CHAPTER
1
MALAYSIA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Yogeeswari Subramaniam and Nanthakumar Loganathan

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There are numerous definitions of sustainable development, but the one that is most often cited comes from the Brundtland Report which states that it satisfies current needs without jeopardising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own. In its most basic form, sustainable development is the process of advancing and raising our standard of living while preserving the welfare of future generations (Barkemeyer et al., 2014; Kaul et al., 2022). It's a delicate balancing act, considering the demands of the present while keeping in mind the limitations our society must operate within on the social, environmental, and economic fronts.

Environmental sustainability is the process of providing present needs while protecting natural resources—such as water, soil, forests, and wildlife—from overuse and contamination for future generations (Ahmed et al., 2022). Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, boosting the production of renewable energy, protecting biodiversity, and implementing sustainable agriculture practices are the main objectives of attaining environmental sustainability to guarantee resource availability both now and in the future. Social sustainability is the process of reducing inequality, fostering inclusive societies, and ensuring the long-term well-being of people through the promotion of equality, human rights, healthcare, education, and decent jobs (Hajian & Kashani, 2021). Policies that support equality, effective judicial administration, better healthcare, and the preservation of human rights are necessary to address challenges including poverty, discrimination, resource access, insecurity, and governance issues to accomplish social sustainability. Besides, economic sustainability involves conducting economic activities in a manner that balances financial stability, social fairness, and economic growth, with the essential objective of ensuring long-term economic benefit while preserving equity and overall financial stability (Leal Filho et al., 2019). Therefore, in sustainable development, where striking an optimal equilibrium between equitable society, economic progress, and environmental preservation is the primary goal, economic, social, and environmental sustainability are inextricably linked.

In addition, there is a belief that the country's economic growth and the idea of sustainable development are intrinsically related. By reducing waste and conserving precious resources, economic growth often raises the sustainability level through better resource allocation and more efficient resource usage. Also, technological advancements fuelled by economic growth might make it easier to incorporate eco-friendly innovations and sustainable practises, which will support social and environmental sustainability. A growing economy also typically leads to sustainable development by increasing the capacity for investment in efforts to promote sustainability, such as renewable energy projects, social welfare and environmental conservation projects. On the other hand, it's critical that we remain aware of any potential drawbacks that can result from economic expansion. Excessive exploitation of natural resources, such as forests, minerals, and fossil fuels, could undermine efforts to maintain a sustainable environment due to rapid economic growth. On the other hand, the unchecked growth in the economy that overlooks equal distribution of wealth has the potential to worsen social inequality and jeopardize the principles of social sustainability. Since there are two opposing viewpoints about sustainable development and economic growth, this chapter will examine the relationship between sustainable development and economic growth from the perspective of Malaysia.

1.2 SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING OVERVIEW

In this section, the discussion of existing studies on sustainable development and economic growth is divided into three stances. The first stance addresses the linkage between environmental sustainability and economic growth, while the second and third stances focus on social and economic sustainability, respectively.

1.2.1 Environmental Sustainability and Economic Growth

There are a number of studies have delved into the linkages between environmental sustainability and economic growth, specifically on environmental quality (Ali et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2023; Cai et al., 2020; Dong et al., 2018; Fatima et al., 2021; Ongan et al., 2023; Pao & Chen, 2019; Raihan, 2023; Shittu et al., 2021). These studies have produced inclusive results, with some indicating that economic growth of a country raises the environmental quality of the country, while others indicate it deteriorates the quality of the environment. For example, studies by Dong et al. (2018), Fatima et al. (2021), Shittu et al. (2021), and Awan et al. (2023) confirm the fact that increased economic growth allows a country the ability to allocate funds for conservation and environmental protection initiatives. This, in turn, has led to the development of more effective and cleaner industrial techniques, which have decreased resource consumption and pollution. In addition, increased economic growth raises people's standards of living, encouraging individuals to adopt sustainable practices and become more conscious of environmental issues, ultimately improving the quality of the environment.

Nonetheless, studies by Destek and Sinha (2020), Begum et al. (2015), & others demonstrate a negative relationship between environmental quality and economic growth. Economic growth is often supported by industrialisation, and globalisation increases energy consumption, which causes global warming and, as a result, degrades environmental quality. The degradation of environmental quality