents, but was allowed to write down handwritten notes. The table below displays archival documents presented to the investigator during interviews with the case organisations.

Table 4.3.6

Case	Archival documents shown to the investigator
A	Annual financial reports, website
B	Company policies, HR training program, website
C	Company policies, brochures, website
D	Annual financial and reports, brochures, website
E	Annual financial and non-financial reports, HR training program, website
F	Annual financial and non-financial reports, HR training program, brochures, website

The primary evidence enables the investigator to cross-check and expand on the conversation during the interviews.

4.4 Transcription and translation

The transcription is carried out immediately after each day of interviews as it is time-consuming and to aid by recall any nuances to do with the interview context. Bryman (2016) suggests "five-six hours for transcription for every hour of speech" (p. 484). That is similar to the four-five hours for transcription the investigator manually spends for every hour of interview in the Vietnamese language. In turn, the investigator translates transcribed interviews with care in order to authentically reproduce the data in the English language. The data will then be entered into *Nvivo*, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), to aid in the development of themes before analysis.

4.5 Data analysis

4.5.1 Coding

Analysing qualitative data can be a “demanding, repetitive and arduous task”, and requires an ability of the researcher to be “dynamic, intuitive and creative, to be able to think, reason and theorise” (Basit 2003, p. 143). The goal of qualitative analysis is to break down blocks of raw data and then classify them into themes, which help in answering the research questions. Coding is the starting point for breaking the data down and identifying themes or categories. Coding therefore facilitates the establishment of a framework of thematic ideas (Gibbs 2007).

The principles of coding have been well developed by successive writers on grounded theory and can be traced to the seminal 2007 work of Glaser and Strauss. It involves breaking the data apart by interrogating it by asking such questions as:

- What does this item of data represent?
- What is this item about?
- What is happening here?
- What are people Doing?
- What do people say they are doing?

During the initial coding process, in vivo codes (words or short phrases in the text) are used to label a section of text and describe a phenomenon. This stage is often followed by a review of the codes in terms of theoretical ideas that allow a collapsing or aggregating of codes into a higher level concept. This iterative process continues through levels of abstraction until a layer of analytic themes capable of explaining variation in the phenomena under study is achieved.

4.5.2 The use of *Nvivo*

It is suggested that an appropriate CAQDAS can shorten analysis timeframes, offer more thorough and rigorous coding and interpretation, as well as provide researchers with enhanced data management. Nvivo 12 (the latest version of Nvivo at the time of writing of this thesis) is chosen because:

1) it creates an "auditable footprint" (Sinkovics & Alfoldi 2012, p. 5) of the progressive dialogue between the researcher and their data and enhances the transparency of the research process in conducting and interpreting the qualitative data;

2) it forces researchers to be more explicit and reflective about the process of the analysis in this study (Bryman 2016); and

3) it allows constant reflection on the transcripts in order to re-examine and confirm certain aspects whenever a need arises (Edhlund 2011).

Although such software provides many advantages for analysis, reliability, management and reporting, "the uptake of these products has not been without controversy" (Jones 2007, p. 8). The research community is divided in regard to the advantages and disadvantages of the use of digital intervention (Crowley, Harré & Tagg 2002). Arguments against using software include that it could distance the researcher from his or her research by providing a buffer between the person and their data (Bourdon 2002; Welsh 2002). It is also often misinterpreted by critics that software does all of the analysis; which is not the case. The researcher must still collect the data, decide what to code and how to conceptualise this product (Buchanan & Jones 2010). CAQDAS is merely a tool which facilitates more effective and efficient analysis by providing better data management, reducing time and repetition, and offering greater flexibility (Jones 2007). In addition, CAQDAS can provide faster and more comprehensive methods of inquiring into the data, and much more versatile and efficient systems of collecting, storing and reporting (Basit 2003; Denardo 2002).

Therefore, despite debates, the use of computer-assisted analysis is on the increase (Basit 2003; Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge 2006; Denardo 2002; Jackson & Bazeley 2019; Wong 2008). Hence, a number of notable qualitative theorists, such as Miles et al. (1994), Merriam (2002), Quinn Patton (2002), Morse and Richards (2002), Denzin and Lincoln (2008), Silverman (2013), and Lune and Berg (2017) have encouraged the use of CAQDAS within research. As a result, nodes (Nvivo refers to codes as nodes) were created more generously than would have been achieved with 'paper and pen' methods.

It should be noted that while CAQDAS programs can assist in the actual coding process by filing and storing data pieces the actual process of reading the data, generating and allocating codes remains with the investigator as does the process of elevating and collapsing codes through higher levels of abstraction.

4.6 Determining quality in qualitative research

It is important for any qualitative researcher to be conscious of and consider the quality of the research they are conducting. Before presenting any research, they need to ensure any findings are credible. Qualitative research cannot be judged by the same measures as quantitative research (e.g., validity, reliability etc), rather it should be judged by its ''trustworthiness'' (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The table below highlights the different approaches to assessing truthfulness between qualitative and quantitative research.

Table 4.6 Criteria to critically appraise findings from qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985)

Aspect	**Qualitative Term**	**Quantitative Term**
Truth value	Credibility	Internal Validity
Applicability	Transferability	External Validity or generalisibility
Consistency	Dependability	Reliability
Neutrality	Confirmability	Objectivity

There are a variety of approaches a qualitative researcher might adopt to demonstrate each of these aspects of trustworthiness. For example, from Hannes (2011):

- Credibility: Credibility evaluates whether or not the representation of data fits the views of the participants studied, whether the findings hold true. Evaluation techniques can include: having participants validate findings, peer debriefing, attention to negative cases, independent analysis of data by more than one researcher, verbatim quotes, persistent observation etc.

- Transferability: Transferability evaluates whether research findings are transferable to other specific settings. Evaluation techniques include: providing details of the study participants to enable readers to evaluate for which target groups the study provides valuable information, providing contextual background information, demographics, the provision of thick description about both the sending and the receiving context etc.

- Dependability: Dependability evaluates whether the process of research is logical, traceable and clearly documented, particularly on the methods chosen and the decisions made by the researchers. Evaluation techniques include: peer review, debriefing, audit trails, triangulation in the context of the use of different methodological approaches to look at the topic of research, reflexivity to keep a self-critical account of the research process, calculation of inter-rater agreements etc.

- Confirmability: Confirmability evaluates the extent to which findings are qualitatively confirmable through the analysis being grounded in the data and through examination of the audit trail. Evaluation techniques include: assessing the effects of the researcher during all steps of the research process, reflexivity, providing background information on the researcher's background, education, perspective, school of thought etc.

In this study the process of having the research participants read through the findings and determine the extent they resonate with their own experiences, the process of triangulation by gathering data from various sources are just two of the methods adopted to ensure truthfulness in this study's findings.

In the following chapter the findings which are grounded in the data and emerged from a systematic and thorough analysis of the data are presented.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

As described in the previous chapter data was collected through semi-structured interviews as well as document and website analysis. The data was systematically analysed and coded with the aid of the qualitative data analysis computer software program Nvivo. As a result of this analysis, five themes emerged that provide insights on the drivers of sustainable practices in the Vietnamese manufacturing firms studied.

In this chapter, these five themes are presented individually. Quotes from participants are included to both clarify the concepts presented as well as demonstrating these findings are grounded in the data. Each theme will be treated as a separate section in this chapter. In addition to explaining each theme, critical components of the theme are identified and also explained. These components explain the variability of the theme between cases, notably the small and large manufacturing cases in this study.

The five themes that emerged were as follows (in no specific order):

1) external influences;

2) internal influences;

3) profit;

4) people; and

5) planet.

To begin, external drivers include pressures on enterprises such as government regulations and campaigns, along with consumer and community expectations. Second, internal influences are driving forces for sustainability initiatives within case organisations, such as top management commitment and resources allocated/available for the pursuit of sustainable development (SD). The third, fourth, and fifth sections provide profit, people,

and planet-related considerations that drive corporations toward sustainability, respectively. Direct quotes from the research transcripts will be deployed to support the findings and, together, establish a new understanding of sustainable practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the prism of the sustainability marketing mix (SMM) on which the interview protocol is relied.

5.1 External influences

External influences are pressures that come from outside of a company. The analysis of the data shows external influences on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises can be broken into three major components, these are:

1) government pressure via policies and campaigns;

2) customer expectations; and

3) community expectations on a business to not only do well (that is, to be financially sound) but also do good (i.e, to be socially and environmentally responsible) at the same time (see figure 5.1).

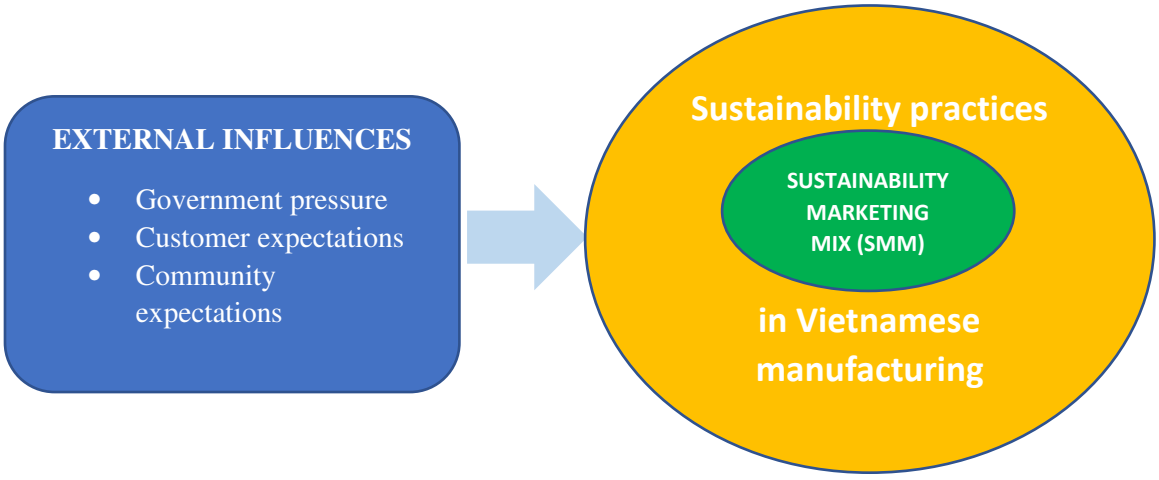

Figure 5.1 External influences on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the prism of the sustainability marketing mix (SMM)

This study provides evidence that big Vietnamese manufacturing firms, unlike small ones which are focused on survival *"to bring in stable income"* (C2- 176), displayed awareness and commitment towards sustainability not just in response to demands, but also in response to the potential advantages that sustainability may provide. For example, complying with regulations and supporting local sustainability-oriented activities entails receiving government assistance in returns. This is shown in the following quotes:

> *"We also aim to work well with the government authorities as they are an important party in regulating and controlling the rules."* (E2-84)
>
> *"As we are associated with the government departments who certify us for being a socially responsible firm, we engage them to provide us courses with additional knowledge, like occupational safety."* (F2-245)

Besides, it emerged that the big firms appear to believe that fulfilling customer and community expectations in terms of social and environmental issues would boost market trust and support for the company's brand and, as a result, contribute to to greater long-term financial returns.

> *"We also collect feedback from our customers. Our customers come to evaluate our firm often and we also go to inspect them. We learn good things from each other and help each other grow."* (E2- 206)
>
> *"Sustainable development is an inevitable tendency of the markets at the present and into the future. Sustainability, environmental protection, energy saving and cutting costs are vital goals in the company."* (E1- 50)

Each of the three major components of the external influences driving sustainability practices in the Vietnamese manufacturing firms studies are explained in further detail below.

5.1.1 Government pressure

Through policies and campaigns, the government can push enterprises to adopt business practices that are critical to attaining sustainable performance. As a result, in order to meet the goals of SD, manufacturing firms must pay close attention to sustainability-related matters. However, this research reveals that big Vietnamese manufacturing firms are under greater pressure than small businesses as they face more regulations and obligations (e.g. annual non-financial reports, involvement in sustainability-related seminars and events). Top management in small businesses simply adhere to minimal local compliance and consider that it is sufficient.

> *"(The government) only look at things on papers via our financial reports and tax-related documents."* (A1-144)
>
> *"Not much (pressure from) the government as my company is still at a small scale."* (B1-58)
>
> *"We don't even have to report because the local authorities often come and check the firm's activities. They look at the financial statement, tax reports and so on. We fully comply with the regulations and requirements. Anything involved social safety or environmental matters, we follow the government laws."* (C1-108)

The big corporations are required to play a considerably larger role since the Vietnamese government views them as partners in the quest of sustainability, as evidenced by the points raised by their strategic-level leaders.

"We participate in some Top 100 businesses program organised by the Government and business associations. As long as they are reasonable and helpful, we are willing to participate." (D1-215)

"We also attend workshops held by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to stay updated about current situations and trends, as well as new policies related to sustainable development" (E1-71)

"The curriculum is written by our firm through references and documents, provided by state organisations and departments, based on evidence and research." (E1-221)

The disparity in government pressure level explains a large part of why the notion of sustainability is simply on paper in small manufacturing firms, but genuine implementation can be seen and felt in big corporations.

5.1.2 Customer expectations

It appears that customers are increasingly concerned about the social and environmental consequences of the value offered by companies, and they progressively base their purchasing decisions on this information. As a result, firms must integrate strategic sustainability actions and consider the long-term impacts on their brands and businesses. Nonetheless, the research data show that, while big firms' relationships with their customers are more equal and partner-like in the pursuit of sustainability, small businesses typically heed to their clients' product- and price-focused demands in the hopes of securing contracts and staying in business. In the intensely competitive and emerging market of Vietnam, small firms' customers retain massive bargain power and are primarily concerned with the financial aspect (i.e. product quality and price, lead time); and while they consider social and environmental issues, these have little weight on their final business decisions.

"Clients always compare prices amongst suppliers; and for the same quality they would pick the lower offers." (A1-50)

"If the environmental costs are included, the price will be high and the customers have to pay for it." (A1-284)

"They are concerned about our employees' working conditions, technical skill levels and training process." (B2-69)

"Due to the nature of our business being an FOB garment exporter, our business activities are dependent on our clients and their requests." (B2-108)

"I think, not only our firm, but the whole textile and garment industry in Vietnam is facing this difficulty. The world is looking at Vietnam under a role of a worker, a labour. And, although when Vietnamese brands are famous for being skillful and having good techniques, we are still seen as a worker who just sits and does the sewing job." (C1-120)

"They compete on prices and on quantities: the bigger the quantity, the lower the prices. Therefore, the work in this industry is based on every second and every cent." (C1-129)

Furthermore, it is evident that the competitive nature of the Vietnamese textile and garment manufacturing industry forces even big corporations to bypass long-term social and environmental consequences in favor of short-term financial gain.

"When customers send orders, they do not care about the social and environmental issues. Given the current pace of our operations, everyone is too busy to care about those issues." (D1-242)

"The customers give us the requirements and we have to meet those. If we cannot, they would not do business with us. It does not matter you agree or disagree with those requirements, if you choose to do business with them, you have to follow them." (D2-97)

"We have to keep the price competitive. What else can we do if we add all the costs but customers do not accept it? We have to think for ourselves and the customers." (D2-134)

"Many things (in) Vietnam are still passive." (D2-190)

Having said that, big firms are expected to conduct their business in a responsible manner, and these expectations often come from their customers, who seek to co-create and deliver value for society as a whole.

"We work together to come up with common solutions for the environmental protection, such as efforts in creating a supplying chain to manufacture and use products which have the same type of waste so that our business operations can go smoothly." (E1-78)

"Sustainability-oriented products can, firstly, reduce price; secondly, boost collaboration among companies to expand the market and, lastly, maximise the usage of each other's products to minimise waste." (E1-304)

"We also collect feedback from our customers. Our customers come to evaluate our firm often and we also go to inspect them. We learn good things from each other and help each other grow." (E2-206)

Customers of big corporations have been found to anticipate more than traditional business cooperation that is only centred on dollars and cents, and rather expect collaboration for innovation to pursue SD. They no longer regard their suppliers as upstream members who merely sell goods, but more as partners in the value chain who, collectively, generate and offer sustainable value to other downstream members.

"Regarding the sustainable development between corporate partners and clients, our customers now have policies for the both parties to cooperate, grow and be

responsible towards the environment together. On our side, we also have policies to support our customers, such as taking back and reuse all plastic cores which are used to roll our products at delivery to the customers. This helps keep the cost down and, at the same time, reduce the impacts on the environment." (E3-30)

"Our business partners also conduct trainings. For example, they have clear policies about the environmental protection, on how to receive and deliver goods. They hold seminars through which we will get to exchange ideas and learn from each other." (E3-192)

In addition, these customer expectations for sustainability performance give drive for business creativity, which potentially result in not only improved financial health of parties involved, but also enhanced social development and environmental protection. They encourage enterprises to establish a blue ocean strategy in order to initiate the adoption of sustainable practices driven by sustainability principles in their quest for innovation and value.

"From the business point of view, especially toward the environment, the demand from our customers about for the products and production to be environmentally friendly is growing day by day. Hence, this is also an opportunity for business." (F1-50)

"Big brands such as Nike and Adidas have programs that encourage their customers to use products with recycled materials… We have strategies to collaborate with those big brands for long-term. Nike and Adidas have strategies to increase the density of the recycled fiber and will work with their suppliers such as us. They have already asked us if we can meet their demand and required capacity in 2021." (F1-174)

The final external driving element revealed by the research data is community expectations, which will be explained in more detail next.

5.1.3 Community expectations

Businesses' sustainability strategies must address the local community because sustainability activities will be determined by what the community values, and the relative significance of these values will be established by community expectations. They arise from the research data as one of the external drivers influencing the level of corporate commitment to the pursuit of sustainability. Because of their wider business network and community, big Vietnamese manufacturing firms demonstrated a higher level of awareness and dedication toward fulfilling community expectations than small businesses, which were preoccupied with survival and, as a result, downplayed what they deemed unimportant matters despite admitting that SD *"is now a trend"* (C3-35). While smaller companies stop at "sensing the trend," big firms treat community expectations as corporate sustainability objectives. For example, firm E's top management observed that environmental preservation and energy conservation are among community expectations and recognised that, if implemented properly, these improvements may assist lower business operational expenses and, at the same time, enhance corporate reputation and positioning in the long term.

> *"Sustainable development is an inevitable tendency of the markets at the present and into the future. Sustainability, environmental protection, energy saving and cutting costs are vital goals in the company."* (E1-50)
>
> *"We must participate in community activities and competitions to achieve the top 100. This is to promote the image of the company and to obtain the acknowledgment by the nation."* (E3-65)

Similarly, firm F's participation at the annual "Top 100 Sustainable Businesses award in Vietnam" is a way for the company to fulfill the expectations of its business community while also expanding the company's business network and exchanging corporate sustainability ideas.

"I think, by joining this program, we can learn what we are lacking so we could complete them next year. This helps the firm grow." (F1-61)

"We have participated for three consecutive years and won the awards in 2016, 2017 and 2018… This is really one of the needed programs in Vietnam. Firstly, enterprises can connect and stay updated about new policies set out by our government, especially the plans for enterprises to move toward the sustainable development. Being one of the pioneers in the textile industry in Vietnam, we volunteer to participate and report what we have done. Secondly, this aligns with our firm's orientation towards sustainable development. Thirdly, by participating, we can exchange knowledge about the sustainable development with the experts there. It is a great opportunity for us to network and with other like-minded firms and develop together." (F2-53)

Although the notion of sustainability is relatively new in Vietnam, the desire for social progress and environmental conservation is not. Given the government's and businesses' increased efforts to promote SD, big firms believe the local and business communities will soon have greater recognition and support for organisations that commit and invest to become more sustainable.

"In general, the awareness of people about environmental protection are low. Therefore, it is difficult to mix the strategy of competitive prices and environmental protection." (E1-94)

"Thanks to the media and the internet, the awareness of the general public is improving." (E1-100)

These external influences appear to stimulate sustainability performance by putting pressure on businesses to make essential adjustments in order to remain relevant and lawful. That being said, it is likely genuine activities begin within a corporation, with the

requisite commitment from top management and the appropriate resource allocation.

In the next section, what is labelled in this study as ‘’internal influences’’ are presented and described.

5.2 Internal influences

Internal influences are driving forces that emanate from within an organisation. The findings of this study suggest two main internal drivers on sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing firms, which are:

1) top management’s commitment; and

2) resources available/ allocated via capital and knowledge planning for the pursuit of sustainability (see figure 5.2).

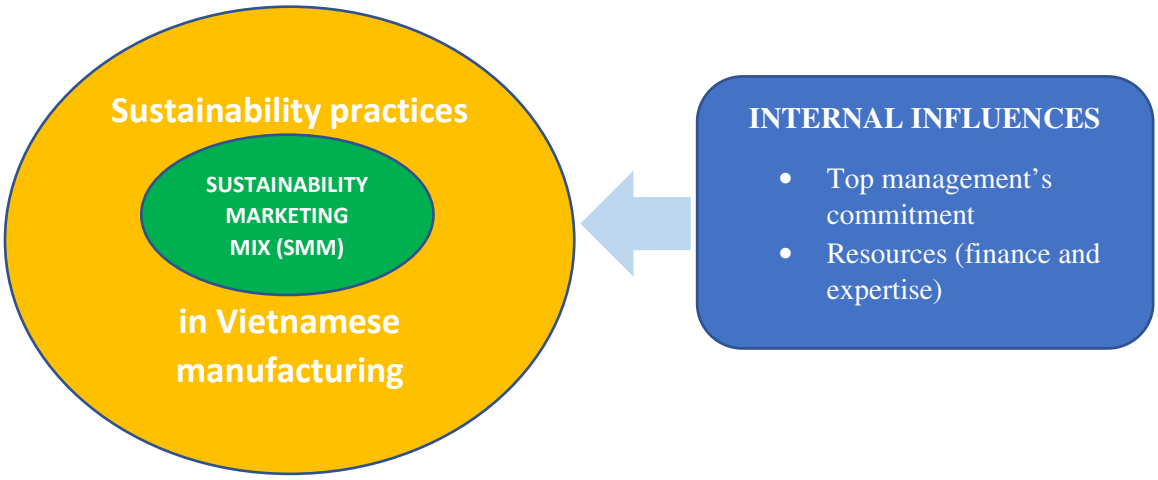

Figure 5.2 Internal influences on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the prism of the sustainability marketing mix (SMM)

The data analysis reveals that big firms’ top management exhibit greater commitment and investment through their efforts in gathering sustainability-related knowledge from experts

and business networks, as well as allocating available resources to technology, innovation/ Research and Development (R&D) and staff training towards SD.

> *"Because we have different departments, managers would take turn to attend conferences or fairs which are related their job scopes. We then bring back the knowledge and apply. We do not have specific goals but we have clear orientation and actions towards sustainable development"* (D1-125)
>
> *"The curriculum is written by our firm through references and documents, provided by state organisations and departments, based on evidence and research. Those materials can be purchased online or exchanged at meetings in which our BOD attended at business clubs, plastic associations or trade associations. Information is shared and exchanged among the members."* (E1-221)
>
> *"We are mainly counting on the foreign experts. When they come, they will provide training to our staff."* (F1-104)

Small manufacturing firms tend to be burdened with survival owing to a scarcity of resources and, as a result, end up focusing mostly on workforce-related issues (i.e. on-time salary payout, employees' skill upgrades) in order to retain staff and meet urgent production demands. Thus, small firms' top management commitments to sustainability appear to be weak and overshadowed by fulfilling immediate needs.

> *"The senior employees will teach the new ones (on-job skills), and they also keep learning from each other. Because of the small size, our firm doesn't have specific training sessions."* (A2-216)
>
> *"Managers only give verbal reminder. We are yet to have a specific training syllabus for the employees."* (B3-162)

Each of the internal forces that drive sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing

enterprises is discussed in greater depth below.

5.2.1 Top management's commitment

The degree to which an organisation's core values incorporate sustainability practices has a significantly beneficial impact on its performance in the pursuit of SD. When the investigator's onsite observation and online study (i.e. their websites) are triangulated with the research data extracted from in-depth interviews with big Vietnamese manufacturing firms, it appears that these organisations' top management was committed to establishing a corporate culture that embraced sustainability through actual actions towards SD when they shared that:

> "*Leaders and managers are sent for seminars and trainings to keep ourselves updated."* (D1-124)
>
> *"The BOD sets up the goals and the strategies to keep us updated with the market's and consumers' tendency, which are supported by the government policies regarding sustainable development for the whole country."* (E1-136)

Not only did the researcher get to speak with top executives, but he also got to speak with lower-level managers and employees about their experiences with their companies' leaders through interviews with various organisational levels.

> *"The curriculum is written by our firm through references and documents, provided by state organisations and departments, based on evidence and research. Those materials can be purchased online or exchanged at meetings in which our BOD attended at business clubs, plastic associations or trade associations. Information is shared and exchanged among the members. This information is strategic for the company to develop and link closely with the all the parties."* (E1-221)

"The challenge is that this is relatively new. Hence, it takes time go from awareness, to underdoing, and to implementation. We have to keep educating, training and reminding the employees. It takes time and lots of effort. We are building a training program just for this. Good thing is that our BOD is committed and lending full support to realise this." (E2-93)

"It is good that the implementation of the firm's sustainable development is supported and consistently directed with great attention from the executive committee and the BOD. From the beginning, our firm has determined that core values were to become a leading enterprise but at the same time, going along with the actual (sustainable development) goals, we have been also interested and wanted to develop and contribute to the society, help solve the environmental issues and assist the local workers. That is considered one of the advantages of our firm at the moment." (F2-95)

The big firms appeared to be making sustainability mainstream rather than an add-on feature by ensuring that organisational financial sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability become complementary rather than competing objectives. In contrast, the findings reveal that small manufacturing enterprises are frequently preoccupied with survival, and as a result, top management tends to prioritise addressing short-term production and labour needs over long-term sustainability. For example, CEO and Chief Accountant of firm B shared that:

"My orientation is to have profits to take good care of our workers, then finding more labors and clients." (B1-192)

"We are firstly focused on the financial strength, secondly on labours and thirdly on the market share." (B2-28)

Similarly, production- and survival-focused attitude was observed in firm A and C. These small firms' leaders viewed 'sustainable' as 'continuing' business, which explains their

concerns about production/price competitiveness, as well as manpower to perform processing tasks.

> *"First of all, our price has to be competitive. The second thing is quality; and the third one is our firm's prestige perceived by the clients."* (A1-23)
>
> *"We only say and commit to things that we are surely able to carry out. To me, the sustainable development at this moment is still humans, machines, and processes. The human factor is important because the people are always beside you."* (C1-310)

The attitude of firms' top management determines the level of corporate sustainability commitment and its impact on sustainability-oriented capital strategic planning, as well as sustainability-oriented project planning processes on cost and schedule performance. The research data reveals that the leaders' commitment is the first critical internal driving force for Vietnamese manufacturing sustainability initiatives, as it establishes corporate culture and other critical business actions. The second key internal factor appears to be resource allocation, which will be addressed further below.

5.2.2 Resources

Perhaps better resource allocation could assist businesses in striking a balance between sustainable practices and their financial bottom line. While big Vietnamese manufacturing firms appear to be committed to SD by investing effort and capital into becoming more sustainable through technology. (i.e. machineries upgrades) and training (that is, workforce upgrades), for example:

> *"We invest in technology and machineries."* (D1-103)
>
> *"Our machineries and production process are of latest technologies and meet all the highest standards in terms of quality and operation safety and environmental*

friendliness. We are one of the few firms who invest to have our own waste water treatment facilities to ensure 100% our waste is safe when it leaves the factories back into the surrounding community. Our logistics always set new standards for the industry with trucks are owned by the firm and regularly serviced to ensure it has minimal impacts to the society and environment during our operations." (E1-247)

"We hold frequent trainings to keep the employees updated about sustainability. Sustainability is part of the firm's culture. We measure, test and track the employees' performance in case it is done wrong, it will not be good for sustainable development." (F3-344)

Small businesses, once again, keep their eyes on staying in business by meeting clients' product requirements and offering a competitive price. According to the findings, small businesses' capital is not invested for the aim of becoming more sustainable, but rather for the purpose of competing for business contracts.

"We invested in machines to produce and sell directly so that the cost is reduced and we can get more customers." (A1-267)

"We focus on finding ways to improve our business by bringing in more orders and gain sales so that our employees could have stable incomes and/or have their pays increased to attract and retain workers." (B1-83)

"We must upgrade ourselves and invest in machines and computers in improve our productivity and customer experience." (C3-196)

Because of a lack of expertise and information about what sustainability is and how to realise it, these small businesses appear to go about their business as usual without recognising a need or reason to venture outside of their comfort zones. Big businesses, with access to a larger business and expert network, are seen to allocate resources in raising awareness, knowledge, and motivation through frequent training to ensure that the

corporate sustainability-oriented culture is standardised and reinforced throughout the organisation.

> *"Leaders and managers are sent for seminars and trainings to keep ourselves updated. Because we have different departments, managers would take turn to attend conferences or fairs which are related their job scopes. We then bring back the knowledge and apply."* (D1-124)
>
> *"Each department has its own strategy in training their workers to develop their capability in order to provide new solutions related to the environmental protection activities; so that customers are able to connect with us because we can offer useful information to them… The curriculum is written by our firm through references and documents provided by state organisations and departments based on evidence and research."* (E1-216)
>
> *"Internally, from day one, each employee is assigned a step-by-step training plan such as how integrating the firm's culture into the professional skills so that they can meet the job position's requirements. We have about 20 departments. Every year, each department need to do up a detailed training plan for their employees. That plan is normally reviewed, approved and implemented for the following year… We monitor, adjust and improve the training curriculum from time to time."* (E2-193)
>
> *"We are currently cooperating with Sojitz, a major corporation in Japan, who contributes 20% of the capital. They set out the anti-corruption principles. In the first phase, they send experts here and train our staff the knowledge of anti-corruption. 100% employees must be trained. All of employees must send evidence of attendance."* (E2-241)
>
> *"We are mainly counting on the foreign experts. When they come, they will provide training to our staff."* (F1-104)
>
> *"We hold frequent trainings to keep the employees updated about sustainability. Sustainability is part of the firm's culture. We measure, test and track the*

employees' performance in case it is done wrong, it will not be good for sustainable development." (F3-344)

"We hold trainings to raise awareness for the workers so that they can cooperate. We organise activities and seminars to our customers to promote the firm's image in the direction of sustainable development." (F3-449)

According to the analysis of data from the in-depth interviews and observations of company documents and facilities, big enterprises seem to invest time, effort, and capital in order to create a whole-system change to pursue a balance across all three dimensions (i.e. profit, people, and planet) of sustainability. Each aspect of the TBL emerges from the research data as a critical driving force of sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing and will be presented and described in greater detail in the following sections.

5.3 Profit

Profit sustainability refers to the need to secure the company's long-term financial performance. Traditionally, this is the bottom line that include conventional measures of profits, return on investment (ROI), and shareholder value. However, profit, as a facet of SD, must be regarded as economic gains that society as a whole may also enjoy (Elkington 1997). According to the data analysis, the profit-related drivers on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing can be divided into two primary elements, which are:

1) Product perceived value; and

2) Viability and growth (see figure 5.3)

Therefore, it is a more ethically defined notion of *profi*t than the typical annual report which focuses solely on profit maximisation for shareholders. Despite differences in growth and

scale, big and small Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises were shown to be similarly motivated by profit sustainability through their company operational planning and activities.

> *"We have to develop our products better so they will be purchased more in the market and become well-known."* (A1-265)
>
> *"Customers are vital to the company… We always have new investment projects and need to attract more investors."* (F1-82)

Figure 5.3 Profit-related drivers on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the prism of the sustainability marketing mix (SMM)

Each of the profit sustainability-oriented driving factor influencing sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing firms is addressed in further detail below.

5.3.1 Product perceived value

In Vietnamese manufacturing, enterprises' capacity to deliver high product perceived value (i.e. relative to its price) appears to contribute to desired long-term economic performance. According to the data analysis, small businesses regard product perceived value as meeting their customers' quality and pricing needs, which leads to business transactions and keeps their firm viable in such a brutally competitive business environment.

> *"Firstly, our price has to be competitive. The second thing is quality; and the third one is our firm's prestige perceived by the clients."* (A1-23)
>
> *"These clients always compare prices amongst suppliers; and for the same quality they would pick the lower offers."* (A1-50)
>
> *"If a customer is interested in our firm, they show us a standard product and want to us to produce a sample. If they are happy with the sample, they tend to send us an order after that. Our job is to work on that order, to manufacture quality products and to deliver them on time according to their request. That's how we can work with our customers in long term."* (A3-58)

Business decisions amongst small Vietnamese manufacturing firms seem to be determined purely on the basis of product quality and price- the two types of product perceived value that appear to exclude social and environmental considerations from the decision-making process.

> *"Manufacturing high quality products, delivering on time and meeting our clients' expectations are our strategies."* (B1-115)
>
> *"We do not prioritised sustainability and mainly focus on the finance and the quality of our products."* (B2-213)

"When (customers) hold our products in their hands, they appreciate the products and they understand the amount of collective effort we put in. That is our firm's priority." (C1-35)

"I have sat down with many leaders in textile and garment industry and the common situation in this industry is that customers send sample products and order us to process. They compete on prices and on quantities: the bigger the quantity, the lower the prices. Therefore, the work in this industry is based on every second and every cent." (C1-129)

Perhaps the focus on keeping the firm afloat has prioritised short-term economic gains over long-term economic benefits, since small manufacturing enterprises are seen to be overwhelmed with financial pressures and underpowered in business negotiations with their customers. Similarly, even big enterprises might prioritise pricing in order to maintain their products competitiveness. For example, when asked if social and environmental costs were added into product pricing, strategic- and tactical-level managers of firm D replied:

"It would be a lie to say that my firm chooses machines based on the environmental concern. An expensive machine surely manufactures more products while saving time and labour. Thus, the financial aspect is the top priority always." (D1-183)

"We have to keep the price competitive. What else can we do if we add all the costs but customers do not accept it?" (D2-134)

"Our Research and Development (R&D) Department is working hard constantly to improve on the quality of the products and, at the same time, bring down the cost to increase our competitiveness." (E3-142)

Having said that, the data suggests big Vietnamese manufacturing firms interpret product value not just in terms of competitive quality and price, but also in terms of value offered to society as a whole.

"We are concentrating on products which are environmentally friendly to minimise the impact to the outside environment. We are developing medical products, strictly following requirements and standards of ISO13485. Our Research and Development Department is also developing a laboratory to launch new and better-looking products which have lower price to serve the needs of the market. We strongly focus on research in this aspect." (E1-155)

"You can refer to our products to see the safety level for the environment, given their friendly prices. We also have machines for managing scraps during the process of production. Those can be found on the company's website." (E1-235)

Furthermore, big firms are observed to treat profit sustainability as new business opportunities for innovation, which in turn helps lower costs and enhance the quality of their products, as well as the social and environmental health in the long run.

"Sustainability-oriented products can, firstly, reduce price; secondly, boost collaboration among companies to expand the market and, lastly, maximise the usage of each other's products to minimise waste." (E1-304)

"One good thing is that it is now the trend of the industry which generates high demand for environmentally friendly products; which is an opportunity for us." (F1-91)

"We are currently manufacturing recycled fiber. That helps recycle waste plastic bottles. According to our statistics, we have sold about 20,000 tons of recycled fiber, equivalent to more than one billion plastic bottles… We also produce coloured fiber… (which) helps textile companies significantly reduce the impact on the environment because they will not need to dye the fabric, a process through which they need to use a lot of clean water and then release heaps of chemical back into the environment." (F1-143)

"We have strategies to collaborate with those big brands for long-term. Nike and Adidas have strategies to increase the density of the recycled fiber and will work with their suppliers such as us. They have already asked us if we can meet their demand and required capacity in 2021 and we can do that." (F1-177)

Perhaps big firms' R&D efforts in innovation go beyond simply addressing customer requirements to design new solutions for the industry. This appears to aid these organisations in acquiring substantial commercial contracts, which will not only preserve but also improve their long-term economic performance while also contributing in the settlement of social and environmental challenges.

The second profit sustainability-related driving factor shown by the data is the stress enterprises have about their future viability and growth, which is discussed in depth next.

5.3.2 Viability and growth

When considering and working towards the SD, it may be necessary to consider financial viability, which is a core determinant of sustainability. According to data analysis, it appears to be a matter of survival for small Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises.

"If you want to be sustainable, you have to survive first, then you can think about developing." (A2-245)

"When we do not have orders, we have to try very hard to talk to the customers to send more orders because our employees need work and income." (C1-150)

"If we want to have sustainable development, we have to get many more customers." (C3-104)

The general consensus among small Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises seemed to be that if there were not enough business orders and hence not enough work for the workers, their businesses would not be able to exist, let alone grow sustainably. As a result, for these companies, profit sustainability appears mostly determined by their capacity to obtain additional clients and business contracts in order to retain the employees and keep business afloat.

> *"If we don't have clients, we wouldn't have any orders and, certainly, the business wouldn't be able to grow."* (A1-150)
>
> *"When we have more orders, we have more work to do which means we can receive more wages."* (A3-244)
>
> *"We focus on finding ways to improve our business by bringing in more orders and gain sales so that our employees could have stable incomes and/or have their pays increased to attract and retain workers."* (B1-83)
>
> *"Due to the nature of our business being an FOB garment exporter, our business activities are dependent on our clients and their requests. We have got no specific goals for sustainability, but do have orientation and planning to constantly improve the stability of our workforce, their technical skills and, as a result, our products' quality."* (B2-108)
>
> *"We are still looking for more customers to obtain sustainable development."* (C2-76)

Financial viability by increasing market share was found to be as important to small enterprises as it is to big organisations, in which SD appeared to be not only a target but also an opportunity to explore and enter new markets through innovation and partnership, ensuring sustainable profit that at the same time benefits the society as a whole.

"Whenever possible, I choose customers who have contributions to the society in one way or another. Therefore, our firm would feel the pride working with them because that is an indirectly contribution to the world. Walmart, H&M or Zara are popular on the world stage because they have created positive effects." (D1-193)

"Because customers are vital to the company. And as for the investors, because the company is constantly growing, we always have new investment projects and need to attract more investors." (F1-82)

"Our two main products for the time bening aim to be environmentally friendly. The first product is the recycled fiber from plastic bottles to significantly cut down the number of plastic bottles ended up in landfills. There have been statistics showing that the amount of waste, if stacked up, is as high as the Eiffel Tower. We are putting efforts to protect the environment. The second product is the coloured fiber. Instead of the traditional way of dyeing the fabrics, which badly affects the environment because it uses chemical and a lot of water, we, with our latest technology, put a stop point to that because the fabrics will have comein colours." (F2-168)

Big firms appeared to recognise that ignoring the role of sustainability as a value-creating component for the manufacturing industry raises business risk and may result in costly and time-consuming re-design efforts later in the operations. As a result, they claimed to be making attempts to include a variety of sustainability strategies, which necessitates short-term investments in a whole-system transformation for long-term advantages to both the business and society at large.

"Our machineries and production process are of latest technologies and meet all the highest standards in terms of quality and operation safety and environmental friendliness. We are one of the few firms who invest to have our own waste water treatment facilities to ensure 100% our waste is safe when it leaves the factories back into the surrounding community. Our logistics always set new standards for

the industry with trucks are owned by the firm and regularly serviced to ensure it has minimal impacts to the society and environment during our operations." (E1-247)

"To our customers, now we have to introduce them the recycled fiber products. Big brands normally calculate by themselves, for example, how many plastic bottles are recycled to make a new shirt or a backpack. So, our business partners and customers will do that job." (F1-201)

"There are also some difficulties because our firm is not too large and, of course, will need a lot of support from many parties and the local committees. For example, a new product or technology, that is environmentally friendly and helps businesses to develop sustainably, requires a lot of initial investment. Given the size of the company, if it really does, it will need a lot of capital. Hopefully, our government will have more associations or sustainable development organisations, such as VCCI, to create a common ground for everyone to share the knowledge and collaborate for more breakthrough." (F2-103)

The efforts were believed to be rewarded by a better reputation and market backing, as well as support from the business community and government, which all contribute to their long-term profit maximisation.

The second aspect of the TBL, *peopl*e, which is also the fourth driving force of sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing, will be presented and explored in detail in the next section.

5.4 People

People-focused sustainability evaluates a company's ultimate performance beyond its traditional financial bottom line to examine how it handles the well-being of its human capital, i.e., its staff and local community, in the development and implementation of its

business strategy. The data analysis shows three major components of people-related drivers of sustainable practices in Vietnamese manufacturing:

1) Staff well-being via work security and equality;

2) Human resource (HR) development through education and training; and

2) Community impacts (see figure 5.4)

The study demonstrates that people-related concerns tend to garner significant attention from Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises of all sizes. Several times throughout the interviews, the importance of the workforce was emphasised,

> *"The first one is the human factor- the employees. Machines and other supporting devices come second; as humans are still the most important thing."* (A1-25)
>
> *"If we want to be sustainable, we have to offer good welfare standards for the labours, such as improving their meals both in terms of quantity and quality."* (B3-26)
>
> *"(Because we) want to aim for sustainable development, we have to focus on humans."* (C1-75)
>
> *"Because they are the life of the company. Without the workers, we cannot do anything."* (D2-69)
>
> *"Our employees are very important, followed by the production and the firm's impact on the environment."* (F2-145)

As well as the impacts on the community in which firms conducts their business activities

"Although we are not a big company and the financial capacity is not very big either, we still like to share with the less fortunate people. We organise some charity trips at different regions. That is one of our social activities." (A1-457)

"Whenever possible, I choose customers who have contributions to the society in one way or another. Therefore, our firm would feel the pride working with them because that is an indirectly contribution to the world. Walmart, H&M or Zara are popular on the world stage because they have created positive effects." (D1-193)

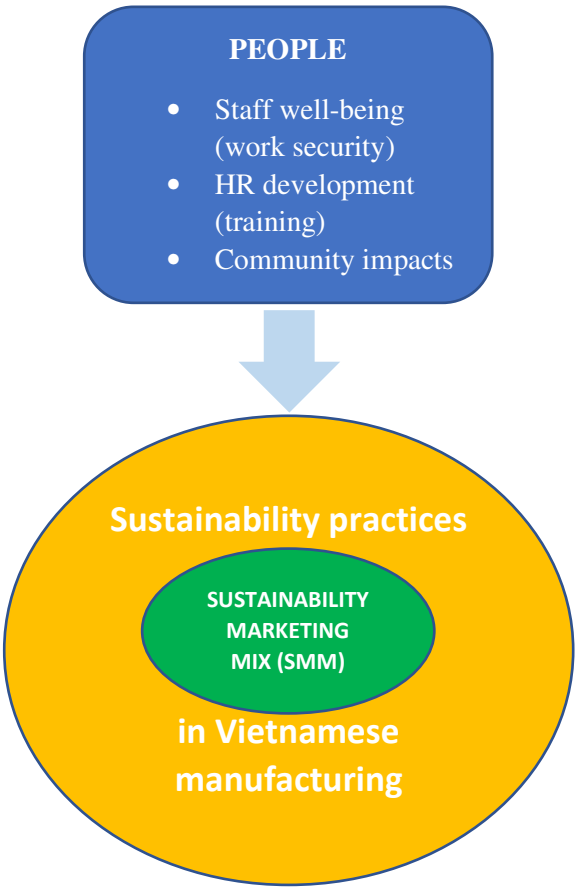

Figure 5.4 People-related drivers on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the prism of the sustainability marketing mix (SMM)

Each of the people-focused driving forces that fuel sustainability activities in Vietnamese manufacturing firms is addressed more below.

5.4.1 Staff well-being

Firms that strives to improve employee wellbeing focuses on employee work security, equality and wellness through stable income payment and safe working conditions. In the goal of establishing successful and healthy businesses, Vietnamese manufacturing firms appeared to place a significant emphasis on building robust and resilient employees based on ethics and legality.

> *"I used to work for someone before, so I understand the workers' thoughts and wants. As an employee, you never get what you ask for because at times your hard work isn't appreciated. That's why, in my company, if the workers work well and have certain needs, they can come and talk to me; and I would work on solutions to their problems at once."* (A1-77)

> *"Male and female workers receive the same benefits, having the same working conditions and the same pay rate. As for the safety's issue, everyone is cared for and protected. We have special policies for female workers. For example, we don't send women to hazardous areas and they can rest during their menstrual periods."* (A2-127)

> *"I care for my workers. Their working hours have to strictly conform to the firm's rules."* (B1-31)

> *"The sustainability here means the career of the people who are working with us. We care about their working and living environment. We even care about their homes after they get back from work... We understand 8 hours at work take up one third of the people's time in a day. Therefore, we always create something to connect everyone through laughter… When people feel safe and peaceful in their working environment, it's sustainable."* (C1-48)

"The firm also pays for various types of insurance for the employees such as social insurance, health insurance, as well as other benefits. Our firm increases annual welfare for employees who have been working with us for a long time." (C2-156)

"Our firm offers regular health checks for all employees. The government offices support us with the fees and latest information." (D1-313)

"We must comply with the (labour) laws and international requirements. We need to ensure the working environment is healthy and safe" (E2-24)

"We are always helpful to the local workers and they, therefore, feel secure while working for us. We want to contribute to the surrounding environment and the local community so that the workers can have positive thoughts about their company." (F3-65)

Aside from moral and legal considerations, data analysis indicates that a competitive labour market and high turnover tend to drive firms of all sizes to concentrate on employee well-being in order to retain their staff and, therefore, make business operations feasible.

"If a firm offers good support and welfare to their employees, the employees will keep working for that firm for a long time; otherwise they will leave." (A1-65)

"It's obvious. If you don't care about those people, they will choose another workplace. When you don't have good staff and skilled workers, your firm can't develop… Within the firm, we try our best to take good care of our employees to make them stay with us. In a firm, if you frequently change workers, you can't have a stable source of workforce" (A2-76)

"Educated workforce does not want to take blue-collar jobs; hence the labour shortage. Besides, there are many foreign-owned companies operating in Vietnam competing for labour. In addition, the increase in Vietnamese labour export is worsening the situation." (B1-73)

"The obstacle is maintaining habit of the staff and workers. The high turnover of managers and workers make it hard to maintain the habits." (D1-95)

"The staff turnover is high. Many people leave after the probationary period because of the low starting salary. They are fed up with the workload and the instability of the employment in this field." (D3-87)

"Last year, the rate of workers quitting their job was very high, so we have to try to stabilise the workforce." (F3-235)

Aside from attempts to retain staff by assuring their workplace well-being, organisations have been observed to engage in employee education and training in order to improve work quality and morale, as well as corporate culture towards SD. This will be addressed further below.

5.4.2 Human resource development

A strategic approach to HR typically entails viewing staff as assets and investments that help organisations achieve their corporate goals. The research findings suggest that small Vietnamese manufacturing firms are seen focusing largely on employees' basic personal habits education and skill training in the aim of improving company's product quality and profit,

"Every day we have to separate different types of waste, industrial waste to hazardous waste… We always keep reminding our workers to have more sense of responsibility in their work. I don't think they are happy with being disciplined but they need to follow the rules." (A1-391)

"The senior employees will teach the new ones, and they also keep learning from each other. Because of the small size, our firm doesn't have specific training sessions." (A2-216)

"We have got no specific goals for sustainability, but do have orientation and planning to constantly improve the stability of our workforce, their technical skills and, as a result, our product quality." (B2-109)

"Managers only give verbal reminder. We are yet to have a specific training syllabus for the employees." (B3-162)

"We educate work ethics to everyone that when we create a product, we need to check for the quality always." (C2-195)

When requested to present the researcher training materials, smaller firms were unable to do so owing to company policies. They were also unable to produce any proof regarding employee training on their websites since they did *"not have one"* (C2-207).

Big firms, in addition to employee technical skill training, were seen stressing the establishment and reinforcement of a sustainability-oriented corporate culture through formal training sessions that were routinely held.

"Leaders and managers are sent for seminars and trainings to keep ourselves updated… then bring back the knowledge and apply." (D1-124)

"We have recently organised a class for all the staff. The class was conducted by experienced managers who wrote the materials… (Our) company organises training courses to educate everyone, to make them see the benefits of sustainability in long term for them." (D2-84)

"The Quality, Health, Safety and Environment (QHSE) department holds monthly training for all employees. Each department has its own strategy in training their workers to develop their capability in order to provide new solutions related to the environmental protection activities… The curriculum is written by our firm through references and documents, provided by state organisations and departments, based on evidence and research… it is about transparency in information and knowledge,

such as news and political matters, so that the employees can stay updated and learn about good ethics and behaviours in order to form a corporate culture in terms of communications and treatment to one another within the firm." (E1-215)

"It takes time go from awareness, to underdoing, and to implementation (sustainability practices). We have to keep educating, training and reminding the employees. It takes time and lots of effort. We are building a training program just for this… We are planning to organise a unit that is knowledgeable and experienced about sustainability to our train staff for the awareness. We will coordinate to set up an action plan and elect a committee to carry out and oversee this program step by step." (E2-93)

"Internally, from day one, each employee is assigned a step-by-step training plan such as how integrating the firms's culture into the professional skills so that they can meet the job position's requirements. We have about 20 departments. Every year, each department need to do up a detailed training plan for their employees. That plan is normally reviewed, approved and implemented for the following year." (E2-193)

Furthermore, with access to more resources and larger business networks, big Vietnamese manufacturing firms were seen to be able to engage external specialists to deliver training, ensuring industry-specific as well as sustainability-related information is maintained up to date.

"Our business partners also conduct trainings. For example, they have clear policies about the environmental protection, on how to receive and deliver goods. They hold seminars through which we will get to exchange ideas and learn from each other." (E3-192)

"We are mainly counting on the foreign experts. When they come, they will provide training to our staff." (F1-104)

"As we are associated with the government departments who certify us for being a socially responsible firm, we engage them to provide us courses with additional knowledge, like occupational safety. We have clear regulations on labour safety and environmental protection." (F2-245)

Additionally, sustainability-related training documents are made available on big firms' websites as proof of their commitment to sustainability, as well as a means to share information with the larger community.

The last people-related driver of sustainability measures in Vietnamese industry, community impacts, is detailed next.

5.4.3 Community impacts

This driver examines corporate performance in terms of the well-being of local community in which business activities take place. Understanding the impacts of manufacturing activities on the external community, firms were found to have their own ways of giving back. For example, while one firm chose charitable activities

"We still like to share with the less fortunate people. We organise charity trips at different regions. That is one of our social activities." (A1-458)

Another considered job creation for local residents as a means of making a contribution

"Every year about 3000 workers can work and earn their living here. Therefore, if we follow (industry) 4.0 fully, we would hurt the society and the people (with unemployment). Therefore, it is very important for us to have employees who can genuinely understand and carry out the firm's values. We will not replace all

humans by machines. Through internal education, we can educate and train the employees." (D1-108)

"If our factories are located in only areas which have greater labour pool, like Ho Chi Minh City, lots of people move to work and live here from distant provinces and towns. They have to live in rented places and be away from their families. Some have to send their children to live with their parents so they can go to work. Therefore, if we open up factories in those provinces, the locals can just work nearer to their homes without worrying about rents or being away from their families… We strive to bring work and happiness to people. Hence, we hire local employees in where the factories are located because that makes people happy as it is more convenient for them to earn the living." (D1-268)

Moreover, big Vietnamese manufacturing firms were seen to consider community's quality of life in their innovation and technological investments in the hopes of providing products and value that benefit not only the shareholders, but also society as a whole.

"We are one of the few firms who invest to have our own waste water treatment facilities to ensure 100% our waste is safe when it leaves the factories back into the surrounding community. Our logistics always set new standards for the industry with trucks are owned by the firm and regularly serviced to ensure it has minimal impacts to the society and environment during our operations." (E1-249)

"We are currently manufacturing recycled fiber. That helps recycle waste plastic bottles. According to our statistics, the firm has started working on it since in 2016 and up to now (2019), we have sold about 20,000 tons of recycled fiber, equivalent to more than one billion plastic bottles." (F1-143)

What's more, big Vietnamese manufacturing firms with greater bargaining power in business contracts were observed to utilise that position to influence both the downstream

(i.e., customers) and upstream (i.e., suppliers) of the value chain in terms of community benefits.

> *"Whenever possible, I choose customers who have contributions to the society in one way or another. Therefore, our firm would feel the pride working with them because that is an indirectly contribution to the world. Walmart, H&M or Zara are popular on the world stage because they have created positive effects."* (D1-193)

> *"In my personal opinion, importing material does not help on the impact on the environment in Vietnam. Thus, the best way is to do it by ourselves or buy from domestic suppliers. This way, we will be able to contribute to the reduction of waste in Vietnam… We plan to buy in a large quantity so the local suppliers can have motivation to collect more."* (F3-393)

> *"We choose strategic partners very carefully so that when we work with them, we will be able to have agreements in the contract. We require them to have certificates of the environmental and labour protection. Only if they can show us every year, we will continue collaborating with them. For example, we visit our suppliers' factories and send them questionnaires about the environment, labour and so on. We have just done that for Nike and Adidas."* (F3-435)

Whether for legal or moral reasons, the data analysis reveals that Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises considered people-related concerns in order to enhance the company's social performance by seeking to improve employees' working conditions or by launching projects to serve the external community.

In the next part, the third dimension of the TBL, *planet*, which is also the final driving factor of sustainability activities in Vietnamese manufacturing, will be introduced and analysed in depth.

5.5 Planet

Businesses must recognise the need to re-direct growth in ways that are less harmful to the planet in order to be considered environmentally responsible. According to the data analysis, there are two main aspects of planet-related drivers of sustainable practices in Vietnamese manufacturing:

1) Pollution reduction; and

2) Resource consumption via reduce- reuse- recycle (see figure 5.5)

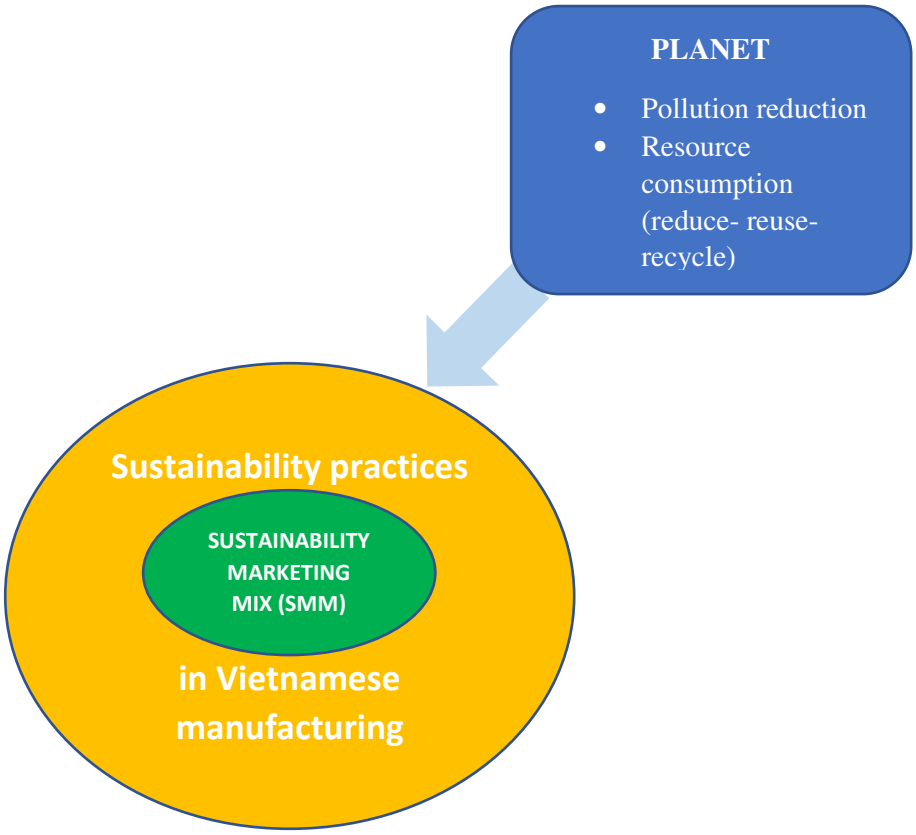

Figure 5.5 Planet-related drivers on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the prism of the sustainability marketing mix (SMM)

Each of the planet-focused driving forces that propel sustainability activities in Vietnamese manufacturing firms is explained in further detail further below.

5.5.1 Pollution reduction

Progressive enterprises that consider the long term and recognise their role in a larger social context are the types of businesses that will naturally incorporate environmental responsibilities as part of their basic missions. According to the findings of the study, Vietnamese manufacturing firms were seen to take environmental responsibility seriously not only because they needed to comply with the regulations

> *"For the environment, the government comes and checks regularly. We obtain all the paperwork to show them that we are qualified to manufacture, which means we meet the standard for air, waste and waste disposal."* (A1-126)
>
> *"About the environment, we decided to have contracts with the government departments so that they can manage the wastes. Our firm fully respects the environmental issues, the wastes are collected by the state management and transferred to the designated places."* (A2-116)
>
> *"Waste is collected daily by an external service company."* (B1-33)
>
> *"As for the environmental matters, we also meet all the requirements from the government departments. They inspect our factory regularly. They have standard forms and data to check on these matters."* (C3-41)
>
> *"As for the environment, we work with the local authorities to take care of necessary matters."* (D1-315)
>
> *"As for health and environmental safety, we must comply with the laws and international requirements. We need to ensure the working environment is healthy and safe, especially production waste, waste water and emissions must be controlled and has to meet the standards set by the government."* (E2-24)

"We have to report about the environment-related matters such as the treatment of wastewater, routine inspections of our factory... Everything needs to be reported. There is a government department who comes and inspects our wastewater treatment, medical room, restroom or something like that. The inspections are very rigorous." (F1-215)

But also because they seemed to recognise that it was the right things to do

"As for the environmental protection, we sign contracts with companies who are qualified to collect and handle the industrial waste. Although I know that some kinds of waste can be sold in the market, I never do that because the buyers may not be qualified in handling the waste. As a result, they may end up keeping what they can use and throwing out and/or burning the rest, which would be seriously harmful for the environment. We work with the most established state-owned enterprises in this province, who professionally collect and deal with the wastes including toxic waste, industrial waste and solid waste." (A1-90)

Moreover, big companies appeared to invest in technology and improve their operational processes in order to make their business activities more environmentally friendly.

"We are using new manufacturing technology which significantly reduce products' toxicity and increase the rate of fast-decomposed products to protect the environment… We always combine products to save on transportation costs. We have close connections with transport service companies to arrange round trips to avoid wasting the resources." (E1-67)

"Our machineries and production process are of latest technologies and meet all the highest standards in terms of quality and operation safety and environmental friendliness. We are one of the few firms who invest to have our own waste water treatment facilities to ensure 100% our waste is safe when it leaves the factories

back into the surrounding community. Our logistics always set new standards for the industry with trucks are owned by the firm and regularly serviced to ensure it has minimal impacts to the society and environment during our operations." (E1-247)

"As for production, we have invested in a solvent recovery system for ink by distillation. Because the printing work is used in packaging which has solvent in the ink. This solvent is toxic to the environment, so we have invested in a distillation and recovery area. After reuse, the solvent component in the ink will distill to separate and recover that solvent into the residue of the ink that can be reused. That is an evidence in our effort towards the environmental protection and the firm's sustainable development. If I recall correctly, I do not think any packaging company in Vietnam has got this kind of distillation facilities." (E3-203)

"We import the materials from overseas by sea, and deliver goods out by sea or air internationally and by road on trucks domestically. Internally, to develop sustainably and cut down on the CO2 emissions, we gradually replace old diesel-engine vehicles by electric ones. We are aware of the greenhouse effect. We want to lead by example in terms of being environmentally friendly." (F2-209)

"We aim to build a smokeless factory. Other factories in the same industrial zone often release smoke into the environment which can be seen from a great distance. We have almost no product or production process that causes the smoke. Even the waste is environmentally friendly and carefully treated in every single step; thanks to the advanced technologies that we are using." (F3-34)

Aside from pollution reduction, resource consumption has emerged as a major driver of sustainability efforts in Vietnamese manufacturing, as discussed more below.

5.5.2 Resource consumption

Businesses' resource consumption habits are likely to have an impact on the overall sustainability of the natural resources that sustain human society. It is evident in this study

that Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises are progressively embracing environmentally friendly practices, green technology, emphasising reduce-reuse-recycle in order to boost natural resource productivity, foster dematerialisation, and reinvest in and contribute to the planet's natural capital.

> *"Workers also focus on manufacturing to reach the target and to ensure that there is no damage in materials to save materials. From there, everyone can contribute their efforts to the company to work on sustainable development"* (A2-101)
>
> *"Currently, our operation is taking the environment protection seriously, such as reducing waste and scrap, reducing usage of energy and using environmentally friendly equipment and materials. At the same time, we switch to solar power to cut down electricity and production waste costs. We are using new manufacturing technology which significantly reduce products' toxicity and increase the rate of fast-decomposed products to protect the environment."* (E1-64)
>
> *"We have clear policies about environmental protection. We reduce, reuse and recycle. A large number of consumers are highly aware of the policies which is a great thing to start with."* (E1-98)
>
> *"Our firm does our best to recycle waste and minimise the impacts on the environment. We have recyclable machines and equipment. We also try to give the second life the damaged goods or can be used somehow during the production process."* (E2-146)

Also, the reduce-reuse-recycle approach appeared to be embraced as the foundation for new product development strategy and business operations.

> *"On our side, we also have policies to support our customers, such as taking back and reuse all plastic cores which are used to roll our products at delivery to the customers. This helps keep the cost down and, at the same time, reduce the impacts on the environment."* (E3-32)

"As for production, we have invested in a solvent recovery system for ink by distillation. Because the printing work is used in packaging which has solvent in the ink. This solvent is toxic to the environment, so we have invested in a distillation and recovery area. After reuse, the solvent component in the ink will distill to separate and recover that solvent into the residue of the ink that can be reused. That is an evidence in our effort towards the environmental protection and the firm's sustainable development." (E3-203)

"Our first specific goal is to increase the production of recycled fibers, which are from plastic bottles. From now (2019) to 2021, we aim to have it increased at least about 50% based on total revenue. By 2025, it will occupy 100% of the factory's capacity... For smaller goals, they are related to production activities. For example, we will have to reuse the paper tube from 3 to 4 times and reduce electricity cost." (F1-118)

"We are currently manufacturing recycled fiber. That helps recycle waste plastic bottles. According to our statistics, the firm has started working on it since in 2016 and up to now, we have sold about 20,000 tons of recycled fiber, equivalent to more than one billion plastic bottles. Beside recycled fiber, we also produce coloured fiber. During the process of production, we will add colours to the fiber to create different colours. It helps textile companies significantly reduce the impact on the environment because they will not need to dye the fabric, a process through which they need to use a lot of clean water and then release heaps of chemicals back into the environment. That is another product that we are developing… Nike and Adidas have strategies to increase the density of the recycled fiber and will work with their suppliers such as us." (F1-143)

"Firstly, our materials are plastic bottles which are thrown into the environment. Polyester is a product from petroleum which does not decompose. But they recyclable. Thus, we collect and recycle them. In Vietnam, when plastic bottles go to the environment, they are very toxic because of the liquid they contained such as fish sauce, soy sauce, etc. and they have been reused several times; unlike overseas where it is only used once so the plastic is quite clear. Normally, the places where

these plastic bottles are collected are very dirty and that makes them unrecyclable. Fortunately, we can still recycle them due to the advanced technologies that we have. Secondly, from the recycled materials- the small pieces of that plastic which is called "bottle flakes", we produce recycled fibers. By doing this, we help reduce the amount of plastic waste... Thirdly, coloured fiber is another product line that we produce to cut down the dyeing process for fabric. When the materials come into our factory, they are white. We dye the materials and convert it into fiber... When we deliver the fibers to our customers, they do not have to dye it any more. For the time being, there are not many choices of colours compared to dyed fabric but we will gradually upgrade it. When our competitors see what we have done they will try to compete with us by doing the same thing, unintentionally, the economic competition will gradually contribute to the protection of the environment." (F3-266)

As it appeared to necessitate large initial investments, big corporations were thought to have more to share in terms of the technology and R&D required.

Above are themes of major drivers of sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing which emerged from the research data analysis. Though Vietnamese manufacturing firms appeared to be aware of the social and environmental impacts that business operations may have, the level of understanding and implementation varied across organisations due to differences in scale, access to resources, and expertise required in the pursuit of sustainability. The following chapter will bring all of the drivers together under one model, describe it in depth, and provide the contribution to literature on the subject.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter the five major themes common to all the firms studied that drive and influence sustainable development (SD) and emerged from the data were identified. The key components of each of these five themes were also identified and through the use of direct quotes it was demonstrated how these components are grounded in the data. In this chapter these themes are consolidated into a single comprehensive model that shows how the various themes and their components drive sustainability efforts across the case organisations studied when viewed through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM).

The conceptual model is placed at the start of this chapter to make it easier for readers as it is compact in nature and easy to interpret. Each section of the model is then subsequently explained in detail. Following the model's presentation and discussion of its components, the chapter compares the model to the existing SD literature with an emphasis on several key models that capture the main themes of sustainability.

6.1 A conceptual model of the influences on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing

6.1.1 An overview of the Conceptual Model

In the past, many firms and industries tended to focus primarily on the financial elements of an enterprise – the generation of profit. Due to increasing social pressure, many companies are now observed to be increasingly concerned about generating profit whilst also addressing the social and environmental impacts of their business activities by incorporating sustainability activities into daily operations. Being held morally, publicly, or even legally accountable to a triple bottom line (TBL), profit-, people-, and planet-focused requirements, together with external and internal pressures, are identified

consistently across three organisational levels in this study as the five key influences on sustainability activities amongst Vietnamese manufacturing firms regardless of a firm's size. At a conceptual level, it is possible to represent the interaction of these influences graphically as shown in figure 6.1.

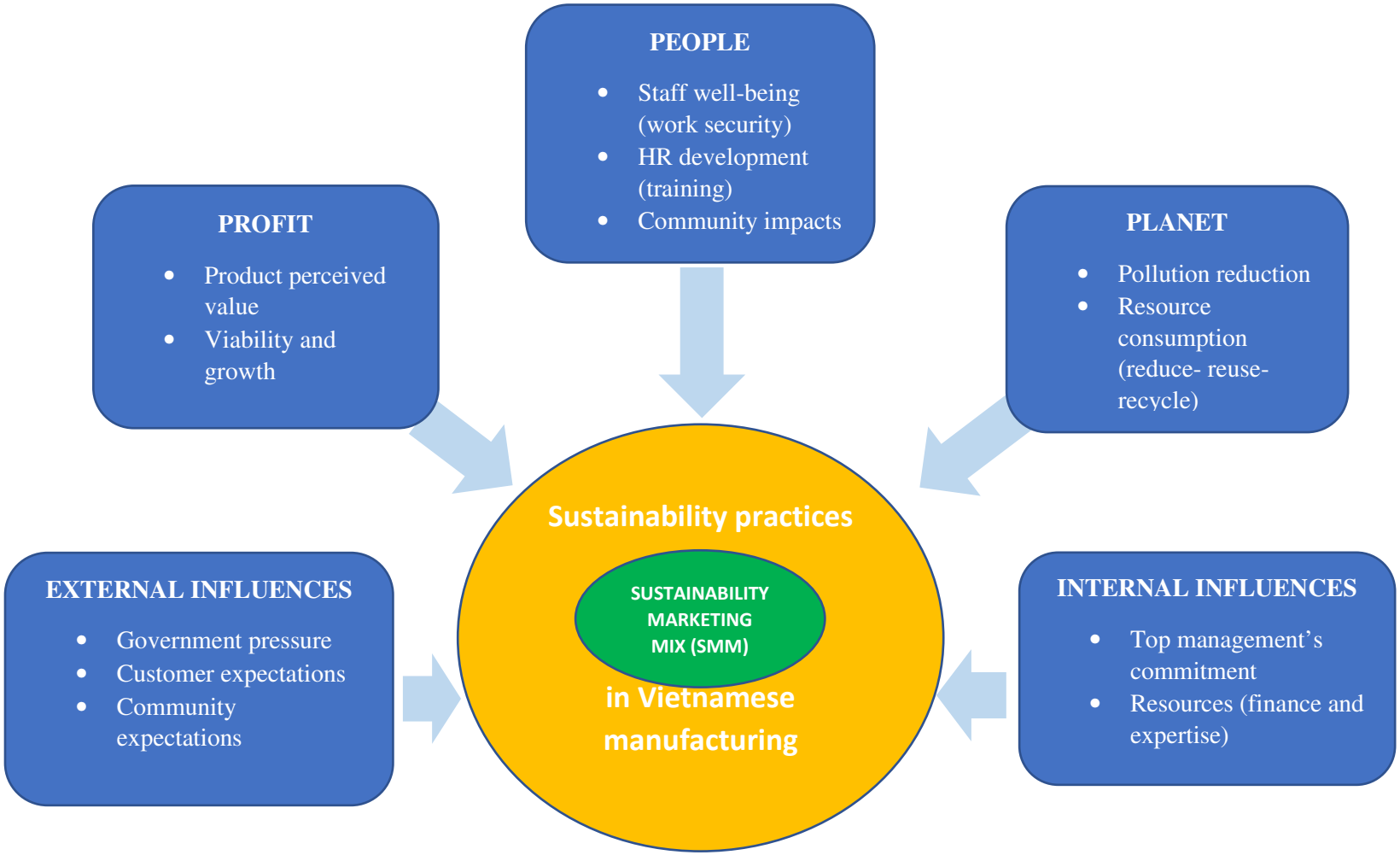

Figure 6.1 Drivers of sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM)

As shown in the diagram, no single influence has a greater or lesser impact on sustainability practices than another. In other words, each of the five influences were present in all the firms studied to some extent. Within each firm it may be that one influence is more visible than another but it does not act as the single source of SD in that firm.

The diagram shows these five influences influencing sustainability practices as represented by the orange oval in the centre. Notably, SMM lies at the centre of this oval. This study found that the SMM is influenced by a combination of the five influences as well as the overall sustainability practices of the individual firm. SMM was used in this study as the lens through which to examine SD practices in the firms studied. Whilst SMM was used as the lens to look "into" the firm, perhaps ironically, the study found SMM lies at the very heart of SD practices and allowed the study to look "out" at what was influencing sustainability practices in the firms studied.

6.1.2 Components of the Conceptual Model

In this section the key components of the conceptual model shown in figure 6.1 are briefly discussed. Firstly, people-focused variables were shown to have a substantial impact on sustainability initiatives, with businesses displaying genuine care for their employees' well-being. Managers from participating firms of all sizes demonstrated top emphasis on human capital via their efforts and investments in employees' job security and development. While Vietnamese tradition and culture seemed to have an influence in this phenomenon, a harshly competitive labour market and high staff turnover also appeared to be important factors in companies' efforts to retain their staff. Furthermore, enterprises' propensity to give back to the local community in which their business activities are conducted exemplifies the prevalent belief of doing well by doing good. Future study might focus on additional influences, such as culture and tradition, on the concept of sustainability through doing well by doing good. Secondly, profit-related variables were found to be a widespread and substantial driver of SD across Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises. While it appeared to be solely a question of survival for small firms, it was seen to be viewed as a blue ocean strategy potential for big businesses to be pioneers in their fields through

investments in innovations, technology, as well as research and development (R&D). This driving force was shown to be important for firms of all sizes, but not to the point where they would engage in unsustainable, or unethical, or unlawful behaviours just for financial gain. Vietnamese manufacturing firms seemed to choose to enhance their economic performance by trying to strengthen the quality of their products and services, as well as their reputation in the local and business community. Thirdly, planet-friendly activities were seen to be undertaken in Vietnamese manufacturing via efforts in reducing pollution and resources consumption. Depending on firm size and hence availability to resources, different levels of investment and commitment were noticed. Big enterprises appeared to make the most of their business network and industry connections in order to gather information (e.g., through specialists) and assistance (for instance, from the government departments).

The fourth and fifth influences for Vietnamese manufacturing sustainability initiatives arise from outside and within the organisation, respectively. External pressures such as labour law and environmental regulations are applied to all manufacturing firms, with a particular emphasis on big firms since the government and local community seemed to believe that these firms should be role models with more responsibility for the well-being of the society in which they operate. Furthermore, businesses of all sizes were observed to hope that the community would raise its awareness of sustainability and, as a result, improve its support for firms' endeavors to become more sustainable. Finally, the forces to become more sustainable inside the organisation might be seen to begin from top management's understanding and knowledge towards SD, as well as allocation of resources and efforts in committing to sustainability initiatives across company operations. Training was considered vital in order to keep employees informed and engaged to the corporate's sustainability-related culture.

In the following section this conceptual model is compared to the existing literature to identify how it differs from existing models as well as how it adds to existing models and understanding of SD.

6.2 Comparison of Model with Extant Literature

While the issue of sustainability has been extensively researched in recent decades, the majority of studies have been undertaken in the context of developed economies and from fragmented perspectives. There are very few whole-system SD models, particularly ones that take Marketing into account. As a result, there is little to compare the conceptual model of this study against. This investigation, hence, intends to bridge these gaps by expanding knowledge on current models from extant literature and providing unique insights into SD from the Marketing discipline's viewpoint.

In 2010 Epstein and Buhovac proposes a corporate sustainability model (see figure 2.2.2) presenting

1) the role of multiple drivers (inputs and processes) in sustainability;

2) the causal relationships between the different actions that can be performed;

3) the influence of these activities on sustainability performance;

4) the potential reactions of the business's numerous stakeholders; and

5) the prospective and actual implications on financial performance.

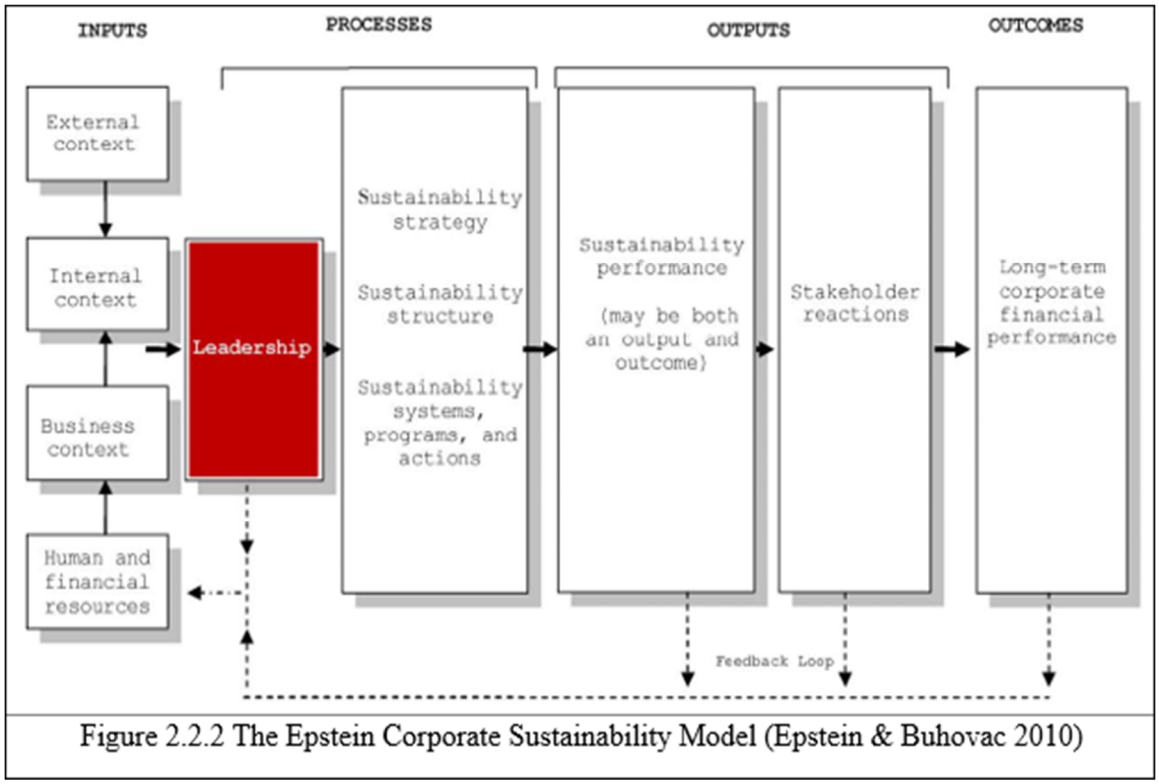

Figure 2.2.2 The Epstein Corporate Sustainability Model (Epstein & Buhovac 2010)

These authors suggest that the leadership function is central to the concept. While their work advances knowledge in the aforementioned areas, it appears to overlook the key elements of sustainability related to economic, social, and environmental performance, which are incorporated and presented in the conceptual model of this thesis.

The need to include the forces of the TBL in a single sustainability marketing (SM) model seems to motivate Lim's 2016 study in which the author takes a step further by adding *ethical* and *technological* dimensions into the picture (see figure 3.1.1). Lim's model illustrates that SM is a modern description of an economically, ecologically, socially, morally, and technologically informed approach to marketing based on a theoretical conception.

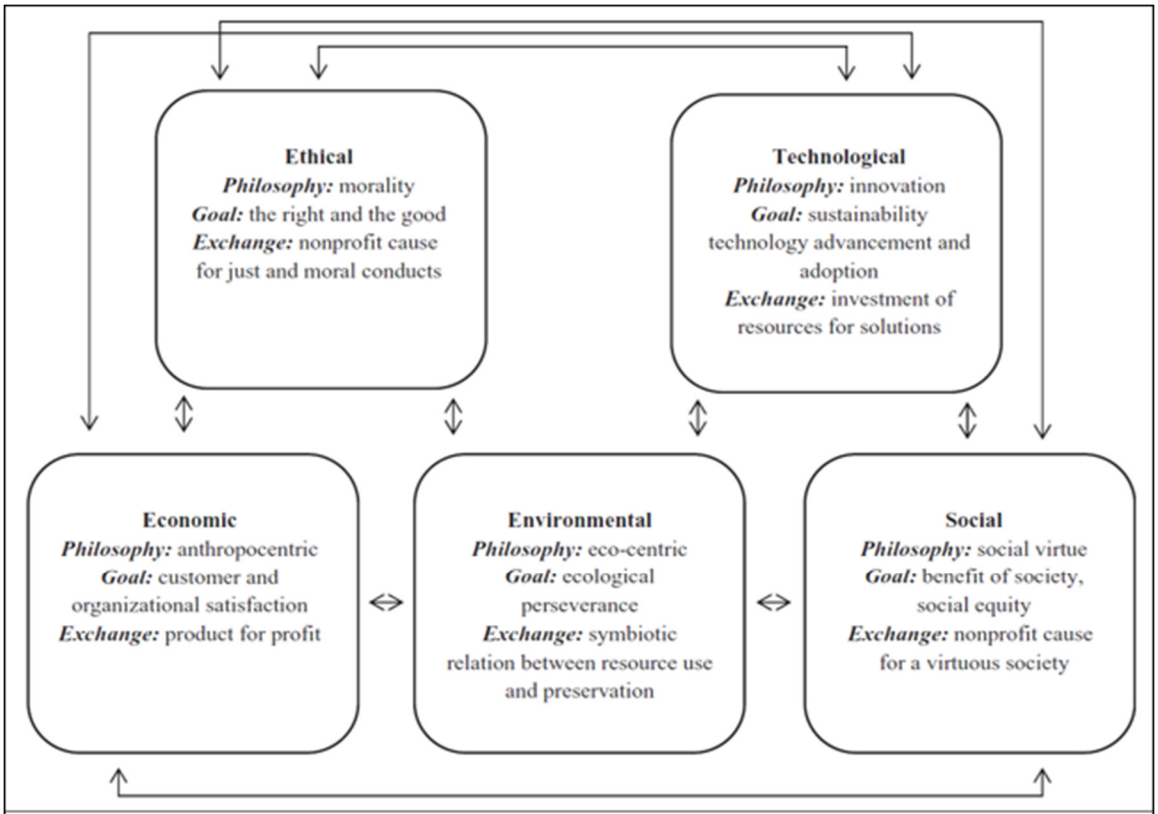

Figure 3.1.1 The five dimensions of sustainability marketing (Lim 2016)

The model aspires to contribute to the literature on SD by providing additional sustainability dimensions, as well as to guide SM practice by advising marketing managers on how to improve corporate image by carrying out the five decision-making areas in a ethical manner. However, it appears to confine marketing functions to merely *promotion* (i.e. improving corporate reputation) and ignores the rest of the marketing mix. Aiming to fill this gap, the development of this thesis' conceptual model is grounded in the data gathered through semi-structured interviews of which questions are designed with all ten elements of the SMM in mind.

Furthermore, the researcher's continual search for the most recent sustainability-related models in extant literature (i.e. published articles since 2020) yields limited results. The work by Zimon, Tyan and Sroufe in 2020 appears to be the closest to providing a dynamic framework for SD (see figure 2.3.1a). These authors argue that it only makes business

sense for organisations to identify sustainability objectives (i.e. towards profit, people, planet), before deciding what practices to apply. The sustainability supply chain-focused (that is, not Marketing-generated) drivers, consisting of:

1) company internal drivers (i.e. management commitment, supportive culture, waste elimination);

2) customers' and suppliers' drivers (i.e. customer and supplier involvement, social and environmental regulation compliance); and

3) Third parties' drivers (i.e. competition, regulatory pressure) set the stage for developing and implementing new practices.

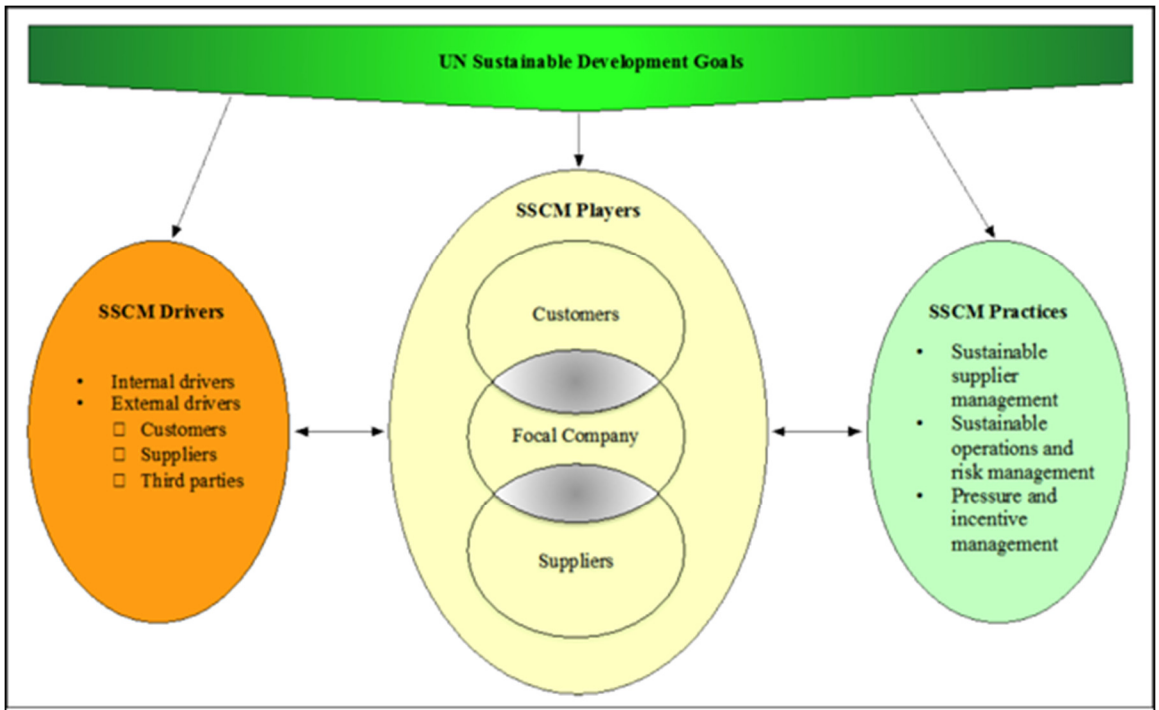

Figure 2.3.1a Sustainable supply chain implementation framework (Zimon, Tyan & Sroufe 2020)

Also, it claims that the 17 sustainable development goals set out by the United Nations (UNSDGs) may serve as a guiding principle for coordinating various aspects of sustainability implementation. This, however, may be entirely irrelevant in the context of emerging economies where the notion of SD is still in its infancy. The framework is

primarily based on the UNSDGs, which are not usually the sets of sustainability goals chosen by all firms. In addition, these authors appear to focus on the overall value chain rather than the market-facing activities of individual firms. As a result, businesses may find it difficult to execute the recommendations. On the other hand, the conceptual model developed in this thesis is purely based on individual firm's business strategies, goals, and action plans; as a result, it is probably more applicable to practice and constructive for literature on the subject.

Once again, this supports the case for why the *Sustainability Marketing Mix*, that seeks to help organisations become more sustainable through ten marketing decision-making areas, is the appropriate lens through which this investigation was conducted. In 2017, Pomering introduced this expanded conceptualisation of the mix for SM (see figure 3.2.2) aiming to assist businesses in dealing with the environmental threat and, thus, offering value to the society at large.

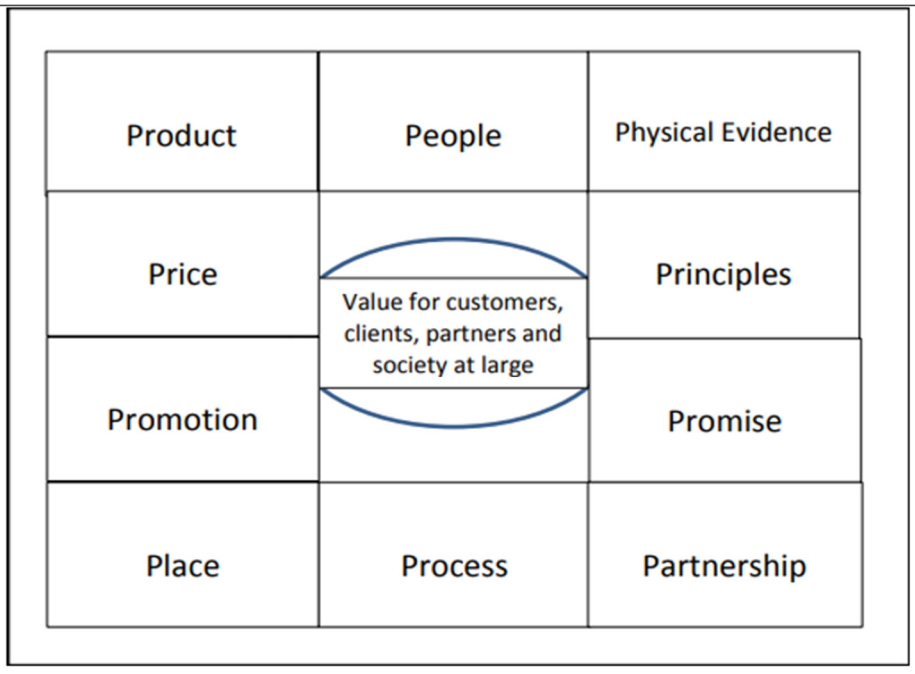

Figure 3.2.2: The ten elements of the sustainability marketing mix (Pomering 2017)

The SMM model strives to reinforce sustainability initiatives in more market-facing decision areas that enable firms to have deeper and wider connections with their stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability efforts. It is possibly one of the most authentic and innovative models for *sustainability marketing* documented in extant literature because of its whole-system approach to sustainability and derivation from the most prominent marketing practical and theoretical framework, the Marketing Mix. Nonetheless, the SMM model is a theoretical approach established in the context of developed economies that appears to be too sophisticated, premature and, hence, yet to be applicable in an emerging economy like Vietnam, particularly amongst small manufacturing firms, as demonstrated by the findings of this research. The conceptual model of this study intends to be a simple and to-the-point model that could be readily utilised by organisations of all sizes.

Moreover, deeper research into the topic of sustainability seems to prove Hart's work in 1997 pertinent when he proposed the Sustainability Portfolio (see figure 2.1.2) which helps set the philosophical foundation for several studies, including this research, since.

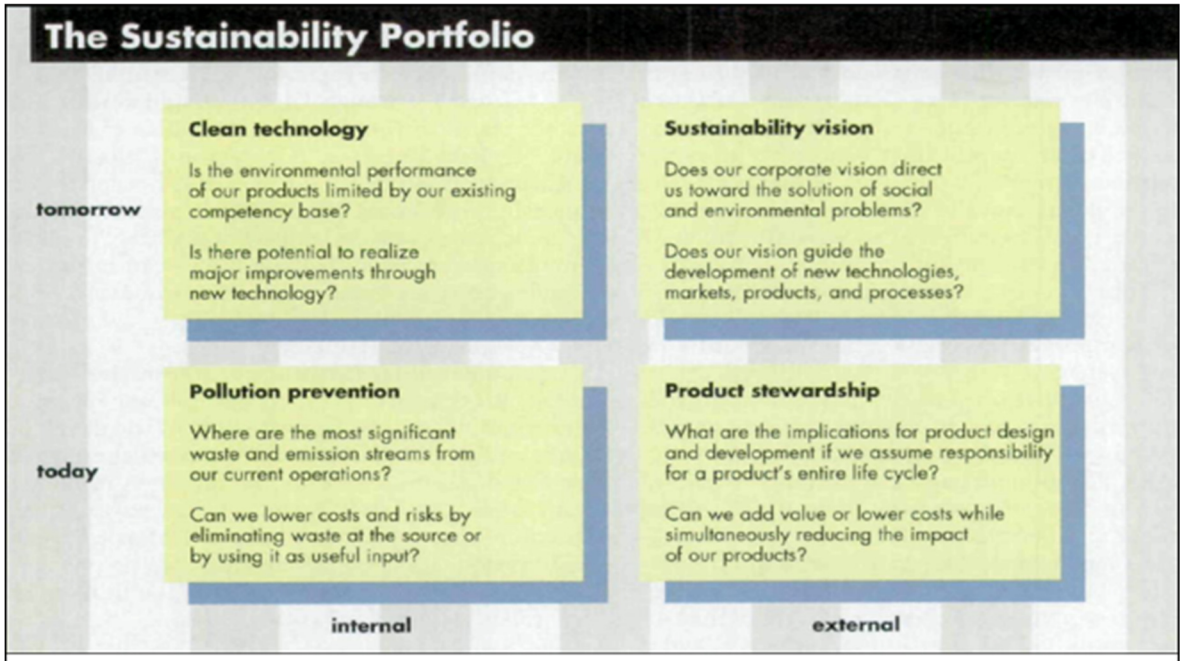

Figure 2.1.2 The Sustainability Portfolio (Hart 1997)

In comparison to Hart's Sustainability Portfolio, small Vietnamese manufacturing firms appears to resemble '*today'* which are more concerned with pollution control and product stewardship; whereas big organisations seem to be more future-oriented (that is, *'tomorrow'*) in terms of investments in sustainability-related technologies, innovation and corporate culture, as evidenced by their top management's vision and commitment in the pursuit of SD. Using Hart's work as a basis for the literature, the conceptual model in this thesis intends to consolidate major drivers of sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing into a cohesive model that may serve as a reference for management practices and future scientific study.

A literature review of recent articles emphasises the relevance of sustainability marketing, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Ahmadi-Gh and Bello-Pintado (2022) aims improve understanding of the reasons for manufacturing sustainability by creating a philosophical framework that incorporates transaction cost theory (TCT), the natural resource-based view (NRBV), and social exchange theory (SET).

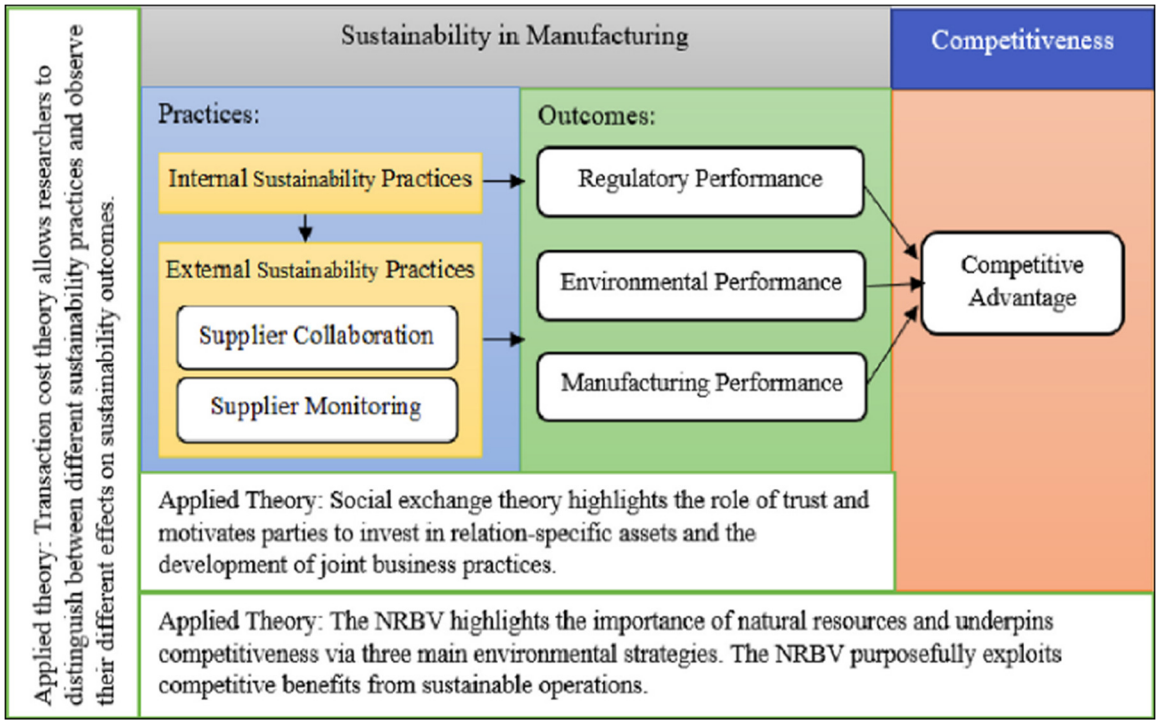

Figure 2.4.1 Structural model (Ahmadi-Gh & Bello-Pintado 2022)

Although the study takes into account the individual and combined impacts of multiple sets of sustainability practices on sustainability outcomes and competitive advantage, it appears that marketing functions are excluded. To address this knowledge gap, the conceptual model developed for this thesis is based on information collected through semi-structured interviews, with questions developed including all ten elements of the SMM in mind to provide managers with a comprehensive marketing toolbox to help them improve their sustainability efforts.

Similarly, when exploring the major themes of green human resource management (HRM) practices, environmental management systems (EMS), and organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE), as well as how these themes impact the environment and discuss sustainable performance among ISO14001-certified Malaysian manufacturing firms, Khan et al. (2021) have completely disregarded the functions that Marketing, the home of innovative market-facing solutions, has to offer. This reaffirms the thesis' and conceptual model's contribution to marketing, not just in academia but also in practice.

What's more, by summarising the top ten academic articles in the International Journal of Production Economics (IJPE) on sustainable economic development (SED) and the role of small and medium manufacturing enterprises (SMMEs) in Asia, Ndubisi, Zhai and Lai (2021) once again have shown how Marketing and its functions are brushed aside in the pursuit of sustainability.

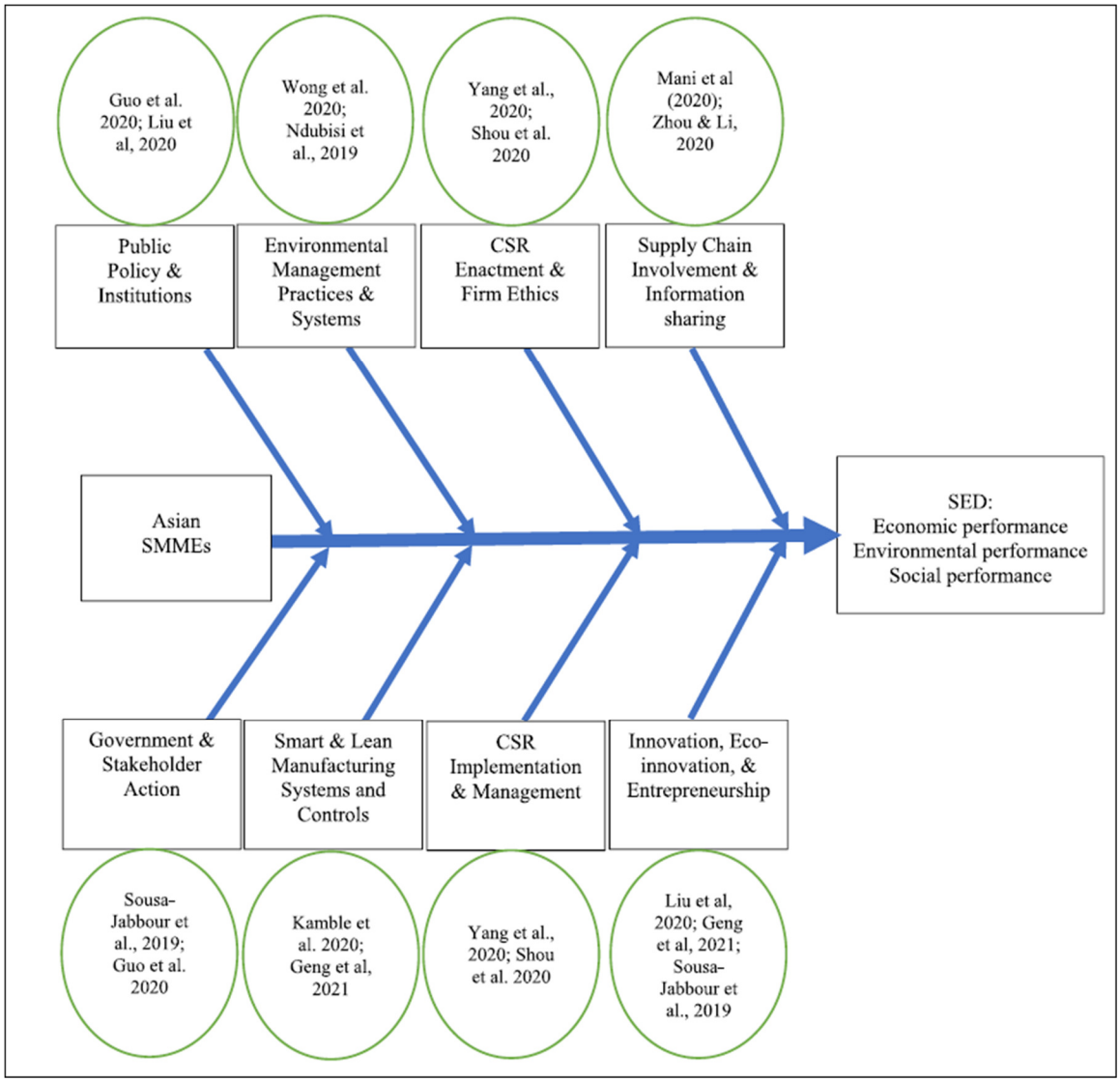

Figure 2.4.5 Drivers of Asian SMMEs contributions to SED (Ndubisi, Zhai & Lai 2021)

Ultimately, although the models discussed in previous studies serve as a basis for this investigation, they remain mostly theoretical and not grounded in any research study. Because the conceptual model of this study is grounded in primary data collected during fieldwork in Vietnam, it reflects most recent real-world understanding regarding sustainability in general, and SM in particular, in the context of an emerging economy. For example, while the SMM appeared to be a useful lens through which organisations' market-facing activities were investigated and examined in a holistic manner, it was found to be too sophisticated for small manufacturing firms in an emerging economy. This study's context-relevant conceptual model is anticipated to provide an important

contribution to industrial practices and scientific theories since it offers fresh insights on unique influences of sustainability practices that are grounded in the data and more accurately represent those of manufacturing firms in this specific setting.

The next and concluding chapter will discuss the study's theoretical contribution to the literature, specifically in relation to Marketing for Sustainability. It also outlines key managerial implications for marketing managers and marketing practice, especially those of private manufacturing firms in an emerging market, such as Vietnam. It will also summarise the research limitations of this thesis and suggest directions for future research into this important topic area.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapter, the research findings and conceptual model were thoroughly discussed and compared with extant literature. This final chapter concludes the study by stating how it addressed the research questions (RQs) and explaining the significance and implications of the study's findings. It then moves on to describing the research's contribution to managerial practices as well as the literature of sustainable development (SD) before presenting the study's limitations and pointing to future research directions, as well as reiterating where the research journey began and ended.

The main sections of this chapter are as follows:

1) Addressing the RQs;

2) Contribution to the field of Sustainability Marketing in an emerging economy context;

3) Contributions to the field of Sustainability and Sustainability Marketing;

4) Limitations and Future Research directions; and

5) Conclusion

First, this chapter will explain how this study fulfilled the research aims and objectives established at the start of the project. In the second and third section, the chapter will address the "so what?" question by offering recommendations for the development of sustainable development-focused marketing practices and theories. It will highlight how this study contributes to the knowledge of sustainability marketing in an emerging economy context, as well as to sustainability and sustainability marketing in general, respectively. In the fourth section, it will go through the study's limitations and suggest future research directions. Finally, it will conclude the study by highlighting its key contribution to *sustainable development* and *sustainability marketing* practice and theory.

7.1 Addressing the research questions

The study develops a conceptual model of major drivers of sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing through the lens of the SMM, with the aim of enriching the literature on *sustainability marketing*, which remains understudied (Kemper & Ballantine 2019; McDonagh & Prothero 2014; Purani, Sahadev & Kumar 2014), and serving as a guide for managers to reflect on in order to improve their sustainability performance across profit, people, and planet. This research seeks to describe a complex, multifaceted, and particularly sensitive subject in the context of a Southeast Asian emerging economy, with the hope of contributing to extant literature and practice on *sustainable development* and *sustainability marketing,* of which the main aim is to create and deliver value to the society at large. The study investigates the driving forces of sustainable development (SD) amongst Vietnamese private manufacturing firms, as well as how sustainability activities are integrated into their market-facing strategies. It focused attention on the following RQs:

7.1.1 How do Vietnamese private manufacturing firms view sustainable development?

SD is commonly regarded as future-oriented and vital for business by participating firms. Regardless of size, Vietnamese manufacturing firms appeared to place a high value on employee well-being and made it a top priority in terms of SD. Big firms with greater access to resources (i.e. finance and networks) were seen to be committed in enhancing their economic, social, and environmental performance through investments in cultivating sustainability-oriented corporate culture, acquiring sustainability-related knowledge, as well as obtaining sustainability-related technology. While small firms were found to be preoccupied about survival and, as a result, considered that SD would only be possible if they could first remain afloat in Vietnam's extremely competitive business environment, big firms appeared to be more future-oriented, focusing on the triple bottom line (TBL) and striving to normalise profit-, people-, and planet-related sustainability practices in their operational activities. Furthermore, the study's findings indicate that, in contrast to other Southeast Asian countries (i.e., Singapore and Malaysia), Vietnamese firms appeared to place a distinct and genuine emphasis on employee well-being, putting people-related sustainability as one of the top priorities rather than profit-related sustainability.

7.1.2 Why are certain sustainable development goals featured in Vietnamese manufacturing?

Each firm was noted to have its own set of internal sustainable development goals (SDGs) determined by its top management. However, International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) certificates looked to be the go-to standards in Vietnamese manufacturing since they were regarded as effective in strengthening company reputation and operations, as well as directly support firms in achieving compatible SDGs set out by the United Nations (UN). Furthermore, being more sophisticated, big firms appeared to not only follow the basic requirements (i.e. regulations) but also aimed to become industry pioneers by setting new standards via research and development (R&D).

7.1.3 How are Vietnamese private manufacturing firms strategically managing sustainable development through their market-facing activities?

Private manufacturing firms in Vietnam, regardless of size, do not appear to be adopting the SDGs. While small businesses have their own set of internal goals that primarily meet the basic requirements of local regulations, big corporations (with the exception of firm D, which has its own goals) tend to opt for ISO standards (i.e. ISO 14001), which are considered to be impactful in boosting company reputation and operations, as well as directly supporting businesses in achieving compatible SDGs (ISO 2019). The tables below summarise the findings, indicating which SDGs the six case organisations have accepted or have not adopted, as well as which drivers identified in this investigation could help them get there.

Table 7.1.3a: Big manufacturing firms

SDGs	**Findings**			**The drivers identified in this study which could get them there**
	D	E	F	
1	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
2	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
3	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
4	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
5	Not in use	Not in use	Not in use	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** Government pressure
6	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
7	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment

				External influences: customer and community expectations.
8	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
9	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
10	Not in use	Not in use	Not in use	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** Government pressure
11	Not in use	Not in use	Not in use	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** Government pressure
12	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
13	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
14	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.

15	Not in use	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	Adopted (via ISO 14001)	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.
16	Not in use	Not in use	Not in use	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** Government pressure
17	Not in use	Not in use	Not in use	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** Government pressure

Table 7.1.3b: Small manufacturing firms

SDGs	**Findings**			**The drivers identified in this study which could get them there**
	A	B	C	
1-17	Not in use	Not in use	Not in use	**Internal influences:** Top management's commitment **External influences:** customer and community expectations.

As a result, the conceptual model developed in this study could be useful as a practical guide for businesses seeking to align themselves on the path to sustainability, as well as a helpful contribution to the SD-oriented literature. The conceptual model identifies the major driving forces of sustainable practices in Vietnamese manufacturing. These drivers are grounded in the data and emerged throughout the data analysis process through the lens of the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) on which interview questions were developed. Via the SMM's ten decision areas, managers and employees from participating Vietnamese manufacturing firms shared their real-life experience of their firms' sustainability activities. Their responses provided insights on the level of sustainability commitment and integration

in Vietnamese manufacturing. Also, the study's findings suggest that while the SMM was understood by big firms, it appeared to be too sophisticated and premature for small firms in an emerging economy. Regardless, the ten marketing variables appeared to be a useful lens to examine firms' whole-system efforts in the pursuit of SD.

The study's results have the potential to assist businesses and governments in emerging economies in developing stronger SD strategy and action plans. The main managerial challenge is putting the sustainability concept into practice, especially with regard to the three aspects of sustainability namely economic, social and environmental (Perez-Batres, Miller & Pisani 2011; Swanson & Zhang 2012; Windolph, Schaltegger & Herzig 2014). This study is time-and topic-relevant since Vietnam is at a critical point, representing a fascinating situation of an emerging economy in transformation, at risk of duplicating all of the industrial missteps of more-developed nations when it comes of sustainability. This study provides valuable real-world knowledge about a subject that is deemed highly sensitive by organisations in emerging economies and, as a result, difficult to acquire primary data on. The study's conceptual model, thus, may be significant as a practical guide for corporations to orient themselves on the path to sustainability, as well as a valuable contribution to the literature of SD.

Following that, a contribution to the knowledge of *sustainability marketing* in the context of an emerging economy will be highlighted.

7.2 Contribution to the field of Sustainability Marketing in an emerging economy context

The influences on sustainability practices outlined in this study seek to apply not only in Vietnamese manufacturing, but also other emerging economies and industries with comparable degrees of socioeconomic development and culture. The research's findings represent the insights of the real world, and, thus, might be used as a reference for managerial actions as well as academic study. For example, for small firms, the pressures

to become more sustainable tend to come externally from the government (i.e. laws and regulations) rather than local community (due to low public awareness regarding sustainability and what it entails), and for big firms, the internal driving forces of sustainability appear to begin with top management's commitment and resources allocation in order to create whole-system changes towards sustainability. In addition, this study seeks to highlight the critical role of marketing in the pursuit of sustainability, as marketing resides at the intersection of firms' operations and the marketplace, and consider how organisations' market-facing activities might develop a fuller propensity to drive corporate sustainability performance in alongside corporate financial performance. Furthermore, regardless of firm size, Vietnamese managers are believed to feel that pro-SD implies pro-people since they genuinely care about the well-being of their employees. This research reveals that future studies on cultural aspects and their effects on sustainability in various contexts might be interesting and valuable to both managers and scholars.

More contributions to the understanding of sustainability and sustainable marketing, both in practice and in the literature, will be provided further below.

7.3 Contributions to the field of Sustainability and Sustainability Marketing

The findings of this study could enhance both sustainable marketing (SM) practice and theory. To industrial practices, this research offers marketing managers of manufacturing firms in Vietnam and other emerging economies a conceptual model which may aid their sustainability efforts by:

1) identifying common driving forces of sustainability initiatives, which help keep firms informed and, therefore, better prepared in pursuing sustainability in a more systematic and harmonious manner, taking into account all factors affecting sustainability activities that come from the outside of the organisation and within the organisation, as well as a balance of the triple bottom line (TBL) across economic, social and environmental performance.

2) providing valuable insights of real-world sustainability strategies and practices carried out by leading firms in Vietnamese manufacturing so that other organisations, in Vietnam and other emerging countries, could relate to and learn from if they wish to become more sustainable and efficient in integrating sustainability activities into their business operations, and,

(3) using the Sustainability Marketing Mix (SMM) as a lens to frame, monitor, manage and improve sustainability planning and activities that enable a more holistic connections with the marketplace and stakeholders in order to realise the impact of sustainability efforts.

Likewise, the study seeks to make a contribution to the literature on *sustainability* and *sustainability marketing* by providing findings grounded in the data from field research. While the definition of Marketing has evolved to reflect contemporary attitudes to business and its role in societal, as well as economic capacity building, there has not been a corresponding guidance on how this new approach, as reflected in the re-definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association (2013), might be executed in practice; in particular, via the concept of the marketing mix, or how value for society as a whole can be identified, described, and then managed. Therefore, to theory, this study contributes to the knowledge by:

1) presenting a comprehensive model for drivers of sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing like no others before in extant literature, which includes external influences, internal influences, as well as profit, people, and planet-related factors affecting firm's strategies and actions towards sustainability of which marketing functions (i.e. through the SMM) are placed at the heart;

2) being the first study to employ the SMM to investigate sustainability initiatives in Vietnamese manufacturing, while more academics (Dlamini & Huang 2019; Khan et al. 2020; Kowalska 2020; Lim 2020; Melović et al. 2020; Mohammadi, Saghaian & Alizadeh

2018; Nasirun et al. 2019) are progressively adopting the knowledge from this emerging SM framework into their research.

3) filling the knowledge gaps of sustainability-oriented matters in Vietnamese manufacturing, which could be useful for theoretical development beyond Vietnam and manufacturing as it may be applicable to other emerging economies and industry with comparable degrees of socioeconomic development and culture; and

4) enriching the literature gaps of sustainable development and Marketing for sustainability with findings grounded in the data from field research which highly reflects real-life situation, therefore increasing the applicability of the theories generated.

The findings of this research, therefore, aim to enrich the literature of the Marketing discipline as a whole in order to meet its critical position as one of the key activities and core competencies of business in creating and delivering value to "consumers, clients, partners, and society at large." (American Marketing Association 2013). This research may serve as a foundation for future quantitative surveys which could be useful to test and confirm the findings of this research, Also, the findings of this research suggest that future studies could explore cultural effects on sustainability practices in Vietnamese manufacturing and/or expand to other settings (i.e. different countries, regions, and level of socioeconomic development, as well as various industries).

7.4 Limitations and future research directions

The study circumstances outline the primary limitations of this investigation. It was carried out by a single researcher with natural constraints (i.e., time and financial restrictions, covid-19 pandemic). The interviews were conducted with respondents from manufacturing firms in a southern city in Vietnam just before the covid-19 pandemic in 2020. As with any research on conceptualisation, further validation from the field is required, as is refinement depending on the finding of more data. To assure quality, the research design was guided by globally recognised researchers who are experts in their respective fields. The works of

Creswell (2003), Bryman (2016), Crotty (1998), Sarantakos (1998), Lincoln and Guba (1985), as well as Patton (2002) provided insight into the overall characteristics of qualitative research. Direction for the case study was gathered from publications by Eisenhardt (1989), Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg (1991), and Yin (2009). The data coding and analysis were informed by the seminal work of Gibbs (2007), as well as Glaser and Strauss (2017).

The fact that only six organisations were included in the research was a limitation in and of itself due to the PhD thesis' scale. Although these organisations contributed useful information, they do not reflect the whole population of Vietnamese manufacturing. Because only small and big firms were included, it is difficult to apply the findings of this study to medium-sized enterprises in Vietnam. Furthermore, not all small and big Vietnamese manufacturing firms travel the same path towards sustainability. As a result, it is not appropriate to generalise these findings to all small and big manufacturing firms in Vietnam. Nevertheless, it is believed that the model developed as a result of this investigation would still be applicable to the majority of Vietnamese manufacturing firms including medium-sized enterprises. While small firms may appear not sophisticated and well aware regarding SD, as well as not have the capacity to execute many of the sustainability practices suggested by this research, the understanding and findings from big corporations would still be relevant to managers in organisations of all sizes. Quantitative surveys to confirm and further explore the matter could be the next step. Also, adding cases would provide additional insights into the research area and may also uncover other drivers of sustainability activities in Vietnamese manufacturing; hence, more cases would present opportunities for future research.

Moreover, geographical accessibility and the sensitive nature of sustainability-related subjects (depending on whether senior management agrees for their company to be part in the study or not) created access barriers to organisations. An individual investigator with limited resource, i.e. financial and time constraints, cannot expect to reach all of the manufacturing firms operating across Vietnam; hence, some sampling is required. In this

research, the interviews wth six case organisations were carried out in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's major economy, which provided basic needs for the investigation to take place such as general safety, as well as accommodation and transportation availability. Future studies might encompass coverage of a larger geographic area. In order to overcome this restriction, it is believed that the relevance of the participants has been demonstrated and that theoretical saturation of findings has been accomplished. Data triangulation, which entails using several sources of data, would strengthen the credibility of the study and aid in overcoming geographical restrictions.

Also, the research was restricted to individuals within organisations who consented to be questioned, thus, only their perspectives were recorded. Other staff and former employees were not interviewed, despite the fact that their information may have been beneficial in either validating or opposing claims. Interviewing other stakeholders, such as local residents who observe organisations' day-to-day business operations, may have revealed further insights. This, too, has the potential for future investigation.

7.5 Societal implications and conclusion

Vietnam is grappling with mounting challenges as a result of industrialisation, modernisation, and urbanisation, all while it is striving to balance economic growth with social advancement and environmental conservation. It's therefore important that Vietnam and other emerging economies do everything they can to make a positive contribution to creating value in terms of the sustainable development goals through sustainability marketing. This research was motivated by the need for business strategic initiatives for a sustainable future in which ecological footprint and social issues, such as pollution in all major cities and socioeconomic inequality among the most vulnerable groups (i.e., women and ethnic minorities), can be gradually improved and hopefully eliminated. Private manufacturing firms mobilise human capital, Southeast Asia's most abundant resource for development (Chaturvedi & Saha 2019), enable new entrants to the workforce, and give them a sense of pride and psychological ownership of their job and the company by providing stable employment to unskilled or low-skilled newcomers to the workforce.

Through learning by doing and empowerment, many newcomers to the workforce have risen to more skill-intensive areas. Salary rises, increased productivity, higher living standards, and social cohesiveness are all benefits of decent employment (Moazzem & Halim 2019). Throughout operational activities, organisations' social performance boils down to their responsibilities to their employees, immediate community, and society at large.

Sustainability is becoming a necessity to avoid the *tragedy of the commons* (Hardin 1968)- a theory demonstrating how individuals driven by self-interest can end up destroying the shared resources upon which they all depend. More businesses are increasingly incorporating sustainability principles into their operations by pursuing goals that go well beyond mere concerns about reputation management, such as reducing energy use, inventing green products, and keeping and motivating people, all of which help firms generate value through development and return on capital. Despite all the wonderful social marketing campaigns that have been developed over recent decades, consumers still consume irresponsibly and unsustainably. Part of the reason for this is that firms do not bring products and services to market sustainably (sustainably in terms of the SMM elements); and this makes it hard for consumers to 'do the right thing' and consume more responsibly. That is, the demand side is not working, so business needs to address the supply side; and this may help improve the demand side. As a result, all organisational and marketing efforts must support sustainability (Polonsky & Rosenberger 2001). The WBCSD has long ago advocated for business to produce more responsibly, but it stopped at calling for same and did not provide any ideas for how business might go about producing more responsibly. The SMM, which is at the heart of this research's conceptual model, provides business with an appropriate framework to meet this need. This research is, thus, a timely investigation since Vietnam is at a crossroad, presenting an interesting situation of an emerging economy in transition, and at risk of repeating all the industrial mistakes of other nations in regards to sustainable development.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (IN ENGLISH)

Corpographic information

1) What industry(ies) is your firm in?
2) How long has your firm been operating for?
3) Could you tell me the approximate number of employees in your firm?
4) Does your firm compete only domestically, or also internationally?

Respondent job-related information

5) Approximately how long have you been working for this firm?
6) Please describe your job title and role in the company, especially as it relates to the company's sustainable development initiatives.

RQ1: How do Vietnamese private manufacturing firms view sustainable development?

1) How is sustainable development defined in your firm?
2) Why is your firm pursuing sustainable development?
3) Why does your firm participate in the annual 'Top 100 Sustainable Businesses in Vietnam' event organised by the VCCI?
4) How does your firm report on its sustainable development initiatives?
5) Which groups are the key audiences for your firm's reporting on its sustainable development SD initiatives?
6) Why does your firm report about its sustainable development initiatives to this audience(s)?
7) What obstacles and facilitators has your firm faced in the pursuit of sustainable development?
8) What initiatives has your firm introduced in order to overcome the above-mentioned obstacles?

RQ2: Why are certain sustainable development goals featured in Vietnamese manufacturing?

9) What are the goals of your firm's sustainable development pursuit? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS to assist interviewee's reflection on this matter).
10) Why have these specific sustainable development goals been chosen by your firm?

RQ3: How are Vietnamese private manufacturing firms strategically managing sustainable development through their market-facing activities?

11) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's products? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PRODUCT to assist interviewee's reflection on this marketing element).

    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

12) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's pricing of its products/services? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PRICE to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

13) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's promotional strategies? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PROMOTION to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

14) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's inbound and outbound logistics/distribution? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PLACE to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

15) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through involving the company's employees, customers, and other stakeholder groups in its operations? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PARTICIPANTS to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

16) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's tangible components that facilitate operations? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PHYSICAL EVIDENCE to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

17) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's operational processes? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PROCESS to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).

a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

18) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's principles? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PRINCIPLES to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

19) How has your firm sought to pursue sustainable development through the company's management of its public commitment promises? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PROMISE to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

20) Has your firm needed to form any strategic collaborations, internal or external, in order to pursue sustainable development? (Prompt: offer examples to expand on PARTNERSHIP to assist interviewee's reflection on this element).
    a. If yes, can you briefly describe the nature of this/these Partnership(s), indicating why it was needed?
    b. Can you point me in the direction of examples of this?

21) Are there any other market-facing initiatives that your firm has engaged in its effort to pursue sustainable development orientation?

22) And last but not least, would it be possible to meet again should there be further questions?

END OF INTERVIEW----------

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (IN VIETNAMESE)

Thông tin về công ty

7) Xin cho biết (các) ngành hoạt động của công ty?
8) Xin cho biết quý công ty đã hoạt động được bao nhiêu năm?
9) Xin cho biết đại khái số lượng nhân viên trong công ty?
10) Quý công ty chỉ cạnh tranh thị trường nội địa, hay cả quốc tế?

Thông tin công việc của người tham gia nghiên cứu

11) Xin cho biết đại khái anh/chị đã làm việc tại công ty này được bao lâu?
12) Xin miêu tả vai trò của anh/chị trong công ty, đặc biệt là liên quan đến các nổ lực phát triển bền vững của công ty.

RQ1: How do Vietnamese private manufacturing firms view sustainable development?

1) Xin chia sẻ khái niệm 'phát triển bền vững' có ý nghĩa gì đối với quý công ty?
2) Xin chia sẻ tại sao quý công ty quan tâm đến phát triển bền vững?
3) Xin cho biết lý do quý công ty tham gia chương trình 'Top 100 Doanh Nghiệp Bền Vững' được tổ chức bởi VCCI?
4) Xin cho biết quý công ty báo cáo bền vững như thế nào?
5) Xin cho biết ai là những đối tượng "khán giả" mà quý công ty quan tâm khi báo cáo về nổ lực phát triển bền vững?
6) Xin cho biết tại sao quý công ty lại quan tấm đến đối tượng khán giả này khi báo cáo phát triển bền vững?
7) Xin chia sẻ các chướng ngại và thuận lợi mà quý công ty trải qua trong nổ lực phát triển bền vững?
8) Xin cho biết quý công ty có kế hoạch gì để vượt qua các chướng ngại kể trên?

RQ2: Why are certain sustainable development goals featured in Vietnamese manufacturing?

9) Xin cho biết các mục tiêu phát triển bền vững của quý công ty? (Ví dụ gợi ý về MỤC TIÊU PHÁT RIỂN BỀN VỮNG khi cần thiết)
10) Xin chia sẻ lý do vì sao quý công ty chọn những muc tiêu phát triển bền vững này?

RQ3: How are Vietnamese private manufacturing firms strategically managing sustainable development through their market-facing activities?

11) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về sản phẩm của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về SẢN PHẨM khi cần thiết).

    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

12) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về định giá sản phẩm của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về ĐỊNH GIÁ SẢN PHẨM khi cần thiết).

a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

13) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về phân phối sản phẩm của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về PHÂN PHỐI SẢN PHẨM khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

14) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về quảng bá và xúc tiến của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về QUẢNG BÁ VÀ XUC TIẾN khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

15) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về đào tạo- quản lý nhân sự, khách hàng, cũng như các bên liên quan mật thiết đến hoạt động kinh doanh của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về NGƯỜI THAM GIA vào hoạt động kinh doanh khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

16) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về bằng chứng vật lý của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về BẰNG CHỨNG VẬT LÝ khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

17) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về quy trình của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về QUY TRÌNH thông suốt hoạt động và chất kết dính giữ các ban ngành khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

18) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về nguyên tắc đạo đức kinh doanh của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về NGUYÊN TẮC ĐẠO ĐỨC KINH DOANH thông qua trách nhiệm doanh nghiệp khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

19) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về lời hứa kinh doanh của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? (Ví dụ gợi ý về LỜI HỨA KINH DOANH thông qua tầm nhìn doanh nghiệp khi cần thiết).
    a. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

20) Xin cho biết quý công ty có cần đối tác chiến lược, cả nội bộ lẫn đối ngoại, để đạt được mục tiêu phát triển bền vững đề ra? (Ví dụ gợi ý về ĐỐI TÁC nội bộ và đối ngoại (chuỗi giá trị) khi cần thiết).
    a. Nếu có, xin chia sẻ nhanh về đối tác chiến lược của quý công ty và tại sao nó lại cần thiết?

    b. Và xin chỉ ra ví dụ cụ thể?

21) Xin cho biết quý công ty còn có những hoạt động nào khác với thị trường trong nổ lực thực hiện phát triển bền vững?

22) Và cuối cùng xin cho biết, trong trường có thêm câu hỏi về nghiên cứu này, ta có thể sắp xếp gặp hay liên lạc lại?

END OF INTERVIEW----------

APPENDIX 3: INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO BE SENT TO THE MANUFACTURING FIRMS (IN ENGLISH)

Dear Mr./ Ms.

I am Dinh Van Dien (Mike), a PhD candidate from the University of Wollongong, Australia.

Part of my thesis requires me to conduct interviews with three employees in your organisation: one employee from strategic level, one employee from tactical level and one employee from functional level. This letter is to invite participants to participate in this research. Names of participating persons and organisations will not be disclosed throughout the research and report. Corpographic information will be used to describe participating firms (e.g. firm size using scale data, years of operation using scale data). This research has been reviewed and approved by the relevant University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee. The ethics application number is 2019/310.

A list of samples interview questions can be found at the end of this letter. Your answers will directly help in answering the research questions. Details of the study are as below.

Thesis title

The integration of sustainability practices into marketing decision-making amongst private manufacturing firms in Vietnam: A case studies approach.

Purpose of the research

To investigate the practicality of the sustainability marketing mix as a framework to help firms assess and, hence, improve their sustainable performances and impacts.

Investigators

Doctor Alan Pomering, Principle Supervisor, School of Management, Operations and Marketing +61 2 4221 4049, alanp@uow.edu.au)

Associate Professor Gary Noble, Co-Supervisor, School of Management, Operations and Marketing (+61 2 4221 5994, gnoble@uow.edu.au)

Dinh Van Dien Mike, PhD Candidate/ Field Investigator/ Main Contact, School of Management, Operations and Marketing (mvdd677@uowmail.edu.au)

Method and demands on participants

Each participant will be interviewed in private, for about 60 minutes, after signing an Interview Consent Form. The interview will be conducted in a room at your workplace, or a venue of your choice. The discussion will be audiotaped so that the investigator can listen again and make notes later. Typical questions include: What does "sustainable development" mean to your firm? What are your firm's sustainable development goals? What does your firm do to achieve these sustainable development goals? Questions are open-ended so that the interviewees can respond freely based on their experience.

On the day of interview, the field investigator will carry out observations of the factories and offices for supporting evidence which will be used for triangulation at the data analysis stage, subject to approval of the participating firm (i.e. via signing of an Observation Consent Form).

Document analysis

Your answers, together with others', will be coded into themes using a software package designed to categorise data before being analysed by the investigator in order to address the research questions of the doctoral thesis.

Possible risks, inconveniences and discomforts

It will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. Names of participating persons and organisations will not be disclosed throughout the research and report, and will be replaced by number 1, 2, 3 and A, B, C instead. Although the risk is minimised by de-identification, there is a further risk of re-identifiability due to small sample size. However, this reidentification risk is to be reduced by not mentioning the gender of the interviewee, but saying "a marketing manager" etc. instead of he/she.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time; and withdraw any data you have provided by contacting the researchers up to six weeks after the interview. Refusal to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with your employer or the University of Wollongong.

Confidentiality and benefits of the results

Names of participating persons and organisations will not be disclosed throughout the research. Data will be stored on (1) external hard disk and (2) digital storage Dropbox, both come with passwords which are only available to the field investigator.

The thesis will be submitted to the University of Wollongong, Australia and Thesis Examination Committee and results will be used to contribute to marketing theory and practice. The University of Wollongong will own the research data rather than an individual researcher(s). Findings will be of immediate practical benefits because they

provide a new alternative indicator framework for sustainable development to firms across industries based on the evidence from the study.

Results will be used to improve on the conceptual sustainability marketing mix and design of a questionnaire for further research and projects. Results may also be published in academic journals, presented at conferences, and used in the design of a questionnaire for further research and projects.

If the participant has any concerns or complaints regarding the way in which the research is conducted, they can contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer (+61 24221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au).

If you give permission to be involved in this study please let me know by return email to arrange an interview time. If you have questions or would like to discuss this research please contact me, Dinh Van Dien (Mike) from the Faculty of Business- School of Management, Operations and Marketing (+61 466961929, mvdd677@uowmail.edu.au).

I'll be looking forward to your favourable reply.

Thank you for your time and interest in this study.

Mike Dinh

PhD Candidate

Discipline of Marketing | School of Management, Operations and Marketing | Faculty of Business

Room 2.02L | Mike Codd Building | University of Wollongong- Innovation Campus

Squires Way, North Wollongong NSW 2500 Australia

Sample interview questions:

1) What does "sustainable development" mean to your firm?

2) Why is your firm pursuing sustainability?

3) Why and how does your firm report its sustainable development initiatives?

4) What and how does your firm know about its sustainable development impacts?

5) What are the current barriers your firm is facing in the pursuit of sustainability? (start from the bigger ones)

6) How does your firm plan to overcome the above-mentioned barriers?

7) What are your firm's sustainable development goals?

8) Does your firm address the UN/ Vietnam sustainable development goals 2030?

9) Why are these sustainable development goals chosen?

10) What does your firm do to achieve these sustainable development goals? Evidence?

11) How does your firm engage sustainability via *product and production*? Could you show evidence of this?

12) How does your firm engage sustainability via *price*? Could you show evidence of this?

13) How does your firm engage sustainability via *promotion*? Could you show evidence of this?

14) How does your firm engage sustainability via *place*? Could you show evidence of this?

15) How does your firm engage sustainability internally via *participants*? Could you show evidence of this?

16) How does your firm engage sustainability via *physical evidences*? Could you show evidence of this?

17) How does your firm engage sustainability via *processes*? Could you show evidence of this?

18) How does your firm engage sustainability via *principles*? Could you show evidence of this?

19) How does your firm engage sustainability via *promises*? Could you show evidence of this?

20) How does your firm engage sustainability via *partnership*? Could you show evidence of this?

APPENDIX 4: INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO BE SENT TO THE MANUFACTURING FIRMS (IN VIETNAMESE)

Kính gửi anh/ chị,

Tôi là Đinh Văn Điền (Mike), nghiên cứu sinh tiến sĩ tại Đại học Wollongong, Úc.

Một phần của luận án yêu cầu tôi tiến hành phỏng vấn với ba thành viên trong tổ chức của anh chị: một thành viên quản lý cấp cao, một quản lý cấp trung và một nhân viên cấp cơ sở/ thừa hành. Đây là thư mời các cá nhân tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Tên của người và tổ chức tham gia nghiên cứu sẽ được bảo mật xuyên suốt quá trình nghiên cứu và báo cáo. Các thông tin của doanh nghiệp sẽ được dung để miêu tả những doanh nghiệp tham gia nghiên cứu (ví dụ như khung số lượng nhân viên, khung số năm hoạt động của doanh nghiệp). Nghiên cứu này đã được phê duyệt bởi Hội Đồng Đạo Đức Nghiên Cứu Trên Con Người của Đại Học Wollongong.

Sẽ có một bảng câu hỏi được chuẩn bị trước (kèm ở cuối thư) và lời đáp của anh chị sẽ trực tiếp giúp trả lời các câu hỏi nghiên cứu. Chi tiết về luận án nghiên cứu của tôi như sau.

Tiêu đề luận án:

Sát nhập các hoạt động vì sự phát triển bền vững thông qua các công cụ chiến lược tiếp thị của các doanh nghiệp sản xuất tư nhân trong nền kinh tế đang nổi lên: các trường hợp tại Việt nam.

Mục đích của nghiên cứu:

Nghiên cứu tính thực tiễn của khái niệm hỗn hợp tiếp thị bền vững làm khung cơ sở chỉ báo giúp các công ty đánh giá và, do đó, giúp trong việc quản lý, điều chỉnh và cải thiện hiệu suất cũng như tác động thật lên phát triển bền vững của doanh nghiệp.

Nghiên cứu viên:

TS. Alan Pomering, Người Hướng Dẫn Thứ Nhất, Viện Quản Trị, Hoạt Động Kinh Doanh và Tiếp Thị (+61242214049, alanp@uow.edu.au)

PGS. Gary Noble, Người Đồng Hướng Dẫn, Viện Quản Trị, Hoạt Động Kinh Doanh và Tiếp Thị (+61242215994, gnoble@uow.edu.au)

Đinh Văn Điền (Mike), Nghiên Cứu Sinh Tiến Sĩ, Viện Quản Trị, Hoạt Động Kinh Doanh và Tiếp Thị (mvdd677@uowmail.edu.au)

Phương pháp và yêu cầu cho thành viên tham gia:

Mỗi thành viên tham gia sẽ <u>được phỏng vấn riêng, trong vòng một giờ</u>. Cuộc phỏng vấn được tiến hành tại nơi làm việc hoặc theo lựa chọn của anh chị. Cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được ghi âm để nghiên cứu viên có thể nghe lại và ghi chép sau. Các câu hỏi sẽ xung quanh: Xin cho biết khái niệm 'phát triển bền vững' có ý nghĩa gì đối với quý công ty? Xin cho biết các mục tiêu phát triển bền vững của quý công ty? Xin cho biết quý công ty làm đang làm gì để đạt được những mục tiêu phát triển bền vững này? Các câu hỏi được thiết kế mở để người tham gia trả lời thoải mái theo kinh nghiệm cá nhân.

Vào ngày phỏng vấn, nghiên cứu viên sẽ tiến hành quan sát các khu xí nghiệp và văn phòng để lấy bằng chứng đối chiếu khi phân tích dữ liệu, nếu được sự đồng thuận và cho phép bởi tổ chức tham gia nghiên cứu (thông qua việc ký giấy ưng thuận cho quan sát).

Phân tích tài liệu

Các câu trả lời của anh chị, và của các người tham gia nghiên cứu khác, sẽ được xếp theo chủ đề thông qua phần mềm Nvivo trước khi được phân tích bởi nghiên cứu viên để trả lời các câu hỏi nghiên cứu.

Khả năng rủi ro và bất tiện

Anh chị sẽ cần khoảng một giờ cho cuộc phỏng vấn. Tên của người và tổ chức tham gia nghiên cứu sẽ được bảo mật xuyên suốt quá trình nghiên cứu và báo cáo. Thay vào đó số thứ tự như 1, 2, 3 và A, B, C sẽ được sử dụng thay cho tên. Mặc dù rủi ro được tối thiểu thông qua bảo mật, sẽ vẫn có khả năng bị nhận diện vì số người tham gia trong quý công ty nhỏ và anh chị vắng mặt khỏi công việc trong khoảng thời giant ham gia phỏng vấn.

Sự tham gia của anh chị trong nghiên cứu là tự nguyện và anh chị có thể rút bất kỳ lúc nào và lấy lại bất kỳ dữ liệu nào anh chị đã cung cấp bằng cách liên hệ với nghiên cứu viên trong vòng sáu tuần sau cuộc phỏng vấn. Sự từ chối tham gia vào hoạt động nghiên cứu của anh chị sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ giữa anh chị và doanh nghiệp của anh chị cũng như trường Đại Học Wollongong.

Lợi ích và tính bảo mật của kết quả

Tên của người và tổ chức tham gia nghiên cứu sẽ được bảo mật xuyên suốt quá trình nghiên cứu và báo cáo. Dữ liệu sẽ được bảo quản trong (1) bộ nhớ cứng và (2) ổ nhớ trên mạng Dropbox, với mật khẩu do nghiên cứu sinh quản lý.

Luận án sẽ được trình lên Đại học Wollongong, Úc và Hội Đồng Chấm Luận Án, và kết quả sẽ được sử dụng để đóng góp cho lý thuyết và thực hành khoa học tiếp thị. Dữ liệu nghiên cứu sẽ thuộc về trường Đại Học Wollongong thay vì các cá nhân nghiên cứu viên. Các kết quả tìm thấy sẽ mang lại lợi ích thực tế đa ngành vì chúng cung cấp một khung chỉ

số thay thế mới vì sự phát triển bền vững cho các doanh nghiệp dựa trên các bằng chứng trong nghiên cứu này.

Kết quả sẽ được sử dụng để cải thiện khái niệm hỗn hợp tiếp thị bền vững và thiết kế bảng câu hỏi cho các nghiên cứu và dự án tiếp theo. Kết quả cũng có thể được công bố trên các tạp chí khoa học, trình bày tại các hội nghị, và dùng để thiết kế câu hỏi cho các công trình nghiên cứu trong tương lai.

Nếu có bất kỳ lo lắng gì, thành viên tham gia có thể liên lạc người chiu trách nhiệm đạo Đức Nghiên Cứu của trường Đại Học Wollongong (+61 242213386, rso-ethics@uow.edu.au).

Nếu anh chị đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, vui lòng phản hồi bằng email. Nếu anh chị có thắc mắc hoặc muốn thảo luận về nghiên cứu này, vui lòng liên hệ với tôi Đinh Văn Điền Mike từ Khoa Kinh Doanh- Viện Quản Trị, Hoạt Động và Tiếp Thị (+61 466961929, mvdd677@uowmail.edu.au).

Hy vọng tôi sẽ nhận được phản hồi đồng thuận từ phía anh chị. Cám ơn thời gian và sự quan tâm của anh chị.

Kính thư.

Đinh Văn Điền (Mike)

Ví dụ nội dung của 20 câu hỏi chính.

1) Xin cho biết khái niệm ‘phát triển bền vững’ có ý nghĩa gì đối với quý công ty?

2) Xin cho biết lý do quý công ty quan tâm đến phát triển bền vững?

3) Xin cho biết quý công ty báo cáo bền vững tiêu chuẩn nào và báo cáo như thế nào?

4) Xin cho biết hiện tại quý công đã tạo nên tác động tích cực gì về phát triển bền vững và giám sát các tác động đó như thế nào?

5) Xin cho biết các chướng ngại mà quý công ty phải đối mặt trong nổ lực phát triển bền vững?

6) Xin cho biết quý công ty có kế hoạch gì để vượt qua các chướng ngại này?

7) Xin cho biết các mục tiêu phát triển bền vững của quý công ty?

8) Quý công ty có chọn 17 mục tiêu phát triển bền vững được đề ra bởi Liên Hiệp Quốc hay Việt Nam vào năm 2030?

9) Xin cho biết lý do vì sao quý công ty chọn các mục tiêu này?

10) Xin cho biết quý công ty làm đang làm gì để đạt được những mục tiêu phát triển bền vững này? Xin cho ví dụ cụ thể?

11) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **sản phẩm** của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

12) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **giá cả** của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

13) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **kênh phân phối** của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

14) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **quảng bá và xúc tiến** của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

15) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **quản lý nhân sự** của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

16) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **bằng chứng vật lý** (ví dụ như có sở hạ tầng) của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

17) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **quy trình** (thông suốt hoạt động và chất kết dính giữ các ban ngành) của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

18) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **nguyên tắc đạo đức kinh doanh** (thông qua trách nhiệm doanh nghiệp) của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

19) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **lời hứa** (thông qua tầm nhìn) của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

20) Xin chia sẻ chiến lược về **đối tác nội bộ (trong tổ chức) và đối ngoại (chuỗi giá trị)** của quý công ty vì sự phát triển bền vững? Nếu có, xin cho ví dụ cụ thể.

APPENDIX 5: "CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE" FORM

Consent Form

Title	The integration of sustainability practices into marketing decision-making amongst private manufacturing firms in Vietnam: A case studies approach.
Short Title	Sustainability practices via marketing functions amongst private manufacturing firms in Vietnam.
Protocol Number	2019/310
Chief Investigator/ Principal Supervisor	Dr. Alan Pomering
Chief Investigator/ Co-Supervisor	A/Prof. Gary Noble
Field Investigator/ PhD Candidate	Mr. Dinh Van Dien Mike
Location	Vietnam

Declaration by Participant

I have read the Participant Information Sheet or the management has explained it to me in a language that I understand.

I consent to a 60-minute audio recorded interview and publication of results from this research on the condition that my identity will not be revealed.

I understand the purposes, risks and methods of this research. I understand that the research results may be published in academic journals, presented at conferences, and used in the design of a questionnaire for further research and projects. The University of Wollongong will own the research data rather than an individual researcher(s).

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about this research, I can contact Dinh Van Dien Mike (+61 466961929 or mvdd677@uowmail.edu.au). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer (+61 24221 3386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au).

Participant name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 6: OBSERVATION CONSENT FORM

Observation Consent Form

Title	The integration of sustainability practices into marketing decision-making amongst private manufacturing firms in Vietnam: A case studies approach.
Short Title	Sustainability practices via marketing functions amongst private manufacturing firms in Vietnam.
Protocol Number	2019/310
Chief Investigator/ Principal Supervisor	Dr. Alan Pomering
Chief Investigator/ Co-Supervisor	A/Prof. Gary Noble
Field Investigator/ PhD Candidate	Mr. Dinh Van Dien Mike
Location	Vietnam

<u>Declaration by Participating Firm</u>

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

I consent the field investigator to carry out observations of the factories/offices with photos taken and publish results from this research on the condition that the firm's identity will not be revealed.

I understand the purposes, risks and methods of this research. I understand that the research results may be published in academic journals, presented at conferences, and used in the design of a questionnaire for further research and projects. The University of Wollongong will own the research data rather than an individual researcher(s).

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to permit the field investigator's observations of the factories/offices with photos taken understand that I am free to stop the observations at any time during the project without affecting the firm's relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about this research, I can contact Dinh Van Dien Mike (+61 466961929 or mvdd677@uowmail.edu.au). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer (+61 24221 3386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au).

Person in-charge (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____