



Social Sustainability in the Malaysian Rice Supply Chain: An Institutional Theory Perspective

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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Declaration

This thesis is my own work and it has not been submitted in support of an application for another higher degree or qualification elsewhere.

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Dedication

To my loving parents *Daddy Gugkang*, *Mummy Dayang*, and my darling siblings,
Aaron and *Allison* for being my source of determination and perseverance.

I love you.

Acknowledgement

All praise, honour and glory to God for His grace, mercy and wisdom.

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Abstract

In recent years, Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) research has gained interest from both scholars and practitioners as a way forward in addressing significant sustainability issues in the supply chain. In comparison to environmental and economic sustainability issues, less attention has been paid to social sustainability issues in the supply chain. Hence, this study seeks to address this research gap by exploring the institutional pressures, institutional logics, institutional complexity, barriers and enablers associated with implementing socially SSCM, specifically from the multi-stakeholder perspective in a developing country context. Using the multi case study approach, this study present evidence from three tiers of the Malaysian rice supply chain – the retailer and distributor and farmer tiers; as well as evidence on the roles of external stakeholders – government and non-government organisations (NGOs).

This thesis developed a conceptual framework and proposes novel interactions between institutional pressures, institutional logics, institutional complexity, barriers and enablers. Using the empirical findings to clarify these relationships, the study contributes towards a better understanding of the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. First, the evidence has illustrated the role of enablers, i.e. *management support, compliance with labour law and compliance with certification requirements*, on strengthening the impact of institutional pressures, e.g. *government enforcement of immigration laws, employee social security provision, employee provident fund, and MyGAP certifications*, on supply chains in order to achieve positive isomorphism. On the other hand, evidence related to barriers, i.e. *behavioural issues, high cost, market forces, process delay, lack of resources, lack of expertise, lack of clear guidelines and poverty*, indicates that they have reduced the impact of institutional pressures leading towards slower isomorphism.

The study also uncovers institutional logics that influence the way organisations respond to social sustainability initiatives. In particular, despite persistent institutional pressures, the evidence suggests that financial logics will remain dominant in commercial supply chains. Specifically, this is due to the way in which financial logics will tend to influence the perceived barriers. For example, high cost is perceived to be a strong barrier for organisations when profitability logic is strong. Hence, when financial logics influence barriers, this could in turn reduce the impact of institutional pressures. On the other hand, sustainability logic is likely to be more prevalent when enablers are present. For example, management support is stronger when organisations have sustainability logic. Hence, sustainability logic can increase the effectiveness of enablers and consequently, strengthen the relationship between institutional pressures and increased social sustainability.

Finally, the stakeholders i.e. *Government and NGOs* have a significant role in the implementation of socially SSCM. In particular, Government exerts coercive pressures for social initiatives such as the enforcement of immigration laws, employee social security, employee provident fund, and MyGAP certifications. On the other hand, NGOs are promoting normative pressures such as upstream/downstream education through knowledge fairs and training programs for the supply chain. Furthermore, NGOs were found to extend their support to assist the supply chain to gain political influence, government financial support and seek new markets for socially sustainable products.

Keywords: Social Sustainability, Institutional Pressures, Institutional Logics, Enablers, Barriers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Motivations

Rising concerns related to social issues have led to calls for more attention to be paid to social sustainability (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Nakamba et al. 2017). These calls have led to an increasing focus on labour working conditions, health, safety and labour well-being and have urged organisations to take further action (Mani et al. 2016, Huq et al. 2014). Furthermore, stakeholders' awareness and media publicity on social issues have an impact on the organisations' image and brand reputation (Mani et al. 2018; New, 2015; Zorzini et al. 2015). Hence, organisations are becoming more pressured to take initiatives to examine their supply chain social practices (Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Zorzini et al. 2015).

In the context of research into Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM), less attention has been paid to social sustainability issues as compared to environmental and economic issues (Sodhi and Tang, 2018; Mani et al., 2018; Hoejmose et al., 2013; Seuring and Muller, 2008). Yet there is a clear need to address this key aspect of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), with social sustainability issues such as Modern Slavery currently receiving much media attention (see for example, The Guardian, 2016, 2017). Moreover, the complex nature of social issues suggests that it is harder to implement socially SSCM (Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Huq et al., 2014). Thus, implementation approaches linked to the environmentally SSCM context may not be fully relevant to the social sustainability context.

There is increasing interest in exploring the implementation of social sustainability in the extant literature, specifically to consider the factors that enable and/or challenge a

successful implementation (Nakamba et al. 2017; Zorzini et al. 2015). Firstly, the terms ‘enablers’, ‘drivers’ and ‘motivations’, and the terms ‘barriers’ and ‘challenges’, have been used interchangeably within the prior studies, which mainly focus on factors that encourage and inhibit the implementation of socially SSCM. For the purpose of this thesis, all the studies discussed under these topics will be referred to as *enablers* and *barriers*.

Prior studies have found many enablers and barriers that influence the implementation of socially SSCM. Examples of enablers include: *organisational commitment, accordance with supply chain objectives, regulatory enforcement and external pressures* (Luthra et al. 2015; Khalid et al. 2015; Marshall et al. 2015b; Freise and Seuring, 2015). Examples of barrier includes: *lack of organisational commitment, dissonance of supply chain objectives, behavioural issues, financial constraints and lack of regulatory enforcement* (Formentini and Taticchi, 2016; Touboulie and Walker, 2015a; Wilhelm et al. 2015; McCarter and Kamal, 2013). Though the extant literature has presented a plethora of factors driving and/or hindering the implementation of social sustainability, the effects on the organisation’s implementation is still vague. This effect could either increase, decrease, aid or hinder organisations efforts to implement social sustainability (Nakamba et al. 2017; Gopalakrishnan et al. 2012).

Moreover, the role of institutional pressures on the implementation of socially SSCM has also gained more attention from scholars in the field (Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Sayed et al. 2017). The three mechanisms of institutional pressures, i.e. coercive, mimetic and normative pressures which were first introduced by (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) are employed to study the factors that influence organisations’ decisions to implement social sustainability. Furthermore, the extant literature seeks to advance the understanding of decision making related to the implementation of socially SSCM by

exploring the institutional logics. Institutional logics and the multiplicity of logics refers to the guidelines used by organisations to make decisions and in what manner do organisations resolve the institutional complexity associated with having several logics, respectively (Greenwood et al. 2010; Greenwood et al. 2011; Sayed et al. 2017; Glover et al., 2014). However, studies which have considered these three standpoints i.e. institutional pressures, logics and complexity are still scarce. Sayed et al. (2017) studied all these standpoints in UK food and catering supply chains where radical changes is achieved when there is homogeneity of pressures and logics, whilst a multiplicity of logics restricts SSCM to more of an incremental change in their sustainable practices. There are still very few examples within the extant literature which focus on the three standpoints discussed above, specifically focusing on the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain (Huq and Stevenson, 2018). In the earlier example, Sayed et al. (2017) studied this context by focusing on the holistic implementation of TBL, Glover et al. (2014) looked at it from the green sustainable practice perspectives, whilst Huq and Stevenson (2018) focuses on social sustainability in one tier of the supply chain. Hence, it is worthwhile to address these gaps to explore the influential role of institutional pressures, logics and multiplicity of logics in the implementation of social sustainability and focusing on the multiple tier perspective of the supply chain.

The sustainable food supply chains are garnering more attention from SSCM scholars (see for example: Darkow et al. 2015 and Glover et al. 2014). The fast-moving food industry consists of customer demand, market needs, distribution channels, production and supply networks, which are continuously changing over time (Darkow et al. 2015). With the interest of sustainability in the industry, food supply chains are obliged to rethink their sustainable practices (Glover et al. 2014). Scholars in SSCM have emphasised more on environmental sustainability (e.g. Darkow et al. 2015), green

sustainable practices (e.g. Glover et al. 2014) or a holistic implementation of the TBL (e.g. Sayed et al. 2017) in food supply chains. For example, Darkow et al. (2015) studied 145 food industry experts in the European food service supply chains. These authors found that management support for sustainability, innovation and customer focus are important drivers in the food service supply chain. In another example, Glover et al. (2014) studies the implementation of sustainability on the dairy supply chain and found cost reduction and profit maximisation remaining as the supply chain's dominant logic, though sustainability was on their agenda. Yet, there is still a need to focus on the implementation of social sustainability in the food supply chains, where the size of the labour force is often large, and the social impact of this industry is significant.

The contextual perspectives in the SSCM literature have increasingly gained more significance and recent literature review papers have acknowledged that studies in SSCM are mainly divided into two contexts: developed and developing economies (Nakamba et al. 2017; Yawar and Seuring, 2017; Jia et al. 2018; Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Yawar and Kauppi, 2018). In Yawar and Seuring (2017) the statistics of papers through their systematic literature review highlighted that more than 70% of papers in SSCM were conducted by European or North American scholars, whilst only 19% were conducted by Asian scholars and the remaining 8% were from continents such as Africa. Therefore, the majority of the research to date is from a developed economy perspective and more research is needed into the developing economy. Given this contextual gap in the literature, researchers are suggesting that there is a need to balance the contextual perspectives and work towards creating a more robust understanding of SSCM (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Yawar and Kauppi, 2018).

The development of socially SSCM in developing economies is still in its infancy (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Huq and Stevenson, 2018). Social issues are known to be different from environmental issues and often, bounded or subject to country context (Huq and Stevenson, 2018). There is increasing concern for global supply chains that relies on suppliers that encounters significant social issues in this context (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Huq and Stevenson, 2018). The need for more research on developing economies is founded on several reasons such as: the different pressures for implementing SSCM (Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Jia et al. 2018) and the different coping mechanism when experiencing challenges and/or motivations related to SSCM (Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Nakamba et al. 2017). Hence, the call to fill this void in the SSCM literature will provide a more comprehensive understanding of supply chain actors in developing economies specifically in addressing global supply chain social issues, addressing the need for more upstream supply chain perspectives, and addressing the need to assess governance measures of supply chains in this context (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Yawar and Seuring, 2018; Nakamba et al. 2017).

1.2 Summary of Research Gaps, Research Questions and Research Method

As discussed above, there is a clear need to further explore the implementation of social sustainability in food supply chains. This section aims to summarise and clarify the research gaps in the extant literature, and then presents the research questions which will be explored in this thesis.

The neglected areas in the extant literature related to the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain can be grouped into two categories. Firstly, developing economies are still an area that need to be further explored (Jia et al., 2018; Nakamba et

al., 2017; Zorzini et al., 2015). Moreover, recent studies have identified that in the context of socially SSCM, more research has focused on developed countries and on the buyer's perspective (Jia et al., 2018; Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Zorzini et al., 2015). Secondly, scholars have demonstrated more interest in managing supply chain tiers (Tachizawa and Wong, 2014; Mena et al., 2013) and several studies suggest there is still a lack of studies focusing on the role of supply chain actors (Wilhelm et al., 2016), the types of drivers (Nakamba et al., 2017) and the types of barriers (Jiu et al., 2018) experienced at different tier levels when social sustainability is implemented.

Thus, this study seeks to explore these gaps related to the implementation of social sustainability by focusing on the consequences of *enablers* and *barriers*, the influential role of *institutional pressures*, *logics* and *complexity* from the perspective of *multiple tiers* of the food supply chain in *developing economies* and including the perspective of various socially SSCM *stakeholders*. Hence, the study aims to address **five research questions**:

1. How can a greater understanding of barriers and enablers, from the perspective of multiple supply chain actors within a developing country context, aid in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain?
2. How do stakeholders (government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) seek to influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
3. How do institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic, normative) influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
4. How do institutional logics influence the decisions made by organisations towards the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

5. How do organisations deal with institutional complexity in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

To address these research gaps, a case study method is adopted, with data collected from three tiers of the rice supply chain in Malaysia – the retailer, distributor and farmer tiers. In addition, the role of both government and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) is investigated in this thesis.

1.3 Defining Social Sustainability in the Supply Chain

Sustainability is referred to as the ability to meet the needs of the present whilst preserving it for the future generation's needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The call for greater sustainability has clearly indicated the importance of addressing the interrelationship between ecological, social and economic systems (Hutchins and Sutherland, 2008); and this has required businesses to reconsider their environmental, economic and social impact throughout the life cycle of their products and services.

Correspondingly, scholars within the field of supply chain management have not missed the call to address sustainability. Within the context of supply chains, which comprise of the flow of activities and information from the extraction of raw materials stage right through to the end users, (Handfield and Nichols, 1999), research insights have begun to slowly add meaning to sustainability by considering the “guidelines” of the Triple Bottom Line. The TBL (i.e. economic, environmental and social) was introduced by Elkington (1998) and highlights the importance of having a partnership between these three, while the article also focuses more on the environmental aspects of sustainability; which was the emerging trend during the 1990s. From the late 1990s until

recently, research has shifted its focus from the environmental and economic side towards the social side of sustainability in the context of supply chain.

Despite the shifted interest in studying social sustainability, only a few scholars have attempted to define the term (Nakamba et al. 2017). The literature review paper by Zorzini et al. (2015) discussed the classification of social sustainability issues as introduced by Carter and Jennings (2002a) and Carter (2004) who covered: human rights, safety, community, diversity and ethics; and then expanded this classification using additional issues found in their review including: respect for local democratic institutions, animal welfare concerns and social impacts on customers (Zorzini et al. 2015). Table 1.1 presents six definitions for social sustainability which focus on several perspectives such as: *management practices* (Klassen and Vereecke, 2012 and; Awaysheh and Klassen, 2010; Sloan, 2010); *stakeholders* (Nakamba et al. 2017; Huq et al. 2014 and; Klassen and Vereecke, 2012), *labour* (Nakamba et al. 2017; Awaysheh and Klassen, 2010; Sarkis et al. 2010 and; Sloan, 2010) and *society* (Nakamba et al. 2017; Huq et al. 2014 and; Sloan, 2010).

Table 1.1: Definitions of Social Sustainability

Authors	Definitions
Awaysheh and Klassen (2010, pp. 1248)	“Management practices that affect how a firm contributes to the development of human potential or protects people from harm, thereby capturing both positive and negative aspects, respectively”
Huq et al. (2014, pp. 612)	“Social sustainability is a holistic concept that must be integrated with economic and environmental performance considerations, recognizes stakeholders within and beyond the supply chain; and attempts to ensure long-term benefit for society”

Authors	Definitions
Sarkis et al. (2010, pp. 338)	“Social sustainability is related to management of social resources including people’s skills and abilities, institutions, relationships and social values”
Sloan (2010, p.8)	“Social dimension involves developing and maintaining business practices that are fair and favourable to the labour, communities, and regions touched by the supply chain”
Klassen and Vereecke (2012, pp. 105)	“Social sustainability is defined as encompassing three levels of stakeholders (who), focusing on the evolving set of social concerns for which the firm has influence in the supply chain (which issues), and involving management capabilities that respond to these concerns by mitigating risk or enhancing customer value (how)”
Nakamba et al. (2017, pp. 527)	“Social sustainability is related to the management of practices, capabilities, stakeholders and resources to address human potential and welfare both within and outside the communities of the supply chain”

In view of the definition and classification of social issues above, this study seeks to study social sustainability and focuses on the perspectives of human rights and employees safety in the supply chain. Zorzini et al. (2015) explained these terms as: (i) human rights refers to “*labour conditions such as child and forced labour, discipline, working hours and freedom of association*” (pp. 68); (ii) safety refers to “*the provision by suppliers of safe working environments and regular health and safety employee training*” (pp. 68). In particular, this thesis focuses on social issues such as minimum national wage, work permit and visa, workplace insurance and pensions. The next section will discuss the context in which these social issues will be studied.

1.4 The Study Context – Malaysia

This section will present the study context, Malaysia. The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the context of the study, which will enhance the understanding of the findings presented in Chapter 4 (i.e. within-case analysis), Chapter 5 (i.e. within-tier analysis), Chapter 6 (i.e. cross-tier analysis of the supply chain), Chapter 7 (i.e. the role of external stakeholders) and Chapter 8 (discussion and conclusion). This section is divided into two parts: (i) an overview of Malaysia and (ii) an overview of the Malaysia Agriculture Industry.

1.4.1 Overview of Malaysia

Malaysia is a country located in the Southeast of Asia (see Figure 1.1) and it is divided into two regions, namely, West Malaysia, also known as Peninsula Malaysia and East Malaysia, also known as Borneo (see Figure 1.2). Malaysia was British-ruled until 1957 and Malaysia was established in 1963, consisting of three parts, Malaya (i.e. West Malaysia), Sarawak, Sabah (i.e. Borneo) and Singapore, though Singapore later separated from Malaysia in 1965. Malaysia is also a member of the Commonwealth (Source: Britannica.com) and ASEAN, with countries such as Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (Source: Asean.org). Malaysia consists of 13 states and three federal territories. Malaysia has a population of approximately 31,100,000 and it is a multi-ethnic country with a variety of ethnic groups such as: Malay, Chinese, Indigenous, Indian and others. Major languages in this country are Bahasa Malaysia (translated as: Malaysian language), English, Chinese dialects, Tamil and many others (Source: BBC.co.uk).

Malaysia has a diversified economy which includes industries such as agriculture, commodity, manufacturing and services. The country faced the Asian financial crisis in

1997 to 1998 and the recovery from this crisis have led to Malaysia's growth and it is becoming one of the most open economies in the world. However, the country still faces 1% of extreme poverty and high rates of income inequality, relative to other Asian countries (Source: World Bank.org). The reports from the World Bank have said that domestic demand is expected to steadily improve income growth and the labour markets (Source: World Bank.org). Malaysia has been selected as an appropriate developing country context to study as the country presents social issue which are relevant to the interest of the study. The intention and justification for selecting Malaysia will be further clarified in Chapter 3.

Figure 1.1 Map of Asia – Location of Malaysia



Figure 1.2: Map of Malaysia



1.4.2 Overview of Malaysia Agriculture Industry: Rice Supply Chain

The Malaysia Agriculture Industry consists of three main commodities which are: crops, livestock and fisheries. In 2017, the palm oil had the highest production followed by rice, rubber, pepper and cocoa beans. The number of employed labour in the industry has increased in the same year (i.e. 2017) with a record of 1,631,600, one of the most labour-intensive industries in the country (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2019). The Department of Agriculture which is responsible for the rice supply chain is referred to as the Paddy, Industrial Crop and Floriculture Division. The main tasks of this department are:

- Promoting the development of paddy, industrial crops, potential commodities and floriculture to meet the goals of the National Agriculture Policy

- Developing technology packages and farm management systems for paddy, industrial crops and potential commodities as well as floriculture
- Improving the skills of development agents in the aspects of paddy, industrial crops and potential commodities as well as floriculture through technical training.
- Providing consultation services, technical support and advisory services to target groups of the crop production and farm management technology.
- Producing and supplying quality seeds from superior varieties for cultivation purposes and;
- Providing paddy seed certification scheme services and providing authorised paddy seeds services to farmers (Source: Department of Agriculture Malaysia Website)

Rice is the main staple food in Malaysia; hence, this is one of the most important supply chains in the country. The objectives of the Agriculture industry for rice supply chains was to improve the socio-economic well-being of the country's population and to continuously increase rice production to meet the national needs (Source: MADA.gov.my).

The rice supply chain has formed a Farmer's Association in August 1967. The main objectives of this association were to: (i) improve the economic and social standards; (ii) enhance skills and knowledge; (iii) increase revenue and income; (iv) improve living standards; (v) develop a progressive, independent and united farming society – for farmers throughout the country (Source: MADA.gov.my). Rice is mainly planted throughout the country, both in the Peninsula and East of Malaysia (see Figure 1.2). This study aims to explore the rice supply chain as it is one of the most labour-intensive supply chains in the country, hence, this is an appropriate context for the study of social sustainability. In the interest of shedding some light on the implementation of social

sustainability, the study has chosen to focus on rice supply chains in the Borneo region of Malaysia, specifically: Miri and Bario, (see Figure 1.3). The thesis will focus on these places of interest in order to follow through and look at the rice supply chain links (i.e. farmers-distributors-retailers) spread throughout these locations.

Figure 1.3: Map of Borneo: Location of Miri and Bario



1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters as outlined below:

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the study which includes the discussion of the research background and motivation, the research questions and method. Furthermore, an overview of the country context and the supply chain studied is presented, and finally,

the organisation of the thesis is described providing a summary of the chapters in the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical foundation of the study which begins with a systematic literature review of the studies in the field. This is followed by the summary of research gaps, research questions and a proposed theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological background of the study including the research philosophy, research methodology and strategies employed in this study to explore the research gaps defined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4 presents the within-case analysis of the study, including a comprehensive analysis and discussion of three cases, namely, Retailer 1, Distributor 1 and Farmer 1, demonstrating the type of analysis carried out for each of the tiers of the supply chain.

Chapter 5 presents the within-tier analysis of the study, providing a discussion of the cases evident in the individual tiers of the supply chain, i.e. retailer tier, distributor tier and farmer tier. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the findings with the extant literature.

Chapter 6 presents the cross-case analysis of the study, providing a comparative analysis of the three tiers discussed individually in Chapter 5. The findings are then compared with the extant literature.

Chapter 7 presents the discussion of the role of external stakeholders, i.e. Government and NGOs on the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. A comparative analysis of the two stakeholder groups is discussed, followed by a discussion of the findings in the context of the extant literature.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents the discussion and conclusion of the study, which includes the main contribution of the study, theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations and future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical review of the relevant literature and identifies the existing research gaps that need to be addressed. The chapter begins by describing the systematic literature review undertaken to identify the relevant literature, its common themes, research methods and the theoretical lenses employed (Section 2.2). The following sections then discuss some of the identified themes in more detail, starting with barriers for implementing social sustainability (Section 2.3), and enablers for implementing social sustainability (Section 2.4). The chapter then goes on to explain the theoretical lens for this study (Section 2.5); review the relevant literature related to institutional theory (Section 2.6); summarise the research gaps (Section 2.7) and research questions (Section 2.8); and finally, to present the conceptual framework for this study (Section 2.9).

2.2 Systematic Literature Review

The objective of conducting a literature review is to enable researchers to map and assess existing knowledge as well as to specify research questions to develop new knowledge (Tranfield et al. 2003). This study will use the systematic literature review approach which is a process of “synthesizing research in a systematic, transparent and reproducible manner” (Tranfield et al. 2003, p.209). The aim of a systematic literature review is to respond to the “increasing demands to organise knowledge into a format that is rigorous and reliable as well as make a difference to practice” (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009, pp .673). This systematic approach is used within this study in order to review the existing

body of literature in the area of social sustainability in the context of supply chain management. Then, from the existing body of literature found, major studies are identified and thereafter, classified into relevant areas of research. Discussion of these areas leads to the identification of research gaps for future research opportunities.

In overview, the systematic literature review process began with organising peer-reviewed articles published between 1996 and 2016 under the area of social sustainability, which were identified using a variety of different terms as discussed in Section 2.2.1 below. The papers were then analysed according to different themes (i.e. similar research contents are grouped together). In summary, these themes are: barriers and challenges; collaboration; motivation, drivers and enablers of sustainability; organisational culture; relationship between practices and performance; risk management; strategy; transparency and literature review papers which were also included, but not grouped as a theme in itself. These themes will be further discussed in Section 2.2.2.

2.2.1 Detail of Stages in the Systematic Literature Review

This systematic literature review stages followed in this study are outlined in the following:

In the first stage, a search was conducted in the Scopus database and only articles that were published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals were selected. This search was conducted by using several combinations of keywords as follows: “*sustainable supply chain management*”, “*sustainability AND supply chain*”, “*socially responsible sourcing*”, “*social sourcing*”, “*social responsibility AND supply chain*”, “*social AND*

supply chain AND sustainability”, “*social sustainability AND supply chain*” and “*social responsibility supply chain*”. This first search was limited to articles published from 2013 to 2016 resulting in 3148 relevant articles.

In the second stage, since this search is focused only on the topic area of social sustainability in supply chain management, papers on environmental sustainability and economic sustainability alone were then removed (2076 papers). This screening process also excluded any articles published before 2013 and selected only those in the area of business management and social science (536 papers). Then, duplicated search results were removed (390 papers) and the final total number of papers was reduced to 146 articles.

In the third stage, the snowballing approach was used to gather articles from 1996 to before 2013. This process involved identifying and selecting other papers that were cited in the articles from the previous stage (i.e. the second stage). This method was felt to be appropriate in this case, given the high number of recent literature reviews (11 papers) that were identified in the initial 146 articles selected. This search resulted in a total of 145 additional relevant articles, which led to a total of 291 articles.

Finally, in order to reduce human error bias in systematic literature reviews, a data extraction form is employed (Tranfield et al. 2003). The purpose of this data extraction form is to have a detailed outline of the existing body of literature so as to facilitate the analysis of recent research trends. The data extraction form used in this study is a Microsoft Excel database (see Table A1 in the appendices), which contains several headings and sub-headings as follows: the article title, author(s), publication details,

methodology approaches used, discussion of findings, and future research. Therefore, this database includes the journals in which the articles were published, as summarised in Table 2.1 below, and the research methods and theories used, as summarised in Table 2.2 below.

2.2.2 Research Themes

The relevant articles that were identified and selected from the literature search are then analysed and grouped according to their research contents. In this study, these research contents are referred to as themes. The analysis and grouping of the articles resulted in eight research themes and/or trends within the literature on social sustainability in the supply chain management context. There were topics or studies that fall under more than one theme (see Table A1 in Appendix A1 where papers having more than one theme were marked accordingly); therefore, these research themes are not mutually exclusive. The following were the research themes identified: (1) barriers and challenges, (2) motivations, drivers and enablers of sustainability, (3) collaboration, (4) organizational culture (5) relationship between practices and performance, (6) strategy, (7) risk management, (8) transparency; and literature review papers were also included, but not grouped as a theme in itself.

Table A1 (see appendix A1 indicates the theme(s) under which each paper has been classified. Using the abbreviations given in Table 2.2 below, it also indicates the research method used and, where relevant, the theoretical lens employed by each of the papers. It is important to note here that the themes have been influenced by the categorisations used in previous literature reviews (e.g. Zorzini et al. 2015, Tate et al. 2010). However, these prior categorisations have been adapted as this study includes new themes and/or trends

that have emerged in the last three years, 2013 to 2016 when 146 of the papers reviewed here were published. Examples of the new added themes in this study include barriers and challenges; and motivations, drivers and enablers of sustainability. Brief descriptions of the research themes found are presented below:

- The theme (1) *barriers and challenges* includes papers that discuss difficulties encountered by businesses, supply chains or industries in implementing or practising social sustainability. For example: the knowledge barriers within the organisation in the implementation of sustainability (Formentini and Taticchi, 2016); lack of training and lack of involvement from senior management in the implementation of sustainability (Silvestre, 2015b).
- The theme (2) *Motivations, Drivers, and Enablers of sustainability* includes papers that discuss factors that have encouraged organisations or the supply chain to implement social sustainability. For example: managerial support, incentives, measurement and education (Griffis et al. 2014).
- The theme (3) *Collaboration* include papers that discuss internal and external cooperation, partnerships or associations of the organisations within the supply chain. For example: collaborative relationships with growers and exporters, close collaboration with certification bodies in order to support the development of the implementation of sustainability (Formentini and Taticchi, 2016).
- The theme (4) *Organisational culture* includes papers that discuss the values embedded within the organisation, or the holistic approaches taken by organisations to employ social sustainability. For example, organisations delivering a clear and measurable value in building their staff morale and in their recruitment and retention of employees (Harwood and Humby, 2008).

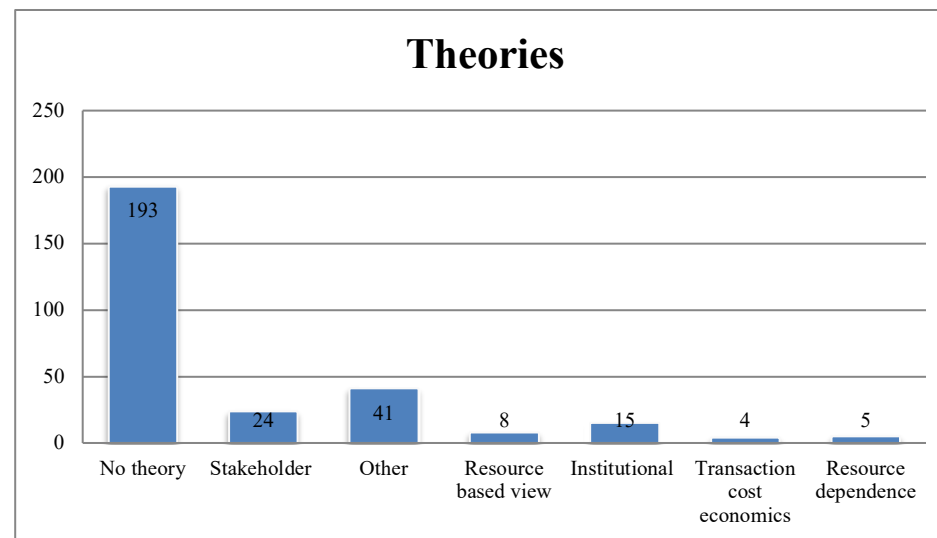
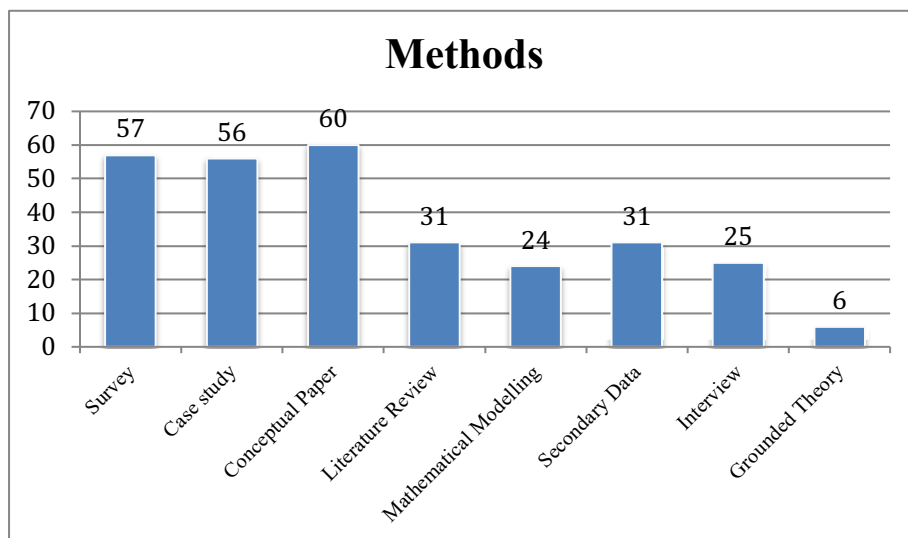
Table 2.1: List of Journals

Journals	No of Papers	Journals	No of Papers
A European Review	1	International Journal of Supply Chain Management	1
Asia Pacific Management Review	2	International Journal of Sustainable Engineering	1
Asian Business and Management	1	International Marketing Review	1
Asian Journal of Business and Accounting	1	International Small Business Journal	1
Baltic Journal of Management	1	Journal of Asia-Pacific Business	1
Benchmarking: An International Journal	1	Journal of Business Ethics	41
British Food Journal	6	Journal of Business Logistics	4
Business Ethics: A European Review	2	Journal of Business Research	1
Business Horizons	1	Journal of Cleaner Production	26
Business Strategy and the Environment	11	Journal of Industrial Ecology	1
California Management Review	1	Journal of Industrial Relations	1
Clean Technology Environmental Policy	1	Journal of International Business Studies	1
Construction Management and Economics	1	Journal of Marketing Channels	1
Corporate Governance	4	Journal of Operations Management	6
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	12	Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management	7
Critical Perspectives on International Business	1	Journal of Small Business Management	1
Decision Science	1	Journal of Supply Chain Management	14
Ecological Economics	1	Journal of World Business	1
European Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management	1	Logistics Journal	1
European Management Journal	7	Long Range Planning	1
Human Resource Development Review	1	Oxford University Press and Community Development Journal	1
Industrial Management and Data Systems	1	Production and Inventory Management Journal	1
Industrial Marketing Management	1	Production and Operations Management	4
Industrial Relations	1	Production Planning and Control	5
Integrated Manufacturing Systems	1	Public Administration	1
International Journal of Business and Social Science	1	Public Money and Management	1
International Journal of Business and Society	1	Research Online	1
International Journal of Business Governance and Ethics	1	Scandinavian Journal of Management	1
International Journal of Operations and Production Management	13	Social Responsibility Journal	2
International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management	15	Supply Chain Management: An International Journal	44
International Journal of Production Economics	26	The International Journal of Logistics Management	2
International Journal of Production Research	14	Total Quality Management and Business Excellence	1
International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management	1	Transportation Research Part E	1
International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	2		

Table 2.2: Methods & Theories used in the articles identified

Abbreviations: Methods		No. of Papers	Abbreviations: Theories		No. of Papers
CP	Conceptual Paper	60	IT	Institutional Theory	15
CS	Case Study	56	OT	Other Theories	41
GT	Grounded Theory	6	RBV	Resource Based View	8
I	Interview	25	RDT	Resource Dependency Theory	5
LR	Literature Review	31	ST	Stakeholder Theory	24
M	Mathematical Modelling	25	TCE	Transaction Cost Economics Theory	4
SD	Secondary Data	31		No theories	194
S	Survey	57			
Total		291	Total		291

Figure 2.1: Methods and Theories used in the articles identified



- The theme (5) *The relationship between practices and performance* includes papers that discuss topics on practices carried out by organisations to ensure that they accomplish their aims of implementing sustainability. For example: the organisational practice of monitoring (i.e. ensuring suppliers' compliance with health and safety requirements) and the adoption of socially sustainable management systems (i.e. introducing a management system with suppliers that provides policies and procedures for fair wages and working hours) in order to maintain or improve their performance of implementing sustainability (Marshall et al. 2015; Pfeffer, 2010).
- The theme (6) *Strategy* includes papers that discuss tactics or actions taken by organisations towards their implementation of sustainability. For example, organisations ensuring that they include: good organisational governance, protection of the human rights, good labour practices, protection of the environment, fair operating practices, awareness of consumer issues, community involvement and development and political responsibility in their strategies (Zhu et al. 2016).
- The theme (7) *Risk Management* includes papers that discuss how organisations manage internal or external threats that could harm their business. For example: organisations may create contingency plans and crisis teams in order to coordinate the conflicts or issues that arise (Carters and Rogers, 2008) and; training, building awareness of risk efficiency and rewarding employees for taking informed risk (Harwood and Humby, 2008).
- The theme (8) *Transparency* includes papers that discuss organisations' ability and readiness in providing sufficient information to their stakeholders (Awaysheh and Klassen, 2010) as an outcome of the monitoring and controlling towards their

implementation of certain general standards and guidelines. For example, origins of commodities, product safety, fairtrade certification, implementation of codes of conduct (for e.g. SA8000) and direct audit of suppliers (Awaysheh and Klassen, 2010).

- Finally (9) Literature review papers as noted earlier this is not a theme in itself but a group of papers that examine research trends in the area of social sustainability. For example: Zorzini et al. (2015) discusses the research trends in the area of socially responsible sourcing; Touboulic and Walker (2015) analyses the theories that has been used in the area of sustainable supply chain management and; Tachizawa and Wong (2014) discusses the research trends in multi-tier sustainable supply chains.

2.2.3 The Themes Selected for This Study: Barriers and Enablers

This study is focused only on two research themes which are: (1) barriers and (2) enablers. There are several reasons for this decision.

Firstly, Zorzini et al. (2015) in their literature review paper have not grouped barriers as a theme in itself; but they have emphasized that barriers and challenges do exist evidently in the implementation of social sustainability. For example, it has been acknowledged that studies on “barriers and challenges to the integration of social standards into sourcing decisions have only been marginally investigated” (Zorzini et al. 2015 pp. 76). In addition, other studies have also recognised the need to further explore and address this research gap. For example, previous studies on barriers and enablers have emphasised that future research should take into consideration perspectives from a broader range of stakeholders, “third-party auditors, NGOs, trade associations, workers and government

officials” in the implementation of social sustainability (Huq et al. 2014 pp.631; Perry et. al. 2015). In addition, previous studies have looked at barriers and enablers within the context of developed countries, whilst not many have looked into the developing country context. For example: Zorzini et al. (2015) have also acknowledged that “there is a clear lack of empirical studies with an explicit focus on developing economies” (pp. 81).

Secondly, by focussing on barriers and enablers, key issues that could also be discussed under other themes above are also included, given that the themes identified are not mutually exclusive, as described in the previous section. Examples of ways in which some of the other themes will be included in the discussion below are as follows: (1) In the efforts of ensuring that social responsibility is integrated in their decision-making, there were barriers and challenges found in the implementation of these organisational *strategies* i.e. theme 6 above (Zorzini et al. 2015). (2) In the efforts of providing sufficient *transparency* (theme 8 above) to organisational stakeholders, Castka and Balzarova (2008b) have underlined the need to consider how to effectively overcome challenges such as: poor labour law enforcement by the government. (3) In the efforts of creating the alignment between organisational and individual values, Huq et al. (2014) found that misalignment between codes of conduct and local *organisational culture* (theme 4 above) exists in the apparel industry of Bangladesh. These examples provide a clear indication that studies on barriers and enablers do contain overlaps in discussing the gaps arising in other themes. Therefore, the review of relevant and significant research gaps found in other themes were also included in this study and will be further discussed in the next section (see section 2.3 and section 2.4).

2.3 Barriers

This section aims to present a review of the extant literature on barriers and challenges in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain and is then followed by the discussion of research gaps to be addressed in this study. The extant literature have studied barriers and challenges as factors that could arise either before or during the implementation of sustainability. The terms “barriers” and “challenges” have been used interchangeably in the SSCM literature; however, for the purpose of this thesis, all the studies under these two themes will be referred to as *barriers*. The extant literature have presented a number of barriers related to the implementation of sustainability and examples of these barriers are as follows:

- *Lack of organisational commitment* (Formentini and Taticchi, 2016; Kirchoff et al. 2016; New, 2015; Silvestre, 2015b)
- *Dissonance of supply chain objectives* (Touboulic and Walker, 2015a; New, 2015)
- *Behavioural issues* (Wilhelm et al. 2015; Silvestre, 2015b; New, 2015)
- *Financial constraints* (Wilhelm et al. 2015; Touboulic and Walker, 2015a, Silvestre, 2015b, Seuring and Muller, 2008a)
- *Lack of regulatory enforcement* (Wilhelm et al. 2015; McCarter and Kamal, 2013; Huq et al. 2014)

Firstly, *lack of organisational commitment* refers to the absence of the organisation’s obligation towards social initiatives which could result in the impediment of the successful implementation of social sustainability. This is an internal challenge for organisations which includes a lack of management support for implementing

sustainability initiatives. For example, Kirchoff et al. (2016) found that decision-makers who are skeptical and hesitant of the benefits of implementing sustainability in the supply chain in various industries such as industrial manufacturing, communications, automotive, healthcare could hinder the success of becoming more sustainable. Furthermore, this lack of management support is perceived to have a detrimental effect where organisations are deemed to experience uncertainty and complexity throughout the process. For example, Formentini and Taticchi (2016) found that organisations presenting limited interest, limited knowledge and limited capability in pursuing sustainability initiatives have hindered a successful implementation of TBL in the food, construction and fashion supply chains in a developed country context. Subsequently, when in doubt, organisations have been found to make poor decisions related to their sustainable practices. For example, Silvestre (2015b) found decision-makers in Brazilian oil and gas organisations have made poor decisions under extreme uncertainty as a result of the lack of knowledge in sustainability. Consequently, these poor decisions have had a damaging impact on the health and safety of employees in their workplace.

The second barrier found is the *dissonance in supply chain objectives* which refers to the conflicting goals between supply chain actors (i.e. buyers and suppliers) in the implementation of social sustainability. This discordance of sustainability objectives in the supply chain could hinder the supply chain in achieving a successful implementation. For example, Touboulic and Walker (2015) found that the suppliers resistant to change and the limited number of compliant suppliers in the UK multinational food and drinks organisations is a significant challenge for the supply chain to achieve their sustainability goals. Furthermore, conflicting time frames to achieve sustainability goals between suppliers and buyers could delay the entire supply chain's implementation of sustainable practices (Touboulic and Walker, 2015). This barrier could be perceived to result from a

lack of buyer power or control over suppliers in the supply chain. For example, New (2015) found that when suppliers fail to meet the sustainability requirements of their buyers, and buyers disregard this non-compliance, then serious issues such as the exploitation of labour (i.e. forced labour, child labour) can occur in the supply chain.

Whilst these studies have focused on dyadic relationships between suppliers and buyers, there is a need to pay more attention to the roles of other supply chain actors beyond just two tiers. Supply chain often consist of three or more tiers; hence, future studies should explore this dissonance when more supply chain actors are involved in the implementation and how this affects the supply chain as a whole.

Thirdly, *behavioural issues* refer to challenges faced in the implementation of social sustainability as a result of poor attitudes or misconduct in the supply chain. This barrier could be associated with organisations' non-compliance of sustainability standards, which often leads to other social issues in the supply chain. For example, Wilhelm et al. (2015) found organisations in the telecommunications supply chain operated with illegal labour, i.e. forced labour and child labour, as a result of the supply chain aim to achieve a lower production cost. The organisations' negligence and/or intended disregarding of laws, policies and standards related to sustainable practices could adversely impact the entire operation of the organisation and its employees. For example, Silvestre (2015b) found informality in terms of disregarding health and safety training for employees and operating without compulsory social certification standards in Brazil's oil and gas organisations.

Furthermore, behavioural issues could also lead to other problems in the supply chain specifically when organisations are not conscious of how it could severely affect their employees. For example, New (2015) explained that organisations continue to commit crimes such as employing forced labour and child labour as a result of the

difficulty in exposing these issues in the supply chain. However, there are not yet any studies which have considered the employees perspectives in this regard. It is noteworthy to explore potentially how employees commit behavioural issues detrimental to the organisations or potentially how the lack of employee empowerment could lead to social issues in the supply chain.

The fourth barrier is *financial constraints* which refers to monetary limitations that hinder organisations to invest in the implementation of social sustainability. The high cost of implementing social initiatives on top of the organisation's production cost have inhibited organisations. For example, Wilhelm et al. (2015) found that telecommunications supply chains faced conflicting decisions of social initiative objectives and high labour costs as part of their social sustainability implementation. The additional costs have led organisations towards making poor decisions which is often a trade-off between the employees' health and safety, and the organisations production cost. For example, Wilhelm et al. (2015) added that, organisations were found to have forgone additional costs related to the health and safety of employees, such as protective equipment for factory workers. Organisations refusal to commit to the high and additional costs associated with sustainability initiatives have been found in a few other studies. For example, refusal to invest in sustainability related initiatives (Touboulie and Walker, 2015a) and corruption (Silvestre, 2015b).

Whilst these studies have focused on organisational perspectives, Seuring and Muller (2008a) found that the lack of consumer demand for sustainably produced products and services have influenced the organisations refusal to commit to implementing sustainability in their supply chains. This finding suggests that financial constraints could go beyond additional production costs and be impacted by the organisations' return on investment. Furthermore, it will be worthwhile to explore how

this impact could potentially differ in the tiers of supply chain, the type of industry (i.e. commercial or non-commercial), the type of sectors (i.e. private or public) and many others.

Finally, *lack of regulatory enforcement* refers to the inefficiency of policies, standards, and codes of conduct to regulate the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. Social issues found in the supply chain are often a result of poor enforcement from regulatory bodies and this detrimentally affects employees working in the supply chain. For example, Wilhelm et al. (2015) found organisations have not formally reported accidents and have poor occupational operational standards such as, operating long working hours, operating with poor working conditions – all as a result of the absence of regulatory enforcement. Furthermore, employees' health and safety have suffered due to the impact of ineffective poor regulatory systems related to social sustainability. For example, McCarter and Kamal (2013) found that labour productivity and labour health conditions in the Indian salt factory have worsened as a result of no actions taken to ban the production of non-iodised salt. Furthermore, the lack of improvement to enhance employees working conditions and safety procedures have reduced employee's well-being. For example, Wilhelm et al. (2015) found that due to the lack of regulatory enforcement, employees have been suffering severe diseases as a result of the exposure to harmful material in industrial factories.

Whilst these studies have presented the severe effects of this barrier on employees, there are opportunities to explore how the actions of one organisation could influence the supply chain as a whole towards achieving a proper implementation of social sustainability. It will be worthwhile to broaden the perspectives of how this barrier affects a particular supply chain, and this could differ from one context to another (i.e. developing or developed country) where different regulatory frameworks exist.

Table 2.3 below summarises the studies which have been discussed in this section and an overall conclusion of the research gap will follow.

The barriers found in the extant literature have been studied from multiple standpoints, such as the supply chain perspectives (i.e. buyer-supplier, multiple tier), the country context (i.e. developed or developing), the types of industry and the nature of the study (empirical and conceptual). The review of the extant literature has led to several research gaps which this study aims to address. In particular, the aim of this research is to explore the barriers from a multiple-tier perspective and from a developing country context. To date, only Silvestre (2015b) have explored this research gap with findings from the oil and gas supply chain in Brazil. Henceforth, it will be worthwhile to explore other industries relevant to the implementation of social sustainability such as the food supply chain, where the food industry is recognised as one of the most significant industries for the society (Yakovleva et al. 2012). Therefore, to uncover the challenges of implementing social sustainability in one of the most labour-intensive industries or supply chains will potentially provide significant insights.

2.4 Enablers

In this study, enablers refer to factors that facilitate or drive the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The terms ‘enablers’ and ‘drivers’ have been used interchangeably in the SSCM literature; however, for the purpose of this literature review, all the studies under these two themes will be categorised as *enablers*. The purpose of this section is to: firstly, review the studies which have found enablers related to the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain and; secondly, to highlight the research gaps for future research.

Table 2.3 Barriers

Authors	Themes	Theoretical Lens	Perspectives		Context		Industry	Methods	
	Barriers		Buyer-Supplier	Multi-Tier	Developed	Developing		Empirical	Conceptual
Formentini and Taticchi (2016)	✓	Contingency Theory Resource-based Theory		✓	✓		Food Construction Fashion	✓	
Gualandris and Kalchschmidt (2015)	✓	Resource-based Theory	✓		✓		Chemical Rubber Electrical	✓	
Huq et al. (2014)		Transaction Cost Theory	✓			✓	Apparel	✓	
Kirchoff et al. (2016)	✓		✓		✓		Industrial Manufacturing Communications	✓	
McCarter and Kamal (2013)	✓	Social Dilemma Theory		✓			Food		✓
New (2015)	✓				✓		Retail		✓
Seuring and Müller (2008A)	✓		✓		✓		Aerospace Electronics Energy	✓	
Seuring and Müller (2008B)	✓		✓			✓	Oil and gas	✓	
Silvestre (2015A)	✓	Stakeholder Theory Contingency Theory							
Silvestre (2015B)	✓	Institutional Theory Evolutionary Theory Complexity Theory		✓		✓	Oil and Gas	✓	
Touboulic and Walker (2015A)	✓	Relational Theory	✓		✓		Food	✓	
Wilhelm et al. (2015)	✓			✓	✓	✓	Electronics		✓
Total:	12		6	4	7	4		8	3

The enablers related to the implementation of sustainability found in the extant literature of SSCM are listed below. It is important to note that some of these enablers, i.e. organisational commitment, accordance with supply chain objectives, regulatory enforcement are the opposite of barriers identified in the previous section, i.e. lack of organisational commitment, dissonance of supply chain objectives and lack of regulatory enforcement.

- *Organisational Commitment* (Luthra et al. 2015; Griffis et al. 2014; Dos Santos et al. 2013; De Treville et al. 2005)
- *Accordance with supply chain objectives* (Khalid et al. 2015; Tachizawa and Wong, 2014; Walker and Brammer, 2012; Panapanaan et al. 2003)
- *Regulatory Enforcement* (Marshall et al. (2015b; Foerstl et al. 2015; Beske and Seuring, 2014; Miao et al. 2012)
- *External Pressures* (Freise and Seuring, 2015; Vasileiou and Morris, 2006; Luthra et al. 2015)

Firstly, *organisational commitment* refers to the organisation's demonstration of obligation towards the implementation of social sustainability. Management support is a significant enabler to improve social practices such as the provision of employee training and development. For example, Griffis et al. (2014) found that top management support is shown through actions called 'leading by example' where decision-makers present exemplary behaviours in US, UAE and Chinese manufacturing and service organisations. Furthermore, the role of top management support is significant in securing that a good system of social practices is implemented throughout the organisation. For example, Luthra et al. (2015) found that top management commitment in the Indian automobile industry has ensured that standard social practices have improved the organisation's human resources management, information sharing and related company policies.

In addition, several studies have discussed the significance of employee training and empowerment as an important aspect of organisational commitment. For example, Dos Santos et al. (2013) have found that employee training and development is an important driver in South Africa's retail industry to ensure the success of their sustainable business practices. Furthermore, their finding illustrate that equal employment opportunities are present in the industry's hiring activities. Subsequently, employee empowerment is also found to be an important enabler related to social sustainability where employees are given the opportunity to make a difference in the organisation. For example, De Treville et al. (2005) found that the empowerment presented through the opportunity given to employees to participate in the development of the organisation's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has motivated their employees to continuously improve their learning.

However, very few studies have considered how organisational commitment as an enabler could impact the supply chain's implementation of social sustainability. Specifically, it will be worthwhile to explore how other forms of commitment from a supply chain multi-tier perspective could improve or drive the implementation of social sustainability.

Secondly, *accordance with supply chain objectives* refers to initiatives taken by supply chain actors to uphold their obligation towards achieving the supply chain social sustainability goals. Supplier management and collaboration are perceived to play an important role in enabling the supply chain's compliance towards sustainability standards. For example, Panapanaan et al. (2003) found that managing good relationship between buyers and suppliers is important for Finnish companies leading towards successful sustainability practices. Furthermore, prolonged relationships between supply chain actors is perceived to potentially lead towards successfully achieving the supply

chain objectives. A few studies have presented evidence of this. For example, Walker and Brammer (2012) found that collaboration was an important factor to ensure compliance with sustainable procurement policies in developed countries such as Austria, Australia and Belgium. Furthermore, Khalid et al. (2015), from the Base of the Pyramid perspective, explained both collaboration and long-term relationship are important enablers when engaging with suppliers from poorer or emerging markets.

Significant findings have been presented in the extent literature, however, further opportunities arises from these findings. Tachizawa and Wong (2014) through a literature review study claim that monitoring suppliers through visits or audits and engaging with suppliers through training and development programs are found to be important practices for organisation to ensure their lower-tier suppliers' compliance. Their paper suggests a potential research gap, where very few have considered a multi-tier perspective, specifically to consider beyond a buyer-supplier relationship and taking into deliberation the forms of enablers when more tiers are involved in the implementation of social sustainability.

Thirdly, *regulatory enforcement* refers to the organisation's compliance towards social sustainability related laws, polices, guidelines or standards presented throughout their operations. Social certification standards and organisations' codes of conduct are forms of requirements related to the implementation of social sustainability. Beske and Seuring (2014) in their conceptual study stated that social certification standards are an important factor that needs to be fulfilled by organisations in order to meet the demands of SSCM. For example, Foerstl et al. (2015) provided empirical evidence from developed countries i.e. Germany and Austria where industries such as consumer goods and the automotive industry have required suppliers to pursue sustainability certification in order to confirm buyer's engagement.

Regulatory enforcement is perceived as a form of enabler which ensures the rights of employees are protected. For example, Miao et al. (2012) stated that labour law is an important enabler in the Chinese industry, which has ensured organisations' compliance in protecting the employees' welfare. On the other hand, regulatory pressure could be due to collaboration between organisations along with regulatory bodies to develop current social sustainability standards. For example, Marshall et al. (2015b) said that Irish organisations have worked together along with regulators to confirm that sustainability regulations are met effectively, specifically in industries such as telecommunication, waste management and construction.

While acknowledging these findings, there are opportunities to extend the knowledge of regulatory enforcement as a form of enabler for the implementation of social sustainability. Previous studies have considered dyadic relationships between buyers and suppliers (Foerstl et al. 2015) and/or the perspectives between the regulatory body and organisations (Marshall et al. 2015b). Henceforth, future studies could explore how regulatory enforcement as an enabler influences the multiple tiers in the supply chain and furthermore, perspectives of organisations from emerging economies is still lacking. It will be notable to consider enhancing the understanding of how different regulatory frameworks from developing countries in comparison to developed countries have influenced the way social sustainability is implemented.

The last enabler found in the extant literature is, *external pressures* which refers to influences coming in from outside of the organisation that could make a difference to the implementation of social sustainability. NGOs and end customers are stakeholders which seek to play an influential enabling role in ensuring organisations compliance to social standards. For example, Freise and Seuring (2015) found organisations in the clothing industries in Germany and Poland have begun managing stakeholder pressures as a form

of risk to avoid loss of reputation and competitive disadvantage – thereby seeking to always portray a positive image of their social implementation. End customers have played a significant role in driving organisations in the supply chain towards compliance. For example, the British potatoes supply chain have nominated customers as one of the main drivers to driving the supply chain's compliance (Vasileiou and Morris, 2006). In another example, Luthra et al. (2015) found that the increasing level of awareness from customers have influenced the success of sustainable implementation in the Indian automobile industry.

Whilst NGOs and customers have been focused on as enablers for organisations to comply with social standards, the roles of other external stakeholders could be further explored. Specifically, future studies could explore other external stakeholders such as industry experts and Governmental departments in the implementation within the supply chain. Most importantly, from the supply chain perspective, how far does this pressure go along the tiers of the supply chain.

Table 2.4 below presents the enablers which have been discussed in the SSCM literature. Overall, these studies have provided a good foundation of the enablers which relate to both social sustainability and the overall SSCM implementation. In comparison to the studies on barriers, more studies have emphasised factors that have driven organisations towards a successful implementation of social sustainability. However, a significant research gap which arises from the discussion of the extant literature is the consideration of enablers from the multiple-tier and developing country context perspectives. To date, Griffis et al. (2014) and Luthra et al. (2015) have both explored the enablers for TBL implementation in the supply chain in the developing country context.

Table 2.4 Enablers

Authors	Themes	Theoretical Lens	Perspectives		Context		Industry	Methods	
	Enablers		Buyer-Supplier	Multi-Tier	Developed	Developing		Empirical	Conceptual
Ahi and Searcy (2015)	✓								✓
Beske and Seuring, (2014)	✓								✓
Brockhaus et al. (2016)	✓	Stakeholder theory		✓			Consulting Retail Consumer	✓	
De Treville and Antonakis (2006)	✓	Job design theory	✓						✓
De Treville et al. (2005)	✓	Job design theory	✓						✓
Dos Santos et al. (2013)	✓			✓			Retail		✓
Eriksson and Svensson (2015)	✓								✓
Foerstl et al. (2015)	✓	Resource dependence theory	✓		✓		Consumer goods Industrial products Automotive	✓	
Freise and Seuring (2015)	✓				✓		Clothing	✓	
Griffis et al. (2014)	✓	Socialisation		✓	✓	✓	Manufacturing Transportation	✓	

Authors	Themes	Theoretical Lens	Perspectives		Context		Industry	Methods	
	Enablers		Buyer-Supplier	Multi-Tier	Developed	Developing		Empirical	Conceptual
		Stakeholder Theory					Construction		
Hsueh (2014)	✓		✓					✓	
Huq et al. (2014)	✓	Transaction cost theory	✓			✓		✓	
Hutchins and Sutherland (2008)	✓								✓
Isaksson et al. (2010)	✓						Building material Mobile communications		✓
Khalid et al. (2015)	✓								✓
Luken and Stares (2005)	✓		✓			✓	Leather Apparel Textile	✓	
Luthra et al. (2015)	✓			✓		✓	Automobile	✓	
Marshall et al. (2015b)	✓	Institutional Theory	✓		✓		Telecommunication on Waste management Construction	✓	
Miao et al. (2012)	✓		✓			✓	Industrial		
Nikolaou et al. (2013)	✓								✓
Panapanaan et al. (2003)	✓		✓		✓			✓	

Authors	Themes	Theoretical Lens	Perspectives		Context		Industry	Methods	
	Enablers		Buyer-Supplier	Multi-Tier	Developed	Developing		Empirical	Conceptual
Reuter et al. (2010)	✓		✓		✓		Chemical	✓	
Sarkis et al. (2010)	✓	Sustainability Theory							✓
Tachizawa and Wong (2014)	✓	Institutional Theory	✓						✓
Touboulie and Walker (2015A)	✓		✓		✓		Food	✓	
Vasileiou and Morris (2006)	✓			✓	✓		Food	✓	
Walker and Brammer (2012)	✓		✓		✓		Online shops	✓	
Total:	27		13	5	8	5		14	12

However, there are still no studies which have considered the single perspectives of social sustainability and the enablers which drive its implementation in the supply chain. Hence, it is worthwhile to explore the factors which positively influence the implementation of social sustainability in the multiple tiers of the supply chain. Furthermore, the food industry was only studied by Touboulic and Walker (2015a) and Vasileiou and Morris (2006) where both these studies were focused on a developed country context. Hence, this presents an opportunity to explore how enablers in the food supply chain from a developing country context influences the implementation of social sustainability.

The next section discusses alternative theoretical lenses. The application of theoretical lenses is to strengthen the insights that have been gained (Barratt et al. 2011). In overview, the next section will provide a summary of theoretical lenses that have been used within the sustainable supply chain management area (see section 2.5) then proceeds with the discussion of institutional theory, the chosen lens for this study (see section 2.6), the institutional isomorphism drivers (see section 2.6.1), institutional logics (see section 2.6.2) and finally, institutional complexity (2.6.3).

2.5 Discussion of Theoretical Lenses

There is increasing utilisation of theoretical lenses found in the extant literature of Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM). There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, theoretical lenses are employed to demonstrate the scholars understanding of their field (Touboulic and Walker, 2015). Secondly, theoretical lenses represent the foundation of creating knowledge, hence, scholars seek to contribute to the body of knowledge and explain the studied phenomena through it (Handfield and Melnyk,

1998). Thirdly, the use of theory could lead to stronger conclusions and without the theoretical lenses their insights would be less valuable (Barratt et al. 2011). Furthermore, theoretical lenses can be used in different ways, Zorzini et al. (2015) have discussed four classifications:

- Theory Dressing – refers to where theories are just simply mentioned, and no further expansion and application is made within the research findings (Zorzini et al. 2015).
- Theory Matching – refers to where theories are used to add external validity to the research findings (Zorzini et al. 2015; Barratt et al. 2011).
- Theory suggesting – refers to where theories are used to provide explanation for research findings specifically in inductive research (Zorzini et al. 2015).
- Theory expansion – refers to where theories provide a more powerful contribution towards the understanding of a phenomenon where managerial implication could also be derived (Zorzini et al. 2015).

Moving forward, Zorzini et al. (2015) and Touboulis and Walker (2015) have provided a timely review of theories that have been used in the recent literatures of SSCM. For example, Touboulis and Walker (2015) provided a summary of 308 articles across the field of supply chains from 1995 to 2013 and some of the popular theories used were for example:

- Resource-Based View / Natural Resource Based View (33 papers)
- Stakeholder Theory (25 papers)
- Institutional Theory (16 papers)
- Transactional Cost Theory (14 papers)
- Other theories (Resource Dependence Theory, Dynamic Capabilities, Relational Theory etc.) (48 papers)

The systematic review of the theories listed above suggests that the theory of Resource-Based View (RBV) and Stakeholder Theory were theories often employed in the extant literature of SSCM. The two theories will be further discussed:

The Resource-Based View discusses the linkage between the resources of a firm and their competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Furthermore, the author suggests that value, rareness, imitability and substitutability were important to sustain the firm's resources. From the perspectives of RBV, a firm's resources refer to "assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm attributes, information knowledge and etc" (Barney 1991, pp.101). Moreover, corporate governance, entrepreneurship and inter-firm relationships are means to sustain a firm's competitive advantage (Barney, 2001). For example, a green project partnership between an organisation and their customers was found to be beneficial to organisations for the purpose of developing and improving their overall capabilities and operational performance (Vachon and Klassen, 2006).

Stakeholder theory discusses the importance of values in business and rejects the idea that ethics and economics can be separated (Freeman, 1994; Freeman et al. 2004). From the perspectives of Stakeholder Theory, stakeholders refer to "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objective" (Freeman, 1984 pp. 46). According to Freeman (1995), there are several important characteristics or elements of stakeholder theory: (1) Shareholders are stakeholders; (2) Organisation leaders are responsible for the organisation's resources, capabilities and relationships with their stakeholders; (3) Organisation leaders are responsible for taking into consideration the interest of the people who could/might be affected by their decisions and (4) The theory provides a good foundation to explain managerial

behaviours (Donaldson and Preston 1995). For example: a study on socially responsible supply chain orientation (SRSCO) focusing on fair labour management issues in the United States clothing and footwear sector found that the effect of stakeholders (for example: consumers, media, industry peers) on organisation's actions differs based on the characteristics of each stakeholder's influence such as: power, legitimacy, and urgency (Park-Poaps and Rees, 2010).

The following section will present a discussion of institutional theory, which will be the theoretical foundation used in this study.

2.6 Institutional Theory in Social Sustainability Research Reviewed

In overview, this section discusses three important constructs of institutional theory:

- Isomorphism Drivers (see section 2.6.1)
- Institutional Logics (see section 2.6.2)
- Institutional Complexity (see section 2.6.3)

Institutional theory is a theoretical lens that discusses sources of change in the way organisations are managed and controlled (i.e. bureaucratisation) and in the way organisations makes decision (i.e. rationalisation) within an organisational field. An organisational field is defined as the “organisations that constitute a recognised area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organisations that produce similar services or products” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 158). The theory also promotes legitimacy of organisational practices (i.e. culture social environment, regulation, tradition and history) and organisations survival (Glover et al. 2014). Legitimacy here refers to the adoption of practices seen by stakeholders as being appropriate and proper.

Table 2.5 notes the studies that have used institutional theory as a theoretical lens in the context of SSCM. These papers are firstly, drawn from the systematic review by Touboulie and Walker (2015) which listed papers published from 1995 to 2013 and secondly, additional papers were found through the systematic literature review of this study which included papers published from 2014 onwards. In summary, the table presents three important classification which are: the type of sustainability, the aspects of institutional theory covered and the type of context in which these papers are studied i.e. a developed or developing country context. A total of 13 papers were found which have employed institutional theory, specifically looking at the institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic and normative pressures), institutional logics and/ or institutional complexity. The next section will first present the coercive, normative and mimetic pressures and this is followed by the discussion of institutional logics and institutional complexity.

2.6.1 Isomorphism Drivers: Coercive, Mimetic, Normative Pressures

The first construct, *Isomorphism Drivers*, describes three forms of mechanisms that create isomorphism in organisational strategies, structures, and processes. These mechanisms are known as coercive pressures, mimetic pressures, and normative pressures. Isomorphism refers to a “constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 149). The next section will discuss further the three forms of mechanisms for isomorphism: coercive pressures, mimetic pressures and normative pressures.

Table 2.5: Institutional Pressures

Authors	Sustainability			Institutional Theory					Context	
	ENV ¹	ECO ²	SOC ³	Coercive	Mimetic	Normative	Institutional Logics	Institutional Complexity	Developing	Developed
Adebanjo et al. (2013)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Castka and Balzarova (2008b)		✓	✓	✓		✓			n/a	n/a
Ferrell et al. (2013)	✓		✓	✓		✓			n/a	n/a
Glover et al. (2014)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lim and Phillips (2008)	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓
Marshall et al. (2015b)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Morali and Searcy (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Moxham and Kauppi (2014)			✓	✓	✓	✓				
Sayed et al. (2017)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Silvestre (2015b)	✓		✓	✓					✓	
Snider et al. (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Tachizawa and Wong (2014)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			n/a	n/a
Tate et al. (2010)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Total	11	8	13	12	7	11	2	2	2	7

¹ Environmental sustainability

² Economic sustainability

³ Social sustainability

A *coercive pressure* is defined as a “result from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organisations by other organisations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organisations function” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 150). In the sustainability context, this pressure is exerted by those in powerful positions (e.g. government, buyers, non-governmental organisations) on organisations. Table 2.5 provides a summary of previous studies that have included insights regarding coercive pressures in the context of SSCM. Examples of powerful actors found in the extant literature are:

- Government and Regulations – The pressure to adopt standards such as ISO 26000 (i.e. social responsibility standard), is influenced by governmental pressures to ensure proper management of environmental practices, working conditions and stakeholder relationships (Castka and Balzarova, 2008b)
- Buyers – Buyers played an important role in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the supply chain of Nike, using codes of conduct and collaborative partnership to ensure elimination of social issues such as illegal overtime, low wages, child and forced labour (Lim and Phillips, 2008)
- Non-Governmental Organisations – Organisations that are lacking in sustainability knowledge seek to collaborate with NGOs to improve their expertise (Tachizawa and Wong, 2014)
- Customers (Market) – Suppliers in the UK food and catering supply chains stated customers as a source of coercive pressure for them to implement sustainability practices (Sayed et al. (2017)

In contrast, there are studies that have looked into poor enforcement and weak coercive

pressures in the supply chain. For example, weak regulatory frameworks and weak coercive pressures related to compliance were found to be evident when service organisations in Nigeria could not show evidence of tax payment (Adebanjo et al. 2013). Furthermore, coercive pressures were also not found to be significant when organisations have gone beyond regulatory pressures. For example: government and regulatory pressures on the adoption of sustainability in supply chain practices in Ireland were found insignificant because organisations were practising sustainability for its perceived benefits rather than compulsory requirement (Marshall et al. 2015b).

A *mimetic pressure* occurs “when organisations face uncertainty which encourages imitation” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 151). Table 2.5 provides a summary of previous studies that have included insights of mimetic pressures within the SSCM field. In comparison to coercive and normative pressures, mimetic have not been studied as much in SSCM. Some sources of mimetic pressure found in the extant literature are:

- Competitors (Marshall et al. 2015b)
- Sustainable League Tables (Sayed et al. 2017)

Competitors are a source of mimetic pressure in various industries such as utilities, construction and manufacturing in Ireland, where organisation mimic their competitors’ implementation of socially sustainable practices specifically related to creating new socially produced products in the supply chain. Sayed et al. (2017) explained that Sustainable League Tables were found as a source of mimetic pressure for the public and private sector of food and catering supply chains in the UK.

In contrast, Moxham and Kauppi (2014) in a conceptual study suggests that self-sufficient organisations in determining their own legitimacy may not admit to mimicking in their decision process of adopting fair trade standards and hence, this requires more

clarification in future research. Furthermore, Adebajo et al. (2013) found mimetic pressures were not an influential pressure in 13 Nigerian products and service companies such as stationary, catering and telephone services because of the perceived lack of transparency of the factors that contributed to the success of sustainability implementation,

A *normative pressure* “stems primarily from professionalisation” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 152). Professionalisation is defined as “the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control the production of producers and to establish a cognitive that individuals who make it to the top are virtually indistinguishable” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 152-153). In the sustainability context, this pressure may exist in a collaboration or alliances within a supply chain, to influence organisations to conform in order to be perceived as participating in legitimate actions. Examples of the normative pressures found in the literature are:

- Stakeholders pressures (Adebajo et al. 2013; Castka and Balzarova, 2008b; Morali and Searcy, 2013)
- Alliances / Collaborations: Purchasing consortiums / alliances (Sayed et al. 2017; Moxham and Kauppi, 2014)
- Professional norms (Marshall et al. 2015b)

Canadian organisations are urged to improve their interactions with *stakeholders* (i.e. suppliers, employees and customers) as part of their sustainable supply chain management practices (Morali and Searcy, 2013). Customers are a source of normative pressure in a few studies, for example, the pressure to adopt a social responsibility standard, i.e. ISO26000 was strongly influenced by consumer demands (Castka and

Balzarova, 2008b), whilst Adebajo et al. (2013), explained that normative pressures from customers in emerging economies play a dominant role in influencing the implementation of CSR. Sayed et al. (2017) presented the evidence of *sustainable purchasing consortiums* or alliances as a source of normative pressures for the legitimacy of public organisations in the UK food and catering supply chain (Sayed et al. 2017). Moxham and Kauppi (2014) suggested in their conceptual paper that future research could explore the improvement of Fairtrade standards as a source of normative pressure and consequently, the initiatives taken by organisations. Professional norms are an important source of pressure for organisations in Ireland to improve basic social sustainability practices such as the health and safety, codes of conduct and suppliers monitoring (Marshall et al. 2015b).

▪ **Discussion of Institutional Pressures and The Research Gap**

The discussion of all three forms of institutional pressures namely, coercive, mimetic and normative pressure have presented insights from the extant literature of SSCM. In summary, only a few papers in SSCM have considered using the institutional theory perspectives. As presented in the previous sections, these studies have covered the Triple Bottom Line, i.e. environmental, economic and social sustainability; the institutional context, i.e. developing and developed country; and the nature of study, both empirical and conceptual. In this study, the first research gap is to explore a single perspective, for example, the institutional pressures on social sustainability practices. All the studies above have included either two perspectives or a holistic approach in their studies, hence, it will be worthwhile to provide an in-depth understanding of the singular perspective. Furthermore, the studied institutional context also presents a research gap, where there is an opportunity to further explore this phenomenon from a developing country context.

2.6.2 Institutional Logics

The second construct of the institutional theory employed in this study is referred to as institutional logic. The term *institutional logic* was first introduced by Friedland and Alford in 1985. Institutional logics is defined as a, “socially constructed, historical pattern of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organise time and space and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999 pp. 804; Jackall, 1988 pp. 112; Friedland and Alford, 1991 pp.243). Institutional logics in previous studies have been used to understand the reasons or rationalities (i.e. logics) behind organisational decisions. According to Ocasio (1997), institutional logics is a set of both formal and informal guidelines for organisations to make decisions in order to gain social recognition, rewards, or penalties as a result of their actions. The number of studies in the SSCM literature on institutional logics is still very small (2 papers). This section will discuss these papers and further highlight research gaps that need to be addressed.

As mentioned above, there are only two papers which have focused on institutional logics in the SSCM literature. Firstly, Sayed et al. (2017) have studied institutional logics to understand the implementation of sustainability in the food and catering supply chain of UK higher education institutions whilst, secondly, Glover et al. (2014) have looked at institutional logics from the perspectives of the dairy supply chain in the UK. This study will draw upon these examples closely in order to highlight the significant research gaps for institutional logics in SSCM.

There have been several dominant institutional logics found in the supply chain (Sayed et al. 2017; Glover et al. 2014; Greenwood et al. 2011). According to Thornton, “institutional logics, once they become dominant, affect the decisions of organisations...by focusing the attention of executives toward the set of issues and

solutions that are consistent with the dominant logic and away from those issues and solutions that are not” (Thornton 2004, pp. 12-13). Examples of dominant logics found by previous studies are:

- cost logic (Sayed et al. 2017)
- financial logic (Sayed et al. 2017, Glover et al. 2014)
- time logic (Sayed et al. 2017)
- sustainability logic (Sayed et al. 2017; Glover et al. 2014)

Firstly, Sayed et al. (2017) referred to cost logic from the perspectives of the HE food supply chain in the UK as a logic which concerns a customer’s affordability in making purchases. For example, cost logic is found to be dominant in the students (i.e. consumers tier) when they demand lower or affordable prices for food products sold in the university (Sayed et al. 2017).

Secondly, financial logic refers to situations where organisations are only concerned with their sustainability initiatives when and/or if it leads towards higher sales or reduction of costs. For example, universities as buyers in the UK food and catering supply chain seek to offset the cost of more expensive sustainable sourcing options in order to remain commercially viable (Sayed et al. 2017). Financial logics could be a priority that the organisations uphold if and when the sustainable initiatives could lead to the reduction of production cost. For example, organisations in the dairy supply chain have committed to pursue a green initiative i.e. energy reduction because the initiative contributed towards the cost reduction (Glover et al. 2014).

Thirdly, time logic refers to the duration needed to employ a particular sustainability initiative (Sayed et al. 2017). Furthermore, time logic could be a factor which involves time management and commitment towards achieving sustainability initiatives within set time frames. For example, Sayed et al. (2017) have found time logic

in the consumers (i.e. students) tier, where time was an influential factor for university students' participation in sustainability initiatives – as students were also engaged with other educational and social activities in the university.

Fourthly, sustainability logic refers to situations where decisions-making is influenced by upholding concerns to achieve environmental, social and economic sustainability (Sayed et al. 2017). For example, Sayed et al. (2017) found sustainability logic has become stronger as compared to financial logic for universities in their efforts to implement sustainability in the food and catering supply chain. However, Glover et al. (2014) found that introducing green sustainable practices (i.e. sustainability logics) to the UK dairy supply chain is still a challenge. Sustainability logic was recognised as a new and evolving logic as compared to the dominant logics such as financial logic. Hence, the UK dairy supply chain was still struggling to successfully implement green practices such as carbon foot-printing and increasing renewable energy sources.

In conclusion, given that only two studies (i.e. Sayed et al. 2017; Glover et al. 2014) have explored institutional logics in the extant literature of SSCM, the following research gaps need to be addressed. Firstly, both these studies have found significant findings from the developed country context, however, it will be worthwhile to extend these findings by considering how institutional logics related to sustainable initiatives could differ from one context to another. Secondly, both these studies have considered perspectives of a holistic sustainability implementation in the supply chain – hence, future research could present an in-depth understanding from one particular sustainability standpoint (i.e. social sustainability) and specifically, how the role of institutional logics in the supply chain could differ in this implementation.

Overall, while considering the institutional pressures and institutional logics that influence how organisations respond towards the implementation of SS in the supply

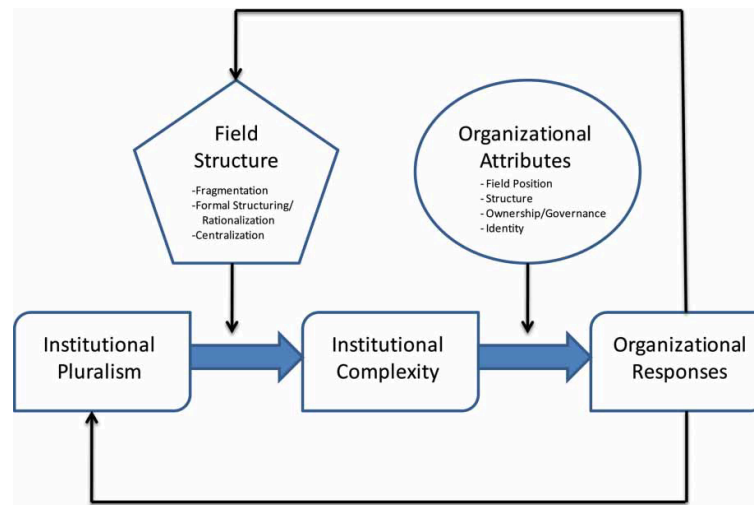
chain, we should also recognise that these response are not likely to be uniform, i.e. they may be heterogeneous (Greenwood et al. 2011). These heterogeneous responses can occur as a result of having multiple logics, which are often conflicting logics (Greenwood et al. 2011). Conflicting logics are when for e.g. organisations put less focus on less important logics that have only localised or weak influence such as the role of family or religion; and focus more on dominant logics such as markets (Greenwood et al. 2011). The presence of conflicting multiple logics is referred to as institutional complexity, as further discussed in the next section (see section 2.6.3) below.

2.6.3 Institutional Complexity

Institutional complexity is a result of conflicting multiple institutional logics. These conflicting multiple institutional logics according to Greenwood et al. (2011), can be understood from two aspects, which are: (1) the number of institutional logics and (2) incompatibilities between institutional logics. Greenwood et al. (2011) have also introduced an analytical framework (see Figure 2.2) to further understand institutional complexity and the differences in organisational responses due to its different field structures (fragmentation, formal structuring/rationalisation, and centralisation) and/or organisational attributes (structure, ownership, governance and identity). In the extant literature of SSCM, there are still a very small number of studies that have considered institutional complexity. Sayed et al. (2017) is the only study to date, to have contributed some insights on complexity in the context of sustainability implementation, and they focus on the food and catering supply chains of HE institutions in UK.

Complexity was found in both the upstream and downstream of the supply chain in this study, and universities were salient actors in this context when it comes to responding to the challenges caused by the multiplicity of logics (Sayed et al. 2017).

Figure 2.2: Institutional Complexity



Source: Greenwood et al. (2011) Institutional Complexity and Organisational Responses.

The multiplicity of logics found were: sustainability logic, financial logic, time logic and cost logic and furthermore, logics varied according to the different tiers in the supply chain – for example, sustainability logic was more advanced as compared to financial logic in the university tier, whilst cost and time logic were more dominant in the customers tier (Sayed et al. 2017).

The following section will provide an overall discussion of the three constructs of institutional theory and conclude with the research gaps from the perspectives of this theoretical lens.

2.6.4 Institutional Pressures, Institutional Logics and Institutional Complexity

The discussion on institutional pressures (see section 2.6.1), institutional logics (see section 2.6.2) and institutional complexity (see section 2.6.3) will be further reflected in this section. The aim of this section is to be able to understand the association and relationship between these three constructs of institutional theory. According to Glover et al. (2014), the different level of compatibility between logics and the increase of institutional demands (i.e. pressures) will increase the complexity within the supply

chain. As mentioned above, there are still a very small number of studies (see Table 2.5) in the area of SSCM that have considered all these three theoretical lenses (see exception Sayed et al. 2017), therefore this section aims to draw upon the relevant examples from prior studies to discuss the significant research gaps that can be addressed.

The motivation for understanding the association between pressures, logics and complexity is because “we have only a modest understanding of how organisations respond” (Greenwood et al. 2010 pp. 530). In particular, prior to any organisational response, there is a logic for every decision made and a complexity could arise when there are pressures and a multiplicity of logics in the process. For example, organisations in the UK dairy supply chain experience complexity to implement sustainable practices for two reasons: firstly, consumers demand (i.e. apply pressure) environmentally friendly products and secondly, financial logic i.e. cost reduction and profit maximisation is dominant in the supply chain, hence, this contradicts with the weak or low sustainability logic (Glover et al. 2014).

In another example, the dynamics of complexity and the multiplicity of logics is also more significant when organisations respond to their sustainability challenges to reduce complexity and the strategies to implement these sustainability practices (i.e. logics) come with an increase in cost throughout the supply chain (Sayed et al. 2017). For example, the upstream of the food and catering supply chain experienced complexity when universities shifted to sustainable sourcing (i.e. sustainability logics) however, this contradicts with the financial logics of their suppliers who have “low sustainability capabilities” (Sayed et al. 2017, pp. 533).

In conclusion, the associations found in prior studies could be further explored. Firstly, one of the challenges found in the implementation of sustainability practices is when the organisations dominant logic in the supply chain is financial logic (Sayed et al.

2017; Glover et al. 2014). Secondly, institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic and normative) is perceived to have an influential role to make sustainable logics more dominant in the supply chain (Glover et al. 2014; Sayed et al. 2017). However, only Sayed et al. (2017) have looked at these three constructs of institutional theory (i.e. institutional pressures, logics and complexity) from the perspectives of sustainability practices in the multiple tiers of the food and catering supply chain in UK, whilst, Glover et al. (2014) have focused on institutional pressures and logics in the UK dairy supply chain. Therefore, future research could extend these findings by exploring these associations from a developing country context – specifically, how significant challenges and the role of institutional pressures, logics and complexity influences the implementation of social sustainability in this particular context.

2.7 Summary of the Research Gaps for this Ph.D.

Up to this point, the systematic literature review has led to research gaps for this thesis – which will be summarised in this section and followed by the research questions for this research. Furthermore, this section will be followed by the discussion and the development of the conceptual framework which underpins this study.

2.7.1 Recent Literature (2017-2019)

The Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) literature have shifted their focus of the Triple Bottom Line (i.e. environmental, social and economic) to particularly discuss the social dimension (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Silvestre, 2018). The last decade witnessed many scholars in the field responding to the need for more social studies in SSCM and therefore, there has been increasing development on diverse areas of social sustainability in the SSCM literature. The purpose of this section is to succinctly

review recent studies in the extant literature on socially sustainable supply chain management – i.e. those published since the systematic literature review (SLR) was first conducted in 2016. To begin with, the recent studies have been summarised under nine research themes – which were first discussed and defined in Section 2.2.2. The research themes are not mutually exclusive; and in discussing these themes, two significant standpoints arise: (i) supply chain actors (i.e. dyadic or multiple tiers) or (ii) supply chain context (i.e. developed or developing countries) or both. The discussion leads to the reinforcement and refining of the research gaps for this Ph.D. in section 2.7.2 below.

The eight research themes found in recent studies in socially SSCM are: (1) *barriers and challenges* (Hussain et al. 2018; Mani and Gunasekaran (2018), (2) *collaboration* (Lee et al. 2019; Jajja et al. 2019a; Yadlapalli et al. 2019; Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Silvestre et al. 2018; Yawar and Kauppi, 2018), (3) *motivation, drivers and enablers* (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Huq and Stevenson, 2018), (4) *organisational culture* (Jajja et al. 2019a; Jajja et al. 2019b), (5) *risk management* (Villena et al. 2018; Soundarajan and Brammer, 2018), (6) *strategy* (Lee et al. 2019; Xiao et al. 2019; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Yadlapalli et al. 2018), (7) *the relationship between practices and performance* (Croom et al. 2018; Mani et al. 2018a), (8) *transparency* (Koster et al. 2019; De Andrade et al. 2019; Jajja et al. 2019b; Mani et al. 2018b) and (9) *literature review* (Jia et al. 2018; Nakamba et al. 2017). Aforementioned, as some studies may possibly be under more than one theme, each of the themes will be discussed in turn.

Firstly, recent studies on *barriers and challenges*, and *motivation, drivers, and enablers* have been discussed from both country perspectives, i.e. developing countries (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018) or developed countries (Hussain et al. 2018). Both Mani and Gunasekaran (2018) and Hussain et al. (2018) explored the manufacturing industry

in India and Portugal; and the healthcare supply chain in United Arab Emirates respectively by using the survey method. Similar barriers were found, for e.g. lack of policies and regulations, lack of commitment and lack of resources; and similar enablers for e.g. regulatory pressure and supplier social compliance to drive the implementation of social sustainability. However, developing countries are often characterised as a context which has incoherent legal/regulatory structures and inadequate resources or skills to manage social issues as compared to developed countries (Koster et al. 2019; Lee et al. 2019; Silvestre, 2018). Yet, quantitative studies impede the need for more understanding of why these challenges and/or motivations lead towards a better or a less successful implementation of social sustainability. Nevertheless, the primary knowledge on barriers and enablers have influenced more studies such as on: collaboration, organisational culture, risk management, strategy, the relationship between practice and performance, transparency – which are endeavours to seek for better management, better adoption and/or better implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain.

Secondly, studies on *collaboration* and *strategy* explore issues concerning supply chain governance and buyer-supplier relationships in an effort to increase the adoption and/or advance the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain (Lee et al. 2019; Jajja et al. 2019a; Xiao et al. 2019; Yadlapalli et al. 2019; Morais and Silvestre, 2018, Silvestre et al. 2018; Yawar and Kauppi, 2018). For example, Lee et al. (2019) studied the collaborative governance between a Hong Kong supplier company and Danish retailers in the apparel industry where the evidence explained that solely relying on auditing and monitoring have not improved poor working conditions and labour rights in the supplier's factories. Subsequently, in order to avoid and/or reduce manipulation of auditing and monitoring reports and to induce cooperation from suppliers, buyers needed to coerce them into action and to offer them continuous support and the means to resolve

their issues. In addition, Jajja et al. (2019a) explored the buyer-supplier relationship of apparel industry manufacturers in Pakistan and categorised them into two types: (i) transactional, i.e. based on legal and economic incentive objectives and (ii) relational, i.e. based on mutual commitment and cooperation objectives. Whilst buyers were willing to invest in supplier development programs in return for better supplier compliance, their findings revealed that the buyer-supplier relationship was predominantly based on transactional, economic concerns. The observation of both the collaboration and buyer-supplier relationship strategies have exposed the persistent absence of value-based thinking such as – ‘because it is the right thing to do’ (Koster et al. 2019) and concluded that adoption is still strongly concerned with financial goals and/or coerced by buyer requirements (De Andrade et al. 2019). Consequently, to uncover organisations’ motivation in aligning their organisational goals to social sustainability, studies seek to explore organisation culture.

Thirdly, *organisation culture* involved studies which seek to understand issues such as organisational response (Xiao et al. 2019; Soundararajan and Brammer, 2018) and supply chain orientation (Jajja et al. 2019b; Croom et al. 2018) to comprehend the *relationship between practices and performances* for the implementation of social sustainability in supply chains. In a multiple case study of a Western multinational company and their Chinese suppliers, Xiao et al. (2019) observed how organisations respond to conflicting issues in SSCM. There are two types of organisational response found, namely: (i) instrumental, i.e. organisations responding to conflicts with results involving a win-win or trade-off between social and economic goals; and (ii) paradox, i.e. organisations responding to conflicts with results involving attempts to work with contradictory elements. On the other hand, Croom et al. (2018) explored how a social sustainability orientation (i.e. the extent to which social sustainability is aligned with the

organisations goals and strategies) influenced operational performance by using a survey on United States companies. The adoption of advanced social sustainability (i.e. redesigning of products or processes based on sustainability goals) practices was found to predict better operational performance as compared to basic social sustainability (i.e. focuses only on auditing and monitoring of the health and safety of workers in the supply chain). These studies present significant knowledge regarding the extent to which organisations are willing to include social sustainability in their operations (Jajja et al. 2019a; Jajja et al. 2019b). Yet, it could be argued that this type of research is too subjective in its style of analysis, as it is based on a subjective assessment of alignment with an organisations sustainability goals (Xiao et al. 2019; Hussain et al. 2018; Silvestre, 2018). Therefore, other studies are seeking to overcome this shortcoming by investigating the *transparency* in order to objectively measure organisational sustainability performance; and exploring *risk management* related to social sustainability in order to measure the management of external and internal threats to the organisations' sustainability goals.

Fourthly, several studies on *transparency* have explored the adoption of social standards as a mean to measure the extent to which social sustainability has advanced in the supply chain. The SA8000 certification was investigated in two studies on developing countries namely, Brazil (De Andrade et al. 2019) and India (Koster et al. 2019). To begin, the sensitivity of disclosing organisations weaknesses related to social issues, De Andrade et al. (2019) reviewed audit documents of seven Brazilian organisations from multiple industries which have adopted SA8000. The result uncovered that clauses on “health and safety, working hours and workers representation” were significantly challenging because of the organisations inability to cope with cost pressure and the weak regulatory enforcement in Brazil for such standards as SA8000. Using an interview

method, Koster et al. (2019) explored both drivers and barriers of adopting SA8000 in the Indian garment industry for both adopters and non-adopters. The strongest drivers for adoption were twofold: (i) when buyers include SA8000 as a requirement prior to purchase and; (ii) when suppliers are concerned about losing business if they fail to certify. Similar to De Andrade et al. (2019), the barriers related to adopting SA8000 were found by Koster et al. (2019) to be: (i) the cost of obtaining and maintaining the standard and; (ii) the lack of regulatory requirements from the Government and (iii) the lack of knowledge from market customers of SA8000. This prior understanding of transparency through the adoption of social standards have emphasised the significant challenges and lack of drive because it is the 'right thing to do'. Yet, there is a need to understand how these challenges faced by suppliers in developing countries will influence their buyers further upstream. Hence, other studies seek to explore this research gap to understand risk management in engaging with suppliers from developing countries.

Fifthly, several studies on *risk management* explored issues such as the management of lower-tier suppliers' compliance to reduce supply chain risk (Villena and Gioia, 2018) and stakeholder collaboration risk (Silvestre, 2018). Villena and Gioia (2018) examined how multinational organisations in developed countries seek to manage lower tier suppliers in developing countries. As lower-tier suppliers impose a high risk to their supply chain, MNCs experienced challenges such as: lack of information, resources, power and trust when engaging with lower tier suppliers. Moreover, significant distance between MNCs and lower tier suppliers and the differences in labour laws in developing countries have led MNCs to increase their intervention in order for lower-tier suppliers to take action. In contrast, Silvestre (2018) uncovered truths behind stakeholder collaboration through the discussion of corruption which could impose significant risk to the supply chain. Through the analysis of secondary data, i.e. reports,

news and video recordings, two types of corruption were found: (i) petty corruption, i.e. small-scale involving individuals and (ii) grand corruption, i.e. large-scale involving organisations or political institutions. The institutional voids and inefficient regulatory mechanisms specifically in developing countries have led to such results where profit maximisation will overturn every good intention behind the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. At this point, these studies have sought to explore risk management from the perspectives of suppliers located in developing countries when engaging with their suppliers located in developing countries. Yet, given the continuous challenges and/barriers found, there is a need for more understanding by taking into consideration the perspectives of suppliers in developing countries.

In summary, this review of the recent extant literature has revealed various aspects of socially SSCM either from the perspectives of buyers and suppliers, a global supply chain or the multiple tiers of the supply chain or the context of a developed and/or developing countries context. In particular, given that developing countries are often characterised by inefficient regulatory institutions and strong turbulence for social issues (Soundararajan and Brammer, 2018; Lee et al. 2019; Silvestre et al. 2018) and given the lack of representation from this context in the socially SSCM literature (Mani et al. 2018a, Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018) - scholars in the field have now begun to shed light on social sustainability in supply chains from the context of developing countries and provided opportunities for future research to expand on this present knowledge. Looking at this recent literature review therefore has further confirmed the research gaps addressed in this Ph.D. as discussed below.

2.7.2 Research Gaps for this Ph.D.

- *Barriers and Enablers*

In summary, the *barriers* (lack of organisational commitment, dissonance of supply chain objectives, behavioural issues, financial constraints and lack of regulatory enforcement) and *enablers* (i.e. organisational commitment, accordance with supply chain objectives, regulatory enforcement and external pressures) were identified from prior studies. As discussed in Section 2.3 and 2.4, this research seeks to address the research gap for exploring barriers and enablers from multiple standpoints such as the multiple tiers in the supply chain from a developing country context. Silvestre (2015b) and Luthra et al. (2015) have explored the different types of barriers (for e.g. lack of training and lack of involvement from senior management) in the Brazilian oil and gas supply chain and enablers (for e.g. organisational commitment and external pressures) in the Indian automobile industry, respectively. Furthermore, in a more recent study, Mani and Gunasekaran (2018) have explored the challenges of socially sustainable practices in India and Portugal and found similar barriers such as the lack of policies and regulations, lack of commitment and lack of resources whilst enablers found were regulatory pressures and supplier social compliance. Given that these findings have represented the dyadic perspectives of the supply chain - therefore, this study seeks to address the research gap by exploring barriers and enablers from the perspectives of social sustainability in the multiple tiers of the supply chain. Moreover, specifically focusing on a developing country context in a food supply chain which has not yet been considered for this selected phenomenon.

- *Multiple actors of the supply chain*

Dyadic relationships of buyers and suppliers have been often studied, but there are still few examples of studies of three or more tiers of the supply chain (Sayed et al. 2017).

Recent studies are still exploring buyer-supplier relationships with an emphasis on buyers from developed economies seeking to improve their management of suppliers from developing countries (Xiao et al. 2019; Villena and Gioia, 2018). Hence, more empirical work needed to explore multiple actors in the supply chain, whilst previous studies have focused on buyers and suppliers independently and the dyadic relationships between them. The perspectives from multiple actors that represent each tier of the supply chain will enable a better understanding of the interaction, collaboration, association or relationship between the supply chain actors towards the implementation of social sustainability.

Furthermore, whilst stakeholder pressures were discussed as an enabler in previous studies, there is a need to include stakeholder perspectives (for e.g. government and NGO) to understand their important role in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. Specifically, the understanding of the significant roles of multiple actors and stakeholders in the implementation of social sustainability could be enhanced by using the theoretical lens of institutional theory.

- *Institutional Pressures, Institutional Logics and Institutional Complexity*

Institutional theory as a chosen theoretical foundation underpinning this study has been discussed in Section 2.5 and 2.6 respectively. The review of the related extant literature of SSCM have led to research gaps which this study seeks to address. Firstly, three constructs of institutional theory namely: institutional pressures, institutional logics and institutional have been considered and discussed – to date, only two studies, i.e. Sayed et al. (2017) and Glover et al. (2014) have explored these three constructs in the implementation of sustainable practices in the food and catering, and dairy supply chain respectively. These findings have highlighted the significant influence that these three

construct have on the organisations' sustainable practices. Therefore, this led to the opportunity to further explore the role of institutional pressures, logics and complexity from other perspectives not yet considered such as: the developing country context. Whilst these prior studies have included a holistic approach of sustainable practices from the multi-tier perspective - it will be noteworthy to extend these findings by focusing on the role of institutional pressures, logics and complexity on initiatives such as social sustainability implementation in the supply chain.

- *Developing Country Context*

Several studies have recognised the lack of emphasis on the developing countries context (Zorzini et al. 2015; Huq et al. 2014). One of the significant reasons for needing further research in the developing country context from the social sustainability perspectives is that higher levels of social issues (e.g. forced labour, child labour, and etc) have been reported to be found in these contexts (Modern Slavery Index, 2016). Consequently, there has been an increase in studies exploring socially sustainable practices in developing countries (as discussed in Section 2.7.1). The nine research themes discussed above have continuously emphasised the inefficiency of regulatory institutions and strong turbulence for social issues in developing countries. Therefore, there are still remaining opportunities to further explore this context where this Ph.D. specifically seeks to better understand both barriers and enablers through the lens of institutional theory (i.e. pressures, logics and complexity) – from the perspectives of multiple tiers in the supply chain which is still minimally represented in the extent literature.

Hence, this then leads to the following research questions for this study, as discussed in the next section.

2.8 Research Questions

1. How can a greater understanding of barriers and enablers, from the perspective of multiple supply chain actors within a developing country context, aid in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain?
2. How do stakeholders (government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) seek to influence the implementation of social sustainability in a developing country context?
3. How do institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic, normative) influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
4. How do institutional logics influence the decision made by organisations towards the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
5. How do organisations deal with institutional complexity in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

2.9 Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the extant literature of SSCM, Figure 1 proposes a conceptual framework that illustrates the interaction between the institutional theory (i.e. institutional pressures, institutional logics and institutional complexity), enablers and barriers. The framework is divided into three important components which are: the perspective of institutional theory, the moderating effects of enablers; and the moderating effect of barriers.

Firstly, the perspective of institutional theory is divided into three, which includes: institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic, normative), institutional logics (i.e.

financial, time, sustainability) and institutional complexity. *Institutional pressures* is illustrated by three links which are:

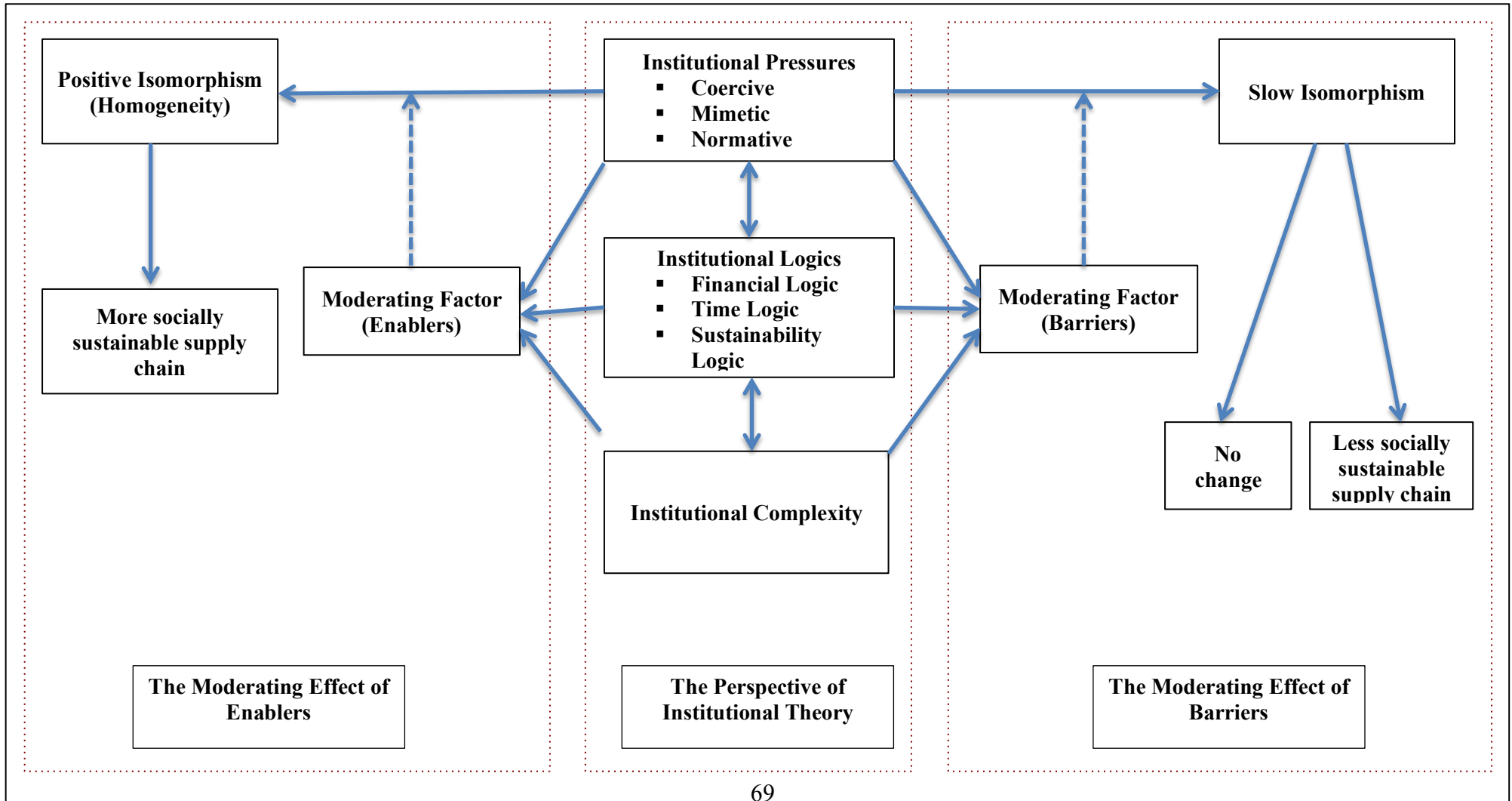
- the direct relationship between pressures and positive isomorphism;
- the direct relationship between pressures and slow isomorphism; and
- the relationship between pressures and logics.

The first link, illustrating the direct relationship between institutional pressures and positive isomorphism, presents an interaction between how different types of pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic and normative) influences the supply chain towards becoming more socially sustainable and vice versa. For example, Glover et al. (2014) found evidence of this link in the dairy supply chain where supermarkets put in more effort to replicate publically available information on green successes as a result of influence from mimetic pressure.

The second link is the relationship between pressures and logics, which is illustrated with a two-way arrow in the framework and represents the interaction between the effects of pressures on organisational decision-making (i.e. logics) and vice versa. Sayed et al. (2017) provide evidence of this interaction in the food and catering supply chains of UK higher education (HE) institutions.

They suggest that institutional logics influence the perception of institutional pressures in the supply chain in the short-run, whilst in the longer term, institutional pressures can lead to changes in the logics. For example, when sustainability logic outweighs financial logic in the short term, this may lead to the HE institutions putting more emphasis on normative and mimetic pressures thereby achieving higher levels of sustainability than are required by the minimum standards associated with coercive pressures.

Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework:
The Impact of Barriers and Enablers on Social Sustainability in the supply chain using an Institutional Theory Perspective



Secondly, *institutional logics* is illustrated by four links which are:

- the relationship between logics and pressures (as discussed above);
- the relationship between logics and enablers;
- the relationship between logics and barriers; and
- the relationship between logics and complexity.

The first link (logics and pressures) has been discussed above. The link between logics and enablers and barriers represents the interaction between how organisations respond (i.e. using their institutional logics) to their enablers or barriers in their effort to implement socially SSCM. To the best of our knowledge, no prior studies have examined this link and therefore, this study aims to further explore these relationships in the context of socially SSCM. The next link illustrates the relationship between logics and complexity, which is represented by an up and down arrow. Institutional complexity arises when there are conflicting multiple logics and Sayed et al. (2017) have found evidence of this link where they look at the heterogeneity and homogeneity of organisational responses (i.e. logics) and how salient actors play an important role in tackling the complexity of multiple logics such as sustainability and financial logics.

Thirdly, *institutional complexity* is illustrated by three links which are:

- the relationship between complexity and logics (as discussed above);
- the relationship between complexity and enablers; and
- the relationship between complexity and barriers.

The first link (between complexity and logics) has been discussed above. The next link looks at the relationship between complexity and enablers and is followed by complexity and barriers. Given the dearth of previous research that looks at institutional complexity in the SSCM context, there has also been no research to date that suggests that these latter two links exist. Nonetheless, we postulate that where there is a multiplicity of

institutional logics, this will have an impact on how those logics then interplay with the enablers and barriers at work within the organisation. Thus, these links are included in the conceptual model as an area in need of further research.

Finally, the remaining two components of the framework represent two links, which are:

- the moderating effect of enablers on the relationship between pressures and positive isomorphism; and
- the moderating effect of barriers on the relationship between pressures and slow isomorphism.

The moderating effect of *enablers* and *barriers* are illustrated by upward dashed arrows in the framework. In the context of the SSCM literature discussed in the literature review above, examples of *enablers* include: organisational commitment, accordance with supply chain objectives, regulatory enforcement and external pressures. However, in this study, we will distinguish regulatory enforcement and external pressures as examples of institutional pressures instead of enablers for the implementation of socially SSCM. This distinction is important to make to avoid any duplication of the constructs contained within the conceptual framework. In particular, regulatory enforcement and external pressures can include pressures from both government and customers, which have both been identified as sources of coercive pressures in the literature review above. Thus, whilst it could be argued that pressures are an enabler, in this conceptual framework, we distinguish between institutional pressures and enablers that provide the right environment for change. From the prior literature, the enablers are then limited here to organisational commitment and accordance with supply chain objectives.

In addition, we also aim to explore the interaction of - the moderating effect of enablers on the relationship between pressures and isomorphism; and the moderating

effect of barriers on the relationship between pressures and slow isomorphism. To the best of our knowledge, these interactions have not been explored in the literature of socially SSCM. Furthermore, we aim to deepen our understanding on how barriers could lead towards slow isomorphism, no change and/or the supply chain becoming less socially sustainable; and how enablers could lead towards positive isomorphism, homogeneity and/or the supply chain becoming more socially sustainable.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the extant literature of SSCM through a systematic literature review process and this has led to the research gaps for this thesis. In summary, these gaps lead to the identification of the aim of this thesis, which is to explore the barriers, enablers and the role of institutional pressures, logics and complexity in the implementation of social sustainability from the perspectives of multiple tiers of the supply chain in a developing country context. The following chapter (Chapter 3) will discuss the research design employed in order to address these research objectives. The next chapter also includes the research protocol such as the data collection, the choice of data analysis and further justification for undertaking all these methodological choices for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the research methodology employed in this study. The chapter begins with a discussion on the research philosophy underpinning the study, followed by the research methodology which comprises of the methods and techniques used in the study. The methods and techniques section provide a detailed account of the case study method employed in this study which includes the unit of analysis and selection of cases. Subsequently, the research protocol which contains the process of data collection and data analysis conducted on the empirical data is discussed. Finally, the last section discusses research rigour which underlines the measures taken throughout the research to ensure that the research design employed is valid and reliable.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to “a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge” (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 124). Furthermore, research philosophy is a reflection of the researcher’s understanding of “what exists and what can hence be said to be” (Karlsson, 2016, pp. 19). The importance of understanding research philosophy is to aid researchers in identifying, creating or choosing the appropriate research designs for their studies (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018; Ahlström, 2016). Moreover, the research design will be influenced by practical considerations, however, a coherent design will depend on the type of philosophical stance chosen by the researcher (Saunders et al. 2016). Yet, there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in selecting a philosophical stance; but three important points to take in consideration suggested by Ahlström (2016)

are, (i) the researchers' view of the world, (ii) in what way knowledge can be gained from this view, and (iii) the need to conduct the research "in a way that is consistent with the implication of this position" (pp.72).

The two main concepts of research philosophy are *ontology* and *epistemology*. There are various definitions used to explain these terms as presented in Table 3.1. In brief, ontology and epistemology describes, firstly, the researcher's understanding of reality and secondly, how this understanding has influenced the decisions taken by the researcher throughout the research process.

Table 3.1: List of Definitions for Ontology and Epistemology

Authors	Ontology	Epistemology
Ahlström (2016, pp.53)	"assumptions about the very essence of the phenomena under investigation"	"assumption about the nature and status of knowledge and about how one might begin to understand the world and communicate this understanding as knowledge to human beings"
Easterby-Smith et al. (2018, pp. 61)	"basic assumptions that the researcher makes about the nature of reality"	"the assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world"
Saunders et al. (2016, pp. 127)	"assumptions about the nature of reality"	"assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others"

3.2.1 Ontology and Epistemology: Relativism and Social Constructivism

The ontology engaged in this study is *relativism*. Relativism is defined as, "an ontological view that phenomena depend on the perspectives from which we observe them" (Easterby-Smith pp. 67). The term *relativism* is also referred to as *subjectivism* in

Saunders et al. (2016). According to these authors, subjectivism is an understanding that, “social reality is made from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors” (Saunders et al. 2016 pp. 130). Subsequently, the epistemology for this study is *social constructivism*. Social constructivism is “the idea that reality is determined by people rather than by objective and external factors and hence it is most important to appreciate the way people make sense of their experience” (Easterby et al. 2018 pp. 69). In Saunders et al. (2016) social constructivism is a “reality constructed through social interaction in which social actors create partially shared meanings and realities” (pp. 130).

A common debate for philosophical positions is often between relativism and internal realism and; social constructivism and positivism, which are two opposite philosophical position in the continuum. Internal realism refers to the world as “real and causally independent of the human mind but it is impossible to observe it directly” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018 pp. 66). Positivism refers to the social world as “exists externally, and that its properties can be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018 pp. 69). Firstly, *relativism* and *social constructivism* are argued to be the appropriate philosophical position because of the research question this study seeks to answer. The objective of this study is to explore social sustainability in the supply chain and the researcher believes that the reality of this phenomenon is socially constructed and given meaning by the people.

Secondly, the research aims to identify with social issues such as human rights, health and safety, and the welfare provisions associated with the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. This study argues that the nature of appropriate welfare arrangements cannot be objectively determined but is complex as it is dependent on the perceptions of a number of stakeholders, including employees, managers, supply chain

members, consumers, government and other external activists, such as NGOs campaigning for improvements in human rights. Given the nature of supply chains, and the consequent involvement of actors from many different cultural backgrounds, it is likely to be particularly difficult to determine universally appropriate socially sustainable practices. Instead, it may be that these practices will need to differ in time and space.

Lastly, the selection of research philosophy often depends on the research questions the researcher aims to answer (Saunders et al. 2009). The context of the study above justifies the choice of philosophical stance of this research and the researcher is “concerned with providing an interpretation of the research phenomenon” (Ahlström, 2016, pp. 71) and the researcher also believes, “what counts for the truth can vary from place to place and from time to time” (Collins, 1983, pp.88). Hence, the next section presents the methods and techniques consistent with the philosophical position chosen for this study.

3.3 Methods and Techniques

This section will present the *methods and techniques* employed in this study. Methods and techniques refer to the “instruments and processes for gathering research data, analysing it and drawing conclusions from it” (Easterby et al. 2018, pp. 62). Methods and techniques are also referred to as *research strategy*, which is defined as “a plan of how a researcher will go about answering her or his research questions” (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 177). For the purpose of understanding this section, the research questions are repeated below:

Research Questions

1. How can a greater understanding of barriers and enablers, from the perspective of multiple supply chain actors within a developing country context, aid in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain?
2. How do stakeholders (government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) seek to influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
3. How do institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic, normative) influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
4. How do institutional logics influence the decisions made by organisations towards the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?
5. How do organisations deal with institutional complexity in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

The choice of research strategy is a decision which depends on the research objectives and the coherence of the links between research philosophy, research purpose and the amount of time and resources accessible to the researcher (Saunders et al. 2016). Saunders et al. (2016) explained the distinction between two types of research which are: quantitative and qualitative. Firstly, the authors explained that quantitative research is “generally associated with positivism, especially when used with predetermined and highly structured data collection techniques” (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 166). Secondly, qualitative research is associated with social constructivism where researchers “make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied” (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 168). Furthermore, within the context of the research strategy, it is important to reflect on whether the research is inductive, deductive or abductive (Saunders et al. 2016). Karlsson (2016) distinguished between the three types of reasoning: (i) inductive: “collects data and observations in order to discern a pattern within them, or to formulate a hypothesis, propositions, or a

new theory” (pp. 21); (ii) deductive, “begins with hypotheses based on existing knowledge or literature and seeks to test a hypothesis or an established theory” (pp. 21) and; (iii) abductive reasoning “allows inference as an explanation” (pp. 21). In line with these clarifications, this research employs the abductive approach to undertake qualitative research. The abductive approach is also referred to as, the combination of both the inductive and deductive approaches (Karlsson, 2016; Kovács and Spens, 2005). This research began with pre-perceptions or theoretical knowledge (Kovács and Spens, 2005) - where the systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted to explore the phenomenon, i.e. social sustainability and to identify the research gaps in the SSCM literature. Subsequently, abductive reasoning often seeks for suitable theories to understand the phenomenon (Karlsson, 2016; Kovács and Spens, 2005) - where in this study, the institutional theory was selected as the theoretical lens to aid in a better understanding of the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. Finally, the researcher employs the “back and forth direction between theory and empirical study” (Kovács and Spens, 2005, pp. 138) which leads towards generating “rules” such as hypotheses or propositions (Kovács and Spens, 2005). The evidence from the empirical research are analysed using the within-case, within-tier and cross-analysis, followed by a reasonable interpretation which are concluded into propositions (Karlsson, 2016; Kovács and Spens, 2005).

There are several types of methods that could be used in research, for example: survey, case method, experiments, action research, grounded theory and many others (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018; Saunders et al. 2016). For the purpose of this study, a distinction will be used between two types of method which are commonly used in research which are: survey research and case method. There are two reasons for this distinction: firstly, survey research is dominantly associated with the positivism

epistemology and case method is associated with the social constructivism epistemology (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018; Saunders et al. 2016). Firstly, survey research is a standpoint that perceives that “there are regular, verifiable patterns in human and organisational behaviour” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 101). One of the common method used in a survey research is the questionnaire, which enables researchers to collect “standardised data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way, allowing easy comparison” (Saunders et al. 2016). On the other hand, case method is research which focuses on the fundamentals of context understanding where the researcher studies the “interactions between the subject of the case and its context” (Saunders et al. 2016). Consistent with the research philosophy (i.e. relativism, social constructivism) of this study, the *case method* will be employed.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) explained that a constructionist research design will begin with “the assumptions that verifiable observations are potentially subject to very different interpretations” (pp.111). The *case method* is argued to be appropriate for this study because the objective of this study is to understand the barriers and enablers from the perspectives of multiple supply chain actors in the implementation of social sustainability. Furthermore, social sustainability is a developing field in the extant literature, hence, in order to enhance better understanding of the social issues in the supply chain, a case method is suitable. The *case method* will allow the study to have an in-depth inquiry into the “phenomenon within its real-life setting” (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 184). The case method allows the researcher to interact with the subjects (i.e. supply chain actors) in its context (i.e. supply chain, developing country) to develop a good foundation of the phenomenon (i.e. social sustainability implementation), which may not be possible through a survey questionnaire method. The next section will further detail the case study method employed for this study.

3.3.1 Case Study Method

Case method is defined as “a research design that focuses in depth on one or a small number of organisations, events or individuals generally over time” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 116). A case can refer to a person, group, organisation, association, change process, an event and many others (Saunders et al. 2016). Yin (2018) explained that the definition of case study should be based on two important perspectives: the scope of the case study and the features of the case study. Hence, in Yin (2018), case study is defined as:

“an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (pp. 15)

As explained in the previous section, this study will employ the case study as deemed a suitable method to study the research objectives of this study. Furthermore, to have an in-depth understanding of the different types of barriers, enablers, institutional pressures, institutional logics and institutional complexity in the implementation of social sustainability – the strengths of the case study method are:

- The case study could “capture the perspectives of different participants and focus on how their different meanings illuminate the topic of study” (Yin, 2018, pp. 16).
- The case study could study the “interactions between the subject of the case and its context” (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 184).
- The case study allows a “full understanding of the nature and complexity of the complete phenomenon” (Voss et al., 2016, pp.167).

These strength detailed above further enable this study to explore the organisations (i.e. supply chain actors) involved in the implementation of the supply chain. Moreover, the intention to explore this phenomenon in a context selected for this study, (i.e. developing

country context) would be possible through the case study method. The next section will discuss the unit of analysis selected for the case study and this is then followed by a detailed elaboration of the selection of cases.

3.3.2 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is defined as, “the main level at which data is aggregated: can be individuals, groups, events, organisations” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 116). Researchers should clarify their unit of analysis in advance as it is “the basis for collating data that will subsequently be analysed (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 129). The unit of analysis for this study is the organisation. The first step to clarify the unit of analysis is to discuss the case study research design. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the study seeks to explore the implementation of socially sustainable supply chains specifically from the perspectives of multiple supply chain tiers. Hence, the organisation as a unit of analysis provides a basis for gathering information from supply chain organisations within each tier. The consolidation and interpretation of data gathered through the analysis will therefore take an organisational stand – thus, whilst data was gathered from the individual interviewee, their individual perspective was not sought. Rather, they were asked to comment from their perception of the organisational perspective. Secondly, the organisation as an unit of analysis permits the study to investigate socially sustainable supply chain management, using the lens of institutional theory, given that individual organisations can be used as the ‘organisation field’ which is defined as, “organisations that constitute a recognised area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organisations that produce similar services or products” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 158).

Yin (2018) explains that, the case study research design will “make your case studies stronger and, possibly, easier to do” (pp. 47). Case study design is commonly divided into two: single and multiple case studies (Yin, 2018; Easterby-Smith et al. 2018; Saunders et al. 2016, Voss et al. 2016). This study will employ the multiple case study method and this is deemed to be an appropriate method to achieve the objectives of this study which seeks to understand the barriers and enablers from the perspectives of *multiple supply chain actors* in their implementation of social sustainability. The multiple-case study design is associated with the replication of findings across cases (Saunders et al. 2016). The selection of each case for a multiple-case study should be carried out carefully in order for the individual case studies to predict either, similar results (literal replication) or contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (theoretical replication). This concept is referred to as *replication logic* (Yin, 2018). This study employs the replication logic and the next paragraph will further discuss how this was executed in the research.

Literal replication is where the selection of cases are to predict similar results and literal replication will only be gained if characteristics of the cases are the same for a set of organisations. For example, in this study, two farms, located in the same location, producing the same type of rice (i.e. premium rice) have provided literal replication. Similarly, selecting two farms which produce non-premium rice in the same location provides literal replication. Therefore, the selection of farms from the same location, producing the same type of rice is predicted to have similar barriers or enablers in their implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The cases of distributors and retailers, both are providing literal replication because they are similar, i.e. selling both premium and non-premium rice.

Theoretical replication on the other hand, is where the selection of cases were to

predict contrasting results for anticipatable reasons. Therefore, for this study, a premium rice and a non-premium rice producer are selected to potentially provide a different and/or contrasting result of their social sustainable implementation in the supply chain. These contrasting results are expected from these cases because they represent different types of setting (premium and non-premium), where rationally they may have different expectations from their buyers, and their attitudes towards implementing social sustainability may differ from one another.

3.3.3 Selection of Cases

The selection of cases involves “the particular setting to be studied, the elements or processes on which you will focus and how you might generalise further” (Silverman, 2017, pp. 273). Miles and Huberman (1994) explained one of the important steps when selecting cases is to set boundaries that could be studied within the limits of times and means. To answer the research questions of this study, a few important settings and/or factors outlined in the research question have been taken into consideration. These settings and/or factors are, “greater understanding of barriers and enablers”, “perspectives of multiple supply chain actors”, “within a developing country” and “the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain”. The following bullet-points presents a detailed outline of these settings:

- *Developing Country Context:* According to the World Bank as of 2017, there are approximately 139 low and middle-income countries / economies, and this has recently been published in the Global Slavery Index 2016. This study focuses on Malaysia, one of the developing countries along with Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia, which have been stressed in the report that need significant action. In

May 2015, Malaysia had the world's eyes turned on them when their rates of abuse, exploitation, forced labour and human trafficking increased significantly with a particular case on finding abandoned people (with evidence of smuggling camps) on the border between Malaysia and Thailand (Walk Free Foundation, 2016).

- *Supply chain:* Malaysia, like any other countries, has a variety of industries such as technological, agricultural, education, and many others. This study focuses on the agricultural industry of Malaysia, which holds more than 50% of the country's production. The agriculture industry consists of crops such as crude palm oil, rice, natural rubber, cocoa beans and tea. Amongst these crops, this study has chosen to look at the supply chain of the rice in Malaysia. Rice plays a significant role in the Malaysian diet. In this study, two types of locally produced rice supply chain will be selected. The first rice supply chain consists of one of the most expensive and premium locally produced rice, which is a unique supply chain, where the rice is produced only in one location in the country called the Bario, the Kelabit Highlands of Borneo which is in the east region of Malaysia. This place has a pleasant temperature of 14 – 24 degree Celsius throughout the year. This rice is called the Bario rice. Then, the second rice supply chain consists of one of the cheapest locally produced rice, which is produced in the west region of Malaysia. This rice is produced in a warmer climate of 24 – 32 degree Celsius throughout the year. This rice is called the National Rice.

- *Supply Chain Actors:* A typical locally produced rice supply chain in Malaysia consists of three (3) supply chain actors who are: (i) farmers, (ii) distributors and, (iii) retailers. In addition to these supply chain actors, external stakeholders of the supply chain will also be included in this study. This is because one of the research questions for this study is to find out how stakeholders (i.e. government and non-governmental organisations) seek to influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain.
- *Stakeholders:* The study will focus on two types of external stakeholders for the Malaysian Rice Supply Chain and these stakeholders are Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Four Government departments (i.e. immigration, labour, social security and pension) and three NGOs have been selected in this study. The rationale for selecting these Government departments is because these are departments involved in the implementation of social sustainability in Malaysia. The three NGOs are chosen because social sustainability is their current main agenda specifically in the rice supply chain.

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the cases selected for this study, specifically, the organisational profile of retailers (6 cases), distributors (5 cases), farms (14 cases) and two types of stakeholders: Government (5 cases) and NGOs (3 cases). This table is then followed by Figure 3.1 which presents the link between the selected cases for this study.

Table 3.2 Profile of Organisations

Case	Organisation Type	Products and Services	Location	Number of Employees	Age of Business	Yearly Turnover
R1	Retailer	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	15	15	MYR400,000 ⁴ £75,000 ⁵
R2	Retailer	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	20	17	MYR500,000 £94,000
R3	Retailer	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	15	12	MYR300,000 £56,000
R4	Retailer	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	10	8	MYR250,000 £47,000
R5	Retailer	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	15	13	MYR400,000 £75,000
R6	Retailer	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	20	16	MYR500,000 £94,000
D1	Distributor	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	10	13	MYR200,000 £38,000
D2	Distributor	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	15	15	MYR250,000 £47,000
D3	Distributor	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	10	12	MYR175,000 £33,000
D4	Distributor	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	8	8	MYR100,000 £19,000
D5	Distributor	Premium and Non-premium rice	Miri	15	10	MYR180,000 £34,000

⁴ MYR: Malaysian Ringgit

⁵ The exchange rate is £1 = MYR5.30 (rounded value) – Data was accessed on the 21st February 2019 at <https://www.xe.com/>

Case	Organisation Type	Products and Services	Location	Number of Employees	Age of Business	Yearly Turnover
F1	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	10	12	MYR250,000 £47,000
F2	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	10	12	MYR250,000 £47,000
F3	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	10	12	MYR250,000 £47,000
F4	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	10	12	MYR250,000 £47,000
F5	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	25	20	MYR200,000 £37,000
F6	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	20	18	MYR250,000 £47,000
F7	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	15	12	MYR200,000 £37,000
F8	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	20	15	MYR140,000 £26,000
F9	Farm	Premium rice	Bario	15	11	MYR100,000 £19,000
F10	Farm	Non-Premium rice	Bario	25	15	MYR130,000 £24,000
F11	Farm	Non-Premium rice	Bario	15	13	MYR120,000 £22,000
F12	Farm	Non-Premium rice	Bario	20	16	MYR145,000 £27,000
F13	Farm	Non-Premium rice	Bario	25	18	MYR150,000 £28,000
F14	Farm	Non-Premium rice	Bario	15	15	MYR140,000

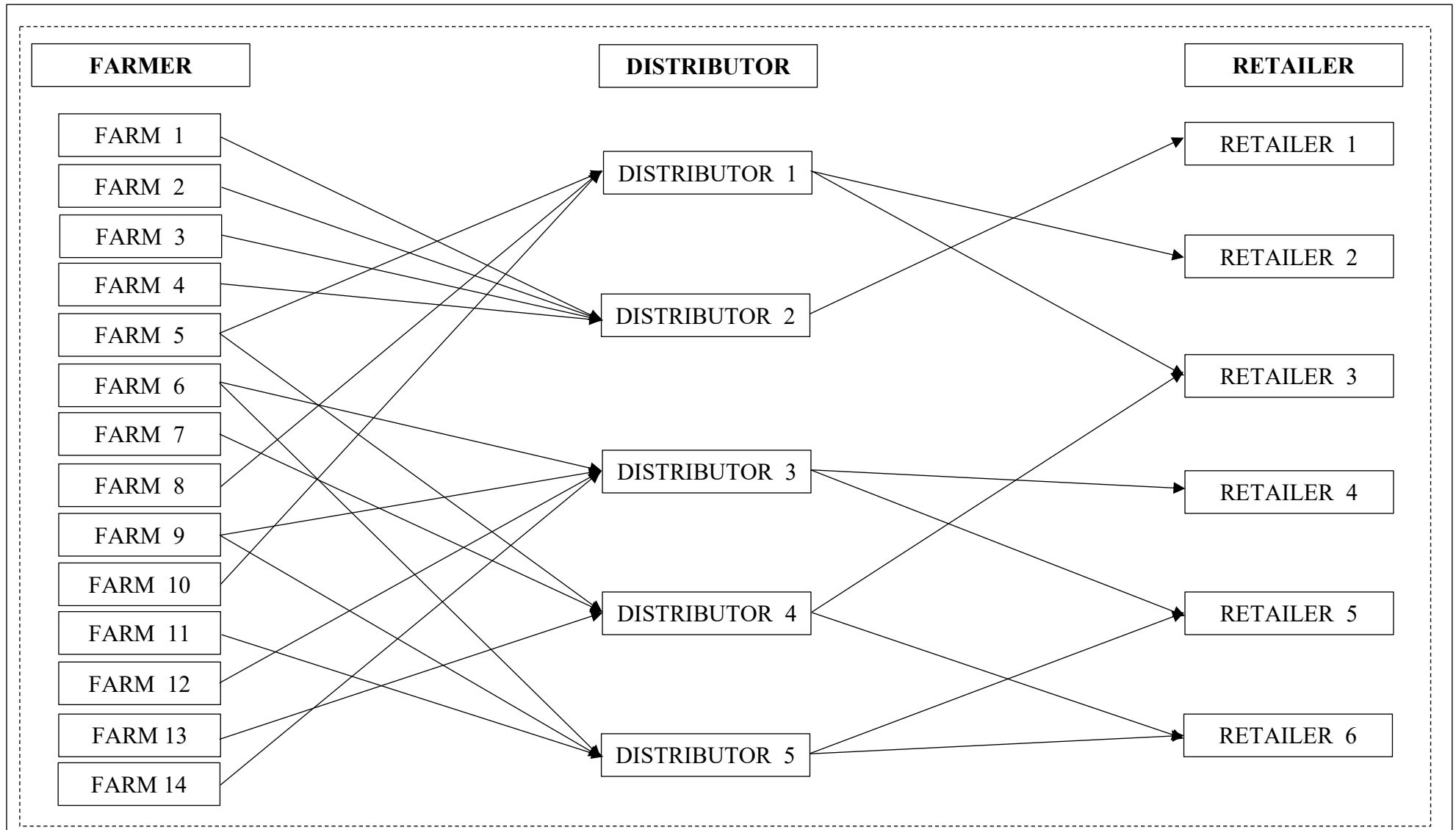
Case	Organisation Type	Products and Services	Location	Number of Employees	Age of Business	Yearly Turnover
						£26,000
GOV1	Immigration Department	This department is responsible for: (i) producing work permits and visas; (ii) conducting investigations and; (iii) handling charges such as money collateral and bank guarantees. The main focus of this department is to protect the rights of foreign workers and to conduct a strict monitoring on organisations, which employ foreign workers in the country.		1020	Miri	n/a
GOV2	Social security Department	This department is responsible for providing insurance for employees from occupational injuries including occupational diseases and accidents, and disability or death occurring during work travelling. The benefit of this protection provides cash remuneration to employees and their dependents in the event of unforeseen incidents. The organisation also provides medical treatment, physical rehabilitation and vocational training.		300	Miri	n/a
GOV3	Agriculture Department	This department is responsible for developing and implementing agricultural policies. Two examples of the departments' role are: (i) monitoring food and environmental safety and (ii) developing the industry's human capital. The department for each state is currently involved in providing development services to small farmers and focusing on the expansion of farmers association.		400	Miri	n/a

Case	Organisation Type	Products and Services	Location	Number of Employees	Age of Business	Yearly Turnover
GOV4	Labour Department	<p>This organisation is responsible for developing a dynamic, receptive and proficient workforce. The organisation plays an important role in enforcing occupational safety and health policies; formulating policies for employment, skilled workforce, wage systems; ensuring a safe work environment and developing a syllabus for skills training, certification systems and standards. The organisation upholds these principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Justice and fairness – to appreciate and practice the principle of justice and fairness to uphold social justice for the wellbeing of all. ▪ Harmonious relationships - to ensure harmonious industrial relations among employers, employees, and trade unions for the development of the nation and well-being of the citizens. ▪ Well-being and safety - to practice safety and health in a workplace to ensure a conducive and productive workplace. ▪ Continuous learning - to place importance on continuous learning through training and skills upgrading to ensure employability of competent and competitive employees. <p>Caring - to provide social security protection for the well-being of employees, family, society and the country overall.</p>		200	Miri	n/a
GOV5	Pension Department	This organisation is responsible for providing benefits for retirement to its members. This savings	Miri	500	Miri	n/a

Case	Organisation Type	Products and Services	Location	Number of Employees	Age of Business	Yearly Turnover
		management system is created for members and employers who are responsible to carry out statutory and moral obligations for their employees. The safeguarding of savings services is committed to provide a better future for its members.				
NGO1	Sustainability Campaigner	This organisation was initially promoting the preservation of wildlife and the environment in the country. Currently, through a joint collaborative initiative with a local NGO, this NGO also seeks to achieve socially sustainable development in Borneo. For example, a current initiative aims to improve the livelihoods of small farm producers in Borneo by transforming economic activities such as: (i) encouraging farmers to produced socially sustainable products, and (ii) promoting their products through market transformation programs, i.e. a collaboration program with retailers aiming to increase consumer awareness of these products		400	Miri	n/a
NGO2	Sustainability Campaigner	This organisation is promoting sustainable development in the Highlands of Borneo through initiatives, which address, for example, environment protection and the preservation of culture and tradition. The organisation is working to achieve initiatives such as improving the livelihoods of indigenous groups who are largely involved in rice farming. The focus is to provide alternatives to rice producers such as seeking for new markets and		70	Miri	n/a

Case	Organisation Type	Products and Services	Location	Number of Employees	Age of Business	Yearly Turnover
		promoting their products both locally and internationally.				
NGO3	Sustainability Campaigner	This organisation is promoting activities to address food security and agricultural issues. Their focus is to influence policy making related to food, agriculture and trade at regional and international forums. Initiatives carried out by this organisation aim to provide better opportunities for small farmers by, for example: (i) promoting their products internationally, (ii) planning to increase production to meet increased demand and (iii) seeking financial assistance and subsidies to decrease financial burdens.		200	Miri	n/a

Figure 3.1: The Link in the Malaysian Rice Supply Chain



The diagram consists of the links between farms, distributors and retailers studied and the following chapters (i.e. Chapter 4, 5, 6) will further discuss findings of the study in light of this diagram. The next section will subsequently discuss the research protocol for this study.

3.4 Research Protocol

This section aims to outline the research protocol for the study. In Yin (2018), this is also referred to as *case study protocol*. The case study protocol consists of four important parts: (i) overview of the case study, (ii) data collection of the case study, (iii) case study questions and, (iv) case study report (Yin, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). In brief, the *overview of the case study* is a clear description of the case study objectives and questions; the *data collection of the case study* clarifies the type of instruments used to gather data and the field-work plan for the research; the *case study questions* consists of questions which will be asked during the data collection stage; and lastly, *case study report* will justify the method used to analyse the findings of the research (Yin, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). The previous sections have described the overview of the case study with a clear description of the types of cases which will be included in this research (see section 3.2.1). The following sections will explain the rest of the protocol, i.e. data collection, case study questions and case study report.

3.4.1 Data Collection and Case Study Questions

This section will present the method used to collect data and the protocol of collecting data employed for this study. According to Voss et al. (2016), the methods typically used in a case research are such as structured and unstructured interviews, personal observations, event and meeting attendance, archival sources and many others. This

study will use a *semi-structured interview* as a method to collect data. The researcher should consider structured and semi-structured interviews when, “the aim of the interview is to develop an understanding of the respondent’s world” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 179). A semi-structured interview is a guided open interview which is based on “a list of questions that can be addressed in a more flexible manner” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 184). The essential element of the protocol is the interview questions, which “outlines the subjects to be covered during an interview, states the questions to be asked, and indicates the specific data required” (Voss et al. 2016, pp. 177).

The semi-structured interview is argued to be an appropriate method as this study seeks to develop a better understanding of the social sustainability implementation in a developing country context. Table 3.3 outlines the interview questions asked during the data collection. The table is divided into several significant rows and columns, which includes the supply chain actors (i.e. suppliers, buyers and stakeholders), and the constructs of this study (i.e. social sustainability, coercive, mimetic, normative, barriers, enablers, institutional logics and institutional complexity). The first section on questions for buyers and suppliers are divided into: (i) questions for suppliers: mainly for farmers and distributors; (ii) questions for buyers: mainly for distributors and retailers and; (iii) questions for stakeholders: mainly for government and non-governmental organisations. However, although these questions are mainly for these particular actors in the supply chain, some of the questions also apply to other actors. For example: questions for buyers are also used for farmers for any buying activities that they are involved in. In addition, distributors are also asked supplier questions as they are suppliers to retailers.

The data collection protocol is important because the process involves ethical consideration, getting permissions for access, planning for information documentation and data storage (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Table 3.3: Case Study Interview Questions

Constructs	Suppliers	Buyers	Stakeholders
Social Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the term social sustainability mean to you and your organisation? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the term social sustainability mean to you and your organization? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the term social sustainability mean to you and your organisation? 2. What are the social sustainability standards, codes of conduct and/or guidelines implemented by Malaysian rice supply chains?
Coercive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the social standards, codes of conducts and/or guidelines that you are required to adhere to by your buyers, if any? 2. What are the actions taken or consequences that will happen, if you don't adhere to the requirements of social standards, codes of conducts and/or guidelines? 3. What is the role of government and/or NGOs to you in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementing regulations/policies ▪ Enforcing regulations/policies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the social standards, codes of conduct and/or guidelines that you require of your suppliers, if any? 2. How are these social standards and/or codes of conduct used by your suppliers influenced by the requirements from you, if at all? 3. What are the actions taken if your supplier(s) are non-compliant? 4. What is the role of government and/or NGOs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementing regulations/policies ▪ Enforcing regulations/policies 	<p>Government:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the social standards codes of conduct and/or guidelines that you require of the Malaysian rice supply chains to comply to, if any? 2. How are these social standards and/or codes of conduct influenced by the requirements from you, if at all? 3. What are the actions taken if the Malaysian rice supply chains are non-compliant? 4. What is your role for the Malaysian rice supply chains in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementing regulations/policies ▪ Enforcing regulations/policies <p>NGO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the good values and/or guidelines that is required of the

Constructs	Suppliers	Buyers	Stakeholders
			<p>Malaysian rice supply chains to comply to, if any?</p> <p>2. What are the actions taken if the Malaysian rice supply chains are not compliant?</p> <p>3. What is your role in enforcing these values or guidelines to the Malaysian rice supply chain in implementing social sustainability?</p>
Mimetic	<p>1. Who are the leading companies that you would refer to as a good example towards the implementation of social sustainability?</p> <p>2. How have these leading companies influenced your organisation towards implementing social sustainability?</p>	<p>1. Who are the leading companies that you would refer to as an example towards the implementation of social sustainability?</p> <p>2. How have these leading companies influenced your organisation towards implementing social sustainability?</p>	<p>1. Who would you promote as a good role model for the implementation of social sustainability in the Malaysian rice supply chains?</p> <p>2. Does this role model differ according to the type of rice being produced in the Malaysian rice supply chains?</p>
Normative	<p>1. Do you collaborate with other organisations on social initiatives?</p> <p>2. If so (Question 1), how do you collaborate? Can you give some examples?</p> <p>3. If not (Question 1), why not?</p> <p>4. Do you participate in professional associations or training? If so, how</p>	<p>1. Do you collaborate with other organisations on social initiatives?</p> <p>2. If so (Question 1), how do you collaborate? Can you give some examples?</p> <p>3. If not (Question 1), why not?</p> <p>4. Do you participate in professional associations or training? If so, how</p>	<p>1. Other than using standards and/or codes of conduct, how does the Malaysian Rice Industry aim to ensure that it remains socially sustainable?</p> <p>2. What is the role of government and/or NGOs in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing encouragement / training/ subsidies

Constructs	Suppliers	Buyers	Stakeholders
	<p>does this influence your social sustainability practices?</p> <p>5. What is the role of government and/or NGOs to you in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing encouragement / training/ subsidies 	<p>does this influence your social sustainability practices?</p> <p>5. What is the role of government and/or NGOs to you in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing encouragement / training/ subsidies 	<p>3. How do you seek to influence social sustainability in the supply chains?</p> <p>4. Does this influence differ according to the different tiers in the supply chain?</p>
Barriers	<p>1. How successful have you been in implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>2. Have you encountered any problems when implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>3. If yes, can you give some examples?</p> <p>4. If yes, why do you think these problems exist?</p> <p>5. Have you tried to overcome these problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>6. If no, why have you not tried to overcome these problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability?</p>	<p>1. How successful have you been in implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>2. Have you encountered any problems when implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>3. If yes, can you give some examples?</p> <p>4. If yes, why do you think these problems exist?</p> <p>5. Have you tried to overcome these problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>6. If no, why have you not tried to overcome these problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>7. What is your role in assisting your suppliers to overcome their problems in implementing social sustainability?</p>	<p>1. How successful has the implementation of social sustainability been in the Malaysian rice supply chains?</p> <p>2. Have there been any problems encountered in the implementation of social sustainability (i.e. standards, codes of conducts, guidelines) in the Malaysian rice supply chains?</p> <p>3. If yes, what are the problems that have been encountered?</p> <p>4. If yes, why do you think these problems exist?</p> <p>5. Have you tried to overcome these problems that have been encountered in implementing social sustainability?</p> <p>6. If yes, can you give some examples?</p> <p>7. What is your role in assisting the supply chain in overcoming their problems of implementing social sustainability?</p>

Constructs	Suppliers	Buyers	Stakeholders
Enablers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the role of the stakeholders (buyers, government and non-governmental organisations) in ensuring you overcome your barriers of implementing social sustainability? 2. What has helped you overcome the problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability? 3. Are there any other factors that have helped you to implement socially sustainable initiatives? If so, please explain and give examples? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the role of the stakeholders (government and non-governmental organisations) in ensuring you overcome the barriers of implementing social sustainability? 2. What has helped you overcome the problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability? 3. Are there any other factors that have helped you to implement socially sustainable initiatives? If so, please explain and give examples? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think helps in motivating firms to be socially sustainable? 2. What do you think will help organisations in the implementation of social sustainability? 3. What benefits do you see coming from these efforts (i.e. of implementing social sustainability)? 4. What is your role in helping organisations towards the implementation of social sustainability? 5. Could you give some examples of help that you could provide the Malaysian rice supply chains in the implementation of social sustainability? 6. Are there any other factors that have helped you to implement socially sustainable initiatives? If so, please explain and give examples?
Institutional Logics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the factors that you consider before implementing social sustainability? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the factors that you consider before implementing social sustainability? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the factors that you consider before implementing social sustainability?

Constructs	Suppliers	Buyers	Stakeholders
	2. Are there any factors that have prevented you to implement social sustainability? 3. If yes, could you give some examples? 4. If yes, how do you overcome these factors?	2. Are there any factors that have prevented you to implement social sustainability? 3. If yes, could you give some examples? 4. If yes, how do you overcome these factors?	2. Are there any factors that have prevented you to implement social sustainability? 3. If yes, could you give some examples? 4. If yes, how do you overcome these factors?
Institutional Complexity	1. Are there any trade-offs that you have to consider before implementing social sustainability? 2. If yes, could you give some examples? 3. If yes, what are the factors you consider before making the decision?	1. Are there any trade-offs that you have to consider before implementing social sustainability? 2. If yes, could you give some examples? 3. If yes, what are the factors you consider before making the decision?	1. Are there any trade-offs that you have to consider before implementing social sustainability? 2. If yes, could you give some examples? 3. If yes, what are the factors you consider before making the decision?

Furthermore, Yin (2018) suggests, researcher should also consider the resources needed during fieldwork, a procedure when assistance is needed, a data collection schedule and preparation for unanticipated occasions. Thus, this following section below will elaborate in detail, the data collection protocol employed in this study:

- **Access** – One of the important considerations prior to conducting the case study is to ensure human subjects *protection*. This *protection* refers to gaining informed consent, protecting the privacy and taking safety precautions for the participants of the study (Yin, 2009). For this study, a participant information sheet and consent form have been prepared prior to collecting the data, as shown in Appendix A2. This participant information sheet and consent form were sent to interviewees in advance via email or mail.
- **Assistance** – The researcher should consider developing a procedure for calling for assistance or guidance when needed when conducting the case study data collection (Yin, 2009). In order to ensure the researcher's safety and protection while conducting the data collection, an assistant is involved in this study. The assistant that has been hired was a retired teacher. This assistant has supported the researcher throughout the data collection process including travelling along for road trips and flights heading towards interview sites.
- **Resources** – The researcher should ensure that there are sufficient *resources* prior to collecting their data. These resources include a personal computer, writing instruments, paper, paper clips and also a pre-established quiet place to write notes (Yin, 2009). These resources were prepared for the data collection and in addition, two important resources such as voice recorder(s) and transportation (road or flight) were included.

- **Schedules** – The researcher should also include a clear *schedule* for data collection (Yin, 2009). The researcher prepared a clear schedule which consists of specified date, time and place where the data collection or interviews have been conducted. In addition, the researcher has included a specified period of time anticipated for each interview in the schedule.
- **Unanticipated events** – The researcher should also be prepared for cases of *unanticipated events*. This unanticipated event could refer to for example: changes to the availability of interviewees (Yin, 2009). In this study, the researcher has included empty time slots or time gaps in between each interview. These empty time slots are open for any last-minute time / date changes requested by interviewees.
- **Construct Validity** – This consists of ensuring multiple sources of evidence and have key informants review draft of case study report (Yin, 2018). Other sources such as annual reports and formal website information were gained from the interviewers during the data collection. Subsequently, the draft of case study report (i.e. summary of key points from interview) has been discussed and formally agreed upon before data analysis commenced.
- **Pilot Study** – The pilot study is an important step in the research where the researcher will be able to refine the data collection protocol (Yin, 2018). The pilot study seeks to validate and clarify the interview questions and most importantly, to verify the feasibility of the research design (Yin, 2018). A pilot study was conducted in July 2016 in Malaysia using three face-to-face interviews with three supply chain actors who are managers of a farm, distributor and retail organisation respectively and therefore the interviewees represented the three tiers of the rice supply chain. Moreover, Yin (2018)

suggested that pilot studies can be broader than data collection and cover other issues such as methodological concerns. The conducted pilot study was helpful in ensuring informants are knowledgeable of the studied phenomenon and further improvements on the conceptualisation of terms and the translations were made post-hoc.

The first phase of data collection was conducted in Malaysia and the data collection began in January 2017 and ended in April 2017. There were 19 interviews conducted and these interviewees consisted of local farmers (*9 interviews*), government (*6 interviews*) and non-governmental organisations (*4 interviews*) in the Malaysian rice supply chain (see Table 3.3). One of the objectives of this study is to explore the different tiers to the supply chain in the Malaysian rice industry. Whilst in the first data collection no data were collected from distributors and retailers, the second phase was then planned and carried out to include these supply chain tiers. The second data collection was carried out from July 2017 to August 2017. There were 18 interviews conducted and the interviewees consist of distributors (*5 interviews*), retailers (*6 interviews*), non-governmental organisations (*2 interviews*), and local farmers (*5 interviews*). A summary of this data collection is presented in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Interviewees for January – April 2017 Data Collection

Organisation	Interviewees	Interviewee Reference Code
Farm	Managing Director	F1
Farm	Director	F2
Farm	Manager	F3
Farm	Manager	F4
Farm	Manager	F5
Farm	Manager	F6

Organisation	Interviewees	Interviewee Reference Code
Farm	Manager	F7
Farm	Manager	F8
Farm	Manager	F9
Government	Director	GOV1- I1
Government	Head of Enforcement	GOV1 - I2
Government	Head of Enforcement	GOV2
Government	Enforcement Officer	GOV3
Government	Industrial Relations Officer	GOV4
Government	Head of Enforcement	GOV5
NGO	Patron Advisor	NGO1-I1
NGO	President	NGO1-I2
NGO	Head of Region	NGO2-I1
NGO	Committee Member	NGO2-I2
Total Interviews:	19	

Table 3.5: Interviewees for July – August 2017 Data Collection

Organisation	Interviewees	Interviewee Reference Code
Distributor	Logistics Manager	D1
Distributor	Logistics Manager	D2
Distributor	Logistics Executive	D3
Distributor	Operations Officer	D4
Distributor	Operations Officer	D5
Retailer	Purchasing Officer	R1
Retailer	Marketing Officer	R2
Retailer	Head of Purchasing	R3
Retailer	Head of Purchasing & Supply	R4
Retailer	Assistant Manager	R4
Retailer	Assistant Manager	R5
NGO – SEA	Head of Member State: Malaysia	NGO3-I1

Organisation	Interviewees	Interviewee Reference Code
NGO – SEA	Committee Member	NGO3-I2
Farm	Manager	F10
Farm	Manager	F11
Farm	Manager	F12
Farm	Manager	F13
Farm	Manager	F14
Total Interview:	18	

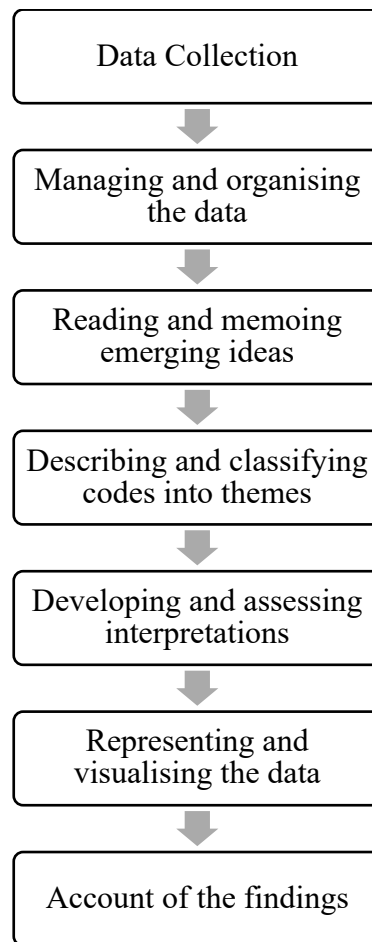
3.4.2 Case Study Report

The case study report is a description of the data collected and the analyses conducted for the findings. One of challenges in the preparation of a case study report is the *data analysis*. This is because the data analysis involves the process of “how to condense highly complex and context-bound information into a format that tells a story in a way that is fully convincing to others” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018, pp. 234). Moreover, the process depends on the researcher’s “style of rigorous empirical thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretation” (Yin, 2018, pp. 165). Creswell and Puth (2018) have suggested a few important steps that should be considered during data analysis such as: organising and preparation of data for analysis, coding of data, generate descriptions and themes and preparation for writing up (refer to Figure 3.2).

Before the data analysis begin, the data collected through a voice recorder was safely transferred onto an encrypted computer. The first process for the data analysis was to listen to the media file (i.e. voice recording) and store them in individual encrypted folders for easy reference and access. Secondly, this media file was then transcribed into full transcripts and translated into English in a Microsoft Word file (389 pages). Thirdly,

the data was ready to be analysed with the aid of a computer-assisted tool, NVivo. The Nvivo assisted the researcher to create *nodes* which are “boxes” to put “codes” into. The boxes of codes is a type of file (i.e. drawers) where the researcher could note groups or classify emerging ideas or themes together.

Figure 3.2 Data Analysis Process



Source: Adapted from Creswell and Puth (2018)

Table 3.6 indicates how the process of coding was conducted for this study. All *first level nodes* and some *second level nodes* are codes obtained from the extant literature which are associated with the research objectives of the study, whereas, the remaining *second level nodes* and all *third-level nodes* are codes emerging from the data. Thus the study employs an abductive approach throughout the process of coding, as previously

explained in section 3.3 above, – which indicates that codes are both drawn from the extant literature, as well as through allowing the data to ‘speak for itself’. In particular, for the institutional theory constructs, the themes within the first-level and second level nodes are all derived from the literature. For example, the institutional pressures (Level 1) can be sub-divided into three clear and well-defined constructs, i.e. coercive, mimetic and normative pressures (Level 2). The third level nodes were then generated using new themes emerging from the data of this study. In the case of *barriers* and *enablers*, it was decided that second-level codes should not be derived from the literature as this may constrain the study unduly. Therefore, all the second level codes were generated from the data itself. Thus open coding was used for third level nodes for the constructs of institutional theory and second level nodes for barriers and enablers.

Table 3.6 Level of Nodes for Data Analysis in NVivo

First-Level Nodes (from literature)	Second-Level Nodes (from literature)	Third-Level Nodes (from data)
Institutional Pressures	Coercive pressures	Government policy Government enforcement Government auditing Buyer power
	Normative pressures	Upstream education Downstream education Sustainable association
	Mimetic pressures	Certified exemplars Competitor exemplars
Institutional Logics	Financial logics Sustainability logics	n/a n/a
Institutional Complexity	Trade-off	Financial logic versus sustainability logic
First Level Nodes (from literature)	Second-Level Nodes (from data)	
Barriers	High cost Market forces Process delay Behavioural issues Lack of resources	n/a
Enablers	Management support Consistent with certification requirements	n/a

As suggested by Bhakoo and Choi (2013), the study employs a within-case, within-tier and cross-tier analysis for the study. These analyses are slightly varied as compared to the common within-case and cross-case analysis employed in most studies. The intention of this variation is to fit the nature of the study which focuses on the supply chain perspective. Firstly, a within-case analysis is conducted on all the organisations in the supply chain. This first stage of analysis on the empirical data was to understand the institutional pressures, institutional logics, enablers and barriers associated with each individual organisation studied. Thus, a within case analysis was completed for each retailer, each distributor and each farmer in turn. The aim of this chapter (i.e. see Chapter 4) is to illustrate a few examples of within-case analysis which was conducted for all the organisations.

The second stage of the data analysis is the within-tier analysis which discusses each tier (i.e. retailer, distributor and farmer tier) respectively and this is discussed in Chapter 5. This second stage on the empirical data aimed to understand the pressures, logics, enablers and barrier found at tier level and to discuss how the implementation of social sustainability have influenced each of the supply chain tiers (i.e. retailer tier, distributor tier and farmer tier) respectively (i.e. see Chapter 5).

Finally, the cross-case analysis is conducted to analyse and study the comparison between the respective tiers in the supply chain on their social sustainability implementation (i.e. see Chapter 6). The same analysis (i.e. cross-case analysis) was also conducted on the evidence from external stakeholders: Government and NGOs. This chapters seeks to discuss the role stakeholders on influencing the implementation of social sustainability in Malaysian rice supply chain. The findings of this chapter will respond to the second research question for this study. The next section will discuss the research rigour of this research.

3.5 Research Rigour

Research rigour in qualitative studies refers to the researcher's thoroughness and openness towards their research data (Krefting, 1991). There are various methods used to ensure rigour in qualitative studies and these methods are often linked to terms such as, validity, reliability and generalisability (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018; Yin, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al. 2016). Validation refers to the "process of verifying research data, analysis and interpretation to establish their validity/credibility/authenticity" (Saunders et al. 2016, pp. 206). Reliability refers to the demonstration of repeating the case study operation with the same results (Yin, 2018). Generalizability refers to the "extent to which observations or theories derived in one context can be applicable to other contexts" (Easterby et al. 2018, pp. 130). In brief, the quality of research design is determined by the research rigour which has been thought through and executed by the researcher.

Many scholars have introduced various methods to ensure research rigour. Yin (2018) explained four important tests to determine rigour: (i) construct validity, (ii) internal validity, (iii) external validity and (iv) reliability. Then, Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) argued that the criteria for judging then research quality fundamentally depends on "where people stand on the epistemological continuum" (pp. 133). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), two important questions has to be considered, "Is the account valid, and by whose standards? How do we evaluate the quality of qualitative research?" (pp. 253). These scholars have posed important arguments that have to be carefully considered and for the purpose of this thesis: Yin's four design tests will be adopted to clarify the research rigour for this research and this is illustrated in Table 3.6. The last column titled *phase of case study research (in which tactic is addressed)* will be outlined how these tests were executed throughout the research.

Table 3.7 Research Rigour: Four Design Tests

Tests	Case Study Tactic	Phase of Case Study Research (in which tactic is addressed)
Construct Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use multiple sources of evidence ▪ have key informants review draft case study report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple sources of data (interview documents, annual reports, company website) ▪ Interview documents are sent to interviewees for reviewing
Internal Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ do pattern matching ▪ do explanation building ▪ address rival explanations ▪ use logic models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A theoretical framework is developed for the study which summarises the links between institutional pressures, barriers, enablers. ▪ A comparison of the links against the empirical data was conducted using the cross-case synthesis suggested by Yin (2018)
External Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use theory in single-case studies ▪ use replication logic in multiple-case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The multiple case studies are employed in this study ▪ Literal and theoretical replication logic is applied to the multiple case studies
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use case study protocol ▪ develop case study database ▪ maintain a chain of evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The case study protocol was employed for all the cases. ▪ The computer-assisted tool, NVivo is employed to organise the case studies

Adapted from Yin (2018): Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods

3.6 Conclusion

The next chapters, i.e. Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 will discuss the research findings of this study. In summary, these chapters will present the within-case analysis, within-tier analysis, cross-tier analysis for supply chain and data analysis for the external stakeholders of this study respectively.

CHAPTER 4:

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The first stage of the analysis of the empirical data was to gain an understanding of the institutional pressures, institutional logics, and of the enablers and barriers associated with each individual organisation studied. A within case analysis was therefore completed for each retailer, distributor and farm in turn. To illustrate how this within case analysis was performed, this chapter first presents the evidence for Retailer 1, Distributor 1 and Farm 1 in sections 4.2, 4.3. and 4.4 respectively. Similar analyses were carried out for the remaining retailers, farms and distributors. Full details of these analyses are not included in this chapter but are summarised in Appendix 3.

4.2 Within-Case Analysis of Retailer 1

4.2.1 Overview of Organisation – Retailer 1

This retail store (Retailer 1) was established 15-years ago and is an independent small-scale retailer. It can be classified as a grocery store, as it primarily sells food products, including vegetables, fruit, dairy items and many packaged foods including rice. Retailer 1 employs 15 workers who manage different aspects of the business such as marketing and sales, accounting and finance, and day-to-day operations. Specifically, these employees fulfil roles such as cashiers, retail assistants, stock takers, shelf-fillers and cleaners or are members of the management team which is in charge of hiring, managing the accounts of the business, procurement (i.e. sourcing new suppliers and maintaining relationships with current suppliers) and operations (i.e. liaising with distributors). The

business is located in Miri, a city in the state of Sarawak, on the border between Malaysia and Brunei. It has been serving local customers for many years and is currently looking for opportunities to expand its market as a wholesaler to Brunei, their neighbouring country.

Small-scale retailing businesses have a limited number of suppliers in the region. Retailer 1 thus buys from the local supply chain but also imports rice which is cheaper than that grown locally and is preferred by consumers. The market for locally produced rice is very limited, particularly given that the government sets a ceiling price. Hence, making it more expensive would make it more difficult to sell the rice (this will be further discussed in 4.2.4).

Before proceeding to the findings, it is important to understand how social sustainability is perceived by Retailer 1. For Retailer 1, social sustainability means: “...*to be able to provide our end customers, with products which come from good practices which includes the provision of equality and employees’ rights to fair pay and employment benefits such as their workplace protection, retirement funds, and work permits*” (R1). This suggests that Retailer 1 has a good understanding of social sustainability and how this was implemented in their organisations will be further discussed in the following section. The following sections will present the evidence on institutional pressures, institutional logics and on the barriers, and enablers associated with Retailer 1. Each section includes a table classifying the findings followed by evidence from the data and discussion.

4.2.2 Institutional Pressures - Retailer 1

As defined in Chapter 2, institutional pressures refer to influence or persuasion that leads to homogeneity in the supply chain.

The process of becoming homogeneous can be referred to as isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Isomorphism is defined as a:

“constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions”
(DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 pp. 149).

This study focuses on the institutional pressures that force organisations to become similar to each other in the way that they implement social sustainability in order to develop a more socially sustainable supply chain. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the context of socially sustainable supply chain management (SSCM), there are three types of pressures. The first is, coercive pressure which refers to the forces exerted by those in powerful positions (for e.g. government, buyers, and/or non-governmental organisations). The second is, mimetic pressure which occurs when organisations imitate the actions of their successful competitors in the industry. The third is, normative pressure which exists when organisations within a supply chain collaborate or form alliances to exert pressure on other organisations to conform in order to be perceived as participating in legitimate actions. Table 4.1 below presents the institutional pressures found in the case of Retailer 1. The table classifies the pressures according to the types discussed above, describes the nature of the pressures identified and the level of strength, i.e. the degree of influence.

The first coercive pressure found in the case of Retailer 1 is *buyer power*. Evidence of this pressure can be seen in the challenges faced by Retailer 1 in exporting their products. This pressure is exerted by a potential buyer from Brunei, a neighbouring country, who demands that products imported from Malaysia must be certified by the Malaysian Good Agricultural Practices (MyGAP).

Table 4.1: Institutional Pressures for Retailer 1

Types of Pressures	Pressure	Nature of the Pressure	Strength
Coercive	Buyer Power	MyGAP certification is needed to export goods to Brunei	Strong
Mimetic	Certified Exemplars	There are some mimetic opportunities from farms which already have MyGAP certification	Weak
Normative	Upstream/Downstream Education	Retailer 1 exerts influence on its supply chain members through short courses and training opportunities	Moderate

MyGAP is:

“a resource management system in agricultural production which is sustainable and follows good practices. The system is expected to increase agricultural productivity of quality and safe food, taking into account the welfare, safety and health of workers and conservation of the environment” (Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Malaysia, 2014 pp. 5).

Retailer 1 states:

“... let me give you an example, our neighbouring country, Brunei, will not import any agricultural goods such as vegetables, rice, and other products if we are not MyGAP certified ... one of the pressures we feel is if we don't get certified by MyGAP, we will lose out on potential business specifically exporting” (R1).

Retailer 1 described how a demand made by a potential buyer is forcing them to be more socially sustainable by getting their products MyGAP certified. Buyer power is a coercive pressure which pushes the organisation to be more proactive in their social practices and in the example presented by Retailer 1, an order qualifier from a potential buyer is to be

certified by an internationally recognised certification for agricultural products such as MyGAP.

The second pressure is *certified exemplars* which constitutes a form of mimetic pressure. Retailer 1 states,

“...there are a few very early MyGAP certified farms who are currently playing the role of farms, distributors and retailers all at once... although they are small-scale farm holders, they are a source of good examples which we can learn from and possibly, we can learn about the factors that enables them to implement it successfully” (R1).

Strong mimetic pressure was discussed (see Chapter 2) as a pressure usually exerted when an organisation imitates successful competitors in the industry. However, in the case of Retailer 1, the implementation of social sustainability is still in its infant stage. Hence, only farms have been MyGAP certified which suggests that these farm organisations have implemented social sustainability according to the standards set by the Department of Agriculture. Moreover, Retailer 1 recognises the lack of competitor exemplars and thus, only relies on farm suppliers, therefore this is perceived to be a weak mimetic pressure in this case.

The third pressure found was a normative pressure which is classified as *upstream/downstream education*. Retailer 1 states,

“... we have tried to provide short courses and training within our organisation and with our suppliers, both distributors and farms ... we put in this effort with the hope to be able to improve our supply chain and at the same time to maintain good business relationships” (R1).

In this case, Retailer 1 play an important role of exerting normative pressure on to their suppliers, i.e. distributors and farm organisations. In order to increase the development

of social sustainability in the supply chain, Retailer 1 have taken initial steps to raise awareness and promote knowledge of social sustainability for both types of suppliers. This effort could be recognised as a good form of collaboration (i.e. normative pressure) between these organisations which could lead towards creating a more socially sustainable supply chain.

4.2.3 Institutional Logic - Retailer 1

Logic is defined as a set of both formal and informal guidelines for organisations to make decisions in order to gain social recognition and rewards as a result of their actions (Ocasio, 1997). Logic in the SSCM context refers to factors which organisations consider before making decisions to implement social sustainability. In the literature on SSCM, Sayed et al. (2017) have identified three types of logic: financial logic, which is “only concerned with sustainability if it leads to greater sales or reduced costs”, sustainability logic is “a balanced attitude towards environmental, social and economic sustainability”, and time logic is the “extra time needed to engage with particular initiatives” (pp.550).

Table 4.2 below presents the institutional logics found in the case of Retailer 1. The table classifies the logics according to the type of logics discussed above, its nature, and level of strength, i.e. the degree of influence.

Table 4.2: Institutional Logics for Retailer 1

Types of Logic	Nature of the Logics	Strength
Financial	The implementation of social sustainability is aimed at increasing product recognition	Strong
Sustainability	Retailer 1 aims to increase awareness of social sustainability across the supply chain	Moderate

In relation to the *financial logic* found in this case, Retailer 1 states,

“... *MyGAP certification allows us to expand our market ... [the recognition from the certification] allows us to patent our product ... it protects our brand ... [in order to do so] we need to ensure the [social sustainability] implementation progresses well, there needs to be an agreement between us and [our suppliers] farms and distributors ... [on how to continuously improve] this includes how we can maintain [or increase] our profitability [as a result of the implementation]*” (R1).

The implementation of social sustainability is commonly associated with MyGAP and this is because one of the advantages of the certification is that it allows retailers to promote their products as sustainably produced products, in this case, promoting rice products as socially sustainable produced. Moreover, the evidence suggests Retailer 1 is inclined to pursue the initiative because of the potential financial reward which can be gained, for example, from promoting MyGAP certified products. Hence, this indicates a strong financial logic in the decision process of implementing social sustainability in the case of Retailer 1.

The second logic found in this case is *sustainability logic*. Retailer 1 states,

“... *we have tried to provide short courses and training within our organisation and with our suppliers, both distributors and farms ... we put in this effort with the hope to be able to improve our supply chain and at the same time to maintain good business relationships*” (R1).

With reference made to this evidence, which was previously discussed as a normative pressure, Retailer 1 states,

“... *at this stage, we cannot force our suppliers [to implement social sustainability], we understand that due to [unavoidable] circumstances*

[challenges], *this will take a lot of time, money and effort* [for the supply chain] *to adjust ... as for now, we could learn from good examples, if any, and to encourage one another to be more socially sustainable ...* [But] *definitely, no force as of now*” (R1).

Although efforts were made by Retailer 1 to exert normative pressure on their suppliers, they recognise the transition is still a challenge and hence, sustainability logic remains weak in their decision-making related to the implementation. Hence, sustainability logic remains a moderate strength logic because sustainable sourcing will only be possible when Retailer 1’s suppliers are ready to implement social sustainability.

4.2.4 Barriers - Retailer 1

Barriers in this study refer to those obstacles that organisations face in the implementation of social sustainability. In the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2, a barrier is a factor that moderates the relationship between institutional pressures and slow isomorphism. A few important assumptions are associated with barriers in our framework:

- Barriers mediate the impact of different types of pressure (i.e. coercive, mimetic, normative)
- Barriers negatively influence organisations’ effort to become more socially sustainable
- Barriers strongly inhibit the supply chain movement towards isomorphism

Table 4.3 below presents the barriers found in the case of Retailer 1 classified according to the type of barrier, nature, and level of strength. As in all the tables, the level of strength is determined by the degree of influence each barrier has on the organisations’ effort to become socially sustainable.

Table 4.3: Barriers for Retailer 1

Barriers	Nature of the Barrier	Strength
High cost	Cost of production already high, therefore incurring the additional costs linked to sustainable practices is prohibitive	Strong
Market forces	Customers not always prepared to pay the higher prices that need to be charged if social sustainability is implemented.	Strong
Lack of resources	Insufficient resources to make changes related to sustainability	Moderate
Behavioural issues	Higher pay for foreign workers compared to local workers even when doing the same work due to perceived better work ethic, resulting in preference to employ foreign workers.	Strong
Process Delay	Significant time delays in processing MyGAP applications, delaying social sustainability accreditation and implementation of associated practices.	Moderate

The first barrier associated with the implementation of social sustainability found in the case of Retailer 1 is *high cost*. Retailer 1 states,

“... our supplies are not sufficient to export, so we only rely on [making profits from] local markets ... [the implementation of social sustainability] for a good cause, we want implement everything good, but we seem to be at losing out [when implementing social sustainability] because of the high production cost which is transferred throughout the supply chain and we lose out to other retailers who sell cheaper products [rice produce] from a less socially sustainable supply chain” (R1).

In this case, high cost is associated with the increased operating costs when social sustainability is implemented, and this additional cost is borne by Retailer 1 and their suppliers. The inability to incur more costs is because of the market saturation where the supply of products are only enough to serve the local market and any mark-up of prices will only result in losing sales to their competitors.

The second barrier found is *market forces*. Market forces related to the implementation of social sustainability is explained by Retailer 1:

“... unfortunately, there are still very few local customers who are aware of the MyGAP certification ... when we get [MyGAP] certified, we could increase our prices ... but if our customers are not well-informed [of what is known as MyGAP], we lose out to other retailers who sell cheaper [rice] products which are sourced from less socially sustainable supply chain. It is really a conflict for us!” (R1).

The evidence suggests that there is a link between *high costs* and the demand and price of rice, i.e. *market forces*. Furthermore, the lack of consumers’ awareness will lead towards lower demand for socially produced products and hence, affect the sales and profitability of Retailer 1. The conflict arising from this barrier indicates that the supply of sustainably produced products, e.g. rice, and the demand for it is unbalanced. This unbalance creates a loss of competition for Retailer 1 as consumers will choose cheaper alternatives, which are often products that are produced in a non-socially sustainable way.

Thirdly, the lack of resources related to the implementation of social sustainability is a barrier for Retailer 1. As Retailer 1 states,

“... we try to persuade our suppliers [farms and distributors], to be MyGAP certified and we understand that we could not force them because as much as

we want to, we could not provide any help for them to successfully implement the transition [to be socially sustainable] ... our hands are tied as much as theirs” (R1).

Retailer 1 explains that the barrier here is that they cannot force suppliers and there are two reasons for this: the inability to assist them in making this transition and the lack of resources or capacity required for them to become more socially sustainable. The lack of resources is perceived to be the lack of time, lack of support and lack of credibility to continuously push their suppliers forward in this implementation. Through this evidence, it is perceived that Retailer 1 suggests that they struggle to make the transition themselves, and hence, cannot offer suppliers any help because they themselves are facing the same challenges.

The fourth barrier found in the case of Retailer 1 is *behavioural issues*. As Retailer 1 states,

“... along the supply chain, issues related to manpower will be often heard where there is always a lack of manpower, especially locals [workers] but we have more foreign workers ... they [foreign workers] work more productively as compared to the locals ... hence [by employing more foreign workers] every tier incurs more [hiring] costs and it will affect the production costs and all these costs would [be accumulated as the products move along the supply chain] affect the selling price of our products” (R1).

The behavioural issue found in this case is concerning the inequality of treatment between local and foreign workers. Foreign workers were explained to receive a better pay as compared to the locals because they are perceived to have better work productivity. While every worker has the right to better pay, in this case, every worker has the right to equal employment opportunity. Hence, favouring foreign workers over local workers in the

hiring process is a barrier for organisations towards becoming more socially sustainable in their practices.

The last barrier found in the case of Retailer 1 is *process delay*. As stated by Retailer 1:

“... there is a large number of applicants [for MyGAP] and because it begins from the farm owners [followed by distributors and retailers], the Department of Agriculture is taking a very long time to process the applications ... so we have to wait ... the process will take us at least two to three years to complete ... and they [Department of Agriculture] will have to visit each organisations [who have applied] every once in a while according to their schedule to monitor ... and then finally only then you will get certified” (R1).

The evidence suggests that the time required for the MyGAP application and approval process is a challenge for Retailer 1. Although this barrier is significantly influenced by the inefficiency of the Department of Agriculture, the supply chain will face a significant delay in the implementation of social sustainability. It is suggested that this acts as a moderate barrier in the case of Retailer 1 as the issue is long waiting time rather than something specifically related to a sustainability issue in the supply chain.

4.2.5 Enablers - Retailer 1

An enabler in the SSCM context refers to something and/or someone that makes the implementation of social sustainability possible. In the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2, an enabler moderates the relationship between institutional pressures and positive isomorphism. There are a few important assumptions associated with enablers in our framework:

- Enablers mediate the impact of different types of pressure (i.e. coercive, mimetic, normative);
- Enablers positively influence organisations' efforts to become more socially sustainable;
- Enablers strongly influence the supply chain movement towards positive isomorphism.

Table 4.4 below presents the enablers found in the case of Retailer 1. As in all the tables, the enabler is classified according to its type, nature and level of strength.

Table 4.4: Enablers for Retailer 1

Enablers	Nature of the Enabler	Strength
Management support	Communicating and cooperating with customers and suppliers with the assistance of external stakeholders, i.e. NGOs.	Moderate

Only one enabler was identified in the case of Retailer 1 and this enabler is referred to as *management support*. Retailer 1 states,

“... we provide welfare for our workers ... we pay our workers higher than the minimum national wage and we provide welfare for our foreign workers, for example, [foreign worker] work permit” (R1)

The evidence suggests a moderate enabler for R1 because there is no explicit evidence of support specifically on social initiatives within the organisation. Although the minimum national wage and work permit is significant, this could be argued to be a compulsory policy for organisations to comply with and hence, the example does not present as a strong enabler. In other evidence of management support, Retailer 1 states,

“... we cooperate and collaborate with external stakeholders [NGOs] who are the middleperson between us and our customers ... we need to understand the perception of our customers of social sustainability ... and we need NGOs to convey our concerns or challenges in implementing social sustainability to the Government ... this collaboration with NGOs is important for us because ... we can understand the demand of our customers ... secondly, we can understand the supply chain’s capability in implementing social sustainability” (R1).

This evidence suggests management support from the perspectives of Retailer 1 is more external than internal. Instead, Retailer 1 is dependent on the assistance provided by NGOs and in this case, NGOs and Government are linked as stakeholders who work together on social initiatives in the supply chain. Furthermore, the aim of the collaboration is to improve the supply chain’s overall implementation of social sustainability through educating the customers of the initiatives.

4.2.6 Conclusion – Retailer 1

Although Retailer 1 experienced prevailing challenges such as high costs and market forces, pressure such as buyer power influences the organisation to be more proactive in their social sustainability implementation. Furthermore, these barriers do not stop them from increasing their efforts to improve themselves - Retailer 1 is taking appropriate initiatives to become more socially sustainable and this was displayed through their attempt to exert normative pressures (i.e. upstream and downstream education) on their suppliers and moreover, they work together with NGOs with the aim of achieving a more socially sustainable supply chain.

4.3 Within-Case Analysis of Distributor 1

4.3.1 Overview of Organisation – Distributor 1

This distributor (Distributor 1) is a 13-year-old independent small-scale distributor that is involved in purchasing, transporting, warehousing, packaging and reselling agricultural products in Miri. Distributor 1 purchases local agricultural products including rice, peppers and vegetables from local farms. Distributor 1 employs 10 workers who manage different aspects of the business such as transportation (i.e. transporting goods from local farms using 4x4 vehicles to the warehouse and transporting goods to retailers), inventory management (i.e. warehousing products, record-keeping), packaging products and procurement (i.e. maintaining relationships with suppliers).

There are not many small-scale distributors in this context because of the nature of their work. For example, Distributor 1's services range from transporting products from farms to distributing them to retailers. Specifically, remote farms are only accessible via road and air. Road transportation is via a timber road, and the journey time is 28 hours; airfreight takes 55 minutes. Costs include transportation and purchasing (according to the type and weight of the goods). Hence, Distributor 1 has developed a long-term relationship with their suppliers (e.g. Farmer 1) because there are not many distributors in Miri.

Before moving to the findings, it is important to understand how social sustainability is perceived by Distributor 1. For Distributor 1, social sustainability is, *“welfare for us, where we focus on how the production [productivity of the business] could sustain the lives of the people involved in the organisations”* (D1). This understanding of social sustainability from Distributor suggests that their financial objectives is significant in order to provide better social sustainability for the employees of the organisation.

The following sections will present the findings from Distributor 1. The findings are presented in the same systematic order as in the previous section: institutional pressures, institutional logics, barriers and enablers. The findings will be presented in an overview table and this is followed by evidence from the data and a discussion of the findings.

4.3.2 Institutional Pressures - Distributor 1

Table 4.5 below presents the institutional pressures found in the case of Distributor 1. As with other sections, the table classifies pressures according to the type of pressure, nature, and level of strength, i.e. degree of influence.

Table 4.5: Institutional Pressures for Distributor 1

Types of Pressures	Pressure	Nature of the Pressure	Strength
Coercive	Government monitoring	Close monitoring by the Department of Agriculture to ensure the implementation of social sustainability is done correctly	Strong
Coercive	Compulsory employment policies	The effort towards implementing social sustainability are shown by conforming to national employment policies such as minimum national wage, social security and employees provident fund.	Moderate
Mimetic	Certified exemplar	No appropriate exemplar of social sustainability identified	None
Normative	Upstream/ Downstream Education	Efforts to improve the implementation of social sustainability are shown by attending short courses and training	Strong

The first pressure is a form of coercive pressure which is referred to as government *monitoring*. The “Government” referred to in this case is the Malaysian Department of

Agriculture. Distributor 1 states,

“... the Department of Agriculture monitors our daily operating activities and they look at every detail [related to social sustainability practices] such as our human resources ... and a close monitoring of our [social sustainability] implementation, includes, looking into the relationships with our distributors [buyers] and farms [suppliers]” (R1).

Distributor 1 explains that a coercive pressure in the process of implementing social sustainability is the strict monitoring from the Department of Agriculture. Furthermore, Distributor 1 states,

“[Department of Agriculture] discusses auditing results and the progress of our implementation in order for us to further improve ourselves and our supply chain” (R1).

Given the infancy of social sustainability implementation, the Department of Agriculture exerts important coercive pressure in order to push organisations forward in their practices, as found in the case of Distributor 1.

The second coercive pressure found in the case of Distributor 1 is *compulsory employment policies*. Distributor 1 states,

“... our responsibility is to strictly comply with compulsory government policies such as the minimum national wage, [employees] social security and employees provident fund ... in bigger organisations, more [financial] resources are available to implement social sustainability ... for us [small-scale distributors], we implement social sustainability to the best minimum standard and offering our best ability so we could survive in this industry” (D1).

Compliance with employment policies, such as providing basic human rights to employees: fair pay (i.e. minimum national wage), pensions (i.e. employees provident fund) and workplace insurance (i.e. social security), in this case is perceived as a moderate coercive pressure. Furthermore, the evidence found suggests that social sustainability practices found in the case of Distributor 1 have not advanced beyond minimum requirements.

Mimetic pressure was not found in the case of Distributor 1. Distributor 1 states, *“... there are still lack of good examples of organisations or supply chains which implements social sustainability well ... and of who we could look up to and learn from”* (D1).

This evidence illustrates the problems faced by Distributor 1 in being unable to identify exemplary organisations, for example, MyGAP certified organisations, such as the farm organisations recognised by Retailer 1. This evidence suggests that Distributor 1 is falling behind in identifying important information such as the availability MyGAP certified organisations in the supply chain which could be a good example for the implementation of social sustainability.

Finally, the last source of pressure is a normative pressure which is referred to as upstream/downstream education. Distributor 1 states,

“... we are putting in more efforts to attend courses and training related to MyGAP certification ... to ensure we do it correctly. The Department of Agriculture is helping us to go through the process ... so they are definitely a big help to us” (D1).

The evidence suggests Distributor 1 is putting in more effort to improve their knowledge and understanding of social sustainability. In addition, the Department of Agriculture plays a significant role in exerting this pressure by educating and providing relevant

information related to the MyGAP certification. Hence, this could be perceived as a strong pressure for Distributor 1 because the exerted pressure drives them towards becoming more socially sustainable.

4.3.3 Institutional Logics - Distributor 1

Table 4.6 below presents the institutional logics found in the case of Distributor 1. The findings will be presented together with supporting evidence from the interview with Distributor 1.

Table 4.6: Institutional Logics for Distributor 1

Types of Logic	Nature of the Logic	Strength
Financial logic	The implementation of social sustainability is to get recognition and to be able to expand their market internationally.	Strong
Sustainability	Their purpose in getting certification is to present themselves as a socially sustainable organisation and to be able to improve their product's marketability.	Moderate

The first logic found through the case of Distributor 1 is financial logic. Distributor 1 states,

“... we have plans to export in order to find more customers too, of course that requires a lot of effort, so we are still working on it hence, this [social sustainability] implementation is important for us because it allows our organisation and the products to be recognised” (D1).

The implementation of social sustainability for Distributor 1 was driven by financial aims, to seek potential opportunities to expand their business internationally. In

particular, the implementation will enable them to gain recognition from international buyers through the award of internationally recognised certification such as MyGAP.

The second logic is a sustainability logic and Distributor 1 states,

“... we definitely have plans to look further into the certification of MyGAP which is the Malaysian Good Agricultural Practices ... it is also one way to demonstrate that we are socially sustainable and that our products are more valued than those without the certification. So, this is on our priority agenda”
(D1).

This logic follows after the first logic, where Distributor 1 aims to seek certification as a result of successfully implementing social sustainability. However, this is driven more by strong financial logic to increase the marketability of their products through the certification, and therefore the strength of sustainability logic is moderate. A strong sustainability logic would be a strong sense of responsibility or influence to improve social issues in the organisation to create a better, safe and healthy environment for their employees. However, this was not evident in this case.

4.3.4 Barriers - Distributor 1

Table 4.7 below presents the barriers found in the case of Distributor 1.

Table 4.7: Barriers for Distributor 1

Barriers	Nature of the Barrier	Strength
Lack of expertise	The low educational level hinders proper implementation of social sustainability.	Strong
Lack of clear code of conduct	Unclear guidelines constitute a problem for the implementation of social sustainability.	Strong

Firstly, lack of expertise is a barrier found in this case. In describing his understanding of the sustainability guidelines, Distributor 1 states,

“... I don’t understand every detail of the guidelines [on social sustainability], but I know that no matter what, it will incur [the organisation] a very high cost, therefore, I think it might not be worth it ... let’s look at another example in this industry where people in the first tier of the supply chain are farms, whom often are less educated ... when it comes to implementing something new, it takes a lot of effort to train and inform” (D1).

This first barrier or challenge that Distributor 1 experiences is the lack of understanding and knowledge of the guidelines to implement social sustainability. Moreover, the evidence suggests that they recognise that this is also experienced by their suppliers, i.e. farms tier. This evidence further suggests that low educational background is one of the strong reasons for this barrier and the process of educating themselves will continuously be difficult. As a result, further evidence suggests that the lack of expertise has its consequences. Distributor 1 states,

“... because the [social sustainability] implementation is still very new [in the supply chain], we have not put any associated terms and conditions [related to social sustainability] into our contract with our suppliers. One of the main reasons are because there is a limited number of suppliers, and secondly, there are also limited number of suppliers who could fulfil this [to supply socially produced product] and to be honest, it is still very difficult and complicated” (D1).

In the effort to source more sustainably produced rice, Distributor 1 explains that the process is still a challenge for the reasons mentioned above. Furthermore, Distributor 1 states,

“... we understand the benefits of implementing social sustainability, however, we also feel that the upstream of the supply chain is not being paid attention to. They [relevant authorities] don't seem to understand what is happening on the ground [in the suppliers tier], and no one ever questions why” (D1).

This following evidence suggests that the *lack of expertise* on how to successfully implement social sustainability is a result of limited assistance provided by the Government, or specifically, the Department of Agriculture. However, this finding further implies that this will continue to be a challenge for Distributor 1 because of they are highly reliant on government assistance in the implementation of social sustainability.

The second barrier experienced by Distributor 1 is the *lack of a clear code of conduct*. Distributor 1 states,

“... there are still no clear guidelines on paper for us as independent distributors to refer to in this industry, therefore, our responsibility is just to strictly follow the compulsory government policies such as minimum national wage, social security and employees provident fund [related to social sustainability]” (D1).

This evidence is perceived to be a consequence of the first barrier discussed. Distributor 1 explains that the lack of clear guidelines, codes of conduct and/or standards for social sustainability is a challenge. However, this could be a result of the lack of expertise for outlining a clear code of conduct for themselves, hence, the need to source guidelines to follow is a challenge. This barrier is also perceived to have resulted in Distributor 1 only meeting minimum social sustainability standards such as the mentioned examples.

4.3.5 Enablers - Distributor 1

Table 4.8 below presents the enablers found in the case of Distributor 1.

Table 4.8: Enablers for Distributor 1

Enablers	Nature of the Enabler	Strength
Management support	The organisation aims to pursue collaboration with their suppliers and buyers to further improve their implementation of social sustainability	Moderate

As shown in Table 4.8, only one enabler was found in the case of Distributor 1, which is *management support*. Management support is present through the efforts to improve communication with their suppliers. Distributor 1 said,

“... it is important for us to listen to issues or challenges experienced by our suppliers [farms] and these issues are also for us to communicate or convey to our buyers [retailers] ... this communication helps us to ensure that we work towards a better supply chain. We are still a work in progress, but we try hard to work together ... if the implementation is done correctly, it could reduce the barriers experienced throughout the supply chain and we [as distributors] could also contribute to a more [successful] socially sustainable supply chain” (D1).

Similar to Retailer 1, management support was found to be more external than internal, hence making this evidence a moderate enabler. However, the evidence indicates that Distributor 1 is putting more effort to improve themselves by seeking to collaborate with their buyers and suppliers, i.e. retailers and farms to achieve isomorphism in the implementation of social sustainability in their supply chain.

4.3.6 Conclusion – Distributor 1

Like Retailer 1, Distributor 1 is aiming to become more socially sustainable via MyGAP certification. Moreover, they are also influenced strongly by external stakeholders. Specifically, Governmental pressures and NGO assistance. However, it is acknowledged that there are also significant challenges present in the process such as the lack of expertise and the lack of a clear code of conduct. Like Retailer 1, Distributor 1 also seeks opportunities to improve themselves in their implementation of social sustainability, for example, by cooperating with their suppliers and buyers with the aim of achieving isomorphism in the supply chain.

4.4 Within-Case Analysis of Farm 1

4.4.1 Overview of Organisation – Farm 1

This farm (Farm 1) is a 12-year-old independent small-scale farm which is involved in planting, harvesting, milling and selling rice. Farm 1 employs 10 workers for the busy seasons and two to three workers for the less busy seasons. The workers are responsible for many activities such as tending the seedlings nursery, paddy planting, harvesting, milling, packaging rice, weeding, pest control, land clearing and land replenishing. The busy seasons are from September to October (for e.g. paddy planting), January to March (for e.g. harvesting) and April to May (for e.g. drying and milling). Less busy seasons are from November to December (for e.g. weeding and pest control) and June to July (for e.g. seedlings nursery, land clearing and replenishing). Farm 1 employs both foreign and local workers. These workers are referred to as seasonal workers due to the nature of seasons (i.e. busy and less busy) as discussed above. The wages paid in a busy season are MYR1500 per month and in less busy season is MYR50 per day. This study focuses on the paddy farm of Farm 1, which is located in Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia.

Farm 1 practices a 50 year old traditional method of farming called *Lakan*. *Lakan* involves paddy planting only once a year. This is different from other farms around Malaysia where paddy planting is done two or three times a year.

Before proceeding to the findings, it is important to understand how social sustainability is perceived by Farm 1. According to Farm 1, social sustainability is an act of goodwill and provides employment benefits such as, “...*their salary, food, accommodation and transportation ... and their medical fees*” (F1). This perception or current practices suggest that Farmer 1 has a weaker understanding and implementation of social sustainability. This will be further discussed in the following sections with evidences of the institutional pressures, institutional logics, barriers and enablers found in the case of Farm 1.

4.4.2 Institutional Pressures - Farm 1

Table 4.9 below presents the institutional pressures found in the case of Farm 1.

Three institutional pressures were found in the case of Farm 1. The first pressure is, *government enforcement* which is an example of coercive pressure. Farmer 1 states,

“... *we do have a license [to hire foreign workers] and permits for our foreign workers ... this [licence and work permit] is important for us as it protects us when the authorities [Malaysian Immigration Department] come in to conduct inspections ... consequently, our workers are free and safe to work without needing to worry about their protection unlike illegal foreign workers*” (F1).

The evidence suggests that enforcement from the Malaysian Immigration Department forces Farm 1 to make sure that the rights of their foreign workers are protected. For example, the right to have a work permit. Furthermore, the strict monitoring of the hiring

process for foreign workers, as carried out by the Immigration department, is perceived to have strongly influenced the implementation of social sustainability for Farm 1.

Table 4.9: Institutional Pressures for Farm 1

Types of Pressures	Pressure	Nature of the Pressure	Strength
Coercive	Government enforcement	The Immigration Department forces organisations to provide work permits for their foreign workers.	Strong
Coercive	Government penalty	Organisations are required to follow mandatory standard application procedures to hire foreign workers and obtain work permits for them to avoid being penalised.	Strong
Mimetic	Certified exemplars	Exemplary organisations provide standard examples of employment benefits that need to be provided to employees.	Moderate

Secondly, *government penalty* is another example of coercive pressure found in this case.

Farmer 1 states,

“... to apply for a work permit, you first need to get a quota [to get a hiring licence] from the Labour Department ... it takes time and there are many stages involved ... we have to do so [following the standard rules to hire workers] or else we will get caught and penalised by the Labour Department, then we'll be done for! If I am not mistaken, the penalty is that we can be jailed for it. We will then have no excuse if both the Immigration and police prosecutes us” (F1).

The finding firstly describes the process which Farm 1 needs to go through to get work permits for their workers. This compulsory process includes: advertising job vacancies, interviewing and hiring. There are two important reasons of this process: firstly, priority is given to local people of Malaysian nationalities and secondly, organisations are only given permission to hire foreign workers if the first option is not feasible. The penalty of not complying with the procedure and hiring foreign workers without a work permit is a strong pressure in this evidence, hence, presenting as a positive influence for Farm 1 in becoming more socially sustainable.

The third pressure found is *certified exemplars* which constitutes a form of mimetic pressure in this case. Farmer 1 states,

“... their salary, food, accommodation and transportation ... their medical fees... without all these [employment benefits], they [employees] would not want to work with us, so we have to keep up with what our competitors are offering” (F1).

Part of this evidence was referred to in the introduction which described Farm 1's perception of social sustainability. The evidence suggests that competitors of Farm 1 were competing for employees and that ensuring that employees are happy with their employment benefits is a source of mimetic pressure. Specifically, Farm 1 has to provide the benefits mentioned above, and it could also be perceived that these benefits have to be the same or more than their competitors are providing. However, this constitutes only a moderate pressure on Farm 1 as there is no strong evidence of advanced practices of social sustainability, such as the provision of benefits beyond regulatory policies (i.e. wages and insurance).

4.4.3 Institutional Logics - Farm 1

Table 4.10 below presents the institutional logics found in the case of Farm 1. The table categorises logics according to types, nature and strength, i.e. the degree of influence.

Table 4.10: Institutional Logics for Farm 1

Types of Logic	Nature of the logics	Strength
Financial logic	Fair pay is provided to their employees in order to meet production needs.	Strong

Only one logic was found in the case of Farm 1, *financial logic*. Farmer 1 stated,

“... only foreign workers are available to work in this industry and not many local workers could cope with the harsh work ... demanding a high salary is definitely working to their [employees] advantage ... so we have to give in sometimes because we don't really have any choice. That is one of the main reasons I am spending a hiring cost ... We don't have a choice” (F1).

This finding suggests that fair pay is associated with the organisation's production demands. Although it could be argued that Farm 1 has mentioned that there is a small amount of labour who could cope with working on the farms, but, Farm 1 is also willing to increase their wages in order to meet its production demands. Furthermore, from a social sustainability perspective, employees have the right to fair pay and equal chances are given to local Malaysian employees, however they are unfortunately, not often available. Hence, in this case, Farm 1's efforts to become socially sustainable is strongly influenced by financial aims.

4.4.4 Barriers - Farm 1

Table 4.11 below presents three barriers found in the case of Farm 1. The findings will be discussed with supporting evidence from the interview with Farm 1.

Table 4.11: Barriers for Farm 1

Barriers	Nature of the Barrier	Strength
Poverty	Child labour is socially acceptable therefore properly implementing social sustainability is impossible.	Strong
Process delay	Delays in the process of applying for work permits disrupts production, especially during busier seasons.	Moderate
Employees' attitude	The implementation of social sustainability becomes very difficult when employers have to deal with workers' leaving without notice.	Weak

The first barrier found in the case of Farm 1 is *poverty*. Farmer 1 states,

"... if the child does not go to school because they have to work and earn money for the family, of course that is really a pity ... when they [a child] are raised in a poor family and they [their parents] don't have enough money, their parents won't be able to send them to school because of the school fees ... [and in order] to avoid creating [other] potential social issues to the community such as stealing or begging on the streets, I personally think it is better for me to hire them [child labour]. We would prefer to teach them working skills to survive. But of course, we would not give them heavy work [to deal with], which is unforgivable given their age" (F1).

This evidence clearly describes the link between poverty and child labour (a social issue).

There are several reasons for this. The first reason is the cultural context. Farm 1 is part

of a cultural setting where it is common for underprivileged children to be sent to work to earn a living for their family. The second reason is that Farm 1 perceives child labour is a better way to avoid other social issues, such as mentioned above. Moreover, in this cultural setting, child labour is perceived as a way of helping children who have been raised in a family which experiences poverty, to develop survival skills. Unfortunately, from the perspectives of implementing social sustainability, this is a strong barrier as child labour is still a serious social issue and it could detrimentally affect the supply chain's product credibility.

The second barrier found is *process delay*. This barrier is associated with long waiting time for work permits, and this barrier is slightly in contrast to the process delay experienced in other tiers such as retailers where it was associated with the long waiting time for MyGAP certification. Farmer 1 states,

"... it [work permit application] takes time and there are many stages involved [in the process] ... and we have to go through that long process ... and it is difficult... when we wait for the permit ... [the experience of Farm 1] it could take eight months [to get approved]" (F1).

This finding is linked to the pressure arising from government enforcement (as discussed in section 4.4.2) and the right to a work permit (i.e. a social sustainability issue). There are two challenges related to this barrier. The first is the complexity of the work permit approval process and the second is length of time required for the work permit applications. These challenges are significant for Farm 1 because it could cause delays in the production. Due to the nature of farm work, workers are often employed in both short-term and long-term employment. The above is a barrier specifically for short-term employment, where 8 months would mean that the production demand during busier seasons will be severely delayed.

The third and final barrier found in this case is *employees' attitude*. Farmer 1 states, “... *when we have paid everything that is required of us* [for work permits] *and after two or three months* [of employment], *these workers will run off!* *So, we lose out on of the money we have spent, it's not refundable. That is why it is tough for us to do it right when it comes to hiring these workers ... the most difficult times are when I have spent so much to hire them ... and these workers however never lasted ... sometimes, they just disappear!*” (F1).

The evidence suggests that employee work ethics is a challenge for Farm 1 in the process of implementing social sustainability correctly. This finding is associated with the high cost spent on providing work permits for their foreign workers, and the long process involved to do so. However, this could be argued to be a weak barrier as employees could be leaving the organisation for better working opportunities.

4.4.5 Enablers - Farm 1

Table 4.12 below present the enabler found in the case of Farm 1.

Table 4.12: Enablers for Farm 1

Enablers	Nature of the Enabler	Strength
Management Support	Efforts to be more socially sustainable are shown by the provision of fair pay and right to work permits for foreign workers	Strong

Only one enabler was found in the case of Farm 1. Farmer 1 states,

“... *we have to offer them* [salary] *much higher than the locals ... for us, it protects them* [foreign workers] *but also ourselves from the authorities ... that is important for us and our business* [reputation] ... *if we go against the law by not hiring our workers the right way* [complying with regulatory policies] ... *that would cost us MYR10,000 or more for one worker!*” (F1).

As compared to Retailer 1 and Distributor 1, management support in this case is more internal as compared to external. In providing evidence of social sustainability practice in the organisation - Farm 1 provides fair pay to their workers, specifically, foreign workers are paid a higher wage because of the demanding nature of the work on the farm. Secondly, Farm 1 describes the consequences of not complying with regulatory policies which could result in receiving government penalties. Although it could be argued that compliance is a responsibility which needs to be carried out by Farm 1 dutifully, but from the perspectives of social sustainability, it is argued here that this is evidence of important management support for their social initiatives.

4.4.6 Conclusion – Farm 1

In comparison to Retailer 1 and Distributor 1, Farm 1 is found to be less socially sustainable. This is supported by significant barriers found in their case such as child labour, which is a serious challenge that could affect the whole supply chain's implementation of social sustainability, if not resolved. However, these barriers have not hindered Farm 1 to improve their implementation, and this is shown through their compliance of regulatory policies such as the provision of work permits, albeit strongly influenced by coercive pressures such as government enforcement and penalty.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the within-case analysis of three cases, Retailer 1, Distributor 1 and Farm 1. The following chapter will present a within-tier analysis which brings other cases into the discussion to identify the full set of institutional pressures, logics, barriers and enablers found in each tier of the supply chain.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

WITHIN TIER ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the within-tier analysis of the empirical data for retailers, distributors and farms. The aim of the within-tier analysis is to discuss the similarity and/or differences emerging from the data found in each respective tier in this study, namely: the retailer tier, the distributor tier and the farmer tier. The discussion will follow the same format as the previous chapter which first discussed the institutional pressures, followed by the discussion of institutional logics, the barriers and enablers in the respective tiers: the retailer tier (Section 5.1); followed by the distributor tier (Section 5.2) and finally the farmer tier (Section 5.3). Each section will include a concluding remark which summarises and compares the findings with the related extant literature.

5.2 Institutional Pressures: Retailer Tier

Table 5.1 presents the institutional pressures for the retailer tier in the Malaysian rice supply chain. Coercive and normative pressures are found to be prominent pressures in this tier followed by mimetic pressure. The table also includes the overall strength of each pressure and this categorisation is based on two criteria: the level of influence each pressure has on the retailers and the number of retailers influenced by each pressure. Firstly, when the level of influence is *low* and number of retailers influenced is *high*; and vice versa - the overall strength is *moderate*. Secondly, when the level of influence is *low* and number of retailers influenced is *low*, it is an overall *weak* pressure. Finally, when the level of influence and number of retailers influenced is *high*, it is an overall *strong*

pressure. The following section will further discuss each of these pressures in turn with evidence from the interview quotes and comparison with the current literature.

Table 5.1: Institutional Pressures for the Retailer Tier

Institutional Pressures	Types of Pressures	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Overall Strength	Total
Coercive	Government		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	7
	Buyer power	✓	✓	✓		✓		Strong	
Normative	Upstream/Downstream education	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Strong	6
	Sustainable retailer association				✓			Moderate	
Mimetic	Certified exemplars	✓						Weak	2
	Competitor exemplar				✓			Weak	
Total:									16

▪ **Coercive Pressure**

As shown in Table 5.1, there are sources found to exert coercive pressures in the retailer tier - the government and buyers. Firstly, our study highlights strong coercive pressures exerted by the government and these pressures are categorised according to three components which are: government policy, government enforcement and government auditing. These components contribute to the overall strength of this pressure, as shown in Table 5.1. This section will discuss each of these components in turn.

Firstly, the current government policy for social sustainability has been found to come under the Malaysian Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) 1994. This act is a guideline used for employers in Malaysia to ensure the welfare of their workers are protected. Moreover, this act is a form of coercive pressure for the Malaysian rice supply chain as organisations within the supply chain do not have their own individual or organisational code of conduct. The findings of this study also highlight that there is a current government initiative to create a better policy for the industry which is seeking

to move beyond the focus on safety and health – and instead increase the focus on eliminating labour issues such as slavery, human trafficking and child labour. This initiative is a movement towards similar acts such as the Modern Slavery Act in the United Kingdom and the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act in the United States. The current practices followed by the retailers were found to be in line with the policy planning surrounding this initiative and therefore provide a stepping stone in the journey towards initiating a more substantial social sustainability policy which could be practiced in the supply chain. This is argued to be a coercive pressure, as even though it is not law as yet, the retailers are already responding in anticipation of the new law coming into play. As stated by R5:

“... the government is currently planning to create a new policy for social sustainability to ensure that the social welfare of workers is protected. As retailers, we will be part of the initial implementation and this will affect us in a big way specifically in our current implementation of social sustainability, the standards will be higher, and this will of course affect us as employers and our suppliers [rice farmers and distributors]” (R5)

As mentioned above, the retailers do not have their own code of conduct for social sustainability within their respective organisation, hence this is why the government plays an important role in pushing the retailers’ practices forward towards social sustainability. In line with the literature, Glover *et al.* (2014) explained that regulatory law was an example of coercive pressure found in the UK dairy supply chain where retailers are required to comply with environmental sustainability codes of conduct for carbon emissions.

Secondly, government enforcement plays an important role to ensure the OSHA is executed within the Malaysian rice supply chain. This study has found that retailers are

pressured to ensure their workers are working in a safe environment; this includes being well-trained in the organisations' Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and well-informed of the OSHA. As explained by R3:

“... to the best of my knowledge, the agriculture department is currently not taking any legal actions [penalising] on us [retailers] if we fail to comply with the certification guidelines ... however, the health and safety of our workers is a priority for the [government] health department. If the environment of our workers are found to be hazardous, immediate actions or harsh penalty will be taken against us and our organization” (R3)

The retailers emphasised the importance of providing a conducive and safe environment in their workplace. As small-retailers in this supply chain, this coercive pressure pushes them to do their best in meeting the minimum standard requirements given by the health and safety department. Examples of these standard requirements include: flexible working hours, annual leave and medical benefits. This finding is also in line with the literature. For example, Delai and Takahashi (2013) found an example of health and safety practices for retailers in the Brazilian context, whereby they are required by law to present a system which is used to prevent workplace diseases and accidents. As they recognised this as an internal practice, their study looks at this as a regulatory pressure on the retailers where their practice towards social sustainability is strongly influenced by the enforcement of this law.

Finally, government auditing completes the components of coercive pressure as exerted by the government in this section. Inspections conducted on retailers are to ensure the OSHA has been adhered to within the organisation. The process specifically focuses on ensuring a complete and conducive work environment for

the workers – which includes the organisations infrastructures and work spaces.

According to R6:

“... the government is increasing their monitoring to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the workers are protected...for example, the government auditing process places emphasis on our infrastructures such as clean toilets, clean work spaces, the availability of rest areas, and safe work environment for workers because this will affect their work efficiency and of course, their health and safety” (R6)

As shown in the quote above, the retailers recognise the importance of ensuring the well-being of workers are protected and this is a result of government audits. In contrast to the current literature, Glover *et al.* (2014) studies coercive pressure in the dairy supply chain of UK organisations where retailers exert this pressure on their supplier’s environmental sustainability practices (for e.g. carbon audits) to identify areas of improvement. On the other hand, this study sheds light on social sustainability practices where this coercive pressure is strongly exerted by government on the retailers. This perspective is evident in a developing country context where retailers are still reliant on regulatory pressure to push the implementation of social sustainability forward rather than exerting this role themselves on the supply chain. Overall, the government coercive pressure is a strong pressure given that five out of six retailers were influenced by it. Although R1 did not present any evidence of having experienced this government coercive pressure, they have evidence of being influenced by buyer pressures to be certified with the government certification, MyGAP. This will be further explained in the next point.

Buyer pressure is the second source of coercive pressure found in this tier. The MyGAP certification was first discussed in Chapter 4 as a source of coercive pressure found in R1. The certificate was introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture in Malaysia

and it is internationally recognised. International buyers for this retailer tier, such as Brunei have included the MyGAP certification as a prerequisite before importing any agricultural products into their country. Hence, there is strong pressure in the form of buyer power to be MyGAP certified. The case of R1 provided evidence of a retailer recognising this as a pressure to implement proper (i.e. according to the certification requirements and guidelines) social sustainability and moreover, as an opportunity for them to expand their businesses internationally. This same pressure, along with its associated benefits, has also been identified in R2, R3 and R5. As stated by R2:

“...the implementation of social sustainability was first introduced in 2002 and it was known as SALAM [which translates into Agricultural Practice Certification] and it was only recognised in Borneo at that time ... in 2014, the certification was upgraded to Good Agriculture Practice which is now an international certification...in order to have this certification, there are guidelines to follow and now with the certificate, we can expand to bigger markets such as Brunei (R2)”

This finding is in line with Sayed *et al.* (2017) where local small suppliers in the UK were found to experience coercive pressures to implement sustainability certifications/accreditations from their customers (i.e. universities) and an example for this is the Red Tractor Accreditation. Our findings highlight a similar buyer pressure however, the difference is, in our context, buyer pressure was exerted from international customers whereas, for Sayed *et al.* (2017), this pressure was exerted within the local (i.e. UK) supply chain. In addition, this study highlights that the local consumers are not exerting any coercive pressures, and this may be because customers are not as competent or aware of sustainability practices as they are in the UK Higher Education case reported by Sayed *et al.* (2017).

To conclude, coercive pressure from the government and buyers are strong pressures found in this tier and evidence of the influences on retailers could be seen in the current practices detailed in the quotes throughout this discussion. Furthermore, although retailers are not exerting any coercive pressures within their supply chain, they are still moving positively towards better social sustainability in this tier and this could influence the supply chain in the future once their practices, standards and guidelines are further developed.

▪ **Normative Pressure**

As presented in Table 5.1, upstream and downstream education is highlighted to have the most influential role, followed by sustainable retailer association membership, when it comes to the implementation of social sustainability. The following will discuss each of these pressures in turn.

Firstly, upstream and downstream education is found to be a strong normative pressure exerted by the retailer tier. It is important to highlight that in this study, normative pressures are found to be exerted from this tier unto their suppliers (i.e. farmers and distributors). Consequently, this is perceived to be as a result of the exerted coercive pressure from the government on the supply chain towards becoming more socially responsible in their practices. Hence, education is the first strategy that retailers used to improve themselves and their supply chain. As mentioned previously, the supply chain adheres to OSHA 1994 and the MyGAP certification guidelines. Therefore, retailers in their current initiatives, seek to improve their upstream suppliers through training and development programs. As explained by R2:

“... we are conducting training and courses to improve the practices of social sustainability within the supply chain and an example of this is ... the farmers’

development program and distributors' development program ... which are small local development programs created to inform and educate our suppliers on the implementation of new policies or standards such as social sustainability” (R2)

These educational programs highlight strong evidence of retailers exerting normative pressures on their suppliers with the aim to show legitimacy and social obligation towards becoming a better socially sustainable supply chain. The findings of this study are in line with the study by Kauppi and Hannibal (2017) who conducted a content analysis on assessment initiatives on social sustainability across supply chains in developing countries. They found organisations establishing their own education channels such as channels to educate their auditors and argued that this is a normative pressure towards better social sustainability assessment. Similarly, this study has found that retailers are seeking to improve current practices throughout the supply chain by initiating their own training and development programs for their suppliers (i.e. distributors and farmers). Furthermore, retailers were pushing forward the process of educating their supply chain by creating educational programs with guidelines from the Malaysian Ministry of Agriculture. This includes engaging their suppliers i.e. distributors and farmers in these activities that they have created. R5 clarifies:

“... the key to a successful implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain is education ... and we are conducting courses with the guidelines given by the Ministry of Agriculture ... we (retailer) play an important role in influencing our suppliers' practices and the willingness to work and improve one another is important ... especially when this concerns the welfare of our employees” (R5).

This normative pressure exerted by retailers is perceived to create a more socially sustainable supply chain but more importantly, to improve their legitimacy and social image. Tang (2018), in a conceptual study of socially sustainable supply chains in developing markets, explained that retailers in developed countries are providing training to improve the productivity of small-scale suppliers as part of their social sustainability initiatives and an example of this was found between Coca-Cola and their convenience stores in the Philippines. In contrast, the findings of this study focus on multiple tiers of the Malaysian rice supply chain and the study provides insights of how retailers pressurise the rest of the supply chain actors using training and development as part of their implementation of social sustainability.

In addition, the study has found that retailers are aiming to improve downstream education and this concerns consumers' awareness of social sustainability. Social sustainability in the Malaysian rice industry is still in its infancy and because of this retailers believe that educating their customers on socially produced products is important. Due to their proximity to consumers, the retailers perceive that their role in increasing customer awareness is very important specifically because it could improve downstream sales for socially produced rice. As explained by R6:

"...customers' awareness is very important for us because when they know the benefits in the certification of MyGAP, the demands for these products will increase ... of course the supply chain has an important role too in educating themselves, but customers do play an important role too because the supply of these products would be a waste without the demand for it" (R6)

As explained in Chapter 4, MyGAP certified suppliers could label their socially produced products to ensure consumers could differentiate or recognise these products on retail shelves. Due to this, retailers want to ensure consumers are educated through advertising

channels and these are with the aim to increase awareness of socially produced products. To the best of our knowledge, there are not yet any studies which discuss downstream educating channels which involve retailers and their consumers. Hence, the study provides new insights where retailers exert normative pressure in the form of educating and improving their consumers' knowledge of socially produced products.

Secondly, normative pressure refers to organisations seeking to influence their peers by aiming to collaborate within the supply chain to create legitimacy groups. Evidence of this has been found from one retailer in this tier. As mentioned earlier, because social sustainability is still a new and developing concept, the initiative began informally with fellow retailers and their main goal is to discuss the main issues with their implementation of social sustainability, to collaborate and influence one another. As explained by R4:

“...we are part of the Sustainable Retailer Association which was created by a small local group of retailers...our main objective is to understand our rights as retailers and to discuss new initiatives such as the implementation of social sustainability...as a group, we try to encourage and influence one another in improving our current practices” (R4).

Being part of a legitimacy group is perceived by the retailers to provide a positive normative pressure which could increase their social obligations through peer influence. In the study of Sayed *et al.* (2017) on sustainable supply chain management in the food and catering supply chain in UK, they have also found evidence of normative pressure where focal universities were members of purchasing consortiums or alliances and benefitted from the training and best practice sharing events provided. In contrast to their findings, the retailers in this study felt obliged to form their own association as their first step towards improving

their current practices and to positively influence one another in order to produce a better social image to their consumers.

In conclusion, normative pressures found in this tier are pushing retailers in making good progress towards becoming more socially sustainable. In addition, the study underlines how retailers place emphasis on improving current standards for the health, safety and well-being of their workers. Furthermore, the findings suggest that retailers are trying to increase the awareness of the society around them of the importance of socially produced products despite the many challenges that they face (Tang, 2018; Kauppi and Hannibal, 2017).

▪ **Mimetic Pressure**

This study has found limited evidence for this pressure in this tier and this may be because the supply chain is still learning to adapt to a new system or standard for social sustainability. Hence, local exemplary organisations may not have been established yet. Hence, retailers have their own perception of a good benchmark of which they could mimic, and the findings of this study provides two source of evidence of this pressure; the first is the certified exemplar, which has been discussed in Chapter 4. The second is the competitor exemplar, which will be further discussed in this section. The competitor exemplar refers to a source of mimetic pressure to the retailer in this tier – where they were found to implement social sustainability according to international guidelines specifically from the United Nations. Hence, according to R4:

“... the truth is, for my business, we are taking initiatives to learn from an exemplary retailer who is currently following guidelines [for sustainability] from the United Nations ... learning from them for us, means we are

improving our standards to meet the standards of other organisations like us around the world” (R4)

Although the implementation of social sustainability in the Malaysian rice supply chain context has not fully matured, retailers continue to put in various efforts to improve themselves. This includes selecting an exemplary retailer whom they perceive as good due to the international guidelines (i.e. united nation) that they adhere to. Glover *et al.* (2014) have also found retailers aiming to replicate publically available information on environmental sustainability success as a source of mimetic pressure with the aim to create a good image of themselves. In contrast to the literature, whilst publically available information for social sustainability has not yet developed, retailers still show evidence of mimetic pressure where they learn from their competitors that practices international standards.

To conclude, the literature stresses that the process to initiate mimetic pressure is complex because it involves the interaction between competing firms; whereas coercive and normative pressure generally involve interaction between the firm and its stakeholders (Kauppi and Hannibal, 2017; Raffaelli and Glynn, 2013). Although the study has found weak evidence for mimetic pressure in this tier, the findings still suggest that some retailers are influenced by mimetic pressure around them and although there are not many exemplary organisations for social sustainability in this industry, those that do exist could still shape them to be a more socially compliant organisation.

5.3 Institutional Logics: Retailer Tier

Table 5.2 presents the institutional logics that have been found in the retailers' tier. Similar to the format in the previous section, the table categorises logics according to the types and overall strength. Two types of logics have been identified in this tier, which

are: financial and sustainability logic. Financial logic as defined in previous chapters (i.e. Chapter 2 and 4) refers to a decision influenced by monetary rewards and; sustainability logic refers to a decision influenced by sustainable goals. Financial logic has been found to be slightly more dominant as compared to sustainability logic in this tier; the following section will discuss each of these logics in turn with evidence from interviews with retailers and the comparison between the findings of this study and the extant SSCM literature will be included.

Table 5.2: Institutional Logics for Retailers Tier

Institutional Logics	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Overall Strength	Total
Financial	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Strong	5
Sustainability	✓	✓		✓	✓		Moderate	4
Total:								9

▪ **Financial logic**

As mentioned previously, financial logic is a strong logic in this study, and it is interpreted as a common reasoning that influences retailers' decisions with regards to the implementation of social sustainability in this tier. Consequently, production cost and profit-making were the main priorities for retailers before implementing social initiatives in the Malaysian rice supply chain. This was evident through their actions towards the MyGAP certification (as defined in Chapter 4) which is one of the current social initiatives practiced in this supply chain. The main advantage of being a certified MyGAP retailer is that it enables the retailers to expand their business internationally; hence, due to its international recognition and the opportunity to increase their profitability, retailers decide to take on the initiative into their organisation. Multiple evidence of this logic has been expressed by the interviewees. According to R3 and R5,

- “... we incur more cost when we implement it [social sustainability] but the international recognition of MyGAP certification ... [could] increase our sales internationally ... it is something like a trade-off for us, for us to gain more [profit], we must spend [incur more cost] first” (R3)
- “...with the MyGAP certification and other forthcoming government initiatives ... business wise, we are planning to expand to international markets because it is a more profitable channel for us to sell these products” (R5)

The logic for implementing social sustainability is a trade-off between cost and profitability as mentioned by the interviewee; this increase in cost refers to the provision of employment benefits for their workers such as medical allowances, safety training, employees’ provident fund and many others. In line with the literature, retailers in the dairy supply chain were found to be driven by a similar logic for environmental sustainability initiatives where cost reduction and profit maximisation were their rationale for practices such as the reduction of energy consumption (Glover *et al.* 2014).

In turn, financial logic is found to be strongly linked with coercive pressures for sustainability, where the retailers are still dominantly driven by profitability. Given the government enforcement, the retailers’ purpose for implementing social sustainability is because it supports their financial goals thereby avoiding any monetary punishment from going against these initiatives. As explained by R6:

“...honestly speaking, for business people like me, we want to earn profit and we need the money to sustain our business ... if the government says we have to do it [implement social sustainability] ... we will ... firstly because we want to avoid getting penalised but secondly, for the financial reward it will bring to our business” (R6).

In contrast, Sayed *et al.* (2017) have found weaker governmental coercive pressures in the food and catering SSCM practices. Hence, this pressure does not influence their logics to source sustainably. This study highlights the point where retailers are still prioritising their financial goals although being coerced by the government.

The next point looks at financial logics and the demand for socially produced products in the market. The retailers voiced their hope to be able to market these products at a premium price due to the cost involved in the production. With that being said, premium price is set at the ceiling price fixed by the government to control prices of commodities in the Malaysian rice industry. However, retailers do feel the implementation would allow them to gain better sales once the awareness of MyGAP matures in the local market and furthermore by exporting to overseas markets once supply is sufficient. As stated by R3 and R2,

- “...there are many reasons why this [social sustainability] is important for us, I can foresee in the future, once the market is mature and socially produced products are recognised, we will be able to get our return on investment ... local customers are now beginning to know what MyGAP is” (R3)
- “...the benefits I must say, there is nothing very obvious after getting the certification especially in the local market ... specifically in terms of pricing, we still can't put a better price tag on MyGAP certified rice because these prices are government controlled ... but we have more advantages if we export our products, so this motivates us to implement (social sustainability)” (R2)

Hence, the findings of this study highlight the significant financial logic of retailers implementing social sustainability where they specifically focus on the benefits of

the MyGAP certification and how it would contribute to the profitability of the business.

▪ **Sustainability logic**

As shown in Table 5.2, sustainability logic is found to be moderate within this tier, with four retailers providing evidence of exhibiting this logic, one of which (R4) did not provide evidence of financial logic and therefore sustainability logic is dominant in this case. In this study, sustainability logic refers to any decisions made based on social sustainability aims or goals for the organisation - in detail, this includes decisions related to the provision of health, safety and welfare benefits to employees; for example: medical allowances, flexible working hours, safe work environment, meeting the national minimum wage and above, and many others. The findings in this tier highlight the extent of sustainability logic which has influenced retailers to push the implementation forward despite facing financial challenges.

Firstly, sustainability logic was found in the retailers' reasoning to implement social sustainability where their short-term aim was to be better employers to their workers. As explained by R2:

"...it was not a simple and straightforward process to implement [social sustainability], there were challenges, some retailers have completely given up on it because we had no help ... but we want to persevere with it, although we don't gain financially at this stage, we believe this helps us to be better employers to our workers and eventually, it will change the perception of our customers and society around us too" (R2)

Thus, they may act as better employers by providing better salaries and employment benefits such as medical allowances and flexible working hours to their workers. In

addition, the evidence has shown retailers' putting in more effort to provide better products (i.e. socially produced products) to their customers. This is with the intention to be able to be a responsible retailer and to portray a better image to their customers and the society around them. Hence, although faced with financial challenges and process complexity throughout the implementation, retailers still persevered and move forward in their socially sustainable practices.

Similar to the previous point, a similar sustainability logic was also found in another retailers' case, where the implementation is influenced by the decision to provide assurance to customers – in which the products have been sourced from a socially sustainable supply chain. In addition, this evidence shows effort from retailers seeking to be able to have a complete implementation throughout the supply chain. A complete implementation in this case refers to where isomorphism could be achieved in the supply chain where all the supply chain actors have successfully implemented social sustainability. As stated by R5:

“...the significance of this for us is to be able to have the supply chain implement social sustainability from our farmers, distributors and to us, as retailer...I would say this is a complete implementation...we would then assure our customers that we have sourced our rice from a socially sustainable supply chain” (R5)

Finally, in another case, the evidence of sustainability logic was found to have influenced the implementation of social sustainability because retailers perceived that, through better practices of sustainability, they could be an example to other retailers. In addition, this was in line with the normative pressure found for this retailer in which efforts to be a member of the sustainable retailer association was a significant step towards improving

their implementation and it is a positive act towards becoming an exemplar for their fellow competitors. As clarified by R4:

“...we want to continuously improve ourselves ... in line with the efforts we are putting in to educate the supply chain, we want to be acknowledged and to be an exemplar to other organisations’ or retailers when it comes to implementing social sustainability” (R4)

Given this, retailer 4 seeks to implement social sustainability because they want to continuously improve themselves, to be able to practice it well and to be a good retailer.

In conclusion, the evidence for sustainability logic in this tier has been summarised to have a moderate influence. This moderate influence is perceived due to a weak reasoning as to why social initiatives were implemented within their respective organisations. In this study, a strong influence is when decisions with regards to social initiatives are made because they believe it is the right thing to do and it will promote good for the people working within their organisation, and overall, the supply chain. However, although the mind-sets of retailers in this tier are moving in the right direction, there is still evidence of self-interest where retailers seek to implement social sustainability with the aim to influence their supply chain. Hence, this might then not be a strong influence of sustainability logic. To the best of our knowledge, there is still a lack of studies that have focused on social sustainability from a retailers’ perspective. Therefore, we would like to draw an example from Glover *et al.* (2014) which have studied the role of supermarkets and their implementation of environmentally sustainable practices (e.g. reducing energy consumption). In their study, they have found that this initiative was mostly driven by cost reduction. In another study by Sayed *et al.* (2017), they have found sustainability logics in the implementation of sustainable practices in UK Higher Education where sustainable sourcing is now given a better emphasis as compared

to before when cost reduction was a stronger criterion. With all that being said, this study has found empirical evidence for social sustainability practices where although evidence of purely financial logics is present in several retailer's case (e.g. R3 and R6), other retailers (e.g. R1, R2, R4 and R5) are still positively influenced by their sustainability logic.

The next section will discuss further the evidence from R3, R4 and R6 and to explore why R3 and R6 have presented only evidence of financial logics in their decision making and why R4 has only been influenced by sustainability logic.

▪ **Further Analysis on Institutional Logics: The Case of R3, R4 and R6.**

The evidence for institutional logics in this tier has highlighted a few significant findings to be further explored. As shown in Table 5.2, there are three retailers which present distinct evidence as compared to the rest – these retailers are: R3, R4 and R6. The evidence shows that R3 and R6 have presented only financial logic and R4 only sustainability logic in their decisions to implement social sustainability; whilst the rest (i.e. R1, R2, and R5) have presented evidence for both financial and sustainability logics.

Firstly, in the case of R3 and R6, they present evidence where financial logic has strongly influenced their decision to implement social sustainability and this logic relates to the organisations' profitability and return on investment. As previously discussed in the coercive pressure section, both R3 and R6 have shown evidence of exerted government pressure (i.e. coercive) and exerting upstream/downstream education (i.e. normative pressure). Given these cases, R3 and R6 are coerced to implement social sustainability and the positive result of this is shown through their efforts to exert normative pressure by educating the supply chain. Hence, these evidence can conclude

that, the motivation for implementing social sustainability in the case of R3 and R6 is influenced by financial aims or rewards for their organisation.

On the other hand, R4 is a contrasting case to R3 and R6, where this retailer has been found to have only considered sustainability logic in their implementation of social sustainability. In terms of the institutional pressures, R4 have been coerced by governmental pressure and the normative pressure (i.e. sustainable retailer association). The evidence presented thus far highlights that R4 have considered the implementation of social sustainability with the positive aim to be a socially responsible retailer and to present themselves as an exemplar to the supply chain in the future. This is in line with the background of R4's organisational aims which seek to be an advocate for health, safety and the well-being of employees in their organisation and their supply chain. R4 focuses on selling local produce and they believe that although financial gains could sustain their business, their main concern has always been the people involved in the supply chain and they aim to be able to make a difference and to create a better place for people to live.

In conclusion, the three cases presented above (R3, R6 and R4) have underlined how financial logic and sustainability logic have influenced the decisions made by retailers to implement social sustainability in the Malaysian rice industry. Organisations such as R4, which was founded based on sustainable goals, reflect this in their actions and efforts to influence and make a difference in their own organisation and the supply chain.

5.4 Barriers: Retailer Tier

Table 5.3 presents the barriers for implementing social sustainability in the retailers' tier and these barriers have been organised according to the types and overall strength. High

cost and market forces are found to be strong barriers in this tier; followed by process delay, behavioural issues and lack of resources. It is important to note that the section will only present discussion on the first three barriers (i.e. high cost, market forces, process delay) as there were no new evidence found for behavioural issues and lack of resources; which have been discussed in Chapter 4 (i.e. within-case analysis) for Retailer 1.

Table 5.3: Barriers for Retailers Tier

Barriers	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Overall Strength	Total
High cost	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	5
Market forces	✓		✓	✓			Strong	3
Process delay	✓	✓					Moderate	2
Behavioural issues	✓						Weak	1
Lack of resources	✓						Weak	1
Total:								13

▪ **High cost**

As stated earlier, high cost is a strong barrier and it could be commonly found in most of the interviewees' case study evidence. In this study, high cost refers to the additional increase of production expenditure spent on implementing social sustainability; and from the interviews conducted, the study has included all evidence related to any form of financial challenges experienced by retailers. One of the collective challenges experienced by retailers is related to the pricing of socially produced rice. As mentioned in Chapter 4, rice and other commodity goods such as flour and sugar are sold at a subsidised price controlled and fixed by the government. The intention of this ceiling price is to reduce the burden on consumers especially on staple goods. Given the increasing cost experienced by retailers from producing in a socially sustainable manner,

they are facing the challenges of selling these products at premium price. Furthermore, they are also risking not getting enough demand which will lead to a surplus of socially produced products in the market. Evidence has been found to support this point; as clarified by R3, R4 and R5:

- “...we don’t get a better price for these [socially produced] rice ... the government has yet to enforce a new price for these products and we have been selling it at the ceiling price set by the government ... [as a result] we as retailers and our suppliers suffer from this implementation because we don’t get any profit in return” (R3)
- “... you will hear this from other retailers too, we can’t set a better price for these products and we don’t get any financial benefits in return ... the challenge is, if nobody [our suppliers] wants to commit to the implementation [of social sustainability], we can’t do it ... when the supply of local rice has always been insufficient, our [retailer] hands are tied” (R4)
- “... the price of [socially produced] rice, we have no control over it...if our producers raise their price, we can’t increase our profit margin because the price of rice is controlled by the government ...we are caught in between the cost of our production and losing our business if this persists” (R5)

Given this imbalance between the high cost of production and low-priced products, the supply chain will suffer a deficit from implementing social sustainability. Similar to what Huq *et al.* (2014) has underlined from the apparel industry in Bangladesh, the cost of implementing social sustainability is often high and buyers are continuously seeking a lower price. The findings of this study is in line with Huq *et al.*’s (2014) finding, where

retailers are facing a similar problem, but looking at where the price of rice is controlled by the government, retailers and the supply chain have to bear the cost of implementing social sustainability.

Another aspect to high cost is the financial challenge faced throughout the supply chain which could affect the overall implementation of social sustainability. This finding specifically focuses on the inability of farmers to cope with the costs associated with implementing social sustainability – in detail, when the farmers are poor themselves, the cost to provide and meet compulsory labour standards such as meeting the national minimum wage, overtime wages, social security fund (i.e. workplace insurance), employees provident fund (i.e. retirement / pension) is a huge burden they have to bear in order to abide by the law. This challenge is particularly difficult in a labour-intensive industry such as the agriculture industry – specifically in the rice supply chain, the evidence suggests that providing these benefits to a large number of employees is almost impossible. This is explained by R5 and R6:

- “... very few people are aware of the real problem of enforcing social sustainability on us ... with the increasing cost of producing rice in this manner, we sacrifice our [retailers, distributors, farmers] own welfare for the welfare of our workers ... we can't raise our prices because of the government protection over consumers” (R5)
- “... we have persistently introduced various sustainability programs to raise their awareness about the importance of their workers' health and safety and welfare ... but as small-producers, I understand they will have financial challenges to provide all these for their workers, because if they do, their [farmer] own welfare will be at risk” (R6)

The findings above highlight the effects of high cost on the supply chain – in this case,

when their suppliers (farmers) are struggling to cope with the costs of implementing social sustainability hence, delaying the entire process. In Tang (2018), the conceptual study underlined lack of access to finance as one of the barriers for micro-retailers and micro-suppliers in developing countries to take part in the different types of activities in the supply chain effectively. In line with that, this study provides empirical evidence to support the study of Tang (2018) where we have found the lack of financial stability in the retailer tier due to their organisational size and small market in this context (i.e. Malaysian rice industry).

▪ **Market forces**

This study refers to market forces as: the influence buyers have on demand, supply, price and quantity of products offered in the market - with a focus on these factors in the context of socially produced rice. The findings highlight evidence of where market forces act as a barrier for retailers and this is because of the role played by the consumers. As price was previously associated with high cost, the study also looked at how price is influenced by market forces in this case. In particular, the evidence suggests that it is difficult to sell sustainable rice even at the ceiling price for rice set by the government, and thus retailers experience difficulties in setting a price for socially produced products that does not adversely affect the demand and supply for this product. Thus, a premium price may divert consumers' demand to cheaper substitutes in the market; hence leading to poorer sales. As stated by R3:

- *“Marketing has to be done to introduce the market to this rice ... but the challenge is, rice is a staple product and to buy it at premium price is a cost our customers have to bear ... and not many are willing to do so given*

the rising standard of living ... it is very difficult to sell it despite all we have done” (R3)

- *“...if you want to label it as a successful implementation, we are not there yet... in fact, we are very far from it because we are not getting any financial help to invest in educating and training our suppliers, persuading them (suppliers) to comply is a continuous challenge and finally, we are struggling for the lack of demand for this type of product [socially produced rice]” (R4)*

The big challenge here is the lack of demand for socially produced rice in the market – whilst retailers are struggling with the cost of implementing and setting a good price for these products. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that consumers are not ready to pay a high price for their staple products, in our case, rice. In contrast, Sayed *et al.* (2017) found that consumers are strongly driven by sustainability thinking and thus, create more demand for sustainable products to be available in universities. In addition, the findings suggest the lack of demand for this socially produced product will continue to be a challenge until the market is more aware and concerned with how their products are being produced.

▪ **Process delay**

Process delay refers to waiting times involved in the course of implementing social sustainability. In Chapter 4, the study presented evidence of waiting time in the process of getting the MyGAP certification. The long waiting time in getting MyGAP certification is due to processes such as organisation observation, auditing and monitoring. This standardised process takes 1 to 2 years throughout the supply chain and the certification will be awarded to individual organisations who have passed the

examination. In Chapter 4, the evidence of process delay was discussed in the case of R1 - where the waiting time experienced by their suppliers (e.g. farmers) have affected their waiting time to get approval or certification. As the Ministry of Agriculture is in charge of the award, priority is given to farm owners followed by distributors and then finally, retailers in the supply chain.

Similar evidence was presented by R2. In particular, the evidence within this tier suggests that retailers felt that their aim to reach isomorphism throughout the supply chain is subject to many process delays. This is due to circumstances such as poor education levels which affects the comprehension of the concept of social sustainability and leads to a time-consuming training and education process. As stated by R2:

“... our farmers’ low education level ... where most of these farmers have only graduated from primary school and at most secondary school before they pursued their families’ paddy farm business ... hence, introducing new ideas, concepts, policy is a challenge ... because firstly, they have been doing traditional farming for generations and secondly, educating and training them has become a strenuous effort for us” (R2)

Following this evidence from R1 and R2, it highlights that due to poor efficiency from the government, the delay in awarding the MyGAP certification has affected the implementation of social sustainability throughout the entire supply chain. In addition, another reason explained above is due to the lack of educational background of farmers, the process has prolonged the time for the supply chain to achieve isomorphism in the implementation of social sustainability. The extant literature still lacks emphasis on the process delay specifically on the practices of social initiatives. However, in Sayed *et al.* (2017) they have underlined time logic as a factor that dominates students thinking when it comes to their involvement with sustainability initiatives and this is because students

are busy with their academic activities. In contrast to their findings, this study looks at time from another different angle, where the long-time taken to be awarded the MyGAP certification is a barrier for the successful implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain, because the award of the MyGAP certification demonstrates that each organization has successfully implemented social sustainability and are doing the right thing.

5.5 Enablers: Retailer Tier

Table 5.4 presents the enablers that have been found in the retailer tier. The two significant enablers found in this tier are: management support and being consistent with certification requirements. The enablers found present both weak and strong influence with regards to the implementation of social sustainability. This section will further discuss each of these enablers with evidence from the interviews and associations with the extant literature.

Table 5.4: Enablers for Retailers Tier

Enablers	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Overall Strength	Total
Management support	✓	✓		✓	✓		Weak	4
Consistent with certification requirements		✓	✓		✓	✓	Strong	4
Total:								8

▪ **Management support**

As defined in Chapter 4, management support refers to an organisation's top management commitment to support social sustainability through their actions. In this section, the aim is to interpret the role of top management in influencing any decision related to employing sustainability initiatives within their organisation. Several sources of evidence

of management support have been found throughout this tier. Firstly, the study interprets the support shown by top management to ensure the participation of their employees to execute activities related to social sustainability such as initiatives to educate and train suppliers in their supply chain. As stated by R2:

“We work together with the agriculture department and some of the activities we do are, we will send our staff along with them to visit rural areas where our farmers are, to educate and train them on social sustainability...this includes informing them of the guidelines, teaching them how to implement it in their organization, and guiding them step-by-step of the process for record keeping, filing reports for all the benefits provided to their workers” (R2)

Although management support is closely linked to internal decisions and changes within the organisation, this evidence presents the effort made by top management to ensure social sustainability is understood and practiced by their employees. R2 believed that by including everyone in the implementation, their support can be felt and the initiative would succeed.

Secondly, a few other evidence were summarised under this same point where a few retailers have shown weak management support. Weak, in this case refers to where no clear evidence of how their role has been executed. However, their opinions or perceptions of management support with regards to the implementation of social sustainability has been included. This evidence will be further discussed below.

- *“Social welfare is a responsibility the supply chain has to bear, and this means everyone involved in this supply chain must be protected of their rights and this includes the retailers, distributors, farmers and their workers respectively...each of us has a role to play, we have to work*

together in order to be able to sell products which have been produced where none of us have been deprived of our rights” (R4)

- *“...I like the concept of sustainability being introduced into our industry because if we want to survive, we have to do it... as small retailers, small producers who contributes to this industry, we will have to expand our businesses in the future and having to implement social sustainability now is like building a good foundation for us...because in the future, to meet the demands of our consumers, we will avoid the instances of where our workers are being exploited” (R5)*
- *“...yes we are working on our consumers’ awareness on social sustainability because it is important for us in the long run...it is important for the people (consumers) to understand how their decision will affect the welfare of the people in this supply chain...in a laborious industry like ours, educating everyone is important” (R4)*

The evidence above presents several perceptions from R4 and R5 of their role as top management towards the implementation of social sustainability. This evidence is labelled as a weak influence as no clear follow-up actions are shown as to how management support for social initiatives was executed. The findings on management support is in line with a study by Walker and Jones (2012) which found top management commitment as an enabler to engage with sustainable supply chain practices in leading organizations in the UK private sector such as retailing, pharmaceutical, aviation, defence and producers for food and beverages. However, although the evidence found is weak, the distributors in this tier presents evidence of awareness for social sustainability and understanding of the role they need to play to ensure the implementation is successful for their respective organisation. Due to the early implementation stages in this context,

a course of action may only be pursued in the near future.

▪ **Consistent with certification requirement**

The retailer's consistency or compliance with certification requirements is generally focused on the MyGAP certification. As MyGAP is the current social initiative, which is practiced in the Malaysian Agriculture Industry, 4 out of 6 retailers in this study have kept up with the movement. Retailers believe MyGAP certification grants them international recognition and the opportunity to expand their market, as discussed in many sections. In this section, evidence of how the application for MyGAP have improved their day-to-day activities is highlighted. As stated by R5 and R6:

- *"We have to keep records of our workers, for example, we have records for all work-related training, medical check-ups and annual leave that they have taken...this is to ensure they are always fit to work and all these records have to be filed and kept for auditing...it is also part of the requirements to be considered for the MyGAP certification"* (R5)
- *"Some of the most important elements in the guideline for MyGAP are the safety for our workers; the provision of employee housing quarters if they are working away from their hometown; and medical allowances which include regular check-ups at our local clinics"* (R6)
- *"...for our suppliers, it is important for MyGAP certified farms to be able to provide the same benefits we are giving our workers, but in their case, we must ensure the workers are given a clean resting area, safety gear for working on farms, good farming skills and most importantly, they are not over-worked"* (R6)

These findings are similar to those found in the Bangladesh apparel industry, where a single industry code-of-conduct was introduced between suppliers to improve clarity and auditing for the implementation of social sustainability (Huq *et al.*, 2014). Thus, the findings of this study support this notion, where the implementation of MyGAP in the Malaysian Agriculture Industry, and specifically in this rice supply chain, highlights how retailers have reacted positively towards the MyGAP initiatives.

Other evidence from the implementation of MyGAP have looked into practices that retailers improve to be granted the certification. Positive effects can be seen through their actions to improve workers' flexible working hours and wages, efforts to purchase from MyGAP certified farms (i.e. suppliers) and in addition, to improve awareness of MyGAP certified products downstream (i.e. consumers). As stated by R2 and R3:

- *“Although we are under pressure due to pricing issues, the MyGAP certification is important for us because it allows us to expand to bigger markets...we are trying to work hard to improve every aspect of our business to meet the guidelines expected of us...for example, we are trying to work on giving better work hours to our employees and giving them a better wage” (R3)*
- *“We have to play our role as retailers and one way to do it is to purchase from farms which are MyGAP certified...no matter how big or how small a retailer or a farmer is, we should sell products or produce from MyGAP farms only...that is one example of how to make this implementation successful” (R2)*
- *“...we have to guide them [farmers and distributors] and we can try to do many things such as creating advertising tools to promote MyGAP*

certified products...hopefully this could attract and increase the awareness of our consumers of what MyGAP is all about” (R3)

To conclude, despite facing challenges such as high costs and market forces within their implementation of social sustainability, the retailers have continued to show positive efforts to be socially sustainable. Their top management support and compliance with local guidelines confirms their commitment towards becoming better in their implementation.

5.6 Institutional Pressures: Distributor Tier

This section presents the institutional pressures found in the distributor’s tier of the Malaysian rice supply chain. In Table 5.5, these pressures are categorised in the similar format as in Table 5.1 - the types of pressures, list of distributors who experience that pressure, overall strength and total number of distributors experiencing that pressure are presented. The coercive and normative pressures are significant pressures experienced in this tier followed by mimetic pressure. This finding is similar to the retailers’ tier. The following section will further discuss each of these pressures in turn with evidence from interviews conducted with distributors. It is important to note here that there has been a lack of studies which have discussed social sustainability from a distributors’ perspective. A comparison with the extant literature will be discussed at the end of this section.

▪ Coercive Pressure

As mentioned earlier, coercive pressure is a strong pressure in this tier and this pressure is exerted by the government. Similar to the retailer tier, this strong government pressure includes: government policy, government enforcement and government monitoring. Firstly, government policy is a pressure where distributors are required to provide a

checklist or requirements of hiring workers for their organisation. As explained in Chapter 4, distributors in this study are involved in a variety of services which includes, transporting produce from suppliers (i.e. farmers) to buyers (i.e. retailers) and warehousing.

Table 5.5: Institutional Pressures for Distributors Tier

Institutional Pressures	Types of Pressures	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Overall Strength	Total
Coercive	Government	✓	✓	✓	✓		Strong	4
Normative	Upstream/Downstream education	✓		✓		✓	Strong	4
	Sustainable distributor association			✓			Weak	
Mimetic	Exemplars				✓		Weak	1
Total:								9

Given this context, their employment criteria focus on the core of their business which is the transportation of goods - where in this unique context, transporting produce from local farms in the outskirts involves driving 4x4 wheel vehicles with a total journey time of 28 hours. Hence, the requirements set by the government labour department emphasises the provision of training or the availability of driving skills, sufficient resting time for workers involved in transporting the produce from farms and meeting the minimum national wage. In the case of D3, it was evident that they have not only complied, but have exceeded what has been expected of them by giving a salary beyond the minimum wage. As explained by D3:

“We have a checklist before employing our workers...most of our worker are foreign workers, this checklist is to ensure we comply with the requirements set by the labour office... for example, we have to provide work permits for our foreign workers... driving training for our drivers who transport produce

from farms, accommodation for them [in cities or farm area], giving them a salary above the national wage” (D3)

Secondly, distributors also experience pressure from government monitoring of their current practice and following the above point, the agriculture department monitors employees involved in transporting the produce from farms to the city. Similar evidence was also highlighted by D1, where government was closely monitoring their operations specifically with regards to the implementation of social sustainability. In addition, in the case of D2, their transportation timetable is monitored to ensure no employees are overworked or underpaid. As previously mentioned, the journey to the city will take 28 hours for a return journey, therefore, it is important for each journey to have at least two drivers. This is so that they can swap activities, with one driver resting and one driving at one point in time – this is to ensure that the drivers have sufficient rest throughout the journey. As clarified by D2:

“The agriculture department comes in to monitor that we have skilled drivers [who transport produce] and to monitor our transportation timetable ... to ensure no drivers are working more than 8 hours in a day while transporting and also we have to make sure to have a spare driver for every single trip made to the city” (D2)

Finally, the findings up to this point focuses on government pressures in the form of employment requirements and monitoring - which emphasises the employees’ rights to the provision of health and safety from their employers (i.e. distributors). In addition to the above points, the study has also found evidence of government enforcement in this tier. Distributors explained how this enforcement influenced their day-to-day practices and encourages them to be attentive of every decision made within the organization with regards to their employees. As stated by D4:

“We understand that the government is currently enforcing stricter labour laws and we have to comply with these laws to avoid the punishment...the emphasis has been placed on problems such as child labour, illegal workers [immigrant workers], health and safety standards amongst the other compulsory practices such as national minimum wage, social security contributions and employees provident fund” (D4)

As explained by D4, government enforcement to eliminate the current social issues mentioned in the quote has a positive influence on the daily organisational activities and their decisions to be more socially sustainable. Overall, there is a positive effect coming from coercive pressures in this tier as four out of five distributors have been influenced by it. As shown in Table 5.5, the exception is D5, for which there is no evidence of coercive pressures. However, they do experience normative pressures, which will be further discussed in the next section. As a new small-up organisation, their focus is on normative pressures which will enable them to make themselves known in the industry. As coercive pressures are associated with compulsory actions that need to be taken, they might perceive these to be something they would simply have to do, hence they do not perceive them as a force or pressure overall. With that being said, coercive pressure is a strong pressure in this tier overall as the findings highlight how the majority of the distributors are adhering to the labour laws and ensuring their practices are on a par with the social initiative guidelines put in place by the government.

▪ **Normative Pressure**

As shown in Table 5.5, normative pressure is a strong pressure found in this tier. In contrast to the retailers tier, normative pressure was exerted from the retailer tier whereas, in this tier, normative pressure is exerted on to the distributors. Similar types of normative

pressure have been found, i.e. upstream and downstream education; and sustainable distributor associations. Each of these findings will be discussed in turn. Firstly, upstream and downstream education refers to various efforts put into this tier to increase the awareness of social sustainability, develop understanding of the practices of social sustainability and to provide training or courses to enhance how this knowledge can be implemented within the organisation. The study found that distributors are influenced by many different activities created for them to assist in achieving the supply chain sustainable goals and some of the example of these activities includes conferences or knowledge fairs – aiming at improving current social practices and to reduce rising social issues in the supply chain. As explained by D5:

“There are various activities proposed to us such as symposiums, conferences, knowledge fairs ...created for us to take part in and to expand our understanding on sustainability...be it environmental or social sustainability...but more focus is being placed on social sustainability...given the rise of social issues in the society today” (D5)

As explained in the concluding section of coercive pressures, being a new organisation in the supply chain and the industry, normative pressures present as a stronger pressure compared to coercive pressure on D5. This may be perceived to be due to the aim of creating the right image for themselves and in addition, the implementation will allow them to attract more buyers. Similar evidence was also found in other distributors’ cases, which took part in the education initiatives created by the government, NGOs and retailers to encourage the implementation of social sustainability. In the words of the distributor, these activities were beneficial for them because they provided an opportunity to meet and experience knowledge exchange with their suppliers (i.e. farmers) and buyers (i.e. retailers) about current social initiatives. In addition, customers

were also invited to participate where they could communicate and gain feedback of how socially produced products influenced their purchasing behaviours. As stated by D3:

“These activities create a space for retailers, distributors and farmers from various supply chains to meet and to engage with one another...customers are also invited into one of our sessions, where we could discuss about any related issues or listen to their feedbacks concerning the products, which have been produced in this [sustainable] supply chain” (D3)

The last finding for normative pressure looks at similar efforts towards creating an association for distributors to encourage positive influences on the implementation of social sustainability in this tier. In contrast to the retailers’ tier, this initiative is created with the collaboration of the government (i.e. agriculture department) and NGOs; whereas, the retailers tier initiated this idea by themselves. The aim of this proposed association is to provide a space for distributors to discuss issues, current practices, and new ideas with regards to implementing social initiatives in this tier. As stated by D3:

“NGOs and the government are currently working towards creating an association for us [distributors] to communicate about sustainability initiatives and to achieve a common goal...we had initial meetings with both representatives [NGO and government] to see how this could work for us and ... it is a good space for us to discuss any challenges or supports in the process of implementing this [social sustainability] in our organisation” (D3)

Overall, the normative pressures found in this tier are strong when it comes to initiatives such as educational programs in the tier to enhance awareness and improve knowledge of sustainability. Although only one example was found for the creation of a sustainable association, this is perceived to be a good start towards initiating a healthy collaboration or cooperation for better sustainable implementation in the future.

- **Mimetic Pressure**

The evidence suggests that mimetic pressure is a weak pressure in this tier. Firstly, distributors explained that they could not identify good exemplars amongst their competitors that could positively influence their current social sustainability initiatives. They added; this is because everyone (i.e. distributors) are at a similar level of competency with regards to implementing social sustainability. Hence, mimetic pressure from fellow competitors is weak or none. As justified by D5:

“One weakness for this implementation [of social sustainability] is we are still lacking a good organisation which we could take as an exemplar...one of the reasons we believe is because everyone [distributors] are still learning and developing their practices...therefore, no one is better than another at this stage of the implementation” (D5)

In Chapter 4, there was no mimetic pressure found in D1 and this is similar to the case of D5. Both distributors perceived that in this stage, their competitors and themselves are of similar competency with regards to the implementation of social sustainability. In this case, it is found that both D1 and D5 were not influenced by any mimetic pressure. In contrast, another distributor underlined that a source of mimetic pressure is retailers. Retailers’ in their perception is a good exemplar as their current social practices are perceived to be more developed than the distributors. In addition, retailers are seeking to be a positive influence on them (i.e. distributors); hence making them a good source to learn from. As explained by D4:

“We take in good pointers from our buyers [retailers] in the implementation of social sustainability... we understand one of their goals is to be able to influence us [distributors] and our producers [farmers] to be more proactive in our practices...they [retailers] are good exemplars for us” (D4)

Overall, mimetic pressure is still a rather weak pressure for this tier. Although the evidence both highlights the availability of such pressure in retailers, however, within the distributor tier, there are still no good exemplars found. This indicates that distributors are still developing themselves with regards to implementing social sustainability, and whilst they might be able to present themselves as exemplars in the long run, this is not currently the case.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Institutional Pressures – Distributor’s Perspective**

In the extant literature, there is still a lack of studies which have focused on the institutional pressures of implementing social sustainability specifically from a distributor’s perspective. There are a few example of studies that have looked into it from a retailers perspective for example, Delai and Takahashi (2013) which discusses the approaches employed by retailers to move towards sustainable practices in the Brazilian context; on the other hand, Tang (2018) discusses how major organisations such as Coca-Cola and Unilever could create programs to engage with micro-distributors in emerging markets as an extension of their current corporate social responsibility program. To the best of this study’s knowledge, the study by Glover *et al.* (2014) is the only study which has looked at the distributors tier from the perspectives of institutional pressures, with empirical findings for sustainable practices in the UK dairy supply chain. For example, distributors felt coercive pressures coming strongly from retailers in the supply chain and also from the government, for example: carbon audits and emissions regulations. Firstly, this study extends the findings of Glover *et al.* (2014) by providing empirical findings for institutional pressures associated with implementing social sustainability in a distributors tier where example of strong government coercive pressures such as government labour law enforcement and government monitoring were found. Secondly, in Glover *et al.*

(2014), mimetic pressures were only found evident in their retailers tier, for example: supermarkets are seeking to copy exemplary green success information to create a good image of themselves. In contrast to their findings, although weak, evidence of mimetic pressures in this tier with one example was found, where instead of taking notes from competitors (i.e. distributors) in this tier, they learn from their buyers (i.e. retailers) in terms of learning good examples for social practices. Thirdly, Glover et al. (2014) found distributors perceived normative pressure to be a form of social responsibility in order to be seen as sustainable legitimate organisations. In contrast to their findings, normative pressures in the distributors tier was related to the participation in educational programs and associations to be an example of how distributors want to be recognised as being a socially sustainable organisations. In conclusion, this study present significant findings of institutional pressures specifically from the perspectives of the distributors tier which, to date, has only been marginally studied.

5.7 Institutional Logics: Distributor Tier

Table 5.6 presents the institutional logics found in the distributors tier. Similar to the retailer's tier, two institutional logics were found in this tier. Financial logic is more dominant in this tier, with all 5 distributors being influenced by this logic. As for sustainability logic, only 4 out of 5 distributors were influenced. The section will begin by discussing the financial logic then followed by the sustainability logic.

- **Financial logic**

As shown in Table 5.6, financial logic is more dominant in this tier with evidence of all distributors being influenced by this logic. As mentioned before, financial logic is associated with any decisions made based on monetary aims or rewards in the

implementation of social initiatives. The distributors tier consists of interactions between them, their suppliers (e.g. farmers) and buyers (e.g. retailers). The financial logics found are, firstly, focusing on the MyGAP certification (e.g. D1, D3, D4) and then on organisational financial goals following the implementation of social initiatives (e.g. D2 and D5).

Table 5.6: Institutional Logics for Distributors Tier

Institutional Logics	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Overall Strength	Total
Financial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	5
Sustainability	✓	✓	✓		✓	Moderate	4
Total:							9

Firstly, the MyGAP certification was found to have been linked with financial logics where it allows the organisations to expand their businesses and gain buyers who seeks to source responsibly in the industry. This was first found in the case of D1 (Chapter 4). Similar findings were found in the case of D3 and D4, as evidenced in the quotes below:

- “...implementing [social sustainability] is the only way to survive in this business...if our buyers [retailers] requires us to be MyGAP certified, then we will have to do it...the way I look at it is like this...this [social sustainability] is a simultaneous process, because once we do it, we get to sell our goods and then our workers will be well taken care of, but if we don't do it, we could lose our business [buyers] and this will also affect our workers” (D3)
- “... the MyGAP certification is very important for us because if we want to ensure that we can continuously provide for the welfare of our workers, we have to implement it [social sustainability] ... in a small organisation

like ours where we just achieve a breakeven point, we can only survive in this business and hopefully gain more potential customers with the certification” (D4)

This is in line with the findings of Glover *et al.* (2014), who presented evidence that the logistics and distribution functions underline that the implementation of any environmental initiatives has to provide a good return in investment. Hence, Glover *et al.* indicated that financial logic was also dominant in that context (i.e. UK dairy supply chain). From a different perspective, this study suggests that social sustainability has also been found to be associated with financial logic where organisations still seek to be financially rewarded for their social practices and this is shown through their aims to be MyGAP certified.

Further evidence of financial logic was found in the case of D2 and D5. Financial logic is found in the case of D2, where the decision to implement social initiatives was aimed at trying to achieve more financial gains for the organisation. Furthermore, the distributor explained that the increase in profits will allow them to be able to reward their employees beyond the minimum required standards. Thus it could be perceived that financial objectives are a first priority for the distributor. As explained by D2:

- *“...the nature of our business has really encouraged us to think about the welfare of our workers, although the job does not pay well, we always strive to meet the minimum best standards, if the business is thriving, we give bonuses to reward our workers whom have worked extra hours and of course this is on top of other benefits such as their medical allowance, work insurance and holidays” (D2)*

In the case of D5, the decision behind implementing social sustainability was to prolong current relationships with their buyers. In addition, the distributor added

that this prolonged relationship is important for them to survive in the industry. As stated by D5:

- *“...if we don't implement it, we won't get any buyers [from retailers] and at the same time, we have to expect our suppliers [farmers] to perform the same [implement social sustainability]...one of the strongest reason for doing it is because we want to survive [profitably] in this business” (D5)*

Overall, financial logic is found to be a strong logic in this tier and the majority of the distributors were highlighting survival as one of the reasons to implement social initiatives. This could be perceived to be due to their organisational size and market size. The justification of this is, these organisations believed that their current capabilities in coping with their demands (i.e. market size) requires them to put their financial objectives first. Furthermore, the cost of implementing social sustainability will increase the current operating cost and hence, make it more challenging to put sustainability logic first. As mentioned earlier, the distributors are trying hard to survive in the industry at this stage, but if and when the financial stability is achieved, this study foresees a possibility of a shift towards stronger sustainability logic in the future.

▪ **Sustainability Logic**

As shown in Table 5.6, the findings suggest that sustainability logic has influenced four out of five distributors in this tier. Similar to other logic sections, the findings in this section indicate the thoughts and actions of distributors in implementing social sustainability in order to be a responsible employer, specifically, in providing welfare to their employees. As mentioned before, the employees for distributors in this tier are vital to their organisation as they play an important role in executing the core activity in this supply chain because they are doing a difficult and risky job for the organisation (e.g.

transporting the products from the farms to the city). Sustainability logic in this tier is found where employers feel that their employees deserved to be treated in the right manner because of the risk these employees take to complete their jobs. As explained by D2, D3 and D5:

- *“...our worker’s health and safety are of great importance to us, because without these workers, we cannot operate...transporting goods from the farms is a big part of our business and the job demands a great deal of skill and strength I must say...so the implementation [social sustainability] is important to protect our workers’ welfare” (D2)*
- *“...ensuring our workers are well-paid, working in a safe and healthy environment ..., it is our priority to treat our workers well because they play an important part in our organisation ...we always believe our business is made of people and it is the people that makes us successful” (D3)*
- *“...just like any other businesses, the implementation [of social sustainability] involves money, of course without even using this term [social sustainability], we have always been required by law to pay our employees above the national minimum wage, to provide SOCSO [work insurance], EPF [employees provident fund] and I believe, with all these three in place, I have already done my part as a responsible employer” (D5)*

Similar evidence was also found in the case of D1 which was discussed in Chapter 4. Overall, the findings highlight that sustainability logic was driven by the employees’ effort and hard work for the organisation and the distributors believe that because of this, their employees should be treated right. Overall, this is argued to be only a moderate

strength logic and a few key points to support this reasoning will be discussed. Firstly, it is interpreted that D5 presented his opinion on a rather grudging note and thus, making the justification of sustainability logic weak. Secondly, although D2 and D3 presented a clear expression of sustainability logic, it is given that these employees should be remunerated accordingly. Hence, the distributors are found to be just merely meeting the minimum standards required of them, yet they understood this action to be a sustainability logic for them. Furthermore, there is no strong evidence pointing out that they aim to go beyond these minimum standards and no evidence was found where sustainability is put first before profitability aims. In conclusion, this justifies the sustainability logic as a moderate logic in this tier.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Institutional Logics – Distributor’s Perspective**

Similar to the institutional pressures, there have not been many studies which have looked at institutional logics in the implementation of social sustainability, specifically from a distributor’s perspective. However, two papers with empirical findings for institutional logics on the implementation of sustainable supply chain management practices, Sayed *et al.* (2017) and Glover *et al.* (2014) will be used for comparison with this section. Firstly, Sayed *et al.* (2017), have found evidence of institutional logics in the three tiers of the food and catering supply chain of UK universities where sustainability logic was found to be stronger in the focal universities and customers tiers, whereas, financial logic was stronger in the suppliers tier. As for Glover *et al.* (2014) they underlined that cost reduction was the strongest logic across the dairy supply chain. This study extends the findings of Sayed *et al.* (2017) and Glover *et al.* (2014); by providing empirical evidence of the logics employed in the distributors tier in their efforts to practice social sustainability. The dominant logic found in this tier is financial logic and profit

maximization is seen as more important where the organisation's survival in the industry was highlighted the most in the tier. On the other hand, although sustainability logic is a moderate strength logic in this tier, the study suggests a that good effort is being made towards sustainable practices as the distributors have demonstrated a good understanding of their employees' rights.

5.8 Barriers: Distributor Tier

Table 5.7 presents the four barriers found in this tier, two of which are similar to the barriers found in the retailer's tier (i.e. behavioural issues and high cost). New barriers identified in this tier are lack of expertise and lack of clear guidelines.

Table 5.7: Barriers for Distributors Tier

Barriers	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Overall Strength	Total
Lack of expertise	✓			✓	✓	Moderate	3
Lack of clear guidelines	✓			✓	✓	Moderate	3
Behavioural issues		✓	✓	✓		Strong	3
High cost		✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	4
Total:							13

▪ Lack of expertise

The lack of expertise is a barrier that has been found in the case of three out of five distributors (e.g. D1, D4 and D5). This barrier was first found and explained in Chapter 4 where D1 identified that their supplier's low educational background made the effort to educate and train them more difficult and challenging. In addition, similar findings were found in other cases such as D4 where their suppliers also lack expertise, yet they cannot switch suppliers as there are only a small number of suppliers available in the supply

chain. Thus, they have little choice but to stick to using their current suppliers even if these suppliers are not sustainable farmers. As explained by D4 and D5:

- *“...it feels like there is a big gap [in implementing social sustainability] between us, our buyers, our suppliers, our enforcers [government] and the community [customers]...one of the reasons could be the lack of common understanding of the whole concept of social sustainability” (D4)*
- *“...the sustainability concept is foreign and complex to them given their low educational background and it is almost impossible for them [farmers] to do it perfectly... of course, you couldn't compare us with huge organisations be it in other parts of the country or in developed countries...we are far too lacking in expertise” (D5)*

This barrier (i.e. lack of expertise) is a moderate strength barrier as it has only influenced three out of five distributors in this tier and there was no definite reasoning presented by distributors. This could be perceived to be due to two reasons: firstly, the lack of effort put in to improve or expand their current knowledge and secondly, the lack of assistance given to them to do so. Furthermore, the unavailability of sustainable suppliers have contributed to this barrier and their lack of knowledge resulting in them being unable to guide their suppliers. However, this could have been the responsibility of the stakeholders but as we are focusing on the distributor's tier, this lack of expertise persists as a barrier for distributors in implementing proper social initiatives.

▪ **Lack of clear guidelines**

Following the previous point, there is a link between this barrier (i.e. lack of clear guidelines) and the lack of expertise experienced by the distributors. This barrier was first

discussed in the case of D1 in Chapter 4 where lack of clear guidelines has resulted with organisations being law-abiding instead of implementing beyond the minimum standards set by the government for e.g. minimum national wage, social security and employees provident fund. Similar evidence was found in the case of D4 and D5:

- *“...the policy, standard, or guidelines or even the term, social sustainability for us, is still a difficult concept...not because we don’t understand human rights, but there are no clear guidelines or standards of what is good enough or what is very good” (D4)*
- *“...because we are a small business community... whenever we are around one another...we do talk about these new concepts or standards which the government wants us to implement...but what is surprising is, everyone has a different understanding of the concept...some people think that this is a cost burden project, some thinks this is a forced or coerced project, some thinks this could cost them their business...which means, the whole thing lacks clarity...it could be anyone’s fault, but we all think, there needs to be more effort put into helping the industry to fully understand how it could be implemented in each organization” (D5)*

As mentioned earlier, the lack of expertise and lack of clear code of conduct are barriers for distributors and as a result, these organisations are only abiding with what is required by the law. D2 and D3 can be seen as not presenting any evidence for both these barriers but focusing more on behavioural issues and high cost as their barriers for implementing social sustainability. These may be perceived to be more important for these organisations as they are more influential barriers for them in their implementation of social initiatives, hence these two organisations will be further discussed in the following sections.

▪ Behavioural issues

Three out of five distributors identified behavioural issues as a barrier for them and this barrier was first discussed in the case of Distributor 1 in Chapter 4. The barrier is about the inequality in terms of fair pay and treatment between local and foreign employees because they perceived better productivity in one group (i.e. foreign) as compared to the other (i.e. local). This evidence highlighted strong prejudice against local workers by the management. Due to bad past experiences, employers tend to stereotype prior to hiring them (i.e. local workers). Consequently, potential local employees are not given equal rights to employment which leads to this barrier, a behavioural issue. This is a strong barrier for the implementation of social sustainability as each potential employee should be given equal rights to employment and in addition, employment benefits. Similar evidence is found in this tier and each of the findings highlights the lack of and/or absence of work ethics and discipline amongst employees within the respective organisations, hence resulting in a barrier towards good social practices. As explained by D2 and D3:

- “...work ethics and discipline is one of the challenges when it comes to our workers...it is not a direct challenge to the implementation [of social sustainability] but it affects how we treat our workers” (D2)
- “...we have dealt with so many contract termination due to poor discipline when it comes to our employees...I think this is because of the nature of this job, it requires a lot of time, risk-taking and skills from the workers” (D3)

As explained earlier, the employers are influenced by past experiences during the hiring process for their organization, moreover due to perceived better productivity and desperation for money in foreign employees, they (i.e. foreign employees) are given more advantages. Consequently, this leads to an unfair judgement of their

potential employees during the hiring process. As stated by D4:

- *“...from our experience of hiring both local and foreign workers... this is how I put it, these two groups of workers have very different work ethics...for example, for local workers, for reasons such as, they could not cope with the workload and many other excuses, they could leave the job only after working for 1 or 2 weeks...but for foreign workers, they persevere with the job because they need to have enough money to be able to return to their home country” (D4)*

Overall, the employees poor work ethics was highlighted throughout these cases and in the perception of their employers, this is a barrier for them to properly implement social sustainability. In particular, in some circumstances, the need for foreign workers to obtain money for a ticket to return home was taken for granted and perceived as a good guarantee to keep these employees committed to the job. Thus, the evidence indicates that they are often employed in preference to local workers. In conclusion, although only three distributors presented evidence of this barrier, this is an overall strong barrier in this tier.

▪ **High cost**

Similar to the retailer tier, high cost is also found as a barrier which has influenced most of the distributors in this tier. This barrier is associated with any financial issues experienced by each distributor in the pursuit of implementing social sustainability. A common challenge experienced in this tier is the increasing operational cost related to social initiatives. Four out of five distributors have identified it as a barrier for their organisations, i.e. D2, D3 and D4 stated:

- *“...a weakness of implementing social sustainability is the increasing cost involved...this cost covers our worker’s salary and their employment*

benefits...of course this could sound like an excuse, but we are a small organization, working with suppliers in the outskirts, but to meet the demands there is so much cost involved in our operation cost...every day it is a challenge for us and if we want this implementation to be sustainable in the long term, I would say finance is most important” (D2)

- *“...for example, when we hire our workers, we want to pay them the right amount of salary [above minimum national wage], we want to employ those with the right skills [to avoid additional training cost] and all these involve money...it might sound wrong, but realistically, to uphold our workers’ rights, we need money...and it is part of our production and operating cost...so this is a challenge for us [to implement social sustainability]” (D3)*
- *“...we live in a community whose mentality is not up to the standard of those in developed countries...and money is always the main problem when it comes to doing the right thing...for example, when we hire our Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Myanmar employees, it has been a real challenge as compared to when we first started because the government has been tightening the process of hiring foreign workers [to give more employment opportunity to local workers]...and one of the effects of this is the increasing cost of hiring them [and it includes every cost involved for bringing them in]...which is a very challenging thing for us because let’s be honest...we could never hire local workers because no one is willing to do this difficult job and...[being a small organization]...it is a real struggle” (D4)*

The evidence provided by these distributors has not completely put a stop to their social initiatives, but it hinders them to go beyond the minimum standards. This barrier links with the strong logics of profit maximation and the clear evidence presented in this tier is the need for more justification of costs related to proper social practices for example, salary and employment benefits (D2), salary and training costs (D3) and foreign work permits (D4). The reasoning for this barrier could perhaps be a result of the need for more employees however, the organisations were hindered to hire more because they are incapable of bearing the cost. This confirms the strong financial logic found in this tier and it could be perceived that this barrier will remain strong until the distributor's tier is financially strong, and this will then shift the current dominant logic towards sustainability.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Barriers – Distributor's Perspective**

This section aims to compare the current findings of barriers in the distributor's tier with the extant literature on social initiatives. This study clearly presents four barriers, two of moderate influence (i.e. lack of expertise and lack of clear guidelines) and two of strong influence (i.e. behavioural issues and high cost). Huq *et al.* (2014) in their study on the implementation of social sustainability in the Bangladesh apparel industry have found new barriers such as mock compliances and misalignment of codes of conduct in the suppliers' tier of this industry. In comparison with Huq's findings, which focuses on a global supply chain with evidence of suppliers from a developing country (i.e. Bangladesh) and buyers from a developed country (i.e. United Kingdom), this study extends their findings by presenting a distributors tier perspective from a local supply chain from a similarly laborious industry (i.e. agriculture). For example, the behavioural issue found in this tier differs from the mock compliance in the supplier's tier found by

Huq *et al.* (2014), where we underline the unfair treatment and prejudice of employers towards their employees in the hiring process. In conclusion, this study contributes to the lack of emphasis given to the distributor's tier in the literature of social sustainability, specifically on the challenges of its implementation.

5.9 Enablers: Distributors Tier

Table 5.8 presents the two enablers that have been found in the distributors tier i.e. 'Management support' and being 'Consistent with labour standards'. Each of these enablers will be discussed in turn below and an overall conclusion will be presented at the end of the section.

Table 5.8: Enablers for Distributors Tier

Enablers	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Overall Strength	Total
Management support	✓	✓	✓	✓		Moderate	4
Consistent with labour law			✓		✓	Moderate	2
Total:							6

▪ Management Support

As shown in Table 5.8, four of the five distributors presented evidence of management support, two of which have clearly expressed a better understanding of their role to provide management support in the implementation of social initiatives. Firstly, distributors have demonstrated good efforts to improve and to give better attention and care to their employees, as is shown through their effort to provide training (i.e. increase skills), protection (i.e. workplace insurance) and well-being (i.e. resting days) for them. As explained by D2 and D3:

- “...we can't put a price on humanity and we have been leveraging human

resources to make a profit for ourselves...bringing [implementing] social sustainability in the industry will restore human rights and we have to learn how to respect and treat each other right...this will take time, but we are willing to invest our time and effort in it” (D2)

- *“...we are committed to make sure our workers are given a safe environment to work in and I know our drivers [employees responsible to transport goods from farms] are faced with risks everyday while working, our safety net for them is to equip them with the best skills, provide them with workplace insurance and sufficient resting days” (D3)*

Furthermore, two additional pieces of evidence presented by D4 were found to lack clarity in comparison to the two previous examples. Although D4 argued that they understood the concept of social sustainability, the approach or how it has been practiced throughout their organization was not clearly expressed. The first piece of evidence looks at the perception of the management’s responsibility of ensuring employees are aware of their rights as a form of management support towards social sustainable initiatives. As stated by D4:

- *“...our employees should know their rights when working with us, educating them on the matter helps them to understand that what we are giving them is our responsibility and also part of our organisation’s internal social initiative...employees awareness [of their rights] is important and this will allow us to create a positive image of ourselves to our buyers and possibly attract more [buyers]” (D4)*

Furthermore, the distributor also believed that conforming to the law is a form of management support with regards to the implementation of social sustainability. In addition, they presented an anticipation of how this will affect their future plans to

continue to push their implementation forward. As stated by D4:

- “... [social sustainability] *for an organisation like ours, our current priority is to abide with the law, standards or guidelines set by the government* [with regards to social sustainability] *for us...slowly when we know enough, we will try to create our own codes of conduct and organisational culture in the future*” (D4)

Overall, D4 presented a rather weak evidence of this enabler with poor understanding of how to clearly execute management support. This could be perceived to be because of D4's infancy in the industry and also the implementation of social sustainability. However, D4 still presented a good effort to improve themselves as they aim to create their own organizational standards in the future.

▪ **Consistent with labour law**

In this tier, a few distributors were found to have been consistently abiding with the labour law especially when employing their workers. The law put in place by the labour department was perceived to be a good foundation for the distributors to build upon in implementing the current social initiatives and go beyond. In addition, evidence for conforming with the law was found where the rights of workers were protected for example, providing work permits (i.e. for foreign workers), workplace insurance and pensions. As stated by D3 and D5:

- “...*the requirements set by the labour office for hiring employees, salary range, and employee benefits are good guidelines for us to follow as a start to our implementation* [of social sustainability] ... *I know this is basic requirements, but this is a start to considering how to go beyond what is required of us*” (D3)

- “...our responsibility is to give our employees their employment privileges and this includes salary equivalent to the amount of work they do, if they are foreign workers, their work permit must be paid in full as a security for working in this country and we have to also pay for their social security [workplace insurance] and provident fund [pension security]”
(D5)

Overall, this enabler can be inferred to be of moderate strength because the distributors are obliged to abide with the labour law. In addition, having to conform to the law could be interpreted as coercion instead of a voluntary act which acts as an enabler. Furthermore, this could also mean that, these distributors might not consider implementing social initiatives at all in the case where the law is absent. However, D3 and D5 presented positive efforts to implement social initiatives, specifically D3 which presented their aim to move forward and go beyond minimum requirements.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Enablers – Distributor’s Perspective**

This tier was seen to be facing strong barriers but, in this section, there is evidence of enablers to counter their challenges in the implementation of social sustainability. Although not the strongest influencers, management support and consistency with current labour law are argued to be enablers in the distributor’s tier. The literature has discussed a wide array of enablers in the implementation of sustainability, while not much focus was given to the distributor’s tier. Mangla *et al.* (2018) in a modelling paper have highlighted management support, governmental pressure, monitoring and auditing as enablers to implement sustainable initiatives in the Indian agriculture food supply chain. In this study, we expand the findings for management support by presenting case study evidence of the implementation of social initiatives from a similar food supply chain (i.e.

rice). In addition, Gabzdylova *et al.* (2009) in a case study of sustainability practices in New Zealand's wine industry found environmental regulations, environmental values and employee welfare to be drivers for the industry. In contrast, this study presents evidence of conforming with the Malaysian labour law as an enabler to the implementation of social initiatives in the agriculture industry. In conclusion, in comparison to the previous literature, we extend their findings by providing the empirical evidence of enablers from three perspectives, firstly, a distributors tier; secondly, a food supply chain; and lastly, a developing country context.

5.10 Institutional Pressures: Farmers Tier

Table 5.9 presents the institutional pressures for the farmer tier in the Malaysian rice supply chain. Coercive and normative pressures are the dominant pressures found in this tier followed by the mimetic pressure. In the table, a total of fourteen individual farm organisation are included and the overall strength of each pressure is presented, which is determined by: the degree of influence each pressure has on the farm and the number of farms influenced by each pressure. The pressures will be discussed in a similar format as the previous tiers, beginning with the coercive pressure followed by normative and mimetic pressure. A concluding remark section will be presented at the end of this section to discuss how these findings contribute to the extant literature.

▪ Coercive Pressure

As shown in Table 5.9, three sources or types of coercive pressures were found in the farmers tier which are: government, buyer power and employee power. The first two coercive pressures were found and previously discussed in the retailer and distributor tier; however, the employee power is a new coercive pressure found in this tier.

Table 5.9: Institutional Pressures for Farmers Tier

Institutional Pressures	Types of Pressures	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13	F14	Overall Strength	Total
Coercive	Government	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	14
	Buyer power		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	9
	Employee power										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Moderate	5
Normative	Upstream/Downstream education			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	9
	Sustainable farmers association		✓		✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	9
Mimetic	Exemplars	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Moderate	9
Total:																	55

This will be further discussed in the following sections. This section will firstly discuss the government coercive pressure followed by buyer power and finally, the employee power.

- *Government Coercive Pressure*

Government coercive pressures consists of four components which are: government policy, government enforcement, government auditing and government penalty. These four components contribute to the overall strength of this pressure as presented in Table 5.9. This section will discuss each of these components in turn. Firstly, the government policy commonly practiced in this farmer tier is the Malaysian Agriculture Good Practices (MyGAP) policy. This act is a guideline used to ensure farms observe sustainable and healthy practices within their organisations and a certification to validate these practices was introduced called the MyGAP certification. The MyGAP is recognised as a source of coercive pressure in this tier as the government has urged farmers to be certified and compliant to the requirements of the certification. As stated by F2 and F4:

- *“...the agriculture department introduces the MyGAP certification to signify that we are a sustainable farmer and employer...in order to be compliant, we have to follow the guidelines and requirements of the certification” (F2)*
- *“...the MyGAP certification is a source of pressure for us and mostly because this is an initiative taken by the government to force farmers to be socially compliant” (F4)*

Furthermore, another form of coercive pressure for farms was government laws such as: the labour law and the immigration law. The labour law includes the

national minimum wage, working hours, pension and workplace insurance. The immigration law covers work permits and visas for hiring foreign workers. The farming industry is a seasonal industry where there are both high and low seasons - high season is the busiest season, when planting and harvesting is done; low season is for preparation for seedlings nurse, seedlings planting and land preparation for planting season (i.e. land clearing, land ploughing). Hence, the laws were significant pressures for farms because the organisations are involved in hiring a lot of temporary workers especially in high seasons. As stated by F3, F5, F7 and F9:

- *“...the government laws such as the labour and immigration law is compulsory for us and this is also a big part of our social sustainability implementation...the law itself protects the welfare of our workers...by abiding by these laws, we believe it is a good effort” (F3)*
- *“...the labour department have standards or guidelines we must follow for basic necessities given to our employees when they are working on the farms...for example, we provide them daily wages or monthly salary, accommodation, food allowance and they must not work more than 8 hours a day...we have strictly followed these guidelines” (F5)*
- *“...to hire foreign workers, we need to pay agency fees to agents who manage the process of bringing in our workers for us...this is an immigration policy we need to abide by...the agency fees cover the cost of work permit, transportation cost for employees to travel from their home country, medical insurance and monthly salary”*

(F7)

- “...immigration laws are the strictest for us and we have to abide by the requirements to hire foreign workers” (F9)

Secondly, government enforcement is a source of pressure experienced by farms where they commonly refer to the monitoring and observation conducted by various governmental departments on their organisations or farm areas. For example, the labour department is responsible for monitoring the human resource activities and systems; the immigration department is responsible for ensuring no illegal foreign employees are found working in the farms; and finally, the agriculture department is responsible for the implementation of MyGAP requirements. As explained by F12, F10, F8 and F6:

- “...we do have monitoring coming in from the government...agriculture department and the labour department came to observe our operations, and our employment systems...mostly because we hire foreign workers...so they need to ensure we hired them through a legal process at all times” (F12)
- “...the government monitors our organisation to make sure we do not hire child labour and illegal foreign workers...the purpose of close monitoring in the farm area is mainly focused on these two main social issues” (F10)
- “...the department of agriculture and labour department usually comes in on informed visits...but the immigration department will come on uninformed visits...these monitoring visits force us to implement the social standards and guidelines correctly” (F8)
- “...the department of agriculture does close monitoring on us

because we are in the process of getting the MyGAP certification...there are many requirements to be met and checked off the list and they will make at least four visits throughout the year to make sure we are implementing the guidelines correctly” (F6)

Thirdly, government auditing is a pressure which comes after policy and enforcement discussed above. Similar to previous pressures, auditing is conducted by the three governmental departments mentioned above (i.e. labour, immigration and agriculture department) and another new addition to this list is BERNAS (translated as the Malaysian National Rice Organisation). BERNAS is the biggest organisation in the rice industry and is responsible for rice procurement in the country and this includes exporting and importing of rice. As mentioned above, the audits include checking payslip records, medical card records, pension and social security contribution payment records, holiday records and working timetable or work schedules (i.e. labour department); inspection for documents validity such as work permit and visa for foreign workers (i.e. immigration department); implementation of MyGAP requirements or guidelines (i.e. agriculture department) and overall operations and management systems (i.e. BERNAS). As stated by F11, F13, F6 and F14:

- *“...the labour department audits our salary systems to ensure employees are not underpaid...it does also include inspecting other welfare provisions such as their medical cards, accommodation, work and rest areas, leave and resting days and many others” (F11)*
- *“...immigration department makes monthly inspections on our farms and during busier seasons, they will come every fortnight to make sure there are no illegal workers working on our farms” (F13)*

- *“...agriculture department comes in every four months to audit the implementation of social initiatives required by the MyGAP certification” (F6)*
- *“...our auditing process comes in from various organisation such as the BERNAS [translated as the Malaysian National Rice Organisation], the labour department and the agriculture department...these organisation do an audit either yearly, bi-annually or quarterly...the inspection criteria include everything from production to management systems” (F14)*

Finally, the last source of government coercive pressure found in this tier is penalty. The farms are conscious of the penalty charges if they are found to have violated or disregarded the law. The government departments each have their own law or acts that governs their organisations; consequently, the penalty charges vary according to the departments. For example, penalty charges for violation of the labour law and immigration law are the most common finding in this tier where hiring one illegal worker would cost between MYR 10,000 and MYR 50,000 or twelve months of imprisonment or both. In addition, other departments such as the employees provident fund organisation responsible for pension contributions and social security organisation responsible for workplace insurance will charge employers in court and employers will need to pay a certain percentage of penalty charges based on the amount of missing contribution payment. As explained by F9, F10, F11, F12, F13 and F14:

- *“...oh yes we definitely have to follow what is required of us [labour law] when we hire employees especially foreign workers because if we get caught hiring them illegally or skipping one step in the*

process then we will be penalized by both the labour and immigration department” (F9)

- *“...the penalty for hiring illegal workers is MYR10, 000 per worker and moreover, we can be jailed for it!” (F10)*
- *“...two penalties will be charged against us if we hire illegal workers, one is from the labour department and another is from the immigration because they have two different laws for that...the penalty charges will be at least MYR20,000 per worker” (F11)*
- *“...the employment provident fund organisation and social security organisation will penalize us if we don’t pay our contribution for our workers” (F12)*
- *“...we will be charged in court if we do not contribute to the employees provident fund and social security...these are two separate laws with two different penalties” (F13)*
- *“...we will be charged with penalty if we don’t meet the requirements for our employee’s welfare and the example of this would be, underpaid employees, no provision of compulsory employment benefits such as pension and workplace insurance” (F14)*

Overall, the evidence found for government coercive pressures can be perceived as a strong influence on the farmers tier. The four types of coercive pressures discussed in this section, i.e. government policy, government enforcement, government auditing and government penalty have coerced farms to ensure that they have implemented social initiatives in their respective organisations. For example, the labour law and immigration law play an important part in strengthening this pressure in this tier and this was significant for the farms

because of the labour-intensive nature of this tier. Furthermore, penalty charges are also a strong factor in forcing the farms to abide by the law and thus, ensuring they become a more responsible i.e. socially sustainable, farmer.

▪ *Buyer Power*

The second source of coercive pressure found in the farmers tier is the buyer power pressure. The buyer power pressure refers to the requirements or demands from customers which have to be fulfilled by farms and this is related to the implementation and practices of social sustainability. In this tier, buyer power is either exerted by distributors or retailers. These buyers will require farms to be socially compliant with the labour law, the immigration law and other social sustainability guidelines. Farms are obliged to meet the requirements of their buyers as otherwise their rice purchasing agreement is at stake. As stated by F2, F4, F6, and F8:

- “...we have strong pressures coming in from our buyers to practice social sustainability...we have to meet their requirements before they purchase our rice” (F2)
- “...we are inclined to meet the demands of our buyers...and this includes ensuring we have implemented social sustainability...this is to determine continuous business relationships with them” (F4)
- “...there are strong groups of buyers...pressures to implement both social and environment sustainability are high...to secure our sales, we have to meet their requirement” (F6)
- “...our buyers are the strongest reason to implement social sustainability...if they stop buying from us, we are not able to sell

our rice...we have to be compliant to survive” (F8)

As pioneers, the MyGAP certified farmers i.e. F10, F11, F12, F13 and F14 also recognise buyer pressure to have been a source of pressure for them. These organisations perceived that their sustainability implementation was influenced by the pressure from their buyers. Moreover, the MyGAP certification has enabled these farmers to lengthen their business relationships with their current buyers and furthermore, to attract new buyers. As explained by one of these farmers, F10:

“...as MyGAP certified farmers, we could fulfil the demands of our buyers and they can rest assured that they have sourced from one of the sustainable farms...this pressure has positively influenced our sustainability initiatives and as we move forward, this certification will bring in more buyers for us” (F10)

Overall, two different groups of farms have been influenced by buyer pressure, the first group is the non-certified farms and secondly, the MyGAP certified farms. Both these groups recognise the pressure to be socially sustainable suppliers for their buyers and the potential effect on their organisation. A clear difference between the two groups is the assurance the MyGAP farms can give to their buyers. Non-certified farms will continuously be coerced by this pressure until they are awarded the certification. Hence, although this buyer pressure only explicitly focuses on MyGAP, it is because this is the current social initiative being enforced into the supply chain. The evidence then suggests that this pressure has influenced their current social practices within their respective organisation.

- *Employee Power*

The third and last source of coercive pressure is employee power. This is a surprisingly unique finding in this tier where employees have power over the employers, in this case, farms. Employee power in this study refers to where employees have control over the demand for better or higher pay; for example, an employee or a group of employees could request for an increase in their salary during busy seasons such as rice planting and harvesting when the workload is doubled in comparison to the less busy season. This finding was only found in MyGAP certified farms, and this could explain how these organisations have successfully been granted the certification. As stated by F10, F11, F12, F13 and F4:

- *“...the demand for higher salary from our employees is a pressure...this is a common case these days especially during busier seasons such as planting and harvesting...in order to meet our production demands, we have to raise our employees’ salaries” (F10)*
- *“...an example of pressure for us is the demand for higher salary from employees...employees will only stay if we meet their requests and we have no other options during busier seasons” (F11)*
- *“...employees are free to demand a higher salary particularly during high seasons such as the harvesting season...this has become a phenomenon and it leads to a competition between farm owners to hire employees when there is a labour shortage” (F12)*
- *“...in the case where employees demand for higher salary, we definitely go way beyond the national minimum wage...we have to*

do this to make sure they don't move to other farms which could offer them a higher salary...this is the case during busy seasons when we are in need of more workers" (F13)

- *"...the employees' salaries are specified according to the types of employment...since farming is seasonal, some workers will work based on seasonal contracts, some will earn daily wages, and some do monthly contracts...for example, the minimum salary per day is MYR50 and it could go up to MYR100 per day during busier seasons" (F14)*

Overall, as explained in the introduction of this section, employee power is not a common finding especially for a coercive pressure. The evidence clearly suggests that farms are willing to commit to the demands of their workers, particularly for a pay raise. This could be perceived to be due to a labour shortage. Furthermore, this evidence was only found in MyGAP certified organisations which also clarifies that this pressure has influenced their actions, despite having met the social standards or certification requirements. This pressure can also be perceived to have forced these farms to go beyond current minimum standards in their social practices.

▪ **Normative Pressure**

As shown in Table 5.9, two sources of normative pressures have been found in this tier and these pressures are: upstream/downstream education and sustainable farmers association. Each of these pressures will be discussed in turn.

Firstly, the effort to increase awareness and to improve knowledge on social sustainability is a pressure in the farmers tier. The pressure is exerted from various

organisations seeking to achieve the goal to have a sustainable supply chain, which then means to source from a sustainable supplier, i.e. farms. These various organisations include the labour department, agriculture department, immigration department, other government departments and NGOs. As mentioned earlier, these organisations aim to achieve the same goal and efforts to do this are initiated through educational, developmental and training programs. For example, in efforts to get farms to be MyGAP certified, the agriculture department works closely with the farms to provide assistance throughout the whole application processes; to get farms to understand the common sustainable goal of the supply chain, the government initiates a program in which they strongly encourage all members of the supply chain to participate (i.e. farms as well as their customers, including distributors or retailers). As stated by F3, F5, F7, F9, and F11:

- *“...the officers from the agriculture department comes in every year or bi-annually to create workshops for MyGAP certification...during these workshops, we will be taught the process of applying for a MyGAP certification” (F3)*
- *“...there are a lot of requirements in the MyGAP application which we need to implement...symposiums and other training programs were created by various departments such as the labour and agriculture department to help us” (F5)*
- *“...we receive assistance for our implementation in forms of learning and training programs...this will be participated in by farmers and our buyers, distributors and retailers...this is often managed by government organisations [labour, immigration, agriculture department] and NGOs” (F7)*
- *“...participation in any development programs related to raising*

awareness of sustainable initiatives helps us to be more responsible and it encourages us to improve our current practices” (F9)

- *“...the government, NGOs and buyers are committed to improve the current social practices by farm owners and more guidelines, assistance and training programs are created to educate the farmers about employees’ welfare” (F11)*

Overall, this pressure could be perceived as having a positive impact towards better implementation of social sustainability. Many of the farms participate in training provided by responsible organisations to improve their current understanding of the whole concept, and ensure the implementation is done correctly in their respective organisations.

Secondly, the sustainable farmers association is a source of normative pressure for the farmers tier. The association was initiated to provide a channel for farms to discuss any farming related issues, challenges, or in this case, any matters concerning the implementation of sustainability into their respective organisations. An example of this discussion is relating to the standard practices for providing welfare to the employees; a result of this discussion will then be relayed to responsible departments such as the agriculture department for further deliberation. As stated by F2, F4 and F6:

- *“...the farmers’ association was created to discuss issues concerning the farmers welfare which includes our production, demand, prices of our rice...in addition, everyone is given an equal right to voice their opinions or concerns” (F2)*
- *“our [farmer] association works along with the government such as the ministry of agriculture or the local agriculture department...we have workshops or forums to discuss any challenges or issues we have experienced” (F4)*

- *“...the association allows us to raise any concerns or problems such as the implementation of sustainability...we can discuss how to solve these issues or send our representative to speak to any organisation responsible [labour department, agriculture department] (F6)*

The participation in any associations such as a sustainable farmer association has been understood as a form of pressure in which organisations partake in order to be seen as being legitimate in their implementation. However, the findings present a rather different perspective to this pressure. The participation in the association was seen as a way to seek assistance, a way to improve themselves, a way to move forward in their current social practices. As a result, it could be perceived that these farms have used this pressure to advance in their implementation and possibly, in due time, to be seen as better employers.

▪ **Mimetic Pressure**

The last source of pressure found in this tier is the certified exemplar, which is a type of mimetic pressure. As mentioned previously, there are five farms in this tier who has been awarded the MyGAP certification and throughout the state, these farms are the first to be given this certification. Other non-certified farms perceive these organisations to be a source of mimetic pressure for them and exemplars in the farmers tier. Similar findings were found in F1 as discussed in Chapter 4. As stated by F3, F5, and F7:

- *“...my organisation’s implementation is influenced by what we have learnt from other farming organisations...these organisations would be those that are more experienced and developed in their implementation of employment benefits or employees’ right” (F3)*

- *“...other organisations that have been certified by MyGAP could be a good example for us...there have been only five certified farms throughout the state which means they must have practiced the highest standards set by the agriculture ministry” (F5)*
- *“...we take pointers from organisations who have been certified by MyGAP...we follow their practices such as the offered salary and employment benefits given to their workers” (F7)*
- *“...the MyGAP certified farms are good examples for us...we try to follow their sustainable practices especially how much they pay their workers and what benefits they offer to their workers” (F9)*

In the case of certified farms, these farms see themselves as exemplars to their competitors in the industry. Thus, they exert mimetic pressure into the farmers tier. All five farms have a similar understanding of the pressure and agree that they are seen as good examples for other non-certified farms. As stated by F12:

“...after receiving the certification, we consider ourselves as good examples for sustainable practices...as MyGAP certified farms, we have successfully met the requirements of the certification” (F12)

Overall, mimetic pressure presents a few significant findings in this tier because of the recognition given to MyGAP certified farms. Non-certified farms have acknowledged MyGAP certified farms to be exemplars in this tier and this was seen as a way to improve their current social practices. However, although a few farms have expressed this, there has been no clear evidence found on how this was implemented within their respective organisations. Hence, this leads to the conclusion that mimetic pressure is a moderate pressure in this tier. This could be perceived to be due to the recent awarding of certification at the time of this study. Nonetheless, the finding suggest that non-certified

farms are recognising that this pressure has a positive impact on improving current implementation standards in this tier.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Institutional Pressures – Farmer’s Perspective**

In summary, government, buyer power, employee power, education, sustainable farmers association and exemplars were found as sources of institutional pressure which have influenced the implementation of social sustainability in this tier. The aim of this section is to discuss how these findings contribute to the extant literature.

Firstly, coercive pressures are perceived to have a strong influence on this tier, mainly by the government. The government policy, monitoring, auditing and penalty were some evidence found to have coerced farms into proper implementation of social sustainability. The literature has presented similar evidence, and one example of this was found by Wu *et al.* (2012) in Taiwan’s textile industry. Their paper studied the moderating factor of institutional pressures on the implementation of green supply chain practices where regulatory requirements from the government were strong and this has influenced manufacturers in this industry to adopt green practices such as eco-design. Zhu *et al.* (2007) have found a similar strong regulatory pressure in the Chinese automobile industry where strict enforcement on the emission law have influenced the manufacturers to adopt green supply chain practices. Both these papers have studied institutional pressures from the environmental sustainability perspective. This study extends their findings by presenting evidence of pressures from the perspective of social initiatives or practices in a similar context, a developing country context. Furthermore, previous studies such as Zhu *et al.* (2007) and Wu *et al.* (2012) have recognised buyers or customers as exerting market pressure (i.e. normative pressure). In contrast this study expands the findings of

coercive pressure where buyers in the supply chain (i.e. distributors and retailers) have been exerting coercive pressures on the farmers tier.

Secondly, normative pressure is found to be a similarly strong pressure as the coercive pressure. As mentioned before, endeavours to improve current social practices such as educational programs and sustainability programs were created for this tier. In Wu *et al.* (2012) they have a contrasting finding where normative pressure did not influence the decision for manufacturers, for example, the market pressures to fulfil their demand for environmental protection have not affected their willingness to implement green practices. In their findings, this did not affect the textile manufacturers as they were supplying to international customers, hence local market pressures did not affect them. However, in contrast, this study found that the normative pressures to implement social practices in the farmers tier is particularly strong where the farms are participating in these initiatives in order to develop their current practices rather than just seeking to be seen as legitimate. Furthermore, this study adds to the literature where the intervention of supply chain customers and external stakeholder were found to have exerted these pressures into the supply chain as they work together to achieve a more socially sustainable supply chain.

Finally, mimetic pressure is found to be a weaker pressure as compared to coercive and normative pressure. Certified exemplars were a significant finding in this tier where MyGAP certified exemplars were seen as a mimetic pressure to the farms in this tier. Bhakoo and Choi (2013) have studied the three-tier supply chain and the institutional pressures of implementing inter-organisational systems in the healthcare supply chain. They have found that mimetic pressures were not prevalent upstream (i.e. manufacturers) but however were stronger downstream (i.e. hospitals) of the supply chain. Wu *et al.* (2012) highlighted similar findings where mimetic pressures were not significant

pressures for manufacturers as they perceived copying their competitor's capabilities and competency was a complex and challenging process. In contrast to Bhakoo and Choi (2013) study, this study has found evidence of this pressure upstream of an agricultural supply chain where certified exemplars exert this pressure unto their competitors. Adding to Wu *et al.*'s (2012) work, from a social sustainability perspective, although mimetic pressures were found, evidence of how it was implemented in non-certified organisations was not clearly evident through the findings. However, the mimetic pressure found in the farmers tier could contribute to the lack of empirical evidence regarding mimetic pressures found in the extant literature for SSCM.

5.11 Institutional Logics: Farmers Tier

Table 5.10 presents the institutional logics that have been found in the farmers tier. Two types of logic are identified to influence the decisions to implement social sustainability in this tier. These logics are financial and sustainability logic. Financial logic is found to be more dominant than sustainability logic in this tier. Similar to the format in the previous tier, each of these logics will be discussed in turn and a concluding section will follow after the two logics, which focuses on linking these findings to the extant literature.

Table 5.10: Institutional Logics for Farmers Tier

Institutional Logics	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13	F14	Overall Strength	Total
Financial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	14
Sustainability		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Moderate	5
Total:																19

▪ **Financial logic**

As mentioned previously, financial logic has been found to be a dominant logic in the farmers tier. A common understanding of social sustainability in this tier is focused on welfare provision and an example of this is, providing salary, sustenance and health benefits to their employees. In this tier, the provision of welfare for employees is recognised as important, however, it is perceived that because they (i.e. farmers) are small-medium organisations, profit-making and cost coverage is crucial for them to survive in the industry. Thus, an important factor found in this logic is that, farms acknowledges the importance of putting welfare first before financial returns, however, they also believe they are accountable to make enough money to be able to provide for their employees. They have not ignored the importance but putting financial priorities first was because they want to be able to successfully execute their responsibility. As stated by F2 and F6:

- *“...yes, the welfare is important...both the welfare of our employees and ourselves...we are farmers ourselves, we don’t work in suits and make millions of money...we are just a small and medium organisation that has 200 to 300 hectares of rice farms...we need to make the most out of it and at the end of the day, with the profit that we earned, we can pay our employees, give them benefits and also gain at least a small profit” (F2)*
- *...the government’s key performance indicator is to protect human rights...for us, this means, us as employers who are also farmers, and our workers...we do it for the money...we need the money to sustain our organisation, our workers and the cost of implementation itself” (F7)*

Furthermore, survival is the next important factor as to why financial logic was put first before any other logic in this tier. Cost and price were associated with this factor, where

despite implementing social initiatives, cost have increased however, their price remained the same. This has made it a stronger reason for them to prioritise their financial returns.

As stated by F3 and F7:

- *“...to be honest, the implementation [of social sustainability] has not raised our prices, but it definitely has raised our cost...it is only normal that our priority is still profit-making...being in the upstream of this supply chain, we have the lowest profit...financial wise, we need to survive in this industry” (F3)*
- *“...every farming organisation wants to sell their produce at the highest price possible...but unfortunately this is controlled by the government...so our only chance to increase buyers at a fixed price is the implementation of initiatives such as social or environmental sustainability” (F7)*

Next, the MyGAP certification was one of the social initiatives currently pursued in this tier. The study has found financial logic to have been an influential factor in their intention to implement the social initiatives associated with this certification. The farmers tier as an upstream supplier was the first tier to have been introduced to the certification. With the intention to gain more buyers and meet the requirements of current buyers, farms have pursued the implementation of social practices which includes the MyGAP certification with the aim to achieve better sales and increased profits. As stated by F4, F5, and F8:

- *“...our intention to get the MyGAP certification is it will allow us to attract more customers...the implementation [social sustainability] has to attract more customers and to maintain our business relationship with current customers...we have spent so much to get certified, we need to cover these costs” (F4)*
- *“...we are working towards getting certified [MyGAP] and we now*

understand that this is to protect our workers' rights to employment benefits...but at the same time, this implementation will help us to improve our business...we can attract new customers to buy our produce" (F5)

- *"the introduction of the certification [MyGAP] promised us many things which includes a better chance to increase sales, profitability...although the costs are spent on improving our provision of better welfare to our workers...this does not change our organisations goal which is to be able to continuously sell and make money" (F8)*

Finally, meeting production demands was the last factor found in this tier. Welfare provision was associated with ensuring workers would stay with the organisation. Farms perceive that it is important that their welfare are consistently provided to reduce labour turnover. Furthermore, they perceived high labour turnover will affect their production and it may cause delays in meeting their supply quotas. As stated by F2 and F9:

- *"...for example, if we don't pay the salary as promised, if we don't provide food and accommodation for our workers, we will definitely not see them anymore...they will leave us, and if we don't have enough workers, the quality of harvest will reduce and we will get less harvest, this is how we get punished if we don't provide welfare for our workers...our workers carry a big weightage of importance to our business" (F9)*
- *"...all the employees want to be paid as much as possible, all the employers want to make as much profit as possible, there has to be a point where these two expectations meet in our social sustainability implementation" (F2)*

Overall, the evidence found in this tier suggests a strong influence of financial logic in the implementation of social sustainability. The factors such as the organisation's

solvency, survival, buyers' requirements and production were found to have links with financial aims in this tier. Although in any given organisation, profitability is a common organisational goal; in this study, the nature of business and organisation capability have led to financial logic persisting as a stronger influential factor in the implementation of social sustainability.

▪ **Sustainability logic**

As shown in Table 5.10, sustainability logic is not as dominant as financial logic. As previously discussed in the institutional pressures tier, two groups of farms were identified in this tier, which are (i) non-certified farms and (ii) certified farms. This distinction is perceived to have influenced sustainability logic in the implementation of social sustainability. The link between normative pressure and sustainability logic could be identified through the evidence found and discussed in this section. To begin with, social sustainability was previously referred to as welfare provision in this tier. To extend this understanding, this study found that before the introduction of the term social sustainability, farms used to care and provide for their employees according to their cultural beliefs and values, for example, they believe they should provide sufficient rewards (e.g. sustenance, wages) for their employees in return for the help (i.e. work) these employees have given to them. Afterwards, social sustainability is now understood and recognised as a formal term to explain their social practices which have been with part of their organisation for generations. As stated by F12 and F15:

- *“...we have been providing welfare for our workers ever since we started traditional farming 50 years ago...we weren't selling our produce back then...but now that we are producing for commercial purposes, we still practice welfare provision as before, nothing has changed, we still give our best to our*

workers whom have sacrificed a lot of their energy in the farms for us” (F12)

- *“...before the introduction of this implementation [social sustainability], we have been treating our employees based on our culture’s good values...that is, we should be kind to one another, we should not ill-treat anyone, abuse them of their rights, so the introduction of this [social sustainability] is more like a reinforcement of what we have been practicing for many generations” (F15)*

The sustainability logic should be found where employers put their employees’ needs and welfare first before their financial goals. Furthermore, this logic should be understood from the perspective where the employers believe it is the right thing to do, that is, that employees have the right to a healthy and safe work environment. The evidence of this has been found in the case of certified MyGAP farms and this links with the mimetic pressure where they see themselves as exemplars in this tier. It could be perceived that because of their sustainability logic in implementing social initiatives, these organisations have been selected as pioneers for MyGAP certified farms throughout the entire state. As explained by F10, F11, F13, and F14:

- *“...regardless if our business is doing well or not, we will have to protect our workers’ rights and we have to provide for their welfare...for the government this is compulsory but for us, we see it as the right thing to do...as we are farmers ourselves, we want to ensure our employees get the same treatment as we do” (F10)*
- *“...we have to look after our workers just like how we want others to treat us...I try my best to provide everything they need on top of their salary...I will give them food, a place to stay, holidays during less busy seasons, for my foreign workers, they could return to their home country for their break” (F11)*

- *“...I don't have any problems in providing for my workers welfare...I provide everything as other organisations do...that is a basic requirement for looking after our workers...one of our organisational values is to be kind to other human beings regardless if they work for us or not...it is a good thing and we have to do it” (F13)*
- *“...we have to make sure our workers are healthy and safe at work...they have worked so hard for us...it is only right for us to reward them beyond their salary...it is not an easy job to begin with, so they deserve much more than just their wages” (F14)*

So far, this evidence for sustainability logic relates to the case of certified farms. A few examples were also identified in the case of non-certified farms where, they have perceived that meeting the social standards which best fits their affordability is a responsibility and if they fail to meet this promise made to their employees, they would consider themselves as irresponsible employers. With this mind-set, this could be categorised as sustainability logic because their intention was focused on executing their responsibility well in the interest of their employee's welfare. As stated by F2 and F6:

- *“...it is our practice to give their salary, provide them a place to stay, provide them food, ensure that they are not overworked by working only five days a week and taking rest on Saturday and Sundays, it sounds very basic but as small-scale farmers, this is considered a good standard” (F2)*
- *“...money is welfare for our workers...so we try our best to provide it for them...during busier seasons where they work six days a week, we pay them overtime wages...every year we will raise their salaries...of course, this is on top of other benefits such as their medical benefit, pension and livelihood allowances...this is social sustainability for us” (F6)*

Overall, the evidence presented for sustainability logic was focused notably on certified farms. Furthermore, the evidence (i.e. F2 and F6) of this logic was also found for non-certified farms. Although certified farms presented a strong indication of sustainability logic in their decision to implement social sustainability, this logic remains as a moderate strength logic in this tier. This is because of the lack in number of farms influenced by this logic and it could be perceived to be due to the dominant financial logic found and/or the prevailing barriers of implementing social sustainability (i.e. see section 5.11). However, despite these circumstances, the evidence presented by the five certified farms were good indicators of possibly seeing sustainability logic moving towards a more dominant logic in this tier.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Institutional Logics – Farm’s Perspective**

As discussed above, financial logic appears to be a more dominant logic in this tier as compared to sustainability logic. Similar to the previous tiers, there has been a lack of empirical evidence for institutional logics especially in the sustainable supply chain management literature. In this section, the study will compare the findings found with the work of Glover *et al.* (2014) and Sayed *et al.* (2017).

Financial logic is found to have influenced all the farms within this tier. In the findings of Sayed *et al.* (2017), financial logic was found to dominate the suppliers in the UK food and catering supply chains. Similarly, Glover *et al.* (2014) have found cost reduction and profit maximisation were dominant financial logics found in the manufacturers’ tier. This study confirms these findings by presenting similar dominant financial logic however, from a socially sustainable perspective and the farmers tier.

Sustainability logic on the other hand, is a weaker pressure as compared to the financial logic. Sayed *et al.* (2017) have found sustainability logic more evident in the

customers group than the other tiers (i.e. suppliers and universities). Similarly, Glover *et al.* (2014) have found weak sustainability logic across the dairy supply chain with an example of a farm supplier presenting evidence of investing in dairy machineries for reducing energy, however this still persists as a way to reduce cost. In contrast to their studies, this study adds a significant finding from a farmer tier perspective where there is the existence of MyGAP certified farms. These certified farms are found to have been strongly influenced by sustainability logic in their implementation of social sustainability, hence they were selected amongst the first throughout the state. Given the lack of empirical findings for sustainability logic in the SSCM literature, this study brings forth these findings from the farmers tier and a developing country context which also seemed to be still lacking.

5.12 Barriers: Farmers Tier

Table 5.11 presents the barriers found in the farmers' tier. Four barriers have been identified which are: behavioural issues, high cost, poverty and process delay. Behavioural issues and high cost are strong barriers whereas poverty and process delay are moderate barriers. These barriers will be presented in turn and the concluding remark section will compare these findings with the extant literature.

▪ Behavioural issues

Behavioural issues in this study refer to any problems arising as a result of the organisation's or an individual's behaviour in the process of implementing social sustainability. These problems are perceived to be barriers towards an effective implementation. In this tier, three behavioural issues have been identified: employers' attitude, employees' attitude and social issues.

Table 5.11: Barriers for Farmers Tier

Barriers	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13	F14	Overall Strength	Total
Behavioural issues	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						Strong	7
High cost		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓					Moderate	5
Poverty	✓	✓	✓												Weak	3
Total:																15

Each of the three issues will be discussed in turn along-with evidence from the interviews. Firstly, employers' attitude could be related to the way managers think about their approach in implementing social initiatives in their organisation. In the findings, the study has found that employers believed that, if or when employees are being mistreated at work and/or if their rights have been neglected, the blame should be on these employees for enduring it. Furthermore, another employer has been assuming that treating their workers well would depend on if their workers behaved well [for e.g. not creating any problems] at work. As stated by F4 and F5:

- *“...the question is why are workers still willing to work if he or she was ill-treated...if their employer does not treat them well, they should have left the organisation...it is a choice they should make” (F4)*
- *“...for me, this is a two-way interaction... if they want to be treated well, they should not cause any problems because if they do, this will lead to mistreatment and this is a common case in the farm area...if they treat me [their employer] well by not creating any problems, of course I will treat them well too” (F5)*

Furthermore, additional evidence highlighting employers' attitude was found to relate to their perception regarding employee's salary. The evidence found allegations of low salary being offered by employers which caused a high labour turnover in the industry. However, in response to these allegations, farms believed employees are at fault for not being able to handle the workload of working on farms. In addition, further evidence pointed to where cash was used to keep employees from running away to other employers, on the assumption that other employers would otherwise offer a higher salary. These findings could be interpreted as evidence of an irresponsible employer particularly in terms of how they remunerate their employees. As stated by F5 and F6:

- *“...we have been accused by the labour department of paying our employees too little...the reason behind this accusation was because we had a high labour turnover... we honestly don't think the salary is a barrier...working in the farm is tough, we work long hours during busy seasons...we believe our workers leave when they can't cope with this work environment” (F5)*
- *“...we only offer a higher salary to our workers because we need them to stay to meet our production needs...we don't have any choice because labour doesn't come easy these days...we have to use money to avoid them running off to other employers” (F6)*

Overall, the issue which arises in this finding (i.e. employers' attitude) is that employers may refuse to acknowledge their mistakes or misinterpreting the whole concept of social sustainability. Furthermore, these findings suggest that if this barrier persists, it will hinder these organisations from proper implementation as these organisations are focusing only on their individual agenda or organisation's production needs and consequently, ignoring their obligation or responsibilities towards their employees.

Secondly, the study looks at employees' attitude from the perspectives of employers as a barrier to the implementation of social sustainability. The study found employers highlighting employees' poor work ethics and discipline as a challenge preventing them from practicing social initiatives properly. This suggests that employers are seeking to use their past and current experiences of employees' immoral behaviours as a reason for not being able to do things right [i.e. implement social sustainability]. As stated by F4, F6, F7, F8 and F9:

- *“...work ethics and discipline is a challenge, we pay so much to get these workers in, we spent so much to provide for their welfare...but the*

next thing we know, these workers are not punctual, finding excuses not to go to the field, taking sick leave for personal occasions...at the end of the day, we either sack them or they will leave without notice” (F4)

- *“...we find it most difficult when we face problems...these problems are always because of poor performance, lack of discipline and not driven at work...for example, we spend at least MYR8000 to hire foreign workers with at least one-year contract, but when they leave without notice, we lose our money just like that” (F7)*
- *“our employees always lack focus and dedication at work...we are unable to meet their demand to increase their salary because of these problems...when our production is affected by this problem, it is a challenge for us” (F6)*
- *“when it comes to work permits for foreign workers, we pay so much but we have experienced being cheated on...this happens when our workers leave the organisation for our competitors who are paying much better before the contract ends...the fee is not refundable so every time we hire new workers, we are at risk of this issue” (F8)*
- *“...with local workers, I have faced a lot of discipline problems...for example, if they want to turn up for work, they will come but when they don’t feel like it, they will not turn up” (F9)*

This evidence presents various work ethic and discipline issues among employees which, in the perception of employers, are barriers for implementing social sustainability. In any given circumstances, employees have the right to employment benefit once they are accepted to work with these organisations, however, given their lack of commitment in the job, employers find it difficult to fulfil their responsibility to provide their (i.e.

employees) benefits. For example, when a worker only turns up once or twice in a week to work instead of five days a week according to their employment contract, it is difficult for employers to still give them their full pay and as a penalty, a reduction of salary will be given and sometimes that will accumulate to something below the minimum national wage. Hence, this will be a barrier for them to say they are a socially sustainable supplier.

Thirdly, a broader perspective for this barrier is social issues pertaining to the farmers tier. The findings highlight evidence of exploitation cases where employees are being used to a certain extent in order to meet substantial production demands or needs. With the excuse of trying to meet supply deadlines, employees are worked for long hours and sometimes seven days a week without rest. Furthermore, given their desperation for money in order to return to their home country, employees are often willing participants in this exploitation. As stated by F4, F5 and F6:

- “...we work around the clock during busy seasons, we start at 6 in the morning and leave at 6 in the evening, sometimes we even have to work during weekends too...we have to do this when we are lacking workers...the job is tough, and we can't offer much [for salary]” (F4)
- “...the number of workers available to hire has been reducing and this is where exploitation cases are becoming more common...workers are looking for employment and are often desperate for money...when workers are desperate for money and employers wants to make money, they take advantage of each other...this is a challenge to do the right thing” (F5)
- “...we hire foreign workers because they are willing to work odd and long hours...they stay with us because they need the money to be able to return to their home country” (F6)

Although the evidence has been interpreted from the quotes given by employers themselves, these findings strongly present serious barriers for the implementation of social sustainability. The behavioural issues found in these organisations will affect not only the farms organisations but also the whole supply chain.

▪ **High cost**

The next barrier related to the implementation of social sustainability in the farmers tier is high cost. The cost of implementing social sustainability is associated with the cost of hiring the employees and other costs of providing employment benefits such as their salary, medical and workplace insurance. Firstly, the farms highlighted how the cost of employing foreign employees have significantly increased their operating costs. In this case, hiring a foreign employee involves the labour and immigration department, however, the farmers could use the service of an agent to complete the entire process for them at a fee. The challenge faced in this tier is the lack of local labour available to hire, which often results in seeking foreign employees to do the job for them and sometimes, due to financial constraints, farms are forced to hire them illegally. As stated by F4 and F5:

- *“...for us, when they come looking for jobs voluntarily, we hire them...it is a risk we took together...paying MYR8000 for one foreign worker’s work permit is too expensive for us...and eight out of ten of our employees are foreign workers” (F4)*
- *“hiring foreign workers is too expensive...we have to pay MYR6000 to MYR8000 for one person...for independent farmers like us, the cost is too high for us and meeting this condition is very difficult” (F5)*

This barrier could be associated with employer’s attitude or social issues presented in the

previous section. However, this finding emphasises the high cost of hiring which results in farms having the need to hire illegally to avoid the costs. Furthermore, the farms clarify that, as small-scale farms, the cost of hiring one worker could be equivalent to the profit earned by the organisation in one or two quarters, hence making it hard to justify adding these costs into their high operating costs.

The next finding associated with high cost is related to the salary of employees. This finding highlights that the salary of employees has been kept to a certain standard to ensure all farm organisations can cope with the salary, due to a somewhat unusual cultural understanding between the farms. Furthermore, the farms believed that, if and when one farms decides to raise their salary offerings even to as much as MYR10, employees from other farms will come running to his organisation. The practice has been kept this way as well in order not to take advantage of small and new farm organisation who could not cope with higher salary standards. Evidence of this cultural practice was provided by F10, F11, F12, F13, and F14. For example, as stated by F10:

“...we can raise the salary of our workers to a certain standard...as agreed with other farmers, we cannot go beyond a certain amount and if it happens you will be brought to the farmer’s association for a penalty...of course we want to give as much as possible to our employees, however, this has been our culture, a community culture...we don’t want to make other farmers lose their employees just because they can’t offer as much as other employers...we have to be understanding of new organisations just beginning in the business...they need to survive in this harsh industry too...this is the uniqueness of our farming community...we look out for each other, this can also be considered to be good social practices even if it doesn’t apply directly in our own organisation, but as one human being to another” (F10)

Despite being competitors in the industry, these farms believed that their community culture practiced for generations is important and should be upheld. However, in the perspectives of this study, this could be a barrier to proper implementation of social sustainability. The employees have the right to better salary and no matter how high the increasing costs is, this should not affect any employment benefits which employees are entitled to receive.

Following that point, the increasing cost associated with the provision of employment benefits is also found to be a barrier for a few farms standards. The result of this high cost has caused farms to settle with only meeting minimum standards. As stated by F2 and F3:

- “...here [in Malaysia] we are still not up to that [international] standard yet...I think it is also because of all the other challenges we are facing...for example, because the cost is high, adding on all other conditions such as safety gear, work uniform, living conditions it will all cost us money...while we can't meet the highest or go below the minimum standard, we have to meet somewhere in between” (F2)
- “...we definitely cannot follow the western standards now because the cost will be so high, no one can afford it. Well of course, our living standards are there. It's just a normal one; at least it matches the local standard” (F3)

Similar to other evidence in this barrier, the increasing cost associated with implementing social initiatives has burdened the farmers tier as they have been struggling with high operating costs and low financial return. Hence, farms believe high costs are a barrier for them to properly implement social sustainability and in the last evidence in this case, meeting sustainability standards is only possible if they are meeting the minimum. It is

perceived that if this barrier still persists, it will be difficult for the tier to reach sustainability goals for the supply chain.

▪ **Poverty**

The last barrier found in the farmer's tier is poverty. Poverty is defined as:

- “when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by a government (and enjoyed by the bulk of the population) that vary from country to country, sometimes within the same country” (Business Dictionary, 2007)
- “A state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living” (Investopedia, 2014)

This barrier was first discussed in the within-case analysis for Farm 1 where poverty has led to the employment of child labour. Furthermore, it was also found that this is perceived to be acceptable under the circumstances that these children have been experiencing extreme poverty and I felt that it was better hiring them than leaving them begging on the streets, which would create more social issues. Similar evidence was found in the case of F2. The farm felt empathetic towards the situation in which these children would end up looking for jobs in the farms and some of the reasons explained for this were: they have elderly parents who are too old to work; parents who are financially incapable to send them to school; and the continuous increase of standard of living in the country. Similarly, farms felt that it was better for them to employ these children than leaving them to search for work in other laborious industries such as the quarry. Consequently, child labour is hired under the condition that they are given less difficult and less tiring work such as planting rice seedlings and caring for the rice seedling nursery. Moreover, they are given shorter working hours and once they have worked, they will earn their keep for the day. The evidence of F1 is presented again along-with new evidence found in F2. As stated by F1 and F2:

- *“...if the child doesn’t go to school because they have to work and earn money for the family, of course that is really a pity...when they come from a poor family and they don’t have enough money, their parents won’t be able to send them to school because of the school fees...to avoid creating potential social issues to the community such as stealing or begging on the streets, I personally think it’s better for me to hire them. We’d prefer to teach them to work to survive. But of course, we wouldn’t give them heavy work which is unforgivable given their age” (F1)*
- *“...it is a shame to hire child labour but we cannot help but feel empathetic to these children who have to work and earn money for their family...this is because they could have elderly parents who are too weak to work and who are incapable to send them off to school...so instead of letting them go to other challenging work around the area such as the quarry, we hire them to do light tasks...we have to help them, we feel a sense of responsibility as an organisation capable of hiring them” (F2)*

Hence this is another distinctive case of where cultural practices inhibit proper implementation of social sustainability. Findings from F3 below also provide an example of a nomadic family and the case where the farmer hired the head of the family to work for the organisation. However, for the nomadic family, it is common for the family to go everywhere together, this includes following the head of the family to work. Furthermore, nomadic groups are known to have been experiencing poverty for many years and consequently, they could not send their children to school. The situation worsened when regulators came in assuming the farm had hired the whole family including the children, which then puts the farms on the spot. However, despite being a misunderstanding, this still persists as a barrier not because of a cultural practice, but because this is an example of poverty and where child labour could have occurred anyway. As stated by F3:

“...we have been accused of hiring underage labour before...there’s this nomadic ethnic group [Penan] which we hire, and it is normal for them to come to work with the whole family even though we’ve only hired the head of their family...we can’t stop them from coming it’s their culture...when the regulators come to monitor us, they will think we hired under age (child) labour – which are the children of these Penan workers. How can we explain that? That is, still happening now... when you hire Penans, their children [who they can’t afford to send to school] will always tag along and work with their parents...that’s just how their culture works...it became a barrier for us”

(F3)

Overall, the strength of this barrier is weak as we define the level of strength according to the level of influence the barrier has on the farms and the number of farms that has been influenced by the barrier. Despite the presented evidence appearing to be a significant social issue (i.e. child labour), the barrier has influenced only three out of fourteen farms. However, another point to add is the employers were not ignorant of the laws and/or regulations of hiring child labour but were put in a situation where they felt empathetic towards these children. Although this could be a result of lack of enforcement by the government or the lack of social assistance given by the government, this study is only focusing on supply chain barriers of implementing social sustainability, hence, the study only looks at this barrier from this perspective.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Barriers – Farmer’s Perspective**

In summary, three barriers were discussed in the farmers tier: behavioural issues, high cost and poverty. These barriers were high, moderate and weak respectively in the tier. Significant challenges were found such as employers and employees’ attitude, social

issues, illegal hiring, and child labour. The extant literature regarding SSCM has explored barriers of implementing sustainability - see for example Silvestre (2015), Giunipero *et al.* (2012) and Walker and Jones (2012). Silvestre (2015) studied the implementation of sustainability in the upstream end of an oil and gas supply chain in Brazil; the study found barriers such as pressing social issues and informality where for example, inadequate training, lack of environmental certificates, lack of quality certificates were highlighted. Giunipero *et al.* (2012) in their literature review paper identified that high investment cost was one of the barriers associated with the implementation of sustainability. Similarly, Walker and Jones (2012) who studied seven UK private sector organisations, found cost pressure as one of the barriers for these organisations to implement social initiatives. This study extends the findings presented by Silvestre (2015), Giunipero *et al.* (2012) and Walker and Jones (2012) by presenting empirical from a farmer's tier in an agricultural industry and food supply chain. Furthermore, the study also confirms the findings of Silvestre (2015) where the upstream of the supply chain in a developing country context are still experiencing similar social issues which are currently presenting as a challenge for the upstream tier to move forward in their effort to implement social sustainability.

5.13 Enablers: Farmers Tier

As shown in Table 5.12 two types of enabler have been found in the farmers tier. The two enablers are 'management support' and being 'consistent with labour standards'. Management support is a more dominant enabler in this tier whilst being consistent with labour standards has a more moderate influence. These enablers will be discussed in turn followed by the comparison of these findings with the extant literature.

▪ **Management Support**

Management support is found to be a strong enabler in this tier. Key examples of this are found in the provision of employees' right to employment benefits such as their salary, medical health checks, daily necessities (e.g. food and accommodation), safety training and education, annual leave and rest.

Table 5.12: Enablers for Farmers Tier

Enabler	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13	F14	Overall Strength	Total
Management support	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	10
Consistent with labour standards									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Moderate	6
Total:																16

Similar findings are found in several farmers organisation. As stated by F9, F10, F11, F12, F13 and F14:

- “...apart from providing them basic necessities such as their food, accommodation and other benefits...they have to be equipped with the right skills to work on the farm...we usually provide on-the-job training for our employees...this is important because we want to make sure they know the uses of all the machinery and tools...it is for their safety” (F9)
- “...the employees have to be trained and equipped with the right skills to work on a farm...safety is a priority in our organisation...as for employment benefits, we provide according to the standards set in the

industry, compulsory standards such as salary, workplace insurance, and their pension” (F10)

- *“...an example of our current implementation is, we are providing above minimum national wage for our employees salary, good accommodation, safe work environment, good employment benefits such as 1-week holiday after every 6 weeks, free transportation home [either local or international], 4 weeks a year of annual leave and bonuses” (F11)*
- *“...social sustainability for us is guaranteeing our employees are paid above the minimum national wage, providing good living conditions, good employment benefits such as 1 week off every 2 months, a trip home once a year [for foreign employees] and 4 weeks of annual leave...this is common standard practice in the industry” (F12)*
- *“...our workers health and safety at work is most important...we get them to visit the doctor once a month to ensure they are fit for work...we invest a lot in their medical fees as well...when we hire new employees, they will be given on-the-job training and supervised for at least 3 months before we allow them to work independently with the group of experienced employees” (F13)*
- *“...during busier seasons, we hire more part-time employees to cope with workload...for our full-time employees, we either raise their salary, give them overtime wages and bonuses when we have received our sales incomes...in addition, after the season is over, we will give them one to two weeks of holiday to rest” (F14)*

Moreover, there was several other evidence of management support found in a few other farm organisations. These are grouped together as this evidence is weaker with regards

to presenting clear examples of application (i.e. social sustainability practices) within their organisation. Although this was the case, it is worthwhile to include here as the evidence presents an expression of how they (i.e. employers) perceived their role in supporting the implementation of social sustainability. As said by F2, F3 and F8:

- *“...welfare is important for everyone in this organization and this includes us as the employer and our employees...we are farmers ourselves, so our employees are like colleagues ...it is only fair for us and our employees to receive the same employment benefits” (F3)*
- *“...the welfare of our employees is important, for example, their safety at work, their health, and other basic necessities needed for their well-being, we try to meet every need...without our employees, we cannot operate in this industry...they have sacrificed so much of their hard work on the farms, so we have to treat them well in return of their labour” (F8)*
- *“...we have continuous dialogues with the various department on improving our current standards...we want to make sure our [social sustainability] implementation meets the standards and furthermore, providing our employees their employment rights” (F2)*

Overall, the first six pieces of evidence are stronger examples of the implementation of social sustainability (i.e. F9, F10, F11, F12, F13 and F14); whereas, the remaining three (i.e. F2, F3 and F8) are illustrations of perception for their implementation, which although not descriptive of what they do – the examples indicate the farms enthusiasm to pursue social sustainability as a form of doing good to their employees. Furthermore, although the evidence presented suggests that they are only trying to meet minimum standards at present, the farms management support indicates a good understanding of

their role to further improve their implementation and move forward beyond minimum standards in the future.

▪ **Consistent with industry standards**

The second enabler found in this tier is being consistent with industry standards. This enabler focuses on the evidence presented by organisations regarding how they abide with labour and immigration policies, meeting the industry's (i.e. Agriculture) standards and complying with the compulsory employees' rights to social security and pension funds. As stated by F9, F10, F11, F12, F13 and F14:

- *“...we have to meet the minimum national wage and we have to contribute to their social security and pension funds as it is compulsory...this is a responsibility from us, but it is important as it protects the welfare of our employees” (F9)*
- *“...we abide with the labour law, immigration law and standards or guidelines from the Agriculture department...because we are a small-scale organisation, we don't have our own set of codes of conduct...we practice according to the guidelines required of us from these various departments and we are sure it is still a proper implementation of social sustainability” (F10)*
- *“...in terms of working permits, Barrio and the surrounding farming area have had a long-standing tradition of getting help from Indonesian workers, who are here to help during rice planting and harvesting seasons...permanent [Indonesian] workers have work permits and temporary workers have a limited visit pass which allows them to work for a short period of time” (F11)*

- *“...all our employees are paid about 25% to 50% [depending on their expertise] above the minimum national wage, our Malaysian employees have their SOCSO [social security] and EPF [pension plan], while non-Malaysian employees are covered by the mandatory national insurance policy required by the immigration and labour department” (F12)*
- *“...foreign employees are given work permit and visa, this includes other employment benefits stated by the labour and immigration department...our local employees are given benefits such as pension plan and social security...both these employees receive different level of salary based on the standards set by the labour department” (F13)*
- *“...our management department now manages a record-keeping system for our employees as advised by the labour and agriculture department...it is to keep track with what we provide our employees and what our employees agreed to have received from us...this makes it easier for these organisations to proceed with their auditing processes” (F14)*

Overall, this enabler could appear to be similar to coercive pressures within this tier. However, in this section, the study perceives the act of adhering and conforming to the industry’s standards as an enabler for the farmers tier. Furthermore, the focus of this section is to understand how these policies, standards and/or guidelines have helped farms to move forward in their implementation of social sustainability.

▪ **Concluding Remarks on Enablers – Farmer’s Perspective**

The two enablers discussed in this tier provide evidence of management support and adhering to the industry’s standards, policy and/or guidelines. In comparison to the current literature, there is still a lack of perspectives from a farmer’s tier in an agricultural

industry. Several studies found were Glover *et al.* (2014) on milk processors and Huq *et al.* (2014) on clothing manufacturers; these studies have focused on environment sustainability and social practices respectively. Glover *et al.* (2014) have not presented any enablers in their study and have only studied institutional pressures in the implementation of green practices. On the other hand, Huq *et al.* (2014) found several enablers such as single industry-wide code, law enforcement and, education and training in their study. In contrast, this study provides a different perspective to the enablers found by Huq *et al.* (2014) because of the institutional pressures standpoint in this study. Firstly, education and training are referred to as a normative pressure and law enforcement is referred to as a coercive pressure in this study. Secondly, given the early stages of implementation for social sustainability at the time of this study, the findings present evidence of adherence to compulsory government policies and industry's standards. In the literature review by Giunipero *et al.* (2012), they have highlighted top management support and compliance to government regulation to be important enablers in the implementation of social sustainability. This study also contributes to the literature by presenting empirical evidence for both these enablers specifically from a farmer's tier perspective for a rice supply chain and from a developing country context.

5.14 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the within-tier analysis of the findings from the three tiers of the Malaysian rice supply chain, i.e. retailer tier, distributor tier and farmer tier. The findings have provided an in-depth understanding of the implementation of social sustainability in each respective tier. More importantly, the chapter underlines the types of pressures, logics, barriers and enablers and how these factors influence each case in the respective tiers. Furthermore, the comprehensive analysis has brought to light

significant insights such as evidence of child labour found in the farmer tier. Consequently, the following chapter (Chapter 6) will present the third analysis i.e. the cross-tier analysis which seeks to make important comparisons between the tiers and to highlight how the significant differences between each tier could influence the overall implementation of social sustainability in the Malaysian rice supply chain.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

CROSS TIER ANALYSIS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss the third-stage of analysis for this study. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 have discussed the within-case (i.e. first stage) and within-tier (i.e. second stage) analysis respectively. Subsequently, this chapter will present the cross-tier analysis on the findings across the Malaysian rice supply chain. The aim of this chapter is to present the discussion which highlights comparison findings between the three tiers of this supply chain, i.e. retailer tier, distributor and farmer tier. The chapter will be divided into sub-sections as follows: institutional pressures (see section 6.1), institutional logics (see section 6.2), institutional complexity (see section 6.3), barriers (see section 6.3) and enablers (see section 6.4). In addition, each section will include a discussion for comparison of findings at the supply chain level with the extant literature and finally, a conclusion at the end of the chapter will be presented (see section 6.5)

6.1 Cross-Tier Analysis: Institutional Pressures

The institutional pressures that have been studied in this research are the coercive, normative and mimetic pressures. The two previous analyses, within-case and within-tier analysis (see section 4.1 in Chapter 4 and section 5.1 in Chapter 5) have identified seven types of pressures which consist of: government, buyer and employer power (i.e. coercive pressures); upstream/downstream education and sustainability associations (i.e. normative pressures) and; certified and competitor exemplars (i.e. mimetic pressures). Table 6.1 presents these pressures with the level of influence (i.e. strength) in each of the

three tiers (i.e. retailers, distributors and farmers). In Figure 3.1 (see Chapter 3), the link between the retailers (i.e. R1 – R6), distributors (D1 – D5) and farmers (F1 – F14) in this supply chain is illustrated. Subsequently, this section aims to compare the pressures found at the different tiers of the supply chain and then to compare these findings with the discussion at the supply chain level in the extent literature.

Table 6.1 Cross-Tier Analysis: Institutional Pressures

Institutional Pressures	Types of Pressures	Retailers	Distributors	Farmers
Coercive	Government	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Buyer power	Strong	n/a	Strong
	Employee power	n/a	n/a	Moderate
Normative	Upstream/downstream education	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Sustainability associations	Moderate	Weak	Strong
Mimetic	Certified exemplar	Weak	n/a	Moderate
	Competitor exemplar	Weak	Weak	n/a

*n/a– not applicable

▪ **Coercive Pressure**

As shown in table 6.1, Government coercive pressures were found to be strong across all three tiers; buyer power is strong in two tiers (i.e. retailer tier and farmer tier) and lastly, employee power is a moderate pressure found only in the farmers tier. As explained in Section 5.1, the level of strength is determined by the level of influence and the number of retailers, distributors or farmers affected by the pressure.

Firstly, the supply chain has experienced strong government pressure and this pressure is the most dominant type of coercive pressure which has been identified in 23

cases (i.e. R2-R6, D1- D4, F1-F14) across the supply chain. In the within-tier chapter (see section 5.1, section 5.5, and section 5.9), these government coercive pressures refer to government policy, government enforcement, government auditing and government penalty. Government enforcement was highlighted as an important pressure across the supply chain. For example, F7 underlined that government enforcement was a significant factor in ensuring that they abide with immigration policies; whilst their buyer, D4, emphasised the need to comply with compulsory labour laws such as minimum national wages; whereas R3 underlined the importance of having a safe environment for their employees following strict auditing by the health department. The similarity in influence (i.e. strong pressure) in the supply chain has allowed a better understanding of how government pressure leads towards better social practices in the supply chain. Furthermore, government coercive pressure plays an important role in bringing the supply chain tiers together and contributes towards a more socially sustainable supply chain. As a retailer, R3 will be able to source responsibly when their distributor (D4) and upstream supplier, rice producer (F7), respond positively to the pressure. The homogenous response to the pressure as a result leads them towards becoming a more socially sustainable supply chain.

Secondly, buyer power is a coercive pressure identified in the retailers and farmers tier and exerted by international buyers that require their suppliers (i.e. retailers and/or farmers) to be MyGAP certified. The pressure is perceived to indirectly influence the supply chain towards the implementation of social sustainability. For example, R1 explained that they need to be MyGAP certified prior to getting a purchase contract from their international buyers in Brunei. In the example from an upstream supplier, F2 also recognises this pressure coming in from their buyers seeking them to meet the requirements of being a socially sustainable supplier. As shown in Table 6.1, this

pressure was not found in the distributors tier. This could be because the distributors are currently only focusing on meeting the demands of the domestic markets, which also means that, there is not yet any buyer pressure coerced on them by the retailers. However, some evidence was found where one of the distributors recognised the importance of MyGAP certification and aims to have their organisation certified, this is evident in the case of distributor (D4). Despite not having buyer pressure on them, in terms of seeking to be certified by MyGAP, the supply chain is still moving in the right direction.

Thirdly, employee power is a moderate strength pressure, which was only found in the farmers tier. This pressure details the power employees have in negotiating a higher salary during busier farming seasons in return for their labour. The engagement of a larger number of workers as compared to the retailers and distributors in the supply could explain this phenomenon. Furthermore, the increase in competition due to the lack of skilled labour between the farmers during their busy season has resulted in the shift of bargaining power for higher salary to the employees. For example, Farmer 10 (F10) and Farmer 11 (F11) explained that planting and harvesting seasons are important seasons where they need to exhaust the supply of available labour in order to meet their demand. Hence, employers are left with no choice but to raise the salary of their employees to attract sufficient workers.

▪ **Comparison with The Extant Literature: Coercive Pressures in the Food Supply Chain**

The extant literature has found contrasting findings in related to governmental coercive pressures. For example, Huq and Stevenson (2018) have found weak government pressures in their study of the Bangladesh apparel industry where high corruption was detected in the auditing processes which led to mock compliance. In contrast, this study

extends the findings of Huq et al. (2018) by presenting contrasting strong coercive government pressures found in all three tiers of a food supply chain. Although the evidence was found in a similar context, i.e. developing countries, stronger regulatory pressure was found in this study - this could be perceived to be due to the infancy of social sustainability initiatives, requiring government to play an important role in enforcing the standards of practice for significant industries such as the food supply chain in this case.

Furthermore, our study confirms the findings of Huq et al. (2014) where buyer power was found to play an important role in influencing the supply chain to implement social sustainability. However, Huq et al. (2014) was focusing only on a buyer-supplier relationship where their buyer is from a developed country (i.e. UK) and the supplier is from a developing country (i.e. Bangladesh). This study extends their findings by bringing in the perspective of a local supply chain and further, clarifying how buyer power has influenced a three-tier supply chain in implementing social sustainability. Interestingly, buyer power is a coercive pressure only found in the retailers and farmers tier, for example, international buyers from a neighbouring country, Brunei have required their suppliers to be MyGAP certified as an order qualifier before any trade agreement is made. In comparison to Huq et al. (2014), the findings present a unique context where international buyers could reach out (i.e. exert coercive pressure) to the farmers tier and bypassing the retailers and distributors tier in this case.

Finally, employee power is a coercive pressure only found in the farmers' tier, which is the tier that has the highest number of workers. To the best of my knowledge, employee power has not been discussed as a coercive pressure in the sustainability literature. In comparison to the studies on environment sustainability, human labour is an important contributing and/or influencing factor in social sustainability. In this study,

due to the high demand for labour and the lack of labour availability, the bargaining power has been shifted to the employees in the farmers' tier of the supply chain.

▪ **Normative Pressure**

Two types of normative pressures were found across the supply chain – upstream/downstream education and sustainability associations. Firstly, upstream/downstream education is found to be strong across the supply chain. This could be perceived to be because the pressure to improve current knowledge, practices and implementation of social sustainability has increased as the supply chain seeks to improve its social image for the market and consumers. This was perceived differently by each tier, where for example, R5 exerts this pressure to educate their suppliers on the importance of implementing social sustainability; whereas D5 and F9 respond to this pressure by recognising the efforts put into the supply chain for them through education fairs. They acknowledge that their participation is crucial in ensuring that the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain as a whole is successful.

Secondly, sustainability associations were found across the supply chain. As shown in Table 6.1, this pressure is moderate in the retailers' tier, weak in the distributors tier and strong in the farmers tier. These differences are perceived to exist because of the influence this pressure has on the implementation of social sustainability in these respective tiers. In comparison to the other tiers, the farmers tier has a long-standing association and farmers have been members of the association for a long time before sustainability was on their agenda. In comparison, for the retailers and distributors tiers, their association are relatively new and developing, hence presenting a weaker pressure as compared to the farmers tier.

- **Comparison with The Extant Literature: Normative Pressures in the Food Supply Chain**

The extant literature such as Glover et al. (2014) explained that normative drivers for green practices were internal and embedded within each organisation in the dairy supply chain. In contrast to their findings, this study found normative pressure were external sources in this three-tier supply chain. For example, retailers were found to exert this pressure on their suppliers (i.e. distributors and farmers tier), however, they relied on the assistance from the government (e.g. agriculture department) and NGOs to conduct the training and development programs. Furthermore, the distributors and farmers tiers relied on the courses, symposiums and knowledge fairs created for them to enhance and improve their current knowledge on social sustainability.

On the other hand, sustainability associations were found to differ in strength at different tiers of the supply chain. In Sayed et al. (2017) normative pressure resulted from the ethical obligations of the universities, whereby they felt that they should be perceived to be good role models by society, and from the membership of purchasing consortiums. This study confirms that membership of a sustainability association is an important source of normative pressure. However, this study extends the prior findings by suggesting that the different years of establishment for each sustainability association has influenced the level of normative pressure experienced in the three tiers of the supply chain. For example, the farmers' sustainability association was found to be a more established association and furthermore, the association has been around for a longer time addressing other agendas before sustainability came to the forefront.

▪ **Mimetic Pressure**

Mimetic pressure is the least influential pressure as compared to normative and coercive pressures. Two types of mimetic pressures were identified: certified exemplars and competitor exemplar. Certified exemplar was weak in the retailers tier and moderate in the farmers tier; on the other hand, competitor exemplar is weak in the retailers and distributors tier. The supply chain as a whole still lacks mimetic pressures for the implementation of social sustainability. This could be perceived to be because, at the time of this study, social sustainability was still a new initiative being implemented in the Malaysian Agriculture Industry. The supply chain still needs time to further develop their implementation before being able to provide exemplars in the supply chain. Certified exemplar was best explained in the farmers tier because of the MyGAP certified farmers and the certification has allowed the farmers to present themselves as exemplars for their competitors. For example, F12, as a MyGAP certified farmer, explained that they are recognised as an exemplar. In other tiers where there is not yet any retailer or distributor which has been MyGAP certified, this mimetic pressure is weaker. In the retailers tier, only one source of evidence was found hence, this was concluded to be a weak influence in that tier. The evidence presented was where R1 referred to a certified farmer's organisation as a mimetic source of pressure for themselves, given the lack of certified retailers' organisation in the supply chain.

Secondly, competitor exemplars are found to be weak in the retailers and distributors tier. Both these tiers present only one example for this pressure. For example, R4 explained that a competitor which practices sustainability based on United Nations guidelines became a source of mimetic pressure for them. Similarly, D4 from the distributors tier stated they could not identify exemplars amongst themselves because of

perceived similar competency and furthermore, they perceived that their retailers were better examples for their implementation of social sustainability.

▪ **Comparison with The Extant Literature: Mimetic Pressures in the Food Supply Chain**

The extant literature such as Bhakoo and Choi (2013) has found mimetic pressure to be stronger downstream of a three-tier supply chain, where the public hospitals tier (i.e. downstream) practiced information sharing in implementing inter-organisational systems; whereas mimetic pressure was weaker in the manufacturers tier (i.e. upstream) because of the perceived secrecy and patents in the healthcare industry. In contrast to Bhakoo and Choi (2013), mimetic pressure is found to be more prevalent upstream in this supply chain. For example, the farmers tier is represented by two groups of farmers which are: MyGAP certified farmers and non-certified farmers. This certified farmer group have exerted mimetic pressure on the non-certified farmers specifically in their implementation of social sustainability. In Sayed et al. (2017) the Green League Table competition was an important source of mimetic pressure and universities mimic the top contender in order to gain a higher ranking in the sustainability league table. In comparison to the findings of Sayed et al. (2017), the lack of good exemplars or channels such as the Green League Table in the private and commercial sectors of the supply chain may help to explain why social sustainability is less advanced in the developing country context, for example, there is still child labour found in the supply chain.

6.2. Cross-Tier Analysis: Institutional Logics

Table 6.2 presents the logics found in the retailers tier, distributors tier and farmers tier. These logics are financial logic and sustainability logic. As defined in section 5.2, with

regards to the implementation of social sustainability, financial logic refers to decisions made under the influence of achieving monetary aims and rewards; while, sustainability logic refers to decisions made under the influence of achieving sustainable goals. These logics will be discussed in turn and this discussion will be followed by a comparison of these findings with the extant literature.

Table 6.2 Cross-Tier Analysis: Institutional Logics

Institutional Logics	Retailers	Distributors	Farmers
Financial	Strong	Strong	Strong
Sustainability	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

As shown in Table 6.2, financial logics is found to be strong in all three tiers of the supply chain. Similar financial logics were found in the retailers and farmers tier. The decision to implement social sustainability was influenced by the organisation's profit maximisation goal. For example, MyGAP is a certification that grants international recognition and provides the opportunity to export their products internationally. The retailers and farmers are pursuing social initiatives with the aim to be awarded this certification and, thereafter, to expand their business abroad. On the other hand, for the distributor tier, financial logic was more focused on the implementation of social initiatives in order to be able to continuously achieve financial stability or profitability. Furthermore, the distributors tier also mentioned they need to be financially able to provide welfare for their employees.

Overall, the implementation of social sustainability can be perceived to be strongly influenced by financial logic in this tier. Despite some evidence of conflict between financial logic and seeking to provide welfare for their employees (i.e. distributors and

farmers tier), a general aim to improve current sales to increase profitability is found in all three tiers. The extant literature discusses the implementation of environmental sustainability in the study of Glover et al. (2014) which highlights a dominant logic of cost reduction in the UK dairy supply chain. For example, their evidence for financial logic was focused on the dairy producer's tier which saw cost and waste reduction as more important than energy consumption reduction, furthermore, investing in green technologies is impossible for small businesses. The findings of this study confirms the findings of Glover et al. (2014), from a similar commercial multiple tier supply chain, the implementation of social sustainability is found to be influenced by financial logic. Furthermore, there is no differences found between environmental and social initiatives in both the developed and developing country context found in this study. It is suggested that this could be because, in a commercial supply chain in any given context (i.e. developed or developing) or for any given sustainability initiatives (i.e. environmental and social), profit maximisation and cost reduction will still prevail. For example, the farmers and distributors tier in this study recognises the importance of labour welfare, however, these organisations are still convinced that profit maximisation is key to maintaining this provision of welfare.

Sustainability logic has been found to be moderate across all three tiers. Therefore, as compared to financial logic, sustainability logic is less dominant. An important factor being considered through all the evidence found in the three tiers is to understand if organisations have implemented social sustainability because it is the right thing to do. Firstly, sustainability logic was found to be moderate as the study found the lack of influence or the lack of justification of implementing sustainability because it is the right thing to do. For example, the retailers tier perceived social practices to be difficult given the financial challenges that they experience, however, they believe the implementation

encourages them to improve themselves as employers. Furthermore, retailers also perceived that their implementation will encourage distributors and farmers to be socially compliant through supply chain education.

On the other hand, the distributors tier is focused on the risk-taking nature of their organisation where employees engage in transporting goods from rural areas using 4x4 vehicles to the cities. Moreover, distributors perceived social practices to be important as an indication of rewarding their employees hard work. Finally, the farmers tier is represented by two groups, the MyGAP certified and the non-certified farmers. MyGAP certified farmers are found to have stronger sustainability logics as compared to the non-certified farmers. For example, MyGAP certified farmers believed social sustainability is important and it is the right way of treating their employees, regardless of their business profitability and operating costs. On the other hand, non-certified farmers tended to implement social sustainability with the objective to meet minimum requirement standards to the best of their ability. Given only six out of fourteen farmers are certified, sustainability logic throughout the farmers tier is summarised as moderate.

Overall, the evidence presented from all three tiers of the supply chain could be perceived to have positive potential for moving towards a stronger influence in the future. Despite strong financial logic overriding their sustainability logic, there is a good foundation of understanding of social sustainability found in the three tiers, for example MyGAP certified farmers. Glover et al. (2014) found dominant financial logics in the UK dairy supply chain where the supply chain was not ready to switch to sustainable initiatives (i.e. green technologies) because of the associated high cost. Consequently, the cost for sustainable initiatives was contradicting with the dominant logic of cost reduction and profit maximisation. This study confirms and extends the findings of

Glover et al. (2014) with evidence of similar dominant financial logics found from a developing country context, on the implementation of social sustainability.

6.3 Institutional Complexity

The incompatibility between multiple logics is referred to as institutional complexity (Greenwood, 2011). Institutional complexity in the context of a supply chain refers to conflicting multiple logics across the tiers of the supply chain. The extant literature such as Sayed et al. (2017) has found conflicting logics across the public and private sector of the UK food and catering supply chain. This complexity was found to have influenced the supply chain actors' response to the multiplicity of logics across the supply chain, for example, financial logics, sustainability logics and time logics – which suggested that the complexity could lead organisations in the supply chain towards incremental change; whereas more radical change was found to be possible when institutional complexity was not present.

On the other hand, in this study, institutional logics was found to be the same across all the tiers, for example: financial logics and sustainability were found to be strong and moderate, respectively, across all the tiers. Hence, institutional complexity was not found in this study, and further research is needed to explore the relationships between this complexity, enablers and barriers, where they co-exist and have an impact on the rate of isomorphism.

6.4 Cross Tier Analysis: Barriers

Table 6.3 presents eight barriers which were found in the retailers, distributors and farmers tiers. Two out of eight of the barriers (i.e. behavioural issues and high cost) were explained by all three tiers, whereas, the remaining six were only explained in one tier

respectively – retailers tier (e.g. market forces, process delay and lack of resources); distributors tier (e.g. lack of expertise, lack of clear guidelines); farmers tier (e.g. poverty). These barriers will be discussed in turn and followed by a comparison of these findings with the extant literature.

Firstly, behavioural issues were found in all three tiers of the supply chain where the evidence presented was strong for both the distributors and farmers tiers, but weak in the retailers tier. The employees lack of and/or absence of work ethics and discipline was highlighted in all three tiers of the supply chain. This barrier became a challenge for employers when it comes to remunerating or providing their employees with employment benefits. For example, the distributors tier explained that when employees only come to work once or twice in a week, even though their employment contract states five days a week, a deduction in salary has to be made.

Table 6.3 Cross-Tier Analysis: Barriers

Barriers	Retailers	Distributors	Farmers
Behavioural issues	Weak	Strong	Strong
High cost	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Market forces	Strong	n/a	n/a
Process delay	Moderate	n/a	n/a
Lack of resources	Weak	n/a	n/a
Lack of expertise	n/a	Moderate	n/a
Lack of clear guidelines	n/a	Moderate	n/a
Poverty	n/a	n/a	Weak

*n/a– Not applicable

Consequently, this deduction could sometimes result in employees receiving less than the minimum national wage (specified as a monthly salary in the Malaysian Human Resource Department systems). In addition, employees' attitude has resulted in another issue with regards to employers' attitude in which unfair judgement and treatment inequality was found. This was highlighted in all three tiers of the supply chain. For example, the distributors and retailers tier explained, foreign workers are perceived to have better work commitment hence, during their hiring process, foreign employees are preferred over local workers. Furthermore, foreign employees are paid much higher than local employees in this supply chain. In comparison to the distributors tier and retailers tier, the farmers tier presented a more significant challenge where social issues were presented. This social issue relates to the exploitation of employees during busier seasons, employees are worked for long hours throughout the whole week. However, due to desperation for money, employees often accept this treatment.

Secondly, high cost is also another barrier found in all three tiers of this supply chain where it is strong in the retailers and distributors tier, however, moderate in the farmers tier. The three tiers highlighted that cost associated with the implementation of social sustainability has significantly impacted their cost of production. For example, distributors tier and farmers tier have related these associated costs with education and training costs and cost of work permit and visa for foreign employees. On the other hand, the retailers tier presented another cost related issue i.e. the control over the price of rice by the government, which further exacerbates their problem of high costs of production and the low-priced rice. The farmers tier found high cost in only five out of fourteen cases, which resulted in this barrier being judged to have only moderate influence. Similar cost issues such as financial constraints to hire foreign employees were highlighted in the farmers tier.

Thirdly, three barriers i.e. market forces, process delay, and lack of resources were found only in the retailer's tier - where these barriers are strong, moderate and weak respectively. In summary, market forces referred to the challenges faced by retailers due to the lack of demand for sustainably produced rice and the market is assumed to not be ready for higher priced rice, as it is a staple product in the country. Next, process delay was related to waiting time in the process of getting the MyGAP certification – retailers explained the process took between one to two years to complete. Finally, lack of resources is a weak example of a barrier found in the case of retailers, for example: the lack of time and manpower have hindered their intention to educate their suppliers as much as they want to. The distributors and farmers tier are perceived to have not experienced these barriers due to their upstream position in the supply chain where first, they don't have any engagement with market consumers. Secondly, the awarding body (i.e. Malaysia Agriculture Department) processes the MyGAP application at the farmers tier first and then followed by the distributors and, finally, the retailers tier. Hence, the farmers and distributors tier did not mention process delay as a barrier for them, as the process is quicker. Finally, distributors and farmers have not felt much burden for educating and training their suppliers, as perceived by retailers, hence they do not feel there is a challenge such as the lack of resource for them in implementing social sustainability.

Fourthly, the lack of expertise and lack of clear guidelines are barriers found only in the distributors tier. In this study, distributors did not train their suppliers, as retailers did, and this is because these distributors perceived they do not have the expertise to educate. Furthermore, the lack of clear guidelines refers to where distributors perceived themselves to be becoming just law-abiding organisations rather than moving beyond minimum standards. These barriers are deemed to have moderately influenced the

distributor tier because there were only a few cases presenting the issue and secondly, there was a lack of clear justification or examples of how significantly the barrier have affected the tier. The retailers and farmers tier have not presented any evidence for these barriers and this could be perceived to be because other barriers or challenges might have seemed more significant in their respective tiers.

Finally, poverty has only been found in the farmers tier. The barrier highlights the significant issue of child labour, although it was only represented in three out of fourteen farmers cases. Poverty is perceived to be a barrier, and, in this study, it is associated with cases where farmers felt it was better to hire these children rather than leaving them begging on the streets or letting them work in other laborious industries such as the quarry. These extreme poverty cases highlight issues such as elderly, financially incapable parents, which have resulted in children ending up seeking jobs to help raise their younger siblings. This barrier was not found in the distributors or retailer's cases as these organisations are situated in a more urban area, as compared to farmers which are situated in rural areas. In the Malaysian context, rural areas are commonly associated with places where the underprivileged and poor live.

In the extant literature, such as in Huq et al. (2014) who studied a global supply chain, barriers such as misalignment between codes of conduct were found in the implementation of social sustainability. Furthermore, their study also highlighted issues such as suppliers and auditor's mock compliance in their findings. However, this study found other types of social issues for example, exploitation and child labour caused by behavioural issues and poverty. Thus, it could be perceived that, in the developing country context, there is still a lack of enforcement on human rights and labour law. This is found to be the case in this study where for example, children living in rural areas of Malaysia are forced to work because of extreme poverty and incapable parents. It is

important to note that Huq et al. (2014) was focused on a cross-cultural study between Bangladesh and United Kingdom, whereas, this study focused on a single or one culture from a multi-tier rice supply chain in Malaysia. This could explain the differences in the types of barriers found in the supply chain, and hence this study is argued to complement the findings of the prior literature.

6.5 Cross Tier Analysis: Enablers

As shown in Table 6.4, three enablers were found in the three tiers. Only one enabler (i.e. management support) was presented in all three tiers of this supply chain, followed by consistent with labour law, found only in the distributors and farmers tier; finally, consistent with certification requirements was only found in the retailers tier. Each of these enablers will be discussed and followed by a comparison with the extant literature.

Table 6.4 Cross-Tier Analysis: Enablers

Enablers	Retailers	Distributors	Farmers
Management support	Weak	Moderate	Strong
Consistent with labour law	n/a	Moderate	Moderate
Consistent with certification requirements	Strong	n/a	n/a

*n/a– Not applicable

Firstly, management support is found in all three tiers of the supply chain where it is strong in the farmers tier, moderate in the distributors tier and weak in the retailers tier. Management support refers to an organisation's top management commitment to support social sustainability through their actions. In the farmers tier, ten out of fourteen farmers were found to present evidence of management support where they are committed in providing employees the right to their employment benefits and furthermore, there is evidence of passionate farmers who have continuously tried to improve themselves and

their abilities in upholding their employees welfare in their organisation despite the challenges that they are currently facing. On the other hand, the distributors tier has expressed their clear understanding of their role to support their organisation in the implementation of social initiatives; for example, provision of training, protection, and an emphasis on ensuring the well-being of their employees were demonstrated in the findings. Finally, the retailers tier was found to have weak management support because of a lack of explanation of how the role was executed and furthermore, it is perceived that there is lack of understanding of the role of management support. For example, instead of focusing on internal decisions in their efforts to implement social sustainability, this management support was conveyed through a supply chain education and training activity which involved external parties (i.e. agriculture department). Hence, the retailer tier presents a weaker management support in this supply chain as compared to the two other tiers.

Secondly, consistent with labour law is found as a moderate enabler in the distributor and farmers tier. The evidence from both tiers was focused on their efforts to conform to the labour law such as through the provision of employment benefits such as salary, workplace insurance, pensions, and for foreign employees: work permit and visa. This enabler was labelled as moderate because of two circumstances, first, the law itself is a coercive pressure which should lead to conformance and secondly, the recognition of the law to be an enabler could indicate that the absence of this law could lead to possibly no implementation for social sustainability in these tiers. On the other hand, the retailers tier did not present any evidence for this as an enabler and this could be because this tier understands the labour law as only a coercive pressure rather than an enabler.

Thirdly, consistent with certification requirements was a strong enabler for the retailer's tier but however, was not found in the distributors and farmers tier. This

certification refers to the MyGAP certification which is a new certification introduced by the Malaysian Agriculture Industry. MyGAP is an important certification because of the international recognition and opportunity to export into international markets, hence, the retailers believe it is an important enabler in pushing them towards becoming a more socially sustainable group of organisations as a whole. On the other hand, the distributors and farmers tiers have not presented any evidence for this enabler. As mentioned above, the MyGAP certification is synonymous with international recognition and the opportunity to expand businesses abroad, however, the distributors tier were not found to be interested in this opportunity. This could be perceived to be due to their financial incapability to do so. Furthermore, although the farmers tier presented evidence of MyGAP certified farmers, interestingly, this enabler was not found in the farmers tier. In the case of MyGAP certified farmers, since they have already met the certification requirements, they no longer see these certification requirements as an enabler. There is a possibility that, if there is a shift from meeting the current MyGAP certification requirements to seeking to achieve something further, then a new set of enablers will emerge for these farmers.

The extant literature has presented an array of enablers for social sustainability however, these were survey-based research papers. For example, Danese et al. (2018), in the study on twelve developed countries from various industries such as mechanical, electronics and transportation, presented enablers for supplier sustainability practices, including supply chain climate, leadership, organisational structure and culture, and organisation fit with sustainability aims. In another example, Mani et al. (2015) highlighted sixteen enablers from the literature and analysed them quantitatively, some example of the enablers were awareness of social sustainability, competitive pressure, customer requirements and many others.

This study complements the findings of Danese et al. (2018) and Mani et al. (2015) by exploring in-depth the types of enablers experienced in the implementation of social sustainability, from the perspective of a multiple-tier supply chain in a developing country context. Whilst fewer enablers have been studied, the differences between the tiers in the supply chain have been discussed. For example, this study found management support to be an important enabler in the farmers tier (i.e. strong influence), however, it was less important in the retailer's tier (i.e. weak influence).

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the cross-tier analysis of the three tiers of the Malaysian rice supply chain, and thereby, completes the analysis for the supply chain actors. In summary, the cross-tier analysis has highlighted significant findings such as, how pressures, logics, barriers and enablers are similar and/or different across the tiers and how it has affected the overall social sustainability implementation for the Malaysian rice supply chain. Furthermore, the results of the analysis have been discussed in comparison to the extant literature with the aim to highlight the significant contributions of the finding. Overall, this chapter presents an in-depth understanding of the Malaysian rice supply chain on the implementation of social sustainability, and this presents a significant contribution to the literature as it presents empirical evidence from a multiple tier perspective of a supply chain into the current implementation of a social sustainability initiatives. The following chapter (Chapter 7) will present the cross-case analysis with evidence from the external stakeholders, i.e. Government and NGOs which aims to explore the influential role of these stakeholders on the Malaysian rice supply chain – specifically on the current implementation of social sustainability.

CHAPTER 7

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

7.1 Introduction

This aim of this chapter is to discuss the second research question of this study: *How do stakeholders (Government and Non-Governmental Organisations) seek to influence the implementation of social sustainability in a developing country context?* As mentioned in Chapter 3, eight external stakeholders have been studied, comprising of five Government departments and three NGOs. This chapter will begin with an overview of these stakeholder organisations, followed by a within-case analysis for two example cases – one from each type of stakeholder respectively to demonstrate the type of within-case analysis completed for all eight cases. The chapter then continues with a section on cross-case analysis which analyses each of these stakeholders' role through the lens of institutional pressures. Then, the next section presents other cross-case evidence relevant to the role played by these stakeholders in influencing social sustainability implementation in the supply chain. Finally, the last section presents the comparison of the findings of this study with the prior literature.

7.2 Description of Cases and The Within-Case Analysis

Table 7.0 presents an overview of the eight stakeholders' departments or organisations. As indicated in Chapter 3, these departments or organisations are referred to as: GOV1, GOV2, GOV3, GOV4 and GOV5; NGO1, NGO2 and NGO3. The following section will present and discuss the within-case analysis of two cases, referred to as GOV1 and NGO1. The purpose of this section is to comprehensively study these two examples of stakeholders and their roles in influencing the supply chain in the implementation of social sustainability. Similar analysis was completed for all of the eight stakeholder

cases, and a summary of the evidence for each one are available from the author on request.

Table 7.1 Description of Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations

Stakeholder	Overview of Cases
GOV1: Immigration	This department is responsible for: (i) producing work permits and visas; (ii) conducting investigations and; (iii) handling charges such as money collateral and bank guarantees. The main focus of this department is to protect the rights of foreign workers and to conduct a strict monitoring on organisations which employ foreign workers in the country.
GOV2: Social Security	This department is responsible for providing insurance for employees from occupational injuries including occupational diseases and accidents, and disability or death occurring during work travelling. The benefit of this protection provides cash remuneration to employees and their dependants in the event of unforeseen incidents. The organisation also provides medical treatment, physical rehabilitation and vocational training.
GOV3: Agriculture	This department is responsible for developing and implementing agricultural policies. Two examples of the departments' role are: (i) monitoring food and environmental safety and (ii) developing the industry's human capital. The department for each state is currently involved in providing development services to small farmers and focusing on the expansion of farmers association.
GOV4: Labour	This organisation is responsible for developing a dynamic, receptive and proficient workforce. The organisation plays an important role in: enforcing occupational safety and health policies; formulating policies for employment, skilled workforce, wage systems; ensuring

Stakeholder	Overview of Cases
	<p>a safe work environment and developing a syllabus for skills training, certification systems and standards. The organisation upholds these principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Justice and fairness – to appreciate and practice the principle of justice and fairness to uphold social justice for the wellbeing of all. ▪ Harmonious relationships - to ensure harmonious industrial relations among employers, employees, and trade unions for the development of the nation and well-being of the citizens. ▪ Well-being and safety - to practice safety and health in a workplace to ensure a conducive and productive workplace. ▪ Continuous learning - to place importance on continuous learning through training and skills upgrading to ensure employability of competent and competitive employees. ▪ Caring - to provide social security protection for the well-being of employees, family, society and the country overall.
<p>GOV5: Pension</p>	<p>This organisation is responsible for providing benefits for retirement to its members. This savings management system is created for members and employers who are responsible to carry out statutory and moral obligations for their employees. The safeguarding of savings services is committed to provide a better future for its members.</p>
<p>NGO1</p>	<p>This organisation was initially promoting the preservation of wildlife and the environment in the country. Currently, through a joint collaborative initiative with a local NGO, this NGO also seeks to achieve socially sustainable development in Borneo. For example, a current initiative aims to improve the livelihoods of small farm producers in Borneo by transforming economic activities such as: (i) encouraging farmers to produced socially sustainable products, and (ii) promoting their products through market transformation</p>

Stakeholder	Overview of Cases
	programs, i.e. a collaboration program with retailers aiming to increase consumer awareness of these products.
NGO2	This organisation is promoting sustainable development in the Highlands of Borneo through initiatives which address, for example, environment protection and the preservation of culture and tradition. The organisation is working to achieve initiatives such as improving the livelihoods of indigenous groups who are largely involved in rice farming. The focus is to provide alternatives to rice producers such as seeking for new markets and promoting their products both locally and internationally.
NGO3	This organisation is promoting activities to address food security and agricultural issues. Their focus is to influence policy making related to food, agriculture and trade at regional and international forums. Initiatives carried out by this organisation aim to provide better opportunities for small farmers by, for example: (i) promoting their products internationally, (ii) planning to increase production to meet increased demand and (iii) seeking financial assistance and subsidies to decrease financial burdens.

7.2.1 Overview of Organisation – Government Immigration (GOV1)

The immigration office is a branch located in Bario, on the border between Indonesia and Malaysia. The office is responsible for national security, focusing on the entry and exit of people on the border. This branch has 5 officers and their responsibilities range from monitoring the border to issuing the Cross-Border Pass (CBP). The CBP is a social visit pass for visitors who comes through the border and its validity is 30 days. The home office for the immigration department is located in Miri. The main office is responsible for issuing work permits. The immigration office in Bario works closely with the rice farms in this study.

7.2.2 The Role of Government Immigration (GOV1)

The purpose of this section is to present evidence of the role played by the Government Immigration department, referred to as GOV1, in influencing the social sustainability implementation in the supply chain. The roles studied are summarised and categorised according to the types of institutional pressure exerted in Table 7.2. Coercive pressure is found to be the most dominant with the strongest influence on the supply chain. The main influential role of this immigration department is to enforce employment rights for foreign employees such as: the right to have a work permit and other employment benefits. The majority of labour in the farmer's organisation are foreign workers, hence, the focus of this section will be discussing the role of GOV1 to protect their employment rights.

Table 7.2: Institutional Pressures – Government Immigration (GOV1)

Types of Pressure	Pressure	Nature of the Pressure
Coercive	Government monitoring	Routine inspection and further actions are taken when organisations are caught not implementing social sustainability correctly.
Coercive	Government enforcement	The foreign workers' rights to work permits is protected.
Coercive	Government penalty	A penalty will be given when organisations hire without proper documentation and/or harbour foreign workers.

Firstly, government monitoring is an important coercive pressure on the supply chain. In this case, GOV1 explained that daily monitoring is undertaken on farms to ensure no illegal immigrants or foreign workers have been hired by farmer organisations. This is essential because of the unique location in this context, i.e. foreign workers who enter

through the border of Indonesia and Malaysia. As stated by GOV1-I1:

“...I am a home office officer here, I monitor every day both day and night...in the case after we receive any lodged report, we will call the immigration enforcement department ... and will require them to recheck the status of workers” (GOV1-I1)

This evidence also suggests that the responsibility of this organisation is to ensure that foreign visitors who come in through the border for employment or social visits, are provided with the correct documentation, i.e. social visit pass, work permit, and/or visa. Furthermore, as a branch in a local office, a continuous follow up of their monitoring must be reported to their headquarters. As mentioned above, foreign workers who are suspected to be working without any work permit, will be reported to the headquarters for further investigation.

Secondly, government enforcement is an important role found to ensure that foreign worker's rights to a work permit and visa are protected. The role of GOV1 is to enforce this regulation on both employer and employees. Subsequently after monitoring, GOV1 takes further action to ensure the appropriate status of new foreign workers found working in the farms and if employees are found without proper documentation, action has to be taken immediately by the employer responsible. As stated by GOV1-I1:

“...our position here is just to monitor and to issue social visit passes for those coming in and out of the border... and if I see anyone who is not familiar in my eyes, I will ask them if they have their documents or not... if not, I will make sure the organisation [employer] does it for them immediately” (GOV1-I1)

Close monitoring and enforcement are significant roles played by the government and as a result of routine inspections, preventative actions could be taken to reduce the number of illegal foreign workers working in the supply chain. As mentioned before, a large number of foreign workers are involved in the rice supply chain, hence, GOV1 plays a significant role to ensure social sustainability is implemented correctly, i.e. by abiding with the immigration law.

Thirdly, government penalty is a pressure exerted by GOV1 on to the supply chain and this is a significant pressure for organisations who fail to obey the law. A large monetary fine will be charged, or jail time given against employers if they are found harbouring and hiring illegal foreign workers. Moreover, employees will also be given a similar penalty if found working without any work permit. A recent case investigation was provided for reference in this study. As stated by GOV1-I1:

“...in Malaysia ... the fine is bigger...so a new regulation recently is when and if you are harbouring and or hiring workers without a work permit, you will be fined MYR10,000 per person...yes, if we look at the recent operation in March [Year 2017], it's true that some [5] foreign workers had no work permit...it's not that they don't have it, but it has already expired and it cannot be used anymore” (GOV1-I1)

The evidence suggests, if misconduct is found, a significant penalty or punishment will be charged against the organisation. Furthermore, this example includes the failure to apply for work permits for every foreign worker hired and to renew the work permit when it expires.

7.2.3 Overview of Organisation – Non-Governmental Organisation 1

This non-governmental organisation (NGO1) is a non-profit organisation, funded through fund raisings and partially funded by the government. The main strategy for this NGO is to assist in the sustainable development of Borneo. Borneo is the third largest island on earth, and it consists of Sabah and Sarawak of Malaysia, Kalimantan of Indonesia and Brunei. The role of this NGO is specifically to focus on and to improve the implementation of environmental and social sustainability in the rice supply chain in the Malaysia region of Borneo. In addition, NGO1 is also currently working on other activities such as raising awareness among the communities, encouraging sustainable development by means of organic farming and agro-forestry, community-based ecotourism, communication and information technology and the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage without degrading the quality of the social and natural environment. Furthermore, they aim to preserve the welfare of farmers and to find better opportunities for them to market their products. NGO1 also mediates the relationship between farmers and their customers.

7.2.4 The Role of Non-Governmental Organisation 1 (NGO1)

The aim of this section is to discuss the role of NGO1 in influencing the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. These roles are presented and categorised according to the theoretical lens of institutional pressures in Table 7.3. The exerted normative pressure was found to be the strongest and most influential on farm organisations as discussed below. Firstly, encouraging the farmers to take advantage of certification opportunities is an initiative undertaken by NGO1. They are thereby aiming to assist and persuade the supply chain to seek social sustainability certification and, in this case, this refers to the MyGAP certification. As first discussed in chapter 4,

Table 7.3 Institutional Pressures – Non-Government Organisation (NGO1)

Types of Pressure	Pressure	Nature of the Pressure
Normative	Certification opportunities	Working with farmers in getting MyGAP certification as one of their social sustainability initiatives
Normative	Education and Training	Working with the agriculture department to educate and communicate with farmers to improve their social sustainability initiatives

MyGAP is a sustainability certification introduced by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and organisations are encouraged to apply although they are under no obligation to do so. As stated by NGO1-I1:

“...it is only an encouragement for now, for example, the Department of Agriculture, will come and say to the supply chain ... there is this certification, please get it” (NGO1-I1)

NGO1 perceived that their role is to work closest with farmer organisations because the DOA will process applications from the upstream supply chain first, followed by the downstream. Furthermore, NGO1 believed social sustainability is an important initiative and by applying to be MyGAP certified, employers can slowly adapt these practices into their organisations. Moreover, farm organisations can begin looking at their current practices and align them with the guidelines provided by the DOA. The role of NGO1 is to guide them assisting them through the certification application.

Secondly, the role of educating and training the supply chain is emphasised as important by NGO1. The evidence suggests that one of the initiatives taken by NGO1 to promote social sustainability is through education and communication with the supply chain, specifically in the farmers tier. In this context, NGO1 perceived that the low education level amongst farm owners calls for this role and they are responsible to initiate

programs whilst collaborating with the DOA to increase the number of MyGAP certified farmers. As stated by NGO1-I1:

“...we work with the Agriculture Department and through talks and dialogues with the farmers...our goals is to have them get MyGAP certification”
(NGO1-I1)

In conclusion, the evidence related to exerting institutional pressures by NGO1 highlights a few important points which are: the supply chain, specifically the farmers tier, consists of low educated individuals; secondly, there is a lack of enforcement of sustainability initiatives such as MyGAP which is currently not a compulsory certification. Hence, NGO1 plays an important role to create an education platform for organisations and to portray the importance of social sustainability to be implemented in the supply chain through various activities and programs.

In addition to exerting institutional pressures, the evidence suggests that NGO1 also plays other important roles in influencing the implementation of social sustainability. This is through two types of support, namely: (i) helping to gain political influence; and (ii) helping to develop new markets, as discussed below.

Firstly, NGO1 seeks to help small farm-holders or farmers by gaining political influence. An example of this is where NGOs wants policy makers to listen to concerns, issues, barriers or any suggestions and feedback from the supply chain. This example in this case would be related to social initiatives, which are currently being implemented in the rice supply chain. As stated by NGO1-I1:

“...our main objective [on social sustainability initiatives] is to empower small farm-holders to have their voice heard, to create strong and independent farmers” (NGO1-I1)

Secondly, NGO1 is also providing support to the supply chain, specifically farmers and retailers by helping them to gain new markets. Through the social sustainability implementation, NGO1 is encouraging the supply chain to apply for certifications or accreditations which will increase the marketability of their products, both locally and internationally. Then, NGO1 collaborates with retailers to provide shelf space to promote sustainable produced products with the intention to increase consumer awareness of these products. As stated by NGO1-I1:

- “... we try our best to work on other areas with the farmers, such as looking for potential new markets after getting accreditation or certification” (NGO1-I1)
- “...downstream of the supply chain, we have a department called the market transformation initiative...this department focuses on changing consumer buying patterns and awareness on sustainability issues” (NGO1-I1)

7.3 Cross-Case Analysis: Exerting Institutional Pressures

This section will present a cross-case analysis on all five Government and three NGO cases and the discussion focuses on the role played by these stakeholders in influencing the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The roles found were categorised according to the types of institutional pressures and these findings are summarised in Table 7.4. The findings highlight coercive pressure as the strongest pressure exerted by Government and on the other hand, normative pressure exerted by NGOs was stronger. No evidence of exerted mimetic pressures was found in either the Government or NGOs cases and this will be further explained at the end of this section. For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to note that the mnemonics in Table 7.4

are created to note the organisations as the unit of analysis. However, throughout the chapter, the interviewees' mnemonics will be used. Table 7.5 will provide the example of both mnemonics used for reference.

Table 7.4 Institutional Pressures - Government and NGOs

Institutional Pressures	Types of Pressures	GOV1	GOV2	GOV3	GOV4	GOV5	Overall Strength	Total
Coercive	Government	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strong	5
Normative	Education		✓	✓			Moderate	2
Institutional Pressures	Types of Pressures	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	Overall Strength			Total
Normative	Education	✓	✓	✓	Strong			3
	Sustainable associations		✓	✓	Moderate			2

Table 7.5 Organisations and Interviewee Mnemonics for Stakeholders

Organisation Reference Code	Interviewee Reference Code
GOV1	GOV1 – I1
	GOV1-I2
GOV2	GOV2
GOV3	GOV3
GOV4	GOV4
GOV5	GOV5
NGO1	NGO1-I1
	NGO1-I2
NGO2	NGO2-I1
	NGO2-I2
NGO3	NGO3-I1
	NGO3-I2

▪ Coercive Pressure

Firstly, the Government has been found to influence the implementation of social sustainability in the Malaysian rice supply chain through activities such as developing government policy, government monitoring, government enforcement, and government penalty. This evidence is consistent with the evidence found in the three tiers of the supply chain (i.e. the retailer, distributor and farmer tiers) which suggests that these coercive pressures have a strong influence. Evidence such as the Immigration Act 1963, Employees Social Security Act 1969, Employees Provident Fund Act 1991 were some example of statutes which oversee the Agricultural industry and more specifically, the rice supply chain. Furthermore, all the Government departments emphasise the importance of monitoring and enforcement, such as through routine inspection and auditing, to ensure policies are practiced in all the tiers of the supply chain. Finally, penalties such as fines and imprisonment were significant influences in the supply chain, and these were deemed to coerce organisations into good implementation. As stated by the following government interviewees:

- “...as stated in our Employees Social Security Act 1969 Act 4, under the *Employment Injury Scheme*, employees are protected against accidents or occupational disease and examples include: industrial accident, commuting accident, accident during emergency, and occupational diseases” (GOV2)
- “...auditing from the agriculture department is important to ensure the industry is stable where everything involved in the production process, including human resources, is well-managed with the rights of everyone involved in the industry protected” (GOV3)
- “Under Sect 43(2), any employer who fails to pay any contributions which

he is liable to pay for his employees in respect of any month shall be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to a fine not exceeding ten thousand ringgit or to both” (GOV5)

These Government departments (i.e. immigration, labour, agriculture, social security and pension) play an important role in influencing the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain respectively. Though all of these departments exert coercive pressures, each department seeks to achieve a significant goal of social sustainability in the supply chain. For example, GOV2 focuses on ensuring employees work in a safe environment and employers are responsible to insure employees through monthly contributions. In another example, GOV1 is responsible to ensure foreign workers rights are protected and employers are responsible to hire foreign workers with work permits and visas provided by GOV1. These Government departments each exerts important pressures on to the supply chain and this is perceived to be beneficial to drive the current stage of social sustainability. The implementation of social sustainability is new and developing, hence, many important departments are playing a significant part in contributing towards building a good foundation for social sustainability in Malaysia's Agriculture Industry.

▪ **Normative Pressure**

The findings suggest that NGOs are strong and influential in exerting normative pressures on the supply chain, for example through upstream/downstream education and sustainable associations. Upstream/downstream education was more significant as compared to sustainable associations with more evidence present for the former. In comparison, Government is found to exert weaker normative pressure with evidence

from two organisation (i.e. GOV2 and GOV3). These findings are summarised in Table 7.4.

The findings on normative pressure were found to be consistent with the evidence presented in the three tiers of the supply chain. Firstly, upstream/downstream education is referred to where NGOs play an important role to develop training and knowledge programs for the supply chain and they have invested a lot of resources to create opportunities for the supply chain to explore and learn more about social sustainability. Secondly, NGOs have created platforms for the supply chain actors to have sustainable associations at every tier of the supply chain. This is perceived to encourage each tier to have a community that influences one another and to discuss feedback, suggestions or any issues related to the implementation of social sustainability. These respective NGOs state:

- *“...one of the key bits of work that we do is to translate big policies such as the United Nations sustainable goals, because when you go to the rural areas in developing countries where there are small-scale producers such as rice farmers in Malaysia, these are often non-educated individuals whom have practiced rice farming for generations...hence, we spend a lot of time moving from one organisation to another to provide knowledge, to educate, to train them through workshops which are conducted in various languages because of our multi-cultural country” (NGO1-I1)*
- *“...one of the examples is, we have helped farmers to organise themselves into formal associations, cooperatives, and through these associations they could learn from one another, discuss important issues or new policies and standards, they can learn to be more independent and they could also get support in any form from many other NGOs besides the*

government” (NGO1-I2)

- *“...we reach out to those in Kalimantan [Indonesia] to work together on various knowledge fairs, workshops, symposiums, conferences and it is amazing how much good feedback we get, working on how to implement technical concepts or policies into practical organisational practices” (NGO2-I1)*

- *“...the farmers associations allow these farmers to reach out to bigger retailers, or vice versa, where retailers could buy directly from these farmers to reduce middle agent fees...so these are some of the types of networking which we are assisting them with” (NGO3-I1)*

The NGOs portrays their influential role in exerting normative pressures through examples such as education and creating channels of communication to encourage the supply chain to be more socially sustainable. Across the three NGOs, each organisation plays a significant role in ensuring the rights of the supply chain actors are protected. For e.g. NGO1 invests time and resources to guide organisations on policies to ensure low educated tiers such as the farmer tier will not get left behind in the implementation of social sustainability. In another example, NGO1 and NGO3 work together to group organisations into associations which have sustainability issues as their main agenda. The efforts shown by these NGOs provide evidence that they are playing a significant part in educating the supply chain regarding social sustainability and their rights as employers and employees. NGOs are more active in spreading awareness and knowledge through normative pressures whilst only two sets of evidence were found from government departments.

Two Government departments, GOV2 and GOV3, have presented evidence for exerting normative pressure and this effort to similar to the NGOs, which is

upstream/downstream education. GOV3 explained that their role is to provide short courses which covers various important social sustainability initiatives such as: increasing the awareness of employers and employees on the importance of work permits and national minimum wage. The Agriculture department, GOV3, has been responsible for providing education on these various aspects of social sustainability to the rice supply chain. GOV3 states:

“...for example, we create and provide short courses for farmers and their employees to educate and to train them with various knowledge, for instance, the importance of work permits, the national minimum wage, employees management systems, which in the end, will be audited by all three Government departments, the immigration, labour, and ourselves [Agriculture] department” (GOV3)

Moreover, the Social Security department have also stated that they are involved in educating organisations in the supply chain on the importance of workplace insurance and the benefits both employers and employees will gain under this protection. As stated by GOV2:

“...we conduct awareness activities related to occupational safety and health such as accident prevention programs for employers and employees” (GOV2)

▪ **Mimetic Pressure**

Mimetic pressures were not found in any cases presented by the Government and NGOs. This is perceived to be because both these stakeholders were more focused on exerting coercive pressures and normative pressures. Both Government and NGOs have not recognised mimetic pressures as being an influential pressure and this is consistent with

the findings in the three tiers of the supply chain. The three tiers of the supply chain presented certified exemplars and competitor exemplars as sources of mimetic pressures and furthermore, some tiers have not presented any evidence of this pressure. Due to the weak influence of mimetic pressure, the stakeholders perceived that it is yet too early to recognise successful and good exemplars for the supply chain to follow. This could be because of the early stages for the implementation of social sustainability as a whole.

7.4 Cross-Case Analysis: Other Support Provided by NGOs

The aim of this section is to present other relevant evidence on the role of stakeholders in influencing the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The study found that NGOs have also presented other support in influencing the implementation of social sustainability. Table 7.5 summarises the findings and a discussion of these findings then follows.

Table 7.6: Other Support Provided by NGOs

NGO Support:	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	Overall Strength	Total
To gain political influence	✓		✓	Moderate	2
To gain government financial support		✓	✓	Moderate	2
To develop new market	✓		✓	Moderate	2

Firstly, NGOs are seeking to assist small-farm holders to gain political influence. This support consists of a range of initiatives such as creating programs to empower small farm-holders and to provide an opportunity platform for the voices of small farm-holders to be heard during policy making. NGOs have been focusing on small farm-holders

because in this context, these rice producers are earning the least benefits, financially, in the supply chain. Furthermore, NGOs explained that small-farm holders should have a clear understanding of their rights when implementing government policies, standards or guidelines, i.e. social sustainability. NGOs perceived that when this has been achieved, a more successful implementation of social sustainability can be achieved. As stated by the NGOs:

- “...our main objective of working [on social sustainability initiatives] with other NGOs is to empower small farm-holders to have their voice heard, to create strong and independent farmers” (NGO1-I1)
- “...one of our aims is to propose to the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] farmers council, that farmers voices should be heard in policy making...it is not an easy feat to convince all the member states to favour this motion, but we will continue to pursue it until farmers are heard” (NGO3-I1)
- “...business owners, small farm-holders should have their voices heard in decision making processes related to their land and trade as their livelihoods depends on it and we take this important role to make sure it happens” (NGO3-I2)

Secondly, NGO support is also found in their efforts to engage with other organisation such as the Government to seek additional assistance for the supply chain. The example for this is seeking financial assistance such as subsidies to ease financial burdens related to the implementation of social sustainability. This is consistent with one of the barriers, i.e. high cost which has been identified throughout the supply chain. Furthermore, the NGOs indicated that their role also extends to moderating any policies introduced related to social sustainability and to encourage the adoption of international standards that are

relevant and important for the supply chain. As stated by the NGOs:

- *“...the implementation of sustainable initiatives requires additional funds and we are currently engaging with Government departments to have this available for small farm holders...additional funds, grants or subsidies will definitely ease the supply chain’s financial burdens” (NGO2-I1)*
- *“...in this country, we do sometimes work along-with the government especially working on important standards such as social sustainability...this is because we believe in open dialogues which refers to open discussions with the government, private sector, farmers or consumer representatives” (NGO2-I2)*
- *“...other NGOs are working on similar issues as us and we also partner with other organisations so we can make a bigger difference in the industry...we want to vastly improve the people’s awareness of social sustainability, we want to promote social safety, ISO26000 is one of the key standards that we are pushing for every organisation to adopt and look at” (NGO3-I1)*

Thirdly, NGOs are also creating initiatives for the supply chain to develop their businesses sustainably. For example, NGOs are helping organisations to find new markets after being awarded certification and accreditation related to social sustainability. The aim of this effort is to increase their ability to expand their market both locally and internationally and one of the main focuses for this support is to eradicate poverty which is often associated with the agriculture industry. Hence, this NGOs support is important because it could create better opportunities for the supply chain through the implementation of social sustainability. As stated by the NGOs:

- “... we try our best to work on other areas with the farmers, such as looking for potential new markets after getting accreditation or certification” (NGO1-I1)
- “...the main objective here is the eradication of poverty and the agriculture industry is one of the main areas of focus...we aim to help small-scale producers reach out to more markets, both locally and internationally...improved demands and fair trade will provide a better opportunity for them to maximise financial profit” (NGO3-I2)

Furthermore, NGOs provide support downstream of the supply chain through an initiative referred to as market transformation. Market transformation is an initiative aimed to increase the demand and raise consumer awareness for sustainably produced products such as rice. For example, NGOs are encouraging retailers to create new and/or more shelf space for sustainably produced products in their retail stores or supermarkets.

- “...downstream of the supply chain, we have a department called the market transformation initiative...this department focuses on changing consumer buying patterns and awareness on sustainability issues” (NGO1-I1)
- “...our organisation is responsible to create awareness amongst consumers through the creation of sustainable shelves in local retail stores and supermarkets...this is an initiative that will benefit the agriculture industry and more specifically in your case, the rice supply chain” (NGO1-I2)

7.5 Comparison of the Findings with the Extant Literature

The extant literature has discussed the role of Government and NGOs on the implementation of sustainability in the supply chain. The role of Government is associated with regulative measures and law control (Hussain et al. 2018; Abdullah and Yaakub, 2015; Zhu et al. 2013) and NGOs are associated with the ability to influence public opinions and collaborate with firms (Meixell and Luoma, 2015).

Several contradictory findings were found on the role of Government where, Government were not found to be influential in selecting socially sustainable suppliers and furthermore, no motivation for proactive sustainable behaviour was found (Ehrgott et al. 2007). However, a recent study by Hussain et al. (2018) have found that Government in United Arab Emirates (UAE) played an important role in influencing the implementation of social sustainability in the healthcare supply chain. For example, Hussain et al. (2018) explained that Government were involved in the auditing of a hospital's social practices, policies and enforcing regulations and moreover, this has been emphasised as having a positive impact on the hospital organisations becoming more socially sustainable.

This study complements the findings of Hussain et al. (2018) on the positive role of Government and provides an extension of this role on a multiple supply chain perspective in an emerging economy context. Our study suggests that Government plays a significant role in exerting coercive pressures such as through government policies, monitoring, enforcement and penalties and this is perceived to have a positive influence on the supply chain's implementation of social sustainability. Moreover, the Government were also found to be involved in educating the supply chain on important social sustainability guidelines such as on work permits, workplace insurance and pension. This has not been presented in the extant literature thus far, hence, in this context, the

Government's role is believed to have extended from exerting regulatory pressures to improving supply chain's awareness and knowledge on social sustainability initiatives.

The role NGOs have been found to be more significant in the implementation of socially sustainable supply chains (Mont and Leire, 2009). Gold et al. (2013) underlined that one of the roles that NGOs play in the supply chain is collaborating with organisations to support them in their implementation of social initiatives through learning. Furthermore, Morais and Silvestre (2018) found that NGOs are seeking to improve the livelihood of women in the supply chain by training them to be better entrepreneurs and to give them empowerment.

This study complements the extant literature on the role of NGOs and found that NGOs are more proactive in providing other support such as: assisting the supply chain to gain political influence, financial support and new markets. The NGOs observed that this additional support is influential in encouraging organisations to implement social sustainability. Moreover, the NGOs are actively involved in upstream and downstream education to improve awareness and knowledge through various training programs.

7.6 Conclusion

The findings above have provided a better understanding of the role of stakeholders in the implementation of social sustainability in the Malaysian rice supply chain. Two types of stakeholders, i.e. Government and NGOs were studied, and the study found that the Government was more influential in exerting coercive pressures on the supply chain. This is perceived to have a significant effect on various aspects of social sustainability such as workplace safety and health, appropriate work permits and visas and pension savings. On the other hand, NGOs were found to be more influential in exerting normative pressures and providing other additional support to promote awareness and

knowledge of social sustainability and seek to improve the livelihoods of small producers in the supply chain. The next chapter will draw conclusions regarding the main overall contributions of this study.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this final chapter is to summarise and discuss the findings and overall conclusions for this study. Firstly, the research contributions are discussed in two sections: (i) the answers to the research questions will be presented summarising the empirical evidence (Section 8.2.1); and (ii) the finalised conceptual framework is illustrated and discussed, indicating where it is based on empirical evidence and/or literature evidence (Section 8.2.2). Furthermore, an explanation of the relationship links within the conceptual framework will be presented. Secondly, the managerial and practical implications are discussed to suggest further development and improvements for practitioners and stakeholders in the light of the evidence found on current social sustainability implementation in the supply chain (Section 8.3). Finally, several limitations of this study are discussed (Section 8.4) and this is followed by suggestions for future research (Section 8.5).

8.2 Research Contributions

Grounded in the research objectives, this study has two research contributions to the SSCM literature. Firstly, a conceptual framework, which underpins the study, was developed following the completion of a systematic literature review of the extant literature of SSCM (see Chapter 2). The studies in the area of socially SSCM have been probed to create interaction links between the constructs in the conceptual framework. Secondly, the study contributes towards providing empirical evidence for the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The empirical analysis has led towards the development of an in-depth understanding on how social sustainability

is implemented – specifically, from the perspectives of a food supply chain in a developing country context.

This section is divided into two. Firstly, section 8.2.1 revisits the research questions for the study, and provides evidence from the study which responds to these questions. Secondly, section 8.2.2 presents the revised, final conceptual framework and discusses the proposed interactions within the framework.

8.2.1 Answering the Research Questions

This section seeks to summarise and emphasise the key findings from the study. This study was based on five research questions - each research question along with the evidence will be discussed in turn below.

- **Research Question 1:** How can a greater understanding of barriers and enablers, from the perspective of multiple supply chain actors within a developing country context, aid in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain?

The study has found different types of barriers and enablers associated with the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The barriers found are: *behavioural issues, high cost, market forces, process delay, lack of resources, lack of expertise, lack of clear guidelines and poverty*. The enablers found: *management support, consistent with labour law and consistent with certification requirement*.

The barriers and enablers provide better understanding of how barriers and enablers are perceived in the multiple tiers of the supply chain. For example, high cost is strong in all tiers of the supply chain, whereas, poverty is only experienced in the farmer tier. The significance of these findings could benefit the supply chain in either increasing the power of the enablers or overcoming the barriers that could lead

towards better implementation of social sustainability. Moreover, the study contributes towards presenting significant insights and a better understanding of the types of barriers and enablers relevant in two contexts, which are: the food supply chain perspectives and developing country context.

- **Research Question 2:** How do institutional pressures (i.e. coercive, mimetic, and normative) influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

This study has found that all three types of institutional pressures have influenced the implementation of social sustainability. Firstly, three types of coercive pressures are found: Government, buyer power and employee power. Secondly, mimetic pressures found are: certified exemplar and competitor exemplar. Thirdly, normative pressures are upstream/downstream education, and sustainability associations. The study has found that coercive pressure is the strongest pressure amongst the three. For example, the evidence highlights strong Government enforcement and penalty which coerced the supply chain towards implementation. In addition, the evidence shows that the supply chain is receptive to normative pressures. For example, the pressure for upstream/downstream education has a positive influence on supply chain actors actively taking part in training and learning initiatives which aims to improve current knowledge and skills related to social practices. Mimetic pressure was the least influential where the number of exemplars in the supply chain were generally small. The study suggests that neither buyers nor suppliers in the supply chain were significantly better at social practices compared to the other, hence, making mimetic pressure still a weak pressure.

- **Research Question 3:** How do institutional logics influence the decisions made by organisations towards the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

Two types of institutional logics found in this study are: financial logic and sustainability logic. Firstly, financial logic was a dominant logic for the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. The evidence found that supply chain actors were only convinced to implement if the social initiative could increase profitability or promote financial stability. Consequently, sustainability logic was a moderate strength logic across all the tiers in the supply chain. This is perceived to be because, the significant challenges such as high cost of implementing social sustainability, have strengthened organisational focus on the dominant financial logic for the supply chain.

- **Research Question 4:** How do organisations deal with institutional complexity in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

Financial logic and sustainability logic were found to be strong and moderate respectively, across the multiple tiers in the supply chain. Hence, institutional complexity was not found. Following the answers in RQ3, the dominant financial logic is perceived to have been influenced by the commercial nature of the supply chain.

- **Research Question 5:** How do stakeholders (government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) seek to influence the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain in a developing country context?

Government and NGOs have a strong and influential role on the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. Following the answers in RQ2, these stakeholders have exerted strong coercive and normative pressures on the supply chain. The evidence has largely emphasised on actions taken by the Government such as the enforcement of labour law-related legislations such as social security, pensions, provident funds on the supply chain. Furthermore, large monetary penalties and severe jail time are to be served if informality is found. On the other hand, the evidence also suggest that NGOs are taking strong progressive actions to raise awareness and to improve the social sustainability implementation in the supply chain. Furthermore, NGOs are actively involved in aiding the supply chain to gain political influence, to gain government financial support and to develop new markets – as part of their social objectives.

8.2.2 The Conceptual Framework Revised

As first discussed in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.3), a conceptual framework was developed from the review of the extant literature. The conceptual framework proposes interactions around the themes from the literature, i.e. institutional pressures, institutional logics, institutional complexity, barriers and enablers. The proposed interactions aim to develop a better understanding of the relationship between these themes specifically towards becoming a more socially sustainable supply chain. Subsequently, using the empirical evidence from this study, the conceptual framework has been revised as illustrated in

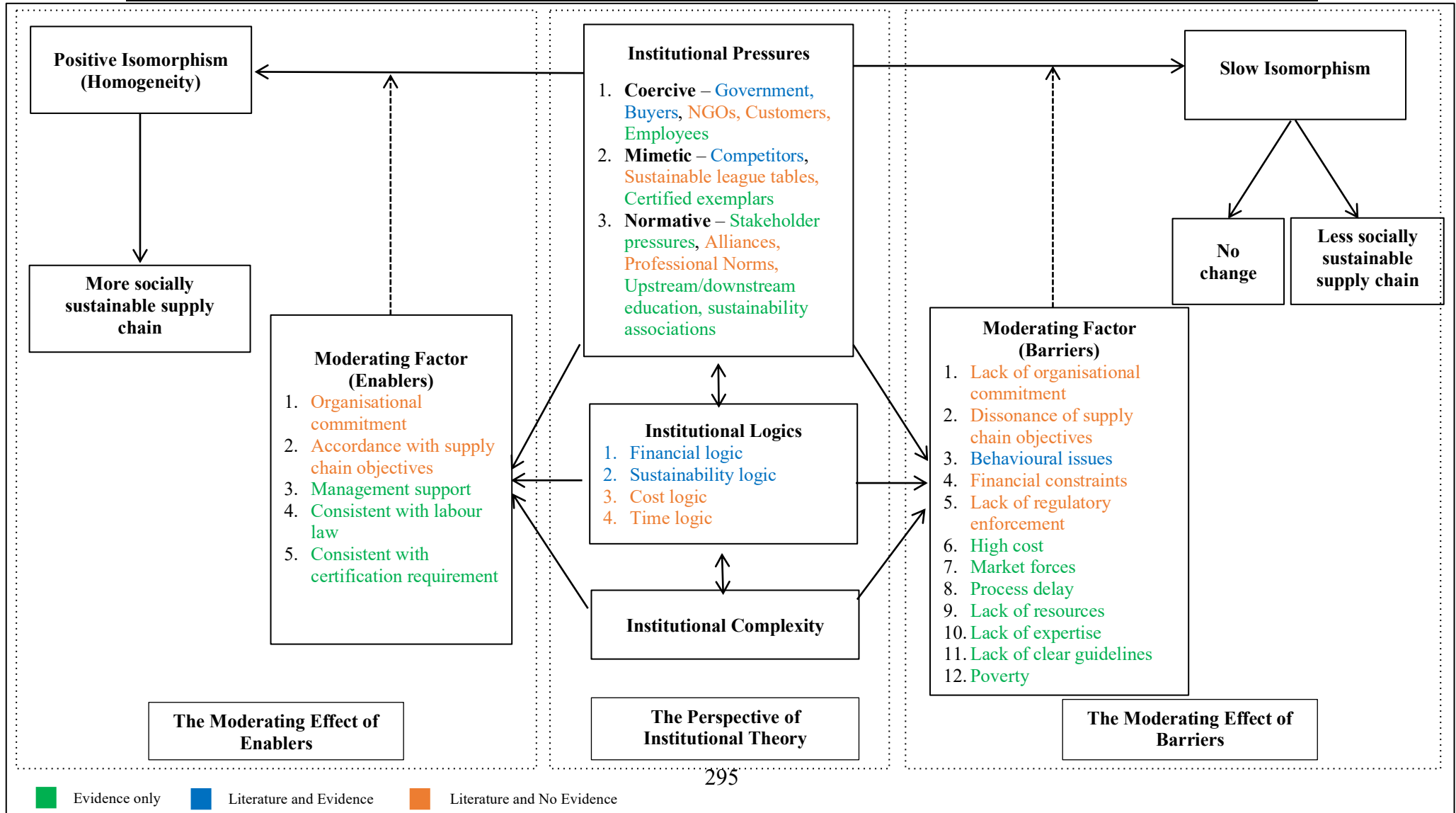
Figure 8.1. In this revised final conceptual model, the constituent parts of some of the key constructs are illustrated using three colours: green, blue and orange. The *green* is intended to illustrate new empirical evidence only found in this study, the *blue* are evidence found both from the literature and the empirical evidence of this study and finally, *orange* reflects evidence only found in the literature.

It is noteworthy to highlight organisational commitment and management support (i.e. enablers) and; financial constraints and high cost (i.e. barriers). The terms could be argued to be similar. However, the study only found weak to moderate management support in the supply chain, which is suggested to be in contrast to the level of organisational commitment discussed in the literature. Furthermore, the evidence from the study emphasises the significantly high and increasing cost for the supply chain to implement social sustainability. In contrast to the literature, the study focuses on challenges prior to making decisions for implementation, which is different to the impact of making poor decisions on employees as a result of financial constraints whilst implementing social sustainability as discussed in the literature. With reference to this final revised conceptual framework, the following discussion will present a comprehensive explanation around the proposed interactions in the conceptual framework.

▪ ***The moderating effect of enablers on institutional pressures and positive isomorphism***

The first interaction proposed is the moderating effect of enablers on institutional pressures and positive isomorphism.

Figure 8.1 Revised Conceptual Framework
The Impact of Barriers and Enablers on Social Sustainability in the supply chain using the Institutional Theory Perspective



As illustrated in Figure 8.1, the institutional pressures found in this study are: Government, buyers and employee pressures (*coercive pressures*); certified exemplars, competitor exemplars (*mimetic pressures*), upstream/downstream education, and sustainability associations (*normative pressures*); and the enablers found are: management support, consistent with labour law and consistent with certification requirement.

Prior to discussing the moderating effect of enablers, the study proposes an interaction link that *there is a relationship between institutional pressures and enablers*. For example, strong Government monitoring and Government penalty on the supply chain have influenced the supply chain towards the compliance of labour legislations (i.e. enabler) such as: minimum national wage, work permit and visa requirements, social security and provident fund for their employees. Thus, the evidence suggests that institutional pressures could lead towards stronger enablers in the supply chain.

Consequently, *the moderating effect of enablers on the relationship between pressures and positive isomorphism* is discussed. For example, Government coercive pressures such as enforcement of labour legislations and penalty for informality could result in the supply chain becoming more socially sustainability. However, the study suggests that enablers could strengthen this relationship. For example, management support for social initiatives have positively influenced organisations in responding to pressures of complying with employment rights such as the provision of social security and pension, work permit and/or visa (i.e. for foreign workers) and compliance of social-related certifications e.g. MyGAP.

Overall, the evidence initially suggests that institutional pressures could increase the strength of enablers in the supply chain. In addition, enablers have an influential impact on how organisations respond to institutional pressures which could lead towards

positive isomorphism in the implementation of social sustainability. Hence, the study proposes:

Proposition 1: Institutional pressures can strengthen enablers, and in turn, these enablers can strengthen the relationship between institutional pressures and positive isomorphism towards increased social sustainability in the supply chain.

▪ ***The moderating effect of barriers on institutional pressures and slow isomorphism***

The second interaction proposed is the *moderating effect of barriers on institutional pressures and slow isomorphism*. As illustrated in Figure 8.1, the barriers found in this study are: behavioural issues, high cost, market forces, process delay, lack of resources, lack of expertise, lack of clear guidelines and poverty. Prior to discussing the moderating effect of barriers, the study proposes an interaction link that *there is a relationship between institutional pressures and barriers*. For example, Government monitoring and penalty are strong coercive pressures found in the supply chain. However, behavioural issues and poverty challenges were still strong barriers which challenges the social sustainability implementation in the supply chain. Hence, although pressures should weaken the strength of barriers, the evidence suggests that strong barriers could weaken the impact of institutional pressures on the supply chain.

Consequently, the study proposes that *barriers have a moderating effect on the relationship between institutional pressures and slow isomorphism*. For example, Government departments have strong enforcement of social initiatives such as: MyGAP certifications, work permits for foreign workers, social security and provident funds for employees. However, process delay, behavioural issues and lack of guidelines have

reduced the influence of the exerted pressures, thereby leading towards a slower response to the pressures for social sustainability implementation.

Overall, the study initially suggests that institutional pressure could potentially reduce the strength of barriers in the supply chain. Simultaneously, strong barriers have reduced the influence of institutional pressures on the supply chain and result in a slower response to pressures for social sustainability implementation. Therefore, the moderating impact of barriers on the relationship between institutional pressures and slow isomorphism could lead to a lesser socially sustainable supply chain. Hence, the study proposes:

Proposition 2: Institutional pressures can weaken barriers, but at the same time, these barriers can weaken the influence of the institutional pressures and lead to slow isomorphism towards social sustainability in the supply chain.

▪ ***The relationship between institutional pressures and logics***

The third interaction proposed is *the relationship between institutional pressures and logics*. As illustrated in Figure 8.1, two logics found in this study are: financial logic and sustainability logic. For example, the upstream/downstream education normative pressure has influenced supply chain actors to participate in events aiming to improve their current knowledge of social practices. The evidence suggests that activity of this kind has led to a shift from weak to moderate sustainability logic in the supply chain. However, despite this strong institutional pressure, financial logic remained dominant in every tier of the supply chain studied. Therefore, it is concluded that in a commercial supply chain, such as the one studied here, it is unlikely that a wholesale shift will be observed from a dominant financial logic to a dominant sustainability logic.

Overall, although it is perceived that strong institutional pressures could shift the dominant logic to sustainability logic, this is suggested to be unlikely in a commercial supply chain. The impact of institutional pressures on logic shift is therefore weakened by the nature of the supply chain, in which financial logic remained dominant and strong across all tiers. Hence, the study proposes:

Proposition 3: Despite the potential for institutional pressures to shift the dominant logic to a sustainability logic, financial logic remains dominant in every tier of the commercial supply chain.

▪ ***The relationship between logics and enablers***

The fourth interaction proposed is *the relationship between institutional logics and enablers*. For example, sustainability logics could influence the way organisations respond to the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. In particular, management support enables organisations to participate in education initiatives (i.e. normative pressure) and compliance of certification requirements enables organisations to be MyGAP certified (i.e. coercive pressure). Overall, the study suggests that when sustainability logic is an underlying factor influencing organisations to implement social sustainability, the effectiveness of enablers could be enhanced. At the same time, this relationship will lead towards the positive response to institutional pressures which in turn could result in the supply chain becoming more socially sustainable. Hence, the study proposes:

Proposition 4: Sustainability logic can influence the effectiveness of enablers that in turn strengthen the relationship between institutional pressures and positive isomorphism towards increased social sustainability in the supply chain.

▪ ***The relationship between logics and barriers***

The fifth interaction proposed is the relationship between institutional logics and barriers. In particular, the strong financial logics have influenced the way supply chain actors perceive the barriers in the implementation for social sustainability. For example, when the supply chain has profit maximisation as a logic for implementing social sustainability, high cost will be perceived as a strong barrier as it goes against their dominant logics. Overall, when financial logic is an underlying factor for the implementation of social sustainability, there is an influential impact on the perceived barriers. Simultaneously, this will reduce the impact of institutional pressures on weakening the barriers and lead towards slow isomorphism and lesser socially sustainable supply chain. Hence, the study proposes:

Proposition 5: Financial logic can influence the barriers that in turn weaken the impact of institutional pressures and lead to slow isomorphism towards social sustainability in the supply chain.

▪ **Discussion of Unexplained Relationship Links**

The empirical findings for this study have been unable to further explain several proposed links in the conceptual framework. These links are the interactions associated with institutional complexity. As first discussed in Chapter 6, a multiplicity of logics was not found in the supply chain because financial logics and sustainability logics remained

strong and moderate respectively across the supply chain. Hence, the links between institutional complexity with logics, enablers and barriers were not found. These findings are consistent with Glover et al. (2014) who similarly did not identify institutional complexity in the commercial UK dairy supply chain study. The similarity between both studies further confirms that, in commercial supply chains, financial logic is expected to remain dominant.

However, this study concludes that the relationship between logics and complexity is still valid, given that it was initially proposed in the original conceptual framework in chapter 2 based on evidence from the extant literature by Sayed et al. (2017). Sayed et al. (2017) found institutional complexity occurring in the context of a mixed public and private sector supply chain, which was therefore not an entirely commercial supply chain. In this case, Sayed et al. (2017) found that financial logic was stronger upstream of the UK Higher Education food and catering supply chain, and that sustainability logic was stronger downstream. Subsequently, they concluded that the level of institutional complexity could influence the extent of changes in SSCM practices, with more radical change possible when institutional complexity is lower.

8.2.3 Summarising the Theoretical Contribution

The aim of this section is to summarise the theoretical contribution of this Ph.D. The previous sections have discussed the research questions and answers (Section 8.2.1) and the conceptual framework and presented five propositions of relationship linkages between institutional theory constructs (i.e. institutional pressures and institutional logics), barriers and enablers (Section 8.2.2). Subsequently, the objective of the discussion in this section is to consolidate the discussions in Section 8.2.1 and 8.2.2 and provide linkages between the findings of this Ph.D. and the extant literature of SSCM.

Firstly, this study presents a timely theoretical contribution to the SSCM literature, specifically by addressing the research gap of socially SSCM from a developing country perspective. At present, the extant literature of socially SSCM have emphasised the need for more perspectives from developing countries (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Huq and Stevenson, 2018). This need for significant theoretical development on developing countries was highlighted because of the pressing social issues in global supply chains (Mani and Gunasekaran, 2018; Huq and Stevenson, 2018). For this reason, studies on SSCM have explored and underline some noteworthy characteristics of developing countries such as: the different pressures for/and coping mechanisms when implementing social sustainability in organisations and/or supply chains (Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Jia et al. 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Nakamba et al. 2017).

Secondly, the research contribution of this Ph.D. is positioned in the SSCM literature where this study seeks to provide a better understanding of implementing social sustainability through (i) the different types of pressures, logics, barriers and enablers and; (ii) the relationship linkages between these pressures, logics, barriers and enablers – specifically from the perspectives of a multiple-tier supply chain in a developing country. Huq and Stevenson (2018) and Hussain et al. (2018) have both explored institutional pressures, logics, barriers and enablers of implementing social sustainability from a developing and developed country perspective, respectively. Huq and Stevenson (2018) explored the relationship between institutional pressures and decoupling in the Bangladesh apparel industry; Hussain et al. (2018) have found weak regulatory structures and suppliers' social compliance as examples of barriers and enablers in the UAE healthcare industry. Following on, to date, only Sayed et al. (2017) and Glover et al. (2014) have explored the intersections between institutional pressures, logics and

complexity in the UK higher institutions and UK dairy supply chains, respectively. Sayed et al. (2017) explored the intersections across UK public and private sector supply chains for SSCM practices, whereas Glover et al. (2014) have found that financial logics remained dominant given the institutional pressures in the UK dairy supply chain.

Therefore, the theoretical contribution for this study extends the work of these studies, specifically by expanding the knowledge of socially SSCM from a developing country context. Although these previous studies have explored institutional pressures, logics, complexity, barriers and enablers, either independently or collectively; or from a developed and/or developing country context – this study bridges this gap in the extant literature between (i) the important mechanisms for developing a socially SSCM, (ii) the characteristics of the developing country context and (iii) advancing the current literature on socially SSCM from the developing country context. In particular, the extant literature of SSCM have explored various social sustainability initiatives in developing countries by exploring the supply chain collaboration, organisational culture, risk management, strategy, relationship between practices and performances and transparency (Lee et al. 2019; Jajja et al. 2019a; Villena et al. 2018; Croom et al. 2018; Koster et al. 2019). Yet, social practices remained challenging for supply chains in emerging economies given the inefficient regulatory institutions and strong turbulence for social issues (Lee et al. 2019; Silvestre et al. 2018; Soundararajan and Brammer, 2018). Hence, the extant literature of SSCM have continued to call for greater scrutiny of what constitutes the implementation of social sustainability (i.e. enablers), how organisations cope with challenges (i.e. barriers) and how stakeholders (i.e. institutional pressures) influence the decisions related to social sustainability in supply chains (i.e. institutional logics), specifically from the developing country perspectives.

Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 present a summary of this discussion by providing a comparison between the findings from the extant literature and from this Ph.D. in terms of key characteristics of the developing country context and the role of external stakeholders (i.e. Government and NGOs) in this context, respectively. The summary of the state of the art in terms of key developing country characteristics, as presented in Table 8.1, indicates that this Ph.D. has contributed towards discovering new barriers such as: *behavioural issues*, *market forces* and *process delay*; enablers such as *consistent with certification requirement*; coercive pressures from *Government* and *employees*; mimetic pressures such as *certified exemplars*; normative pressures such as *sustainability associations*; institutional logics such as *financial* and *sustainability* logics. Subsequently, the role of external stakeholders (see Table 8.2) within a developing country context, has only been looked at in three other prior studies (i.e. Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Abdullah and Yaakub, 2015 and Zhu et al. 2013). These authors have looked at the role of stakeholders using the survey approach from the perspectives of the supply chain organisations. On the other hand, this Ph.D study has explored the role of Government and NGO by interviewing them directly to determine their own understanding of their role. Hence, this is a timely contribution where this study seeks to provide a better understanding of the role of Government and NGOs, specifically in their efforts to ensure better implementation of social sustainability initiatives in the supply chain. For example, this study has found evidence of strong coercive pressures from the Government e.g. *Government penalty* and strong normative pressures from NGOs, e.g. education and training for the supply chain.

Table 8.1: Characteristics of the Developing Country Context

Characteristics of Developing Country Context: State of the Art	Source																			
	Extant Literature																	This Ph.D. Study		
	2019			2018				2017				2016						Supply Chain		
	De Andrade et al.	Koster et al.	Lee et al.	Huq and Stevenson	Silvestre	Silvestre et al.	Soundararajan & Brammer	Villena and Gioia	Dubey et al.	Rueda et al.	Orzes et al.	Clarke and Boersma	Mani et al. (a)	Mani et al. (b)	Mani et al. (c)	Syuiab	Mzembe et al.	Hsu et al.	Farmer Tier	Distributor Tier
Challenges / Barriers:																				
Corruption					✓															
High cost		✓										✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Lack of policies and regulation		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Lack of resources	✓	✓						✓												✓
Mock compliance			✓								✓									
Negligence of labour rights			✓																	
Poor working conditions			✓																	
Behavioural issues																		✓	✓	✓
Market forces																				✓
Process delay																				✓
Motivations/Enablers																				
Customer pressure	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓						✓				

Characteristics of Developing Country Context: State of the Art	Source																			
	Extant Literature																	This Ph.D. Study		
	2019			2018					2017			2016						Supply Chain		
	De Andrade et al.	Koster et al.	Lee et al.	Huq and Stevenson	Silvestre	Silvestre et al.	Soundararajan & Brammer	Villena and Gioia	Dubey et al.	Rueda et al.	Orzes et al.	Clarke and Boersma	Mani et al. (a)	Mani et al. (b)	Mani et al. (c)	Syuiab	Mzembe et al.	Hsu et al.	Farmer Tier	Distributor Tier
Business viability	✓	✓						✓									✓			
Management support																	✓		✓	✓
Consistent with labour law																	✓		✓	
Consistent with certification requirement																				✓
Institutional Pressures																				
Coercive																				
Buyers				✓															✓	✓
Government																			✓	✓
Employees																			✓	
Mimetic																				
Competitors				✓																✓
Certified Exemplars																			✓	✓
Normative																				
Upstream/downstream education				✓															✓	✓
Sustainability associations																			✓	✓

Characteristics of Developing Country Context: State of the Art	Source																			
	Extant Literature																This Ph.D. Study			
	2019			2018				2017				2016				Supply Chain				
	De Andrade et al.	Koster et al.	Lee et al.	Huq and Stevenson	Silvestre	Silvestre et al.	Soundararajan & Brammer	Villena and Gioia	Dubey et al.	Rueda et al.	Orzes et al.	Clarke and Boersma	Mani et al. (a)	Mani et al. (b)	Mani et al. (c)	Syuiab	Mzembe et al.	Hsu et al.	Farmer Tier	Distributor Tier
Institutional Logics																				
Financial logics																		✓	✓	✓
Sustainability logics																		✓	✓	✓

Table 8.2 The role of external stakeholders in the developing country context

The Role of External Stakeholders	Source				
	Extant Literature			This Ph.D. Study	
	Morais and Silvestre (2018)	Abdullah and Yaakub (2015)	Zhu et al. (2013)	Government	NGO
Coercive Pressures					
Government monitoring				✓	
Government enforcement		✓	✓	✓	
Government penalty				✓	
Normative Pressures					
Social certification opportunities					✓
Education and training				✓	✓
Other Support:					
To gain political influences	✓				✓
To gain financial support					✓
To develop new markets	✓				✓

Furthermore, NGOs are providing other support, e.g. to help *gain political influence* and *gain financial support* as part their initiatives to encourage better social sustainability implementation in the supply chain.

Thirdly, this study also presents a significant theoretical contribution to the broader body of knowledge of the socially SSCM literature, and this contribution is argued below to be relevant beyond the contextual gap of the developing country. This contribution is summarised in Table 8.3, which presents a comparison between the extant literature and the findings of this Ph.D in terms of the five relationship linkages between the constructs studied here, i.e. institutional pressures, institutional logics, barriers and enablers. This shows that there are five prior papers, all of which have only focused on one such relationship linkage – that between institutional pressures and institutional logics. Of these five prior papers, three have explored the developed country context (i.e. Leon-Bravo et al. 2019; Sayed et al. 2017; Tate et al. 2010) and the remaining two explored

the developing country context (i.e. Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Yawar and Kauppi, 2018). For example, Leon-Bravo et al. (2019) investigated four cases in the Italian food supply chain and proposed that sustainable practices are influenced by the way organisations perceive institutional pressures. Furthermore, the authors propose that organisations' perception of institutional pressures varies in the different tiers of the supply chain and is influenced by the organisation's size and level of integration. In another example, Huq and Stevenson (2018) explored Bangladeshi apparel suppliers and propose that institutional pressures reduces the trade-off between social and economic logics in the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. Whilst this Ph.D also investigates this relationship linkage, proposition 3 is nonetheless novel as it focuses on how financial logics remain dominant in a commercial supply chain context, despite institutional pressures to move towards a more dominant sustainability logic.

Table 8.3 also illustrates that the remaining four propositions (i.e. Proposition 1, 2, 4 and 5) are also significant contributions to the SSCM extant literature, as none of the relationships covered in these propositions have been investigated previously, for either a developed or a developing country context. Therefore, propositions 1, 2, 4 and 5 presents a better understanding of: (i) how enablers and barriers can affect the influence of institutional pressures; and (ii) how institutional logics can influence enablers and barriers, and vice versa - which could either lead towards positive isomorphism or slow isomorphism towards the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain. All of the five propositions are argued to provide a broader understanding of these relationship linkages for the SSCM literature, and not to only be relevant to the developing country context. For instance, when social sustainability is implemented in the supply chain, then: (i) the effectiveness of institutional pressures is not necessarily influenced by a context, but rather hinges on the enablers and barriers, and the way

organisations and/or supply chains respond to them (i.e. proposition 1 and 2); and (ii) the way organisations and/or supply chains perceive their enablers and barriers will influence their institutional logics – which also suggests that this relationship is detached from the context in which it is studied.

Table 8.3: Summary of the theoretical contribution towards the relationship linkages between key constructs

Relationship Between Constructs	Source									
	Extant Literature					This Ph.D. Study				
	Tate et al. (2010)	Sayed et al. (2017)	Huq and Stevenson (2018)	Yawar and Kauppi (2018)	Leon-Bravo et al. (2019)	Proposition 1	Proposition 2	Proposition 3	Proposition 4	Proposition 5
The moderating effect of enablers on the relationship between pressures and positive isomorphism						✓				
The moderating effect of barriers on the relationship between pressures and slow isomorphism							✓			
The relationship between institutional pressures and logics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
The relationship between logics and enablers									✓	
The relationship between logics and barriers										✓

Although it could be argued that social issues are more pertinent and the coping mechanisms are weaker in developing countries as compared to developed countries (Huq and Stevenson, 2018; Jia et al. 2018; Morais and Silvestre, 2018; Nakamba et al. 2017), there are however other prior studies in the developed country context such that suggest for example that sustainability logic and coercive pressures can be weak in this context also. For example, there are the findings related to the dominance of financial logics in the UK's dairy supply chain (Glover et al. 2014); and weak regulatory systems

in UAE's healthcare supply chain (Hussain et al. 2018). This further confirms that the relationship propositions may still be relevant from a supply chain perspective in a developed country context, specifically when social sustainability is implemented. Thus it is concluded that there is no definitive evidence as yet to suggest that the theoretical contribution encapsulated in the five propositions developed in section 8.2.2 above is specific to the developing country context, but that further research is needed to determine whether such evidence can be found. Thus they are currently proposed to be of more general relevance.

As further discussed in Section 8.5 below, the propositions of this Ph.D. presents an opportunity for future studies to explore these relationships in several instances such as: exploring the differences between developed or developing country context, other types of supply chains (i.e. non-commercial) and sectors (i.e. private or public).

8.3 Managerial and Practical Implications

The study proposes several managerial and practical implications for the Malaysian food supply chain. Firstly, the conflict of interest between Government and supply chain producers as related to the ceiling-price set for staple products calls for policy change. The Government interest in protecting the needs of end consumers has resulted in poor consideration of the welfare of supply chain producers. Any revision of the ceiling price policy should include the rights of both supply chain producers and end consumers. Secondly, NGOs could gain new insights specifically regarding the poverty and behavioural issues found in the study. There is a need for additional support and development of better initiatives to address these social issues and aid towards overcoming shortcomings found in the supply chain.

Secondly, the study offers a better understanding of the role of pressures on the implementation of social sustainability. The role of Government and NGOs have had a significant impact on socially SSCM in the supply chain in this developing country context, however, the study suggests that other supply chain actors could exert stronger pressures. For example, retailers should exert stronger pressures for socially produced products from their suppliers. Specifically, the terms and conditions related to social sustainability should be included in their procurement contracts. In addition, an understanding of the types of enablers and barriers found could facilitate in strengthening the current enablers and seeking better approaches to overcome challenges related to the implementation of social sustainability. For example, the distributors and farmers tier should respond to challenges such as high cost, lack of guidelines and lack of resources by seeking support from stakeholders or other available assistance.

Overall, the study can aid supply chains more generally to better understand the current implementation of social sustainability. The role of enablers has a significant influence on the exerted pressures in the supply chain. In particular, when there are strong enablers, it is likely that supply chains will positively respond to the institutional pressures which, in turn, could result in more socially sustainable practices. In contrast, supply chain actors should seek ways to overcome barriers. Specifically, when barriers are strong, it is likely to weaken the influence of pressures which could delay the supply chain implementation of social sustainability. Moreover, the institutional logics present a better understanding of how different supply chain actors could respond to the implementation of social sustainability. Specifically, a better understanding into the nature of the supply chain (i.e. commercial vs non-commercial) and the perceived benefits from social sustainability implementation could aid in an easier shift of dominant logics.

8.4 Limitation

The study has several limitations. Firstly, it could be argued that the selected case studies were limited to a single-perspective, which is the manager or business-owner perspective – this choice was made as the study perceived decision-makers to play a significant role in the implementation of social sustainability and could best present the insights needed for the study. However, it is recognised that the research is limited in capturing the employees' perspectives which might have contributed towards a more comprehensive, and presumably, a more diverse findings on the phenomenon studied.

Secondly, the study has only considered two types of stakeholder, which are Government and NGOs – as the study deemed these stakeholders could provide significant insights relevant to the implementation of social sustainability. The study recognises that there is limitation in considering other relevant stakeholders such as middle-persons or labour agencies which recruit foreign employees for labour intensive industries such as Agriculture, Construction and Manufacturing. The role of these agents could present interesting insights into fostering the rights of foreign employees, who constitutes a large portion of labour in developing countries.

Finally, the study has only focused on one supply chain/industry namely, the food supply chain. The generalisation of findings could be limited as it may differ in other supply chain/industries or countries. For example, other types of supply chain may offer different insights for institutional pressures, enablers and barriers in a developing country context. For example, it could be expected that public sector, such as healthcare and/or education, supply chains could have different institutional logics that influence their implementation of social sustainability. Moreover, the public sector which is Government-owned, and for which the services are either regulated or subsidised by the

Government, could offer a different set of evidence for pressures, logics, enablers and barriers.

8.5 Future Research

In order to address the limitations found in the study, future research is proposed.

Firstly, the conceptual framework could be further explored to develop a better understanding into the implementation of social sustainability. Specifically, given the lack of empirical evidence on institutional complexity, future studies should explore the related links between complexity with enablers, barriers and logics from the social sustainability implementation perspective.

Secondly, future research could explore the regulatory frameworks that underpin the implementation of social sustainability in developing countries - such as the Modern Slavery Act in the UK or the California Act in the USA which are aiming at slavery eradication. Specifically, future research could focus on the comparison between how developing and developed countries undertake these legislations to improve social sustainability in the supply chain. Furthermore, the Stakeholder Theory could be used as a lens to explore the role of stakeholders and the governance of legislations related to social sustainability.

Finally, as discussed in the limitation section, future research should include more perspectives from the supply chain such as, exploring the perspectives of employees and other types of stakeholders such as recruitment agencies. These perspectives could provide a more comprehensive understanding into the implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain.

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APPENDIX 1:

Systematic Literature Review Summary Table

Table A1: Research Themes

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
	Total:		11	3	19	27	55	90	14	116	63
	Authors										
1.	Abdullah and Yaakub (2014)							S			
2.	Abdullah and Yaakub (2015)							S			
3.	Adebanjo et al. (2013)	IT						CS			
4.	Agan et al. (2016)							S			
5.	Ageron et al. (2012)									S	
6.	Ahi and Searcy (2015)				LR	LR		LR			
7.	Amaeshi et al. (2008)	ST								CP	
8.	Amann et al. (2014)	OT									S
9.	Andersen et al. (2009)									CS	
10.	Andrews et al. (2009)									CS	
11.	Arikan et al. (2015)										CP
12.	Arya and Mittendorf (2015)									M	
13.	Awaysheh and Klassen (2010)	RDT								S	S
14.	Ayuso et al. (2013)	SSCM					S				
15.	Baden et al. (2009)									I	I

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
16.	Baden et al. (2011)									S	S
17.	Bai and Sarkis (2010)	OT								M	
18.	Bai and Sarkis (2014)	IT						M			
19.	Barkemeyer and Figge (2014)	RDT								CP	
20.	Becker et al. (2010)						CP			CP	
21.	Belal (2002)										SD
22.	Beske and Seuring (2014)					CP					
23.	Beske et al. (2008)									CP	CP
24.	Beske-Janssen et al. (2015)							LR			
25.	Biazzo and Panizzolo (2000)							CP			
26.	Birkin et al. (2009)									S	
27.	Borjeson et al. (2015)									CP	
28.	Bouchet et al. (2015)	OT					CP M				
29.	Boyd et al. (2007)									CP	
30.	Brammer and Walker (2011)									S	
31.	Brockhaus et al. (2016)	ST				I					
32.	Burchielli et al. (2009)						CS				CS
33.	Bush et al. (2015)									CP	
34.	Byrne and Power (2014)	OT					CS				
35.	Carbone et al. (2012)	IT						SD			
36.	Carter (2000a)						I				
37.	Carter (2000b)						I				
38.	Carter (2004)						S				
39.	Carter (2005)	RBV						S		S	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
40.	Carter and Easton (2011)									LR	
41.	Carter and Jennings (2002a)						I	I		I	
42.	Carter and Jennings (2002b)							S		S	
43.	Carter and Jennings (2004)						S			S	
44.	Carter and Rogers (2008)								LR	LR	
45.	Castka and Balzarova (2008a)										CP
46.	Castka and Balzarova (2008b)										CP
47.	Chae (2015)	OT								SD	
48.	Chen (2016)	RDT					CP				
49.	Chen and Baddam (2015)	OT					M				
50.	Chen and Hao (2015)	OT						M		M	
51.	Chen et al. (2014)	OT					CS				
52.	Cheng et al. (2014)	IT					S				
53.	Chiu and Wang (2015)	ST						S			
54.	Ciliberti et al. (2008a)									CS	CS
55.	Ciliberti et al. (2008b)										LR
56.	Ciliberti et al. (2009)										CP
57.	Collison et al. (2008)										SD
58.	Colwell et al. (2011)	OT									S
59.	Conti, et al. (2006)						S	S			
60.	Cooper et al. (1997)						S				
61.	Cooper et al. (2000)						S				
62.	Crespin-Mazet et al. (2012)						CS				
63.	Cruz (2013)	OT							M		

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
64.	Cruz (2013b)	OT							M		
65.	Darus et al. (2014)	OT									SD
66.	De Bakker and Nijhof (2002)	ST									CP
67.	De Brito et al. (2008)	ST								S	
68.	De Treville and Antonakis (2006)	OT				CP	CP				
69.	De Treville et al. (2005)	OT				CP		CP			
70.	Dos Santos et al. (2013)					CS					
71.	Eadie et al. (2011)									LR	
72.	Ehrgott et al. (2011)	ST					S				
73.	Eltantawy et al. (2009)	OT					S	S			
74.	Eriksson and Svensson (2015)				LR	LR					
75.	Erridge and Hennigan (2012)							S			
76.	Fassin (2008)										CP
77.	Fawcett and Waller (2014)	OT								CP	
78.	Ferrell et al. (2013)	IT					CP				
79.	Fischl et al. (2014)				LR				LR		
80.	Flidner and Majeske (2010)							CP			
81.	Foerstl et al. (2015)	RDT				CS					
82.	Font et al. (2008)						I			I	
83.	Formentini and Taticchi (2016)	OT RBV	CS	CS				CS			
84.	Forsman-Hugg et al. (2013)									CS	
85.	Freise and Seuring (2015)					S				S	
86.	Frostenson and Prenekert (2015)	OT						SD			

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
87.	Fukukawa and Teramoto (2009)									I	
88.	Gimenez and Tachizawa (2012)							LR		LR	LR
89.	Gimenez et al. (2012)							S			
90.	Glover et al. (2014)	IT						I			
91.	Goebel et al. (2012)						S				
92.	Gopalakrishnan et al. (2012)									CS	
93.	Govindan et al. (2016)				LR			LR			
94.	Goworek (2011)						CS				
95.	Graafland (2002)									I	I
96.	Green (1999)							CP			
97.	Griffis et al. (2014)	OT				S					
98.	Gualandris and Kalchschmidt (2014)						S				
99.	Gualandris and Kalchschmidt (2015)	SSCM	RBV					S			
100.	Gualandris et al. (2014)	OT						S			
101.	Gualandris et al. (2015)	OT								CP	
102.	Gugler and Shi (2009)										CP
103.	Hall and Matos (2010)									CS	
104.	Hall et al. (2012)	OT								CS	
105.	Harwood and Humby (2008)						CS		CS	CS	
106.	Harwood et al. (2011)						S				
107.	Hoejmose and Adrien-Kirby (2012)						LR			LR	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
108.	Hoejmose et al. (2013)							S		S	
109.	Hoejmose et al. (2013b)									CS	
110.	Hogevold et al. (2014)							M			
111.	Hollos et al. (2011)							S			
112.	Hsu et al. (2013)							S			
113.	Hsueh (2014)	SSCM				CS	CS				
114.	Huq et al. (2014)	TCT				CS		S			
115.	Husgafvel et al. (2015)						M				
116.	Hutchins and Sutherland (2008)					LR					
117.	Illge and Preuss (2012)										CS
118.	Isaksson et al. (2010)					SD				SD	
119.	Jiang (2009a)	TCE								S	S
120.	Jiang (2009b)	TCE								S	S
121.	Joo et al. (2010)						M	M			
122.	Jorgensen and Knudsen (2006)									S	
123.	Kabongo et al. (2013)	RDT									
124.	Kaptein (2004)										SD
125.	Keating et al. (2008)									CP	CP
126.	Ketola (2010)	OT								CP	
127.	Khalid et al. (2015)	SSCM			LR	LR		LR			
128.	Kirchoff et al. (2015)	OT	GT					GT			
129.	Klassen and Vereecke (2012)	ST						CS	CS	CS	
130.	Kleindorfer et al. (2005)									CP	
131.	Knudsen (2013)									I	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
132.	Kogg and Mont (2012)						CP			CP	
133.	Kolk (2012)									CS	
134.	Kolk and Van Tulder (2002a)									SD	SD
135.	Kolk and Van Tulder (2002b)										CS
136.	Kolk and Van Tulder (2004)									SD	SD
137.	Koplin et al. (2007)								CS	CS	
138.	Kortelainen (2008)										CS
139.	Krause et al. (2009)									CP	
140.	Krueger (2008)										CP
141.	Kudla and Klaas-Wissing (2012)						CS			CS	
142.	Kuei et al. (2015)							S			
143.	Lamberti and Lettieri (2009)									CS	
144.	Larson and Morris (2014)	OT						S			
145.	Lee (2015)	OT						S			
146.	Lee and Kim (2009)										S
147.	Lee et al. (2013)						S			S	
148.	Lehtinen (2012)							CS			
149.	Leire and Mont (2010)										CP
150.	Lemke and Petersen (2013)						CP		CP		
151.	Li et al. (2014)	SDT								CS	
152.	Li et al. (2016)	ST						I			
153.	Lillywhite (2007)										CS
154.	Lim and Phillips (2008)	IT								CS	CS
155.	Lin and Tseng (2016)							S		S	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
156.	Longoni and Cagliano (2015)	OT						S		S	
157.	Lozano and Huisinigh (2011)										GT
158.	Luken and Stares (2005)					CS		CS			
159.	Luo and Zhen (2013)	ST						SD		SD	
160.	Luthra et al.					M S		M S			
161.	MacCarthy et al. (2012)									CP	CP
162.	Maignan et al. (2002)						CP			CP	
163.	Maloni and Brown (2006)									CP	
164.	Mamic (2005)										I
165.	Manning (2013)	ST								LR	
166.	Manning et al. (2006)										M
167.	Markley and Davis (2007)	RBV								CP	
168.	Marshall et al. (2015a)	RBV						LR S			
169.	Marshall et al. (2015b)	SSCM				S		S			
170.	Martinez-Jurado et al. (2014)				LR			LR			
171.	Matthews et al. (2016)	SSCM						SD			
172.	McCarter and Kamal (2013)	OT	CP								
173.	Meckenstock et al. (2015)				LR					LR	
174.	Meehan and Bryde (2011)										S
175.	Meixell and Luoma (2015)							LR			
176.	Mejias et al. (2016)				LR			LR			
177.	Miao et al. (2012)					S	S	S			
178.	Morali and Searcy (2013)	IT						I			
179.	Moxham and Kauppi (2014)	IT RBV						CP		CP	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
180.	Mueller et al. (2009)									SD	SD
181.	Neumuller et al. (2015)									MCS	
182.	New (1997)									CP	
183.	New (2015)		CP								
184.	Ni and Li (2012)	OT					M	M			
185.	Niepce and Molleman (1996)							I			
186.	Nikolaou et al. (2013)					CP					
187.	Nikoloyuk et al. (2010)									CS	
188.	Ntayi et al. 2013)						S				
189.	Ortas et al. (2014)	OT						SD			
190.	Oruezabala and Rico (2012)	OT								I	
191.	Österle et al. (2015)	IT						M			
192.	Pagell and Wu (2009)									CS	
193.	Pagell et al. (2010)									SD	
194.	Panapanaan et al. (2003)					I		I			
195.	Panda et al. 2015)	OT						M			
196.	Park (2005)	OT					S				
197.	Park-poaps and Rees (2010)	ST								S	
198.	Paulraj et al. (2015)	ST						S			
199.	Pedersen (2009)						S			S	
200.	Perez-Aleman (2008)										CP
201.	Perry and Towers (2013)							CS			
202.	Perry et al. (2015)							I			I
203.	Petersen and Lemke (2015)								I		

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
204.	Piecyk and Bjorklund (2015)										SD
205.	Piercy and Rich (2015)									CS	
206.	Pil and Macduffie (1996)							S			
207.	Polonsky and Jevons (2009)									CP	
208.	Porteous et al. (2015)	OT								S	
209.	Pretious and Love (2006)						CP				CP
210.	Preuss (2007)						I			I	
211.	Preuss (2009a)						CS			CS	
212.	Preuss (2009b)						SD				SD
213.	Preuss and Walker (2011)						I				
214.	Prieto-Carron (2008)										CP
215.	Pullman and Dillard (2010)						CS			CS	
216.	Rahim and Wisuttisak (2013)							CP			
217.	Reuter et al. (2010)					S					
218.	Reuter et al. (2012)						S				
219.	Rimington et al. (2006)							CS			
220.	Roberts (2003)										CP
221.	Robinson (2010)									GT	GT
222.	Sahakian and Dunand (2015)							CP			
223.	Sarkis and Dhavale (2015)	OT						M			
224.	Sarkis et al. (2010)					CP					
225.	Schneider and Wallenburgh (2012)	ST								CP	
226.	Seuring and Muller (2008a)		CS								
227.	Seuring and Muller (2008b)		CS							LR	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
228.	Signori, Flint and Golicic (2015)							GT			
229.	Silvestre (2015a)	IT ST OT	CS								
230.	Silvestre (2015b)	ST	GT						GT		
231.	Simpson et al. (2015)				LR						
232.	Singhry (2015)				LR			LR			
233.	Sitek and Wikarek (2015)									M	
234.	Smith and Betts (2015)								CP		
235.	Snider et al. (2013)	IT						S		S	
236.	Sobczak (2003)										CP
237.	Sodhi (2015)	RBV ST OT			LR			LR		LR	
238.	Spekman and Davis (2004)								CP		
239.	Spence and Bourlakis (2009)	SSCM							CS	CS	CS
240.	Stigzelius and Mark-Herbert (2009)										CS
241.	Strand (2009)	ST								CS	
242.	Subramanian et al. (2015)				LR			LR		LR	
243.	Sureeyatanapas et al. (2015)							CS S			
244.	Svensson (2009)						SD				SD
245.	Svensson and Wagner (2012)									CS	
246.	Tachizawa and Wong (2014)				LR	LR					
247.	Tajbakhsh and Hassini (2015)							M CS		M CS	
248.	Taplin et al. (2006)										CP

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
249.	Tate et al. (2010)	IT								SD	
250.	Taticchi et al. (2015)				LR			LR		LR	
251.	Tencati et al. (2008)									S	
252.	Teuscher et al. (2006)								CS		CS
253.	Thornton et al. (2013)	ST						S		S	
254.	Tidy et al. (2016)							SD			
255.	Tiwari et al. (2014)							CP			
256.	Touboulic and Walker (2015a)	OT	CS	CS		CS					
257.	Touboulic and Walker (2015b)	RBV ST IT			LR						
258.	Towers et al. (2013)										CS
259.	Tsoi (2010)	ST					I				
260.	Turker and Altuntas (2014)										SD
261.	Van Hoof and Thiell (2015)	OT						I S			
262.	Van Tulder and Kolk (2001)										CP
263.	Van Tulder et al. (2009)	ST									CS
264.	Varsei et al. (2014)				LR			LR			
265.	Vasileiou and Morris (2006)					I		I			
266.	Vinodh et al. (2011)									CP	
267.	Vurro et al. (2009)									CP	
268.	Walker and Brammer (2009)									S	
269.	Walker and Brammer (2012)					S					
270.	Walker and Jones (2012)	CT					CS			CS	
271.	Walker and Preuss (2008)									CS	

Themes		Theories	Barriers and Challenges of Sustainability	Collaboration	Literature Review	Motivation / Drivers / Enablers of Sustainability	Organizational Culture	Relationship between practices and performances	Risk Management	Strategy	Transparency
272.	Wang and Sarkis (2013)							M			
273.	Wang et al. (2015)									M	
274.	Welford and Frost (2006)									I	I
275.	Wiengarten and Longoni (2015)	RBV TCE		S							
276.	Wiese and Toporowski (2013)	OT									SD
277.	Wild and Zhou (2012)									I	
278.	Wilhelm et al. (2015)		LR		LR						
279.	Wilhelm et al. (2016)	IT						CS		CS	
280.	Winstanley et al. (2002)									CS	CS
281.	Winter and Knemeyer (2013)				LR						
282.	Wittstruck and Teuteberg (2012)							S CP		S	
283.	Worthington (2009)										
284.	Wu and Pagell (2011)						GT				
285.	Xie (2015)									M	
286.	Yakovleva, et al. (2011)							M			
287.	Yu (2008)	ST TCE									CS
288.	Zailani et al. (2012)							S			
289.	Zhang et al. (2016)	ST					M				
290.	Zhu et al. (2016)	ST						SD		SD	
291.	Zorzini et al. (2015)				LR						

APPENDIX 2:

Interview Template and Protocol

Name : Alesia Sigang Gugkang

Supervisor : Professor Linda Hendry

Department : Management Science, Lancaster University Management School,
Lancaster.

The Order of Interview:	
Date and Time of Interview:	
Participant Details	
Name of Interviewee	
Position of Interviewee	
Length of Service	
Company	
Company Details:	
Products and Services	
Number of Employees	
Age of Business	
Parent or Subsidiary	
Yearly Turnover	
Location of Branches (if any)	

Sample of Interview Script

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Checklist / Additional Notes</u>
<p><i>Social Sustainability:</i> What does the term social sustainability mean to you and your organisation?</p>	
<p><i>Coercive Pressure:</i> What are the social standards, codes of conducts and/or guidelines that you are required to adhere to by your buyers, if any?</p>	
<p><i>Mimetic Pressure:</i> Who are the leading companies that you would refer to as a good example towards the implementation of social sustainability?</p>	
<p><i>Normative Pressure:</i> Do you collaborate with other organisations on social initiatives?</p>	
<p><i>Barriers:</i> How successful have you been in implementing social sustainability?</p>	
<p><i>Enablers:</i> What has helped you overcome the problems that you encounter in implementing social sustainability?</p>	
<p><i>Institutional Logics:</i> What are the factors that you consider before implementing social sustainability?</p>	
<p><i>Institutional Complexity:</i> Are there any trade-offs that you have to consider before implementing social sustainability?</p>	

Additional notes (if any):

Participant Information Sheet
January - July, 2016

Social Sustainability in Malaysian Supply Chains

My name is Alesia Gugkang and I am a PhD student in the Management Science Department at Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster, United Kingdom.

What is the study about?

Social sustainability (SS) refers to the organisations' responsibility in taking care of its employees well-being, health and safety; and its impact on the broader local / global community. The aim of this project is to carry out research into the implementation of SS in Malaysian supply chains, specifically the local rice industry. The study thus aims to analyse the current implementation of SS practices within each organisation in each tier of the supply chain, and across the organisations / tiers through collaboration and co-operation. Furthermore, the research aims to further understand the key stakeholders, both within the supply chain and those that are external, that influence the implementation of social sustainability in the industry.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because the study requires information from people who have an understanding of the local rice industry.

Do I have to take part?

The decision to take part in this study is voluntary. You can decide whether or not you would want to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you have decided to take part in this study, a research team will interview you. The summary of interview questions is attached.

Will my data be confidential?

The information provided will be confidential. The data collected in this study (in forms of recorded tapes or handwritten notes), will be stored securely. This storage will only be available and accessed by the research team. The data for the use in any publication in the future will not expose any of your personal information (name and gender). Data will be stored securely for a minimum of 10 years as some publishers require data to be kept for 10 years, some longer.

What if I decide to withdraw from the study?

You are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without any disadvantages. However, your data may not be withdrawn if this is more than 2 weeks after your participation as data has been anonymised and aggregated.

What will happen to the results?

The results of the study will be summarised and analysed for a Ph.D. thesis and also publication in academic journals.

Are there any risks?

There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

It is hoped that the results from information gained and discussion in this study will provide a better understanding of the implementation of social sustainability in Malaysian Supply Chains. Furthermore, we hope that the results of this study may also generate some ideas for implementation practices for your organisation.

Who has reviewed the project?

The University Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University has reviewed this study prior to the interview.

Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

The main researcher:

Alesia Sigang Gugkang, Ph.D. Student at Lancaster University
a.gugkang@lancaster.ac.uk

or

The main researcher's supervisor:

Linda Hendry, Professor of Operations Management at Lancaster University
l.hendry@lancaster.ac.uk

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to the researcher, you can contact:

Professor John Boylan
Director of Ph.D Management Science
Management Science Department
Lancaster University Management School
Email: j.boylan@lancaster.ac.uk
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YX

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Participant Identification Number:

CONSENT FORM
Social Sustainability in Malaysian Supply Chains

Name of Researchers: Alesia Gugkang, Doctoral Researcher at Lancaster University Management School; Professor Linda Hendry, Academic Staff, Lancaster University Management School.

(Please put √ for agreement and X for disagreement)

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated January/July 2016 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles, the researcher's thesis or presentations by the research team. ☐
4. I understand that my name will not appear in any published reports, articles or presentations, unless further consent is sought. ☐
5. I agree that my interview with the researcher(s) will be tape-recorded. ☐
6. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

When completed, please return in the envelope provided (if applicable). One copy will be given to the participant and the original to be kept in the file of the research team at: Lancaster University Management School

APPENDIX 3

Additional Data Analysis

TABLE A3: Within-Case Analysis of R2-R6, D2-D5 and F2-F14

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Retailer 2	<i>“...the implementation of social sustainability was first introduced in 2002 and it was known as SALAM [which translates into Agricultural Practice Certification] and it was only recognised in Borneo at that time ... in 2014, the certification was upgraded to Good Agriculture Practice which is now an international certification...in order to have this certification, there are guidelines to follow and now with the certificate, we can expand to bigger markets such as Brunei (R2)”</i>	Institutional Pressures	Coercive	Buyer Pressures
Retailer 2	<i>“... we are conducting training and courses to improve the practices of social sustainability within the supply chain and an example of this is ... the farmers’ development program and distributors’ development program ... which are small local development programs created to inform and educate our suppliers on the implementation of new policies or standards such as social sustainability” (R2)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Normative	Upstream / Downstream education
Retailer 2	<i>“...the benefits I must say, there is nothing very obvious after getting the certification especially in the local market ... specifically in terms of pricing, we still can’t put a better price tag on MyGAP certified rice because these prices are government controlled ... but we have more advantages if we export our</i>	Institutional Logics	Financial logics	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>products, so this motivates us to implement (social sustainability)” (R2)</i>			
Retailer 2	<i>“...it was not a simple and straightforward process to implement [social sustainability], there were challenges, some retailers have completely given up on it because we had no help ... but we want to persevere with it, although we don’t gain financially at this stage, we believe this helps us to be better employers to our workers and eventually, it will change the perception of our customers and society around us too” (R2)</i>	Institutional Logics	Sustainability logics	n/a
Retailer 2	<i>“... our farmers’ low education level ... where most of these farmers have only graduated from primary school and at most secondary school before they pursued their families’ paddy farm business ... hence, introducing new ideas, concepts, policy is a challenge ... because firstly, they have been doing traditional farming for generations and secondly, educating and training them has become a strenuous effort for us”</i>	Barrier	Process delay	n/a
Retailer 2	<i>“We work together with the agriculture department and some of the activities we do are, we will send our staff along with them to visit rural areas where our farmers are, to educate and train them on social sustainability...this includes informing them of the guidelines, teaching them how to implement it in their organization, and guiding them step-by-step of the process for record keeping, filing reports for all the benefits provided to their workers”</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Retailer 2	<i>“We have to play our role as retailers and one way to do it is to purchase from farms which are MyGAP certified...no matter how big or how small a retailer or a farmer is, we should sell products or produce from MyGAP farms only...that is one example of how to make this implementation successful” (R2)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with certification requirement	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Retailer 3	<i>"... to the best of my knowledge, the agriculture department is currently not taking any legal actions [penalising] on us [retailers] if we fail to comply with the certification guidelines ... however, the health and safety of our workers is a priority for the [government] health department. If the environment of our workers are found to be hazardous, immediate actions or harsh penalty will be taken against us and our organization" (R3)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Coercive	Government Enforcement
Retailer 3	<i>"... we incur more cost when we implement it [social sustainability] but the international recognition of MyGAP certification ... [could] increase our sales internationally ... it is something like a trade-off for us, for us to gain more [profit], we must spend [incur more cost] first" (R3)</i>	Institutional Logics	Financial logic	n/a
Retailer 3	<i>"...there are many reasons why this [social sustainability] is important for us, I can foresee in the future, once the market is mature and socially produced products are recognised, we will be able to get our return on investment ... local customers are now beginning to know what MyGAP is" (R3)</i>	Institutional Logics	Financial logic	n/a
Retailer 3	<i>"...we don't get a better price for these [socially produced] rice ... the government has yet to enforce a new price for these products and we have been selling it at the ceiling price set by the government ... [as a result] we as retailers and our suppliers suffer from this implementation because we don't get any profit in return" (R3)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
Retailer 3	<i>"Marketing has to be done to introduce the market to this rice ... but the challenge is, rice is a staple product and to buy it at premium price is a cost our customers have to bear ... and not many are willing to do so given the rising standard of living ... it is very difficult to sell it despite all we have done" (R3)</i>	Barrier	Market forces	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Retailer 3	<i>"Although we are under pressure due to pricing issues, the MyGAP certification is important for us because it allows us to expand to bigger markets...we are trying to work hard to improve every aspect of our business to meet the guidelines expected of us...for example, we are trying to work on giving better work hours to our employees and giving them a better wage" (R3)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with certification requirements	n/a
Retailer 3	<i>"...we have to guide them [farmers and distributors] and we can try to do many things such as creating advertising tools to promote MyGAP certified products...hopefully this could attract and increase the awareness of our consumers of what MyGAP is all about" (R3)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with certification requirements	n/a
Retailer 4	<i>"...we are part of the Sustainable Retailer Association which was created by a small local group of retailers...our main objective is to understand our rights as retailers and to discuss new initiatives such as the implementation of social sustainability...as a group, we try to encourage and influence one another in improving our current practices" (R4)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Normative Pressure	Sustainable retailer Associations
Retailer 4	<i>"... the truth is, for my business, we are taking initiatives to learn from an exemplary retailer who is currently following guidelines [for sustainability] from the United Nations ... learning from them for us, means we are improving our standards to meet the standards of other organisations like us around the world" (R4)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Mimetic Pressure	Certified exemplar
Retailer 4	<i>"...we want to continuously improve ourselves ... in line with the efforts we are putting in to educate the supply chain, we want to be acknowledged and to be an exemplar to other organisations' or retailers when it comes to implementing social sustainability" (R4)</i>	Institutional Logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Retailer 4	<i>"... you will hear this from other retailers too, we can't set a better price for these products and we don't get any financial benefits in</i>	Barriers	High cost	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>return ... the challenge is, if nobody [our suppliers] wants to commit to the implementation [of social sustainability], we can't do it ... when the supply of local rice has always been insufficient, our [retailer] hands are tied" (R4)</i>			
Retailer 4	<i>"...if you want to label it as a successful implementation, we are not there yet... in fact, we are very far from it because we are not getting any financial help to invest in educating and training our suppliers, persuading them (suppliers) to comply is a continuous challenge and finally, we are struggling for the lack of demand for this type of product [socially produced rice]" (R4)</i>	Barriers	Market forces	n/a
Retailer 5	<i>"... the government is currently planning to create a new policy for social sustainability to ensure that the social welfare of workers is protected. As retailers, we will be part of the initial implementation and this will affect us in a big way specifically in our current implementation of social sustainability, the standards will be higher, and this will of course affect us as employers and our suppliers [rice farmers and distributors]" (R5)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Coercive	Government Policy
Retailer 5	<i>"... the key to a successful implementation of social sustainability in the supply chain is education ... and we are conducting courses with the guidelines given by the Ministry of Agriculture ... we (retailer) play an important role in influencing our suppliers' practices and the willingness to work and improve one another is important ... especially when this concerns the welfare of our employees" (R5).</i>	Institutional Pressures	Normative	Upstream / Downstream Education
Retailer 5	<i>"...with the MyGAP certification and other forthcoming government initiatives ... business wise, we are planning to expand to international markets because it is a more profitable channel for us to sell these products" (R5)</i>	Institutional Logics	Financial logic	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Retailer 5	<i>"...the significance of this for us is to be able to have the supply chain implement social sustainability from our farmers, distributors and to us, as retailer...I would say this is a complete implementation...we would then assure our customers that we have sourced our rice from a socially sustainable supply chain" (R5)</i>	Institutional Logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Retailer 5	<i>"... the price of [socially produced] rice, we have no control over it...if our producers raise their price, we can't increase our profit margin because the price of rice is controlled by the government ...we are caught in between the cost of our production and losing our business if this persists" (R5)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
Retailer 5	<i>"... very few people are aware of the real problem of enforcing social sustainability on us ... with the increasing cost of producing rice in this manner, we sacrifice our [retailers, distributors, farmers] own welfare for the welfare of our workers ... we can't raise our prices because of the government protection over consumers" (R5)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
Retailer 5	<i>"...I like the concept of sustainability being introduced into our industry because if we want to survive, we have to do it... as small retailers, small producers who contributes to this industry, we will have to expand our businesses in the future and having to implement social sustainability now is like building a good foundation for us...because in the future, to meet the demands of our consumers, we will avoid the instances of where our workers are being exploited" (R5)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Retailer 5	<i>"We have to keep records of our workers, for example, we have records for all work-related training, medical check-ups and annual leave that they have taken...this is to ensure they are always fit to work and all these records have to be filed and kept</i>	Enabler	Consistent with certification requirements	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>for auditing...it is also part of the requirements to be considered for the MyGAP certification” (R5)</i>			
Retailer 6	<i>“... the government is increasing their monitoring to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the workers are protected...for example, the government auditing process places emphasis on our infrastructures such as clean toilets, clean work spaces, the availability of rest areas, safe work environment for workers because this will affect their work efficiency and of course, their health and safety” (R6)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Coercive	Government Auditing
Retailer 6	<i>“...customers’ awareness is very important for us because when they know the benefits in the certification of MyGAP, the demands for these products will increase ... of course the supply chain has an important role too in educating themselves, but customers do play an important role too because the supply of these products would be a waste without the demand for it” (R6)</i>	Institutional Pressures	Normative	Upstream / Downstream education
Retailer 6	<i>“...honestly speaking, for business people like me, we want to earn profit and we need the money to sustain our business ... if the government says we have to do it [implement social sustainability] ... we will ... firstly because we want to avoid getting penalised but secondly, for the financial reward it will bring to our business” (R6).</i>	Institutional Logics	Financial logics	n/a
Retailer 6	<i>“... we have persistently introduced various sustainability programs to raise their awareness about the importance of their workers’ health and safety and welfare ... but as small-producers, I understand they will have financial challenge to provide all these for their workers, because if they do, their [farmer] own welfare will be at risk” (R6)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Retailer 6	<i>“Some of the most important elements in the guideline for MyGAP are: the safety for our workers; the provision of employee housing quarters if they are working away from their hometown; and medical allowances which include regular check-up at our local clinics” (R6)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with certification requirement	n/a
Retailer 6	<i>“...for our suppliers, it is important for MyGAP certified farms to be able to provide the same benefits we are giving our workers, but in their case, we must ensure the workers are given a clean resting area, safety gear for working on farms, good farming skills and most importantly, they are not over-worked” (R6)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with certification requirement	n/a
Distributor 2	<i>“The agriculture department comes in to monitor we have skilled drivers [who transport produce] and to monitor our transportation timetable ... to ensure no drivers are working more than 8 hours in a day while transporting and also we have to make sure to have a spare driver for every single trip made to the city” (D2)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government monitoring
Distributor 2	<i>“...the nature of our business has really encouraged us to think about the welfare of our workers, although the job does not pay well, we always strive to meet the minimum best standards, if the business is thriving, we give bonuses to reward our workers whom have worked extra hours and of course this is on top of other benefits such as their medical allowance, work insurance and holidays” (D2)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Distributor 2	<i>“...our worker’s health and safety are of great importance to us, because without these workers, we cannot operate...transporting goods from the farms is a big part of our business and the job demands a great deal of skill and strength I must say...so the implementation [social sustainability] is important to protect our workers welfare” (D2)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logic	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Distributor 2	<i>"...work ethics and discipline is one of the challenges when it comes to our workers...it is not a direct challenge to the implementation [of social sustainability] but it affects how we treat our workers" (D2)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issues	
Distributor 2	<i>"...a weakness of implementing social sustainability is the increasing cost involved...this cost covers our worker's salary and their employment benefits...of course this could sound like an excuse, but we are a small organization, working with suppliers in the outskirts, but to meet the demands there is so much cost involved in our operation cost...every day it is a challenge for us and if we want this implementation to be sustainable in the long term, I would say finance is most important" (D2)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
Distributor 2	<i>"...we can't put a price on humanity and we have been leveraging human resources to make a profit for ourselves...bringing [implementing] social sustainability in the industry will restore human rights and we have to learn how to respect and treat each other right...this will take time, but we are willing to invest our time and effort in it" (D2)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Distributor 3	<i>"We have a checklist before employing our workers...most of our worker are foreign workers, this checklist is to ensure we comply with the requirements set by the labour office... for example, we have to provide work permits for our foreign workers... driving training for our drivers who transport produce from farms, accommodation for them [in cities or farm area], giving them a salary above the national wage" (D3)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government policy
Distributor 3	<i>"These activities create a space for retailers, distributors and farmers from various supply chains to meet and to engage with one another...customers are also invited into one of our sessions, where we could discuss about any related issues or listen to their</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Upstream education

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>feedbacks concerning the products, which have been produced in this [sustainable] supply chain” (D3)</i>			
Distributor 3	<i>“NGOs and the government are currently working towards creating an association for us [distributors] to communicate about sustainability initiatives and to achieve a common goal...we had initial meetings with both representatives [NGO and government] to see how this could work for us and ... it is a good space for us to discuss any challenges or supports in the process of implementing this [social sustainability] in our organisation” (D3)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Sustainable distributor association
Distributor 3	<i>“...implementing [social sustainability] is the only way to survive in this business...if our buyers [retailers] requires us to be MyGAP certified, then we will have to do it...the way I look at it is like this...this [social sustainability] is a simultaneous process, because once we do it, we get to sell our goods and then our workers will be well taken care of, but if we don't do it, we could lose our business [buyers] and this will also affect our workers” (D3)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Distributor 3	<i>“...ensuring our workers are well-paid, working in a safe and healthy environment ..., it is our priority to treat our workers well because they play an important part in our organisation ...we always believe our business is made of people and it is the people that makes us successful” (D3)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logics	n/a
Distributor 3	<i>“...we have dealt with so many contract termination due to poor discipline when it comes to our employees...I think this is because of the nature of this job, it requires a lot of time, risk-taking and skills from the workers” (D3)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issues	n/a
Distributor 3	<i>“...for example, when we hire our workers, we want to pay them the right amount of salary [above minimum national wage], we</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>want to employ those with the right skills [to avoid additional training cost] and all these involve money...it might sound wrong, but realistically, to uphold our workers' rights, we need money...and it is part of our production and operating cost...so this is a challenge for us [to implement social sustainability]" (D3)</i>			
Distributor 3	<i>"...we are committed to make sure our workers are given a safe environment to work in and I know our drivers [employees responsible to transport goods from farms] are faced with risks everyday while working, our safety nets for them is to equip them with the best skills, provide them with workplace insurances and sufficient resting days" (D3)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Distributor 3	<i>"...the requirements set by the labour office for hiring employees, salary range, employee benefits are good guidelines for us to follow as a start to our implementation [of social sustainability] ... I know this is basic requirements, but this is a start to considering how to go beyond what is required of us" (D3)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with labour law	n/a
Distributor 4	<i>"We understand that the government is currently enforcing stricter labour laws and we have to comply with these laws to avoid the punishment...the emphasis has been placed on problems such as child labour, illegal workers [immigrant workers], health and safety standards amongst the other compulsory practices such as national minimum wage, social security contributions and employees provident fund" (D4)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government enforcement
Distributor 4	<i>"We take in good pointers from our buyers [retailers] in the implementation of social sustainability... we understand one of their goals is to be able to influence us [distributors] and our producers [farmers] to be more proactive in our practices...they [retailers] are good exemplars for us" (D4)</i>	Institutional pressure	Mimetic	Exemplars

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Distributor 4	<i>"... the MyGAP certification is very important for us because if we want to ensure that we can continuously provide for the welfare of our workers, we have to implement it [social sustainability] ... in a small organisation like ours where we just achieve a breakeven point, we can only survive in this business and hopefully gain more potential customers with the certification" (D4)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Distributor 4	<i>"...it feels like there is a big gap [in implementing social sustainability] between us, our buyers, our suppliers, our enforcers [government] and the community [customers]...one of the reasons could be the lack of common understanding of the whole concept of social sustainability" (D4)</i>	Barrier	Lack of expertise	n/a
Distributor 4	<i>"...the policy, standard, or guidelines or even the term, social sustainability for us, is still a difficult concept...not because we don't understand human rights, but there are no clear guidelines or standards of what is good enough or what is very good" (D4)</i>	Barrier	Lack of clear guidelines	n/a
Distributor 4	<i>"...from our experience of hiring both local and foreign workers... this is how I put it, these two groups of workers have very different work ethics...for example, for local workers, for reasons such as, they could not cope with the workload and many other excuses, they could leave the job only after working for 1 or 2 weeks...but for foreign workers, they persevere with the job because they need to have enough money to be able to return to their home country" (D4)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issues	n/a
Distributor 4	<i>"...we live in a community whose mentality is not up to the standard of those in developed countries...and money is always the main problem when it comes to doing the right thing...for example, when we hire our Indonesian, Vietnamese, and</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>Myanmar employees, it has been a real challenge as compared to when we first started because the government has been tightening the process of hiring foreign workers [to give more employment opportunity to local workers]...and one of the effect of this is the increasing the cost of hiring them [and it includes every cost involved for bringing them in]...which is very challenging thing for us because let's be honest...we could never hire local workers because no one is willing to do this difficult job and...[being a small organization]...it is a real struggle" (D4)</i>			
Distributor 4	<i>"...our employees should know their rights when working with us, educating them on the matter helps them to understand what we are giving them is our responsibility and also part of our organisation's internal social initiative...employees awareness [of their rights] is important and this will allow us to create a positive image of ourselves to our buyers and possibly attract more [buyers]" (D4)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Distributor 4	<i>"... [social sustainability] for an organisation like ours, our current priority is to abide with the law, standards or guidelines set by the government [with regards to social sustainability] for us...slowly when we know enough, we will try to create our own codes of conduct and organisational culture in the future" (D4)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Distributor 5	<i>"There are various activities proposed to us such as symposiums, conferences, knowledge fairs ...created for us to take part in and to expand our understanding on sustainability...be it environmental or social sustainability...but more focus is being placed on social sustainability...given the rise of social issues in the society today" (D5)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Upstream / Downstream Education
Distributor 5	<i>"One weakness for this implementation [of social sustainability] is we are still lacking a good organisation which we could take as</i>	Institutional pressure	Mimetic pressure	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>an exemplar...one of the reasons we believe is because everyone [distributors] are still learning and developing their practices...therefore, no one is better than another at this stage of the implementation” (D5)</i>			
Distributor 5	<i>“...if we don’t implement it, we won’t get any buyers [from retailers] and at the same time, we have to expect our suppliers [farmers] to perform the same [implement social sustainability]...one of the strongest reason for doing it is because we want to survive [profitably] in this business” (D5)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Distributor 5	<i>“...just like any other businesses, the implementation [of social sustainability] involves money, of course without even using this term [social sustainability], we have always been required by law to pay our employees above the national minimum wage, to provide SOCSO [work insurance], EPF [employees provident fund] and I believe, with all these three in place, I have already done my part as a responsible employer” (D5)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Distributor 5	<i>“...the sustainability concept is foreign and complex to them given their low educational background and it is almost impossible for them [farmers] to do it perfectly... of course, you couldn't compare us with huge organisations be it in other parts of the country or in developed countries...we are far too lacking in expertise” (D5)</i>	Barrier	Lack of expertise	n/a
Distributor 5	<i>“...because we are a small business community... whenever we are around one another...we do talk about these new concepts or standards which the government wants us to implement...but what is surprising is, everyone has a different understanding of the concept...some people think that this is a cost burden project, some thinks this is a forced or coerced project, some thinks this could cost them their business...which means, the whole thing is lack clarity...it could be anyone’s fault, but we all think, there</i>	Barrier	Lack of clear guidelines	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>needs to be more effort put into helping the industry to fully understand how it could be implemented in each organization” (D5)</i>			
Distributor 5	<i>“...our responsibility is to give our employees their employment privileges and this includes salary equivalent to the amount of work they do, if they are foreign workers, their work permit must be paid in full as a security for working in this country and we have to also pay for their social security [workplace insurance] and provident fund [pension security]” (D5)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with labour law	n/a
Farmer 2	<i>“...the agriculture department introduces the MyGAP certification to signify that we are a sustainable farmer and employer...in order to be compliant, we have to follow the guidelines and requirements of the certification” (F2)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government policy
Farmer 2	<i>“...we have strong pressures coming in from our buyers to practice social sustainability...we have to meet their requirements before they purchase our rice” (F2)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Buyer power
Farmer 2	<i>“...the farmers’ association was created to discuss issues concerning the farmers welfare which includes our production, demands, prices of our rice...in addition, everyone is given an equal right to voice their opinions or concerns” (F2)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Sustainable farmer association
Farmer 2	<i>“...yes, the welfare is important...both the welfare of our employees and ourselves...we are farmers ourselves, we don’t work in suits and make millions of money...we are just a small and medium organisation that has 200 to 300 hectares of rice farms...we need to make the most out of it and at the end of the day, with the profit that we earned, we can pay our employees, give them benefits and also gain at least a small profit” (F2)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 2	<i>"...all the employees want to be paid as much as possible, all the employers want to make as much profit as possible, there has to be a point where these two expectations meet in our social sustainability implementation" (F2)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Farmer 2	<i>"...it is our practice to give their salary, provide them a place to stay, provide them food, ensure that they are not overworked by working only five days a week and taking rest on Saturday and Sundays, it sounds very basic but as small-scale farmers, this is considered a good standard" (F2)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Farmer 2	<i>"...here [in Malaysia] we are still not up to that [international] standard yet...I think it is also because of all the other challenges we are facing...for example, because the cost is high, adding on all other conditions such as safety gear, work uniform, living conditions it will all cost us money...while we can't meet the highest or go below the minimum standard, we have to meet somewhere in between" (F2)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
	<i>"...it is a shame to hire child labour but we cannot help but feel empathetic to these children who have to work and earn money for their family...this is because they could have elderly parents who are too weak to work and who are incapable to send them off to school...so instead of letting them go to other challenging work around the area such as the quarry, we hire them to do light tasks...we have to help them, we feel a sense of responsibility as an organisation capable of hiring them" (F2)</i>	Barrier	Poverty	n/a
Farmer 2	<i>"...we have continuous dialogues with the various department on improving our current standards...we want to make sure our [social sustainability] implementation meets the standards and furthermore, providing our employees</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>their employment rights” (F2)</i>			
Farmer 3	<i>“...the government laws such as the labour and immigration law is compulsory for us and this is also a big part of our social sustainability implementation...the law itself protects the welfare of our workers...by abiding to these laws, we believe it is a good effort” (F3)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government enforcement
Farmer 3	<i>“...the officers from the agriculture department comes in every year or semi-annually to create workshops for MyGAP certification...during these workshops, we will be taught on the process of applying for a MyGAP certification” (F3)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Upstream / downstream education
Farmer 3	<i>“...my organisation’s implementation is influenced by what we have learnt from other farming organisations...these organisations would be those that are more experienced and developed in their implementation of employment benefits or employees’ right” (F3)</i>	Institutional pressure	Mimetic pressure	Exemplars
Farmer 4	<i>“...the MyGAP certification is a source of pressure for us and mostly because this is an initiative taken by the government to force farmers to be socially compliant” (F4)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government policy
Farmer 4	<i>“...we are inclined to meet the demands of our buyers...and this includes ensuring we have implemented social sustainability...this is to determine continuous business relationships with them” (F4)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Buyer power
Farmer 4	<i>“our [farmer] association works along with the government such as the ministry of agriculture or the local agriculture department...we have workshops or forums to discuss any challenges or issues we have experienced” (F4)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Sustainable farmer association
Farmer 4	<i>“...our intention to get the MyGAP certification is it will allow us to attract more customers...the implementation [social sustainability] has to attract more customers and to</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>maintain our business relationship with current customers...we have spent so much to get certified, we need to cover these costs” (F4)</i>			
Farmer 4	<i>“...the question is why are workers still willing to work if he or she was ill-treated...if their employer does not treat them well, they should have left the organisation...it is a choice they should make” (F4)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 4	<i>“...work ethics and discipline is a challenge, we pay so much to get these workers in, we spent so much to provide for their welfare...but the next thing we know, these workers are not punctual, finding excuses not to go to the field, taking sick leave for personal occasions...at the end of the day, we either sack them or they will leave without notice” (F4)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 4	<i>“...we work around the clock during busy seasons, we start at 6 in the morning and leave at 6 in the evening, sometimes we even have to work during weekends too...we have to do this when we are lacking workers...the job is tough, and we can't offer much [for salary]” (F4)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 4	<i>“...for us, when they come looking for jobs voluntarily, we hire them...it is a risk we took together...paying MYR8000 for one foreign worker's work permit is too expensive for us...and eight out of ten of our employees are foreign workers” (F4)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
Farmer 5	<i>“...the labour department have standards or guidelines we must follow for basic necessities given to our employees when they are working on the farms...for example, we provide them daily wages or monthly salary, accommodation, food allowance and they must not work</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government enforcement

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>more than 8 hours a day...we have strictly followed these guidelines” (F5)</i>			
Farmer 5	<i>“...there are a lot of requirements in the MyGAP application which we need to implement...symposium and other training programs were created by various departments such as the labour and agriculture department to help us” (F5)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Upstream / downstream education
Farmer 5	<i>“...other organisations that has been certified by MyGAP could be a good example for us...there have been only five certified farms throughout the state which means they must have practiced the highest standards set by the agriculture ministry” (F5)</i>	Institutional pressure	Mimetic	Certified Exemplar
Farmer 5	<i>“...we are working towards getting certified [MyGAP] and we now understand that this is to protect our workers’ rights to employment benefits...but at the same time, this implementation will help us to improve our business...we can attract new customers to buy our produce” (F5)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logics	n/a
Farmer 5	<i>“...for me, this is a two-way interaction... if they want to be treated well, they should not cause any problems because if they do, this will lead to mistreatment and this is a common case in the farm area...if they treat me [their employer] well by not creating any problems, of course I will treat them well too” (F5)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 5	<i>“...we have been accused by the labour department for paying our employees too little...the reason behind this accusation was because we had a high labour turnover... we honestly don’t think the salary is a barrier...working in the farm is tough, we work long hours during busy seasons...we believe our workers leave when they can’t cope with this work environment” (F5)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 5	<i>"...the number of workers available to hire has been reducing and this is where exploitation cases are becoming more common...workers are looking for employment and are often desperate for money...when workers are desperate for money and employers wants to make money, they take advantage of each other...this is a challenge to do the right thing" (F5)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 5	<i>"hiring foreign workers is too expensive...we have to pay MYR6000 to MYR8000 for one person...for independent farmers like us, the cost is too high for us and meeting this condition is very difficult" (F5)</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a
Farmer 6	<i>"...the department of agriculture does close monitoring on us because we are in the process of getting the MyGAP certification...there are many requirements to be met and checked off the list and they will make at least four visits throughout the year to make sure we are implementing the guidelines correctly" (F6)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government monitoring
Farmer 6	<i>"...agriculture department comes in every four months to audit the implementation of social initiatives required by the MyGAP certification" (F6)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government auditing
Farmer 6	<i>"...there are strong group of buyers...pressures to implement both social and environment sustainability is high...to secure our sales, we have to meet their requirement" (F6)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Buyer pressure
Farmer 6	<i>"...the association allows us to raise any concerns or problems such as the implementation of sustainability...we can discuss of how to solve these issues or send our representative to speak to any organisation responsible [labour department, agriculture department] (F6)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Sustainable farmer association

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 6	<i>"...money is welfare for our workers...so we try our best to provide it for them...during busier seasons where they work six days a week, we pay them overtime wages...every year we will raise their salaries...of course, this is on top of other benefits such as their medical benefit, pension and livelihood allowances...this is social sustainability for us" (F6)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logics	n/a
Farmer 6	<i>"...we only offer a higher salary to our workers because we need them to stay to meet our production needs...we don't have any choice because labour doesn't come easy these days...we have to use money to avoid them running off to other employers" (F6)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 6	<i>"our employees always lack focus and dedication at work...we are unable to meet their demand to increase their salary because of these problems...when our production is affected by this problem, it is a challenge for us" (F6)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 6	<i>"...we hire foreign workers because they are willing to work odd and long hours...they stay with us because they need the money to be able to return to their home country" (F6)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 7	<i>"...to hire foreign workers, we need to pay agency fees to agents who manages the process of bringing in our workers for us...this is an immigration policy we need to abide by...the agency fees cover the cost of work permit, transportation cost for employees to travel from their home country, medical insurances and monthly salary" (F7)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government enforcement
Farmer 7	<i>"...we receive assistance for our implementation in forms of learning and training programs...this will be participated in by farmers and our buyers, distributors and retailers...this is often managed by governmental organisations [labour, immigration, agriculture department] and NGOs" (F7)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Upstream / downstream education

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 7	<i>"...we take pointers from organisations who have been certified by MyGAP...we follow their practices such as the offered salary and employment benefits given to their workers" (F7)</i>	Institutional pressure	Mimetic	Certified exemplar
Farmer 7	<i>"...the government's key performance indicator is to protect human rights...for us, this means, us as employers who are also farmers, and our workers...we do it for the money...we need the money to sustain our organisation, our workers and the cost of implementation itself" (F7)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Farmer 7	<i>"...every farming organisation wants to sell their produce at the highest price possible...but unfortunately this is controlled by the government...so our only chance to increase buyers at a fixed price is the implementation of initiatives such as social or environmental sustainability" (F7)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Farmer 7	<i>"...we find it most difficult when we face problems...these problems are always because of poor performance, lack of discipline and not driven at work...for example, we spend at least MYR8000 to hire foreign workers with at least one-year contract, but when they leave without notice, we lose our money just like that" (F7)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issues	n/a
Farmer 8	<i>"...the department of agriculture and labour department usually comes in on informed visits...but the immigration department will come on uninformed visits...these monitoring visits forces us to implement the social standards and guidelines correctly" (F8)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government enforcement
Farmer 8	<i>"...our buyers are the strongest reason to implement social sustainability...if they stop buying from us, we are not able to sell our rice...we have to be compliant to survive" (F8)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Buyer power

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 8	<i>“the introduction of the certification [MyGAP] promised us many things which includes a better chance to increase sales, profitability...although the costs are spent on improving our provision of better welfare to our workers...this does not change our organisations goal which is to be able to continuously sell and make money” (F8)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Farmer 8	<i>“when it comes to work permits for foreign workers, we pay so much but we have experienced being cheated on...this happens when our workers leave the organisation for our competitors who are paying much better before the contract ends...the fee is not refundable so every time we hire new workers, we are at risk of this issue” (F8)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 8	<i>“...the welfare of our employees is important, for example, their safety at work, their health, and other basic necessities needed for their well-being, we try to meet every need...without our employees, we cannot operate in this industry...they have sacrificed so much of their hard work on the farms, so we have to treat them well in return of their labour” (F8)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Farmer 9	<i>“...immigration laws are the strictest for us and we have to abide by the requirements to hire foreign workers” (F9)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government enforcement
Farmer 9	<i>“...oh yes we definitely have to follow what is required of us [labour law] when we hire employees especially foreign workers because if we get caught hiring them illegally or skipping one step in the process then we will be penalized by both the labour and immigration department” (F9)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government penalty

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 9	<i>"...participation in any development programs related to raising awareness of sustainable initiatives helps us to be more responsible and it encourages us to improve our current practices" (F9)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Upstream / downstream education
Farmer 9	<i>"...the MyGAP certified farms are good examples for us...we try to follow their sustainable practices especially how much they pay their workers and what benefits they offer to their workers" (F9)</i>	Institutional pressure	Mimetic	Certified exemplar
Farmer 9	<i>"...for example, if we don't pay the salary as promised, if we don't provide food and accommodation for our workers, we will definitely not see them anymore...they will leave us, and if we don't have enough workers, the quality of harvest will reduce and we will get less harvest, this is how we get punished if we don't provide welfare for our workers...our workers carry a big weightage of importance to our business" (F9)</i>	Institutional logics	Financial logic	n/a
Farmer 9	<i>"...with local workers, I have faced a lot of discipline problems...for example, if they want to turn up for work, they will come but when they don't feel like it, they will not turn up" (F9)</i>	Barrier	Behavioural issue	n/a
Farmer 9	<i>"...apart from providing them basic necessities such as their food, accommodation and other benefits...they have to be equipped with the right skills to work on the farm...we usually provide on-the-job training for our employees...this is important because we want to make sure they know the uses of all the machinery and tools...it is for their safety" (F9)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
Farmer 9	<i>"...we have to meet the minimum national wage and we have to contribute to their social security and pension funds as it is compulsory...this is a responsibility from us, but it is important as it protects the welfare of our employees" (F9)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with industry standards	n/a
Farmer 10	<i>"...the government monitors our organisation to make sure we do not hire child labour and illegal foreign workers...the purpose of close monitoring in the farm area is mainly focused on these two main social issues" (F10)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government monitoring
Farmer 10	<i>"...the penalty for hiring illegal workers is MYR10,000 per worker and moreover, we can be jailed for it!" (F10)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government penalty
Farmer 10	<i>"...as MyGAP certified farmers, we could fulfil the demands of our buyers and they can rest assured that they have sourced from one of the sustainable farms...this pressure has positively influenced our sustainability initiatives and as we move forward, this certification will bring in more buyers for us" (F10)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Buyer power
Farmer 10	<i>"...the demand for higher salary from our employees is a pressure...this is a common case these days especially during busier seasons such as planting and harvesting...in order to meet our production demands, we have to raise our employees' salaries" (F10)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Employee power
Farmer 10	<i>"...regardless if our business is doing well or not, we will have to protect our workers' rights and we have to provide for their welfare...for the government this is compulsory but for us, we see it as the right thing to do...as we are farmers ourselves, we want to ensure our employees get the same treatment as we do" (F10)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Farmer 10	<i>"...we can raise the salary of our workers to a certain standard...as agreed with other farmers, we cannot go</i>	Barrier	High cost	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>beyond a certain amount and if it happens you will be brought to the farmer's association for a penalty...of course we want to give as much as possible to our employees, however, this has been our culture, a community culture...we don't want to make other farmers lose their employees just because they can't offer as much as other employers...we have to be understanding of new organisations just beginning in the business...they need to survive in this harsh industry too...this is the uniqueness of our farming community...we look out for each other, this can also be considered to be good social practices even if it doesn't apply directly in our own organisation, but as one human being to another" (F10)</i>			
Farmer 10	<i>"...the employees have to be trained and equipped with the right skills to work on a farm...safety is a priority in our organisation...as for employment benefits, we provide according to the standards set in the industry, compulsory standards such as salary, workplace insurance, and their pension" (F10)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Farmer 10	<i>"...we abide with the labour law, immigration law and standards or guidelines from the Agriculture department...because we are a small-scale organisation, we don't have our own set of codes of conduct...we practice according to the guidelines required of us from these various departments and we are sure it is still a proper implementation of social sustainability" (F10)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with industry standards	n/a
Farmer 11	<i>"...the labour department audits our salary systems to ensure employees are not underpaid...it does also includes inspecting other welfare provisions such as their medical</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government auditing

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>cards, accommodation, work and rest areas, leave and resting days and many others” (F11)</i>			
Farmer 11	<i>“...two penalty will be charged against us if we hire illegal workers, one is from the labour department and another is from the immigration because they have two different law for that...the penalty charges will be at least MYR20,000 per worker” (F11)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government penalty
Farmer 11	<i>“...an example of pressure for us is the demand for higher salary from employees...employees will only stay if we meet their requests and we have no other options during busier seasons” (F11)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Employee power
Farmer 11	<i>“...the government, NGO and buyers are committed to improve the current social practices by farm owners and more guidelines, assistance and training programs are created to educate the farmers about employees’ welfare” (F11)</i>	Institutional pressure	Normative	Upstream / downstream education
Farmer 11	<i>“...we have to look after our workers just like how we want others to treat us...I try my best to provide everything they need on top of their salary...I will give them food, a place to stay, holidays during less busy seasons, for my foreign workers, they could return to their home country for their break” (F11)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Farmer 11	<i>“...an example of our current implementation is, we are providing above minimum national wage for our employees salary, good accommodation, safe work environment, good employment benefits such as 1-week holiday after every 6 weeks, free transportation home [either local or</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	international], 4 weeks a year of annual leave and bonuses” (F11)			
Farmer 11	“...in terms of working permits, Bario and the surrounding farming area have had a long-standing tradition of getting help from Indonesian workers, who are here to help during rice planting and harvesting seasons...permanent [Indonesian] workers have work permits and temporary workers have a limited visit pass which allows them to work for a short period of time” (F11)	Enabler	Consistent with industry standards	n/a
Farmer 12	“...we do have monitoring coming in from the government...agriculture department and the labour department came to observe our operations, and our employment systems...mostly because we hire foreign workers...so they need to ensure we hired them through a legal process at all times” (F12)	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government monitoring
Farmer 12	“...the employment provident fund organisation and social security organisation will penalize us if we don’t pay our contribution for our workers” (F12)	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government penalty
Farmer 12	“...employees are free to demand a higher salary particularly during high seasons such as the harvesting season...this has become a phenomenon and it leads to a competition between farm owners to hire employees when there is a labour shortage” (F12)	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Employee power
Farmer 12	“...after receiving the certification, we consider ourselves as good examples for sustainable practices...as MyGAP certified farms, we have successfully met the requirements of the certification” (F12)	Institutional pressure	Mimetic	Certified exemplar
Farmer 12	“...we have been providing welfare for our workers ever since we started traditional farming 50 years ago...we weren’t selling our	Institutional pressure	Financial logic	n/a

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>produce back then...but now that we are producing for commercial purposes, we still practice welfare provision as before, nothing has changed, we still give our best to our workers whom have sacrificed a lot of their energy in the farms for us” (F12)</i>			
Farmer 12	<i>“...social sustainability for us is guaranteeing our employees are paid above the minimum national wage, providing good living conditions, good employment benefits such as 1 week off every 2 months, a trip home once a year [for foreign employees] and 4 weeks of annual leave...this is common standard practice in the industry” (F12)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
	<i>“...all our employees are paid about 25% to 50% [depending on their expertise] above the minimum national wage, our Malaysian employees have their SOCSO [social security] and EPF [pension plan], while non-Malaysian employees are covered by the mandatory national insurance policy required by the immigration and labour department” (F12)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with industry standards	n/a
Farmer 13	<i>“...immigration department makes monthly inspections on our farms and during busier seasons, they will come every fortnight to make sure there are no illegal workers working on our farms” (F13)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government auditing
Farmer 13	<i>“...we will be charged in court if we do not contribute to the employees provident fund and social security...these are two separate laws with two different penalties” (F13)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government penalty
Farmer 13	<i>“...in the case where employees demand for higher salary, we definitely go way beyond the national minimum wage...we have to do this to make sure they don’t move to other farms which could offer them a higher salary...this is the case during busy seasons when we are in need of more</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Employee power

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>workers” (F13)</i>			
Farmer 13	<i>“...I don't have any problems in providing for my workers welfare...I provide everything as other organisations do...that is a basic requirement for looking after our workers...one of our organisational values is to be kind to other human being regardless if they work for us or not...it is a good thing and we have to do it” (F13)</i>	Institutional Logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Farmer 13	<i>“...our workers health and safety at work is most important...we get them to visit the doctor once a month to ensure they are fit for work...we invest a lot in their medical fees as well...when we hire new employees, they will be given on-the-job training and supervised for at least 3 months before we allow them to work independently with the group of experienced employees” (F13)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Farmer 13	<i>“...foreign employees are given work permit and visa, this includes other employment benefits stated by the labour and immigration department...our local employees are given benefits such as pension plan and social security...both these employees receive different level of salary based on the standards set by the labour department” (F13)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with industry standards	n/a
Farmer 14	<i>“...our auditing process comes in from various organisation such as the BERNAS [translated as the Malaysian National Rice Organisation], the labour department and the agriculture department...these organisation does audit either yearly, semi-annually and quarterly...the inspection criteria include everything from production to management systems” (F14)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government auditing
Farmer 14	<i>“...we will be charged with penalty if we don't meet the requirements for our employee's welfare and the example of</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Government penalty

Supply Chain Actor	Interview Quotes	First-Level	Second-Level	Third-Level
	<i>this would be, underpaid employees, no provision of compulsory employment benefits such as pension and workplace insurance” (F14)</i>			
Farmer 14	<i>“...the employees’ salaries are specified according to the types of employment...since farming is seasonal, some workers will work based on seasonal contracts, some will earn daily wages, and some do monthly contracts...for example, the minimum salary per day is MYR50 and it could go up to MYR100 per day during busier seasons” (F14)</i>	Institutional pressure	Coercive	Employee power
Farmer 14	<i>“...we have to make sure our workers are healthy and safe at work...they have worked so hard for us...it is only right for us to reward them beyond their salary...it is not an easy job to begin with, so they deserve much more than just their wages” (F14)</i>	Institutional logics	Sustainability logic	n/a
Farmer 14	<i>“...during busier seasons, we hire more part-time employees to cope with workload...for our full-time employees, we either raise their salary, give them overtime wages and bonuses when we have received our sales incomes...in addition, after the season is over, we will give them one to two weeks of holiday to rest” (F14)</i>	Enabler	Management support	n/a
Farmer 14	<i>“...our management department now manages a record-keeping system for our employees as advised by the labour and agriculture department...it is to keep track with what we provide our employees and what our employees agreed to have received from us...this makes it easier for these organisations to proceed with their auditing processes” (F14)</i>	Enabler	Consistent with industry standards	n/a