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A Systematic Literature Review of Healthcare Total Quality Management, Sustainable Hospital Governance, and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

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Abstract : The healthcare industry faces various challenges due to technological advancements, rising patient expectations, regulatory changes, and increasingly intense competition. These conditions require hospitals to develop strategic capabilities to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. This study aims to identify, evaluate, and synthesize the results of previous research on the relationship between Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM), Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG), and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The literature search was conducted in the Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, PubMed, and Google Scholar databases, covering publications from 2015 to 2025. Of the 420 articles identified, 15 met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach. The synthesis results indicate that HTQM plays a crucial role in improving service quality, patient safety, operational efficiency, patient satisfaction, and organizational performance through a culture of continuous improvement. Additionally, SHG strengthens organizational sustainability through the application of the principles of transparency, accountability, responsibility, and stakeholder engagement. From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), HTQM and SHG are strategic capabilities that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and not easily replaceable, thereby creating sustainable competitive advantage. This study also produced a conceptual framework that integrates HTQM and SHG as the foundation for building sustainable competitive advantage in hospitals. The research findings provide a theoretical contribution to the development of the literature on strategic hospital management, as well as practical implications for hospital administrators in formulating strategies for quality improvement and governance oriented toward sustainability.

Keywords: Healthcare Total Quality Management, Sustainable Hospital Governance, Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare industry is currently undergoing rapid transformation as a result of technological advancements, changing patient expectations, increasing regulatory demands, and intensifying competition among healthcare providers. Hospitals are no longer evaluated solely on their ability to provide clinical care; they are also required to demonstrate organizational excellence, operational efficiency, innovation capabilities, and long-term sustainability. Therefore, achieving and maintaining a Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) has become a strategic necessity for hospitals to survive and thrive in a dynamic environment.

Sustainable competitive advantage is an organization's ability to create and maintain superior value that is difficult for competitors to replicate in the long term. In the context of hospitals, sustainable competitive advantage is reflected in superior service quality, high patient satisfaction, better clinical outcomes, a strong organizational reputation, operational efficiency, innovation capabilities, and the ability to adapt to changes in the environment. Hospitals that are able to build these capabilities have a greater chance of achieving organizational sustainability and resilience in the face of competition.

One widely recognized strategic approach to improving organizational performance is the implementation of Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM). This concept is an adaptation of Total Quality Management (TQM) applied to the healthcare sector. HTQM emphasizes continuous improvement, patient-centered care, the involvement of all employees, the optimization of work processes, data-driven decision-making, and the fostering of a culture of quality throughout the hospital organization. Various studies show that the implementation of HTQM can improve service quality, patient safety, operational efficiency, patient satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. In an increasingly competitive environment, these outcomes can serve as strategic resources that support the creation of sustainable competitive advantage.

In addition to quality management, the concept of Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) is also gaining increasing attention in the hospital management literature. Sustainable Hospital Governance is an approach to hospital governance that not only focuses on control and compliance but also integrates the principles of accountability, transparency, ethical leadership, stakeholder engagement, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and a long-term organizational orientation. Good governance enables hospitals to manage resources effectively and efficiently while ensuring the sustainable achievement of organizational goals. Thus, the implementation of SHG can strengthen the organization's legitimacy, increase stakeholder trust, and reinforce the hospital's long-term competitiveness.

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between HTQM, SHG, and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA) can be explained through the Resource-Based View (RBV). The RBV theory states that organizations can achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the possession of resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Quality management and hospital governance capabilities are strategic resources embedded in an organization's systems, culture, processes, and leadership. These characteristics make HTQM and SHG strategic assets that are difficult for other hospitals to imitate, thereby potentially creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

Although research on quality management, hospital governance, and organizational performance has advanced significantly, most studies still examine these variables separately. Research that systematically integrates and synthesizes the relationships between Healthcare Total Quality Management, Sustainable Hospital Governance, and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage remains relatively limited. Furthermore, the complexity of today's healthcare environment demands a more comprehensive understanding of the strategic mechanisms linking management quality and governance to the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage.

Given this research gap, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is needed to identify, evaluate, and synthesize the findings of previous studies on the impact of Healthcare Total Quality Management and Sustainable Hospital Governance on Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of strategic hospital management while also providing practical recommendations for hospital administrators in formulating organizational sustainability strategies.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize the findings of previous research on the effects of Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) and Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) on Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). The SLR approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive, systematic, transparent, and replicable synthesis of the literature, thereby yielding stronger scientific evidence than traditional literature reviews.

This study adopted the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which consist of four main stages: (1) Identification, (2) Screening, (3) Eligibility, and (4) Inclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

A systematic literature search was conducted in several reputable international databases widely used in scientific publications and indexed by Scopus and Web of Science. The databases used included Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and PubMed as the primary sources for article retrieval. In addition, Google Scholar was used as a supplementary database to identify relevant articles that may not have been covered by the primary databases and to ensure the completeness of the literature search process.

The article search was conducted from January through February 2026, focusing on publications released between 2015 and 2025. The search strategy was developed using a combination of keywords representing the three main constructs of the study: Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM), Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG), and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). For the Healthcare Total Quality Management construct, the keywords used included “Healthcare Total Quality Management,” “Total Quality Management in Healthcare,” “Hospital Quality Management,” and “Healthcare Quality Improvement.” Furthermore, for the Sustainable Hospital Governance construct, the keywords used were “Hospital Governance,” “Sustainable Hospital Governance,” “Healthcare Governance,” and “Corporate Governance in Hospitals.” As for the Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage construct, the keywords used include “Sustainable Competitive Advantage,” “Hospital Competitive Advantage,” “Healthcare Competitive Advantage,” and “Hospital Sustainability.” The use of these various keyword variations aims to broaden the scope of the search so that all articles relevant to the research topic can be comprehensively identified.

The literature search strategy used the Boolean operators AND and OR to combine key terms, thereby yielding search results that were more specific and relevant to the research focus. The OR operator was used to combine various terms with similar meanings or synonyms within each research construct, while the AND operator was used to link the three main constructs: Healthcare Total Quality Management, Sustainable Hospital Governance, and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage. The search syntax applied is (“Healthcare Total Quality Management” OR “Hospital Quality Management”) AND (“Sustainable Hospital Governance” OR “Healthcare Governance”) AND (“Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage” OR “Hospital Competitive Advantage”). The use of this search strategy aims to optimize the

literature identification process so that the articles obtained are highly relevant to the research objectives.

The article selection process in this study was conducted by establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the literature used was of high quality, relevant, and aligned with the study's objectives. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) articles published between 2015 and 2025; (2) articles indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or other reputable international databases; (3) articles employing quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, or systematic review research approaches; (4) articles that discuss one or more research variables, namely Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM), Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG), and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA); (5) articles available in full text; and (6) articles written in English or Indonesian.

Conversely, articles were excluded from the synthesis process if they met any of the following exclusion criteria: (1) they were not relevant to the research topic; (2) they were editorials, conference proceedings, book reviews, or non-scientific publications; (3) they were duplicate articles found in more than one database; and (4) they were not available in full text. The application of these inclusion and exclusion criteria aims to identify valid, high-quality, and relevant articles so that the resulting literature synthesis possesses a high level of credibility and reliability.

Article Selection Process

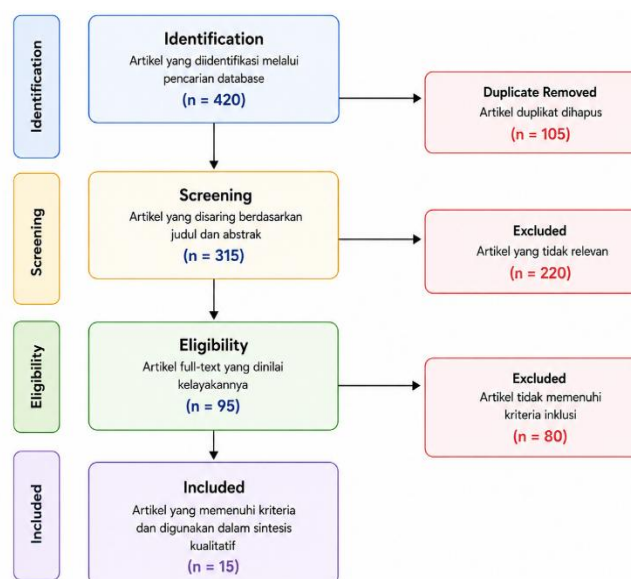


Figure 1: Prisma 2020 Flowchart

Based on the PRISMA guidelines, the initial search yielded 420 articles from various international databases. After removing 105 duplicate articles, 315 articles were selected for the screening phase. Subsequently, 220 articles were eliminated based on an assessment of their titles and abstracts because they were not relevant to the focus of the study. A total of 95 articles were then analyzed in full (full-text review). During the eligibility phase, 80 articles were eliminated because they did not meet the established inclusion criteria. Thus, 15 articles met all requirements and were used in the literature synthesis for this study.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained from the selected articles were analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach, which is an analytical technique aimed at identifying, grouping, and synthesizing the main themes that emerge in the literature. The analysis process was conducted in three stages. The first stage was data extraction, which involved extracting key information

from each article, including the author's name, year of publication, country where the research was conducted, research objectives, research methods, variables studied, and the study's main findings. This stage aimed to provide a systematic overview of the characteristics of each analyzed article.

The second stage is the coding process, which involves classifying the articles based on the three main themes that are the focus of the study: Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM), Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG), and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). The coding process was conducted to group the research findings into categories with similar characteristics, thereby facilitating the synthesis process.

The third stage is thematic synthesis, which involves synthesizing all findings from the classified articles to identify patterns of relationships among variables, the consistency of research results, research gaps, and theoretical and practical implications that can serve as a basis for further research and the implementation of strategies in hospital management. Through these stages, this study produced a comprehensive and systematic literature synthesis capable of providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between HTQM, SHG, and HSCA.

Literature Synthesis Framework

This study uses the Resource-Based View (RBV) as its primary theoretical framework to explain the relationship between Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM), Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG), and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). The RBV theory states that an organization can achieve and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage if it possesses resources and capabilities that meet the characteristics of being valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable known as the VRIN criteria. Resources and capabilities that meet these characteristics are believed to create added value for the organization and serve as the foundation for building a competitive advantage that is difficult for competitors to match.

In the context of this study, Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) is positioned as a strategic quality capability that reflects an organization's ability to manage and continuously improve service quality through a culture of quality, continuous improvement, and patient-centered care. Meanwhile, Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) is positioned as a strategic governance capability—that is, an organization's ability to implement governance that is transparent, accountable, responsible, and sustainability-oriented. Both capabilities are viewed as strategic resources that can strengthen a hospital's competitiveness. Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA) is positioned as a strategic organizational outcome, reflecting a hospital's ability to sustain its competitive advantage through improvements in service quality, operational efficiency, innovation, organizational reputation, and the ability to adapt to environmental changes.

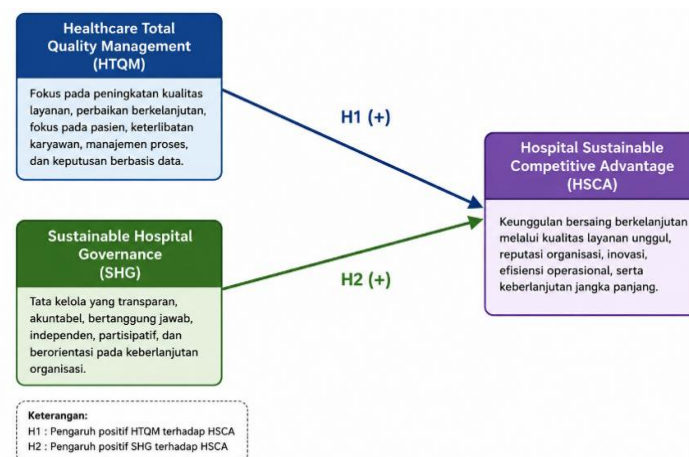


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Validity and Reliability of the Study

To enhance the credibility of the study's findings, the research implemented the following steps:

1. Applying the PRISMA guidelines in the article selection process.
2. Using reputable international databases.
3. Conducting a systematic screening and evaluation of articles.
4. Applying clear inclusion and exclusion criteria.
5. Conducting a thematic synthesis of all articles that met the criteria.

With this approach, the study's results are expected to demonstrate high validity, reliability, and transparency, thereby contributing both theoretically and practically to the development of sustainability strategies and competitive advantages for hospitals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature Review Results

This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure that the process of identifying, selecting, and synthesizing the literature was carried out systematically, transparently, and in a replicable manner. The literature search was conducted using several reputable scientific databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, PubMed, and Google Scholar, covering publications from 2015 to 2025.

The search process utilized keywords relevant to the research focus, namely Healthcare Total Quality Management, Total Quality Management in Healthcare, Healthcare Quality Management, Hospital Quality Management, Hospital Sustainability, Competitive Advantage, and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage. All retrieved articles were then screened based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

During the identification phase, a total of 420 articles were retrieved from various databases. After removing 105 duplicate articles, 315 articles remained and proceeded to the screening phase based on titles and abstracts. At this stage, 220 articles were eliminated because they were irrelevant to the research focus. Subsequently, 95 articles that met the initial criteria were further analyzed through a full-text review process.

During the eligibility assessment phase, 80 articles were eliminated because they did not specifically address the variables under study, did not meet the established journal quality standards, or did not provide sufficient information for the literature synthesis process. After completing all selection stages, 15 articles that met all inclusion criteria were identified and used as the primary sources in this study.

These fifteen articles are indexed in Scopus and are highly relevant to the topic of Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM). Most of the studies used a quantitative approach to examine the impact of quality management practices on organizational performance, service quality, patient satisfaction, organizational innovation, and competitive advantage. In addition, several studies used qualitative approaches and systematic literature reviews to deepen the understanding of HTQM implementation in a hospital setting.

The results of the review indicate that Healthcare Total Quality Management is a strategic capability that plays a crucial role in improving service quality, operational efficiency, patient safety, and hospital organizational performance. These findings suggest that HTQM functions not only as a quality improvement approach but also as a strategic resource capable of creating superior value and supporting the development of Hospital Sustainable Competitive

Key Findings from the Literature

The literature review yielded three main themes:

1. Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM)
2. Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG)

3. Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA)

Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM)

The results of the study indicate that Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) is a management approach that makes quality the responsibility of all components of a hospital organization. The implementation of HTQM includes a focus on patients (patient-centered care), continuous improvement, employee engagement, leadership commitment, evidence-based decision-making, and process management. The majority of studies indicate that the implementation of HTQM contributes positively to improvements in service quality, patient safety, operational efficiency, patient satisfaction, and hospital organizational performance.

Summary of Findings

Several studies have found that hospitals that consistently implement a culture of quality are able to reduce the incidence of adverse events, increase patient satisfaction, and improve the efficient use of resources. Thus, HTQM serves not only as a quality control tool but also as a strategic resource that supports organizational sustainability.

Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG)

The literature indicates that Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) is an extension of the concept of Good Corporate Governance that integrates economic, social, and environmental aspects. The key dimensions of SHG include accountability, transparency, responsibility, independence, fairness, and a focus on sustainability. The results of the study show that the implementation of good hospital governance contributes to an improved organizational reputation, a reduction in operational risks, increased stakeholder trust, and more stable organizational performance. These findings indicate that SHG is a strategic capability that supports hospital sustainability.

Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA)

Based on a literature review, Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA) is characterized by a hospital's ability to sustain superior performance over time. The most commonly identified dimensions include superior service quality, organizational reputation, innovation capability, operational efficiency, and organizational resilience. The literature also indicates that hospitals with sustainable competitive advantage tend to have higher patient visit rates and patient loyalty, more stable financial performance, and sustainable organizational growth.

Discussion

The Impact of Total Quality Management in Healthcare on Hospitals' Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The results of the study indicate that Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) has a positive effect on Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), HTQM is a strategic capability characterized by being valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN), thereby enabling the creation of sustainable competitive advantage. A culture of quality built through the implementation of HTQM has been proven to improve service quality, patient safety, patient satisfaction, operational efficiency, innovation, and organizational performance. Therefore, HTQM can be viewed as a strategic resource that strengthens a hospital's competitive advantage in the long term, leading to the proposition that HTQM contributes positively to Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

The Impact of Sustainable Hospital Governance on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Hospitals

The study's findings indicate that Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) plays a crucial role in creating a Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). Effective governance through the application of the principles of transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and stakeholder engagement has been shown to enhance organizational effectiveness and support the successful implementation of sustainability strategies (van Schie et al., 2024). Furthermore, good governance enables hospitals to manage risks more effectively, enhance the organization's reputation, strengthen stakeholder trust (Keswani et al., 2022), and improve adaptability to environmental changes, thereby supporting the achievement of sustainable performance (Braithwaite et al., 2017; Calciolari et al., 2018). Based on the perspectives of Stakeholder Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV), SHG can be viewed as a strategic capability that supports the creation of a Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (WHO, 2023). Therefore, the proposition is formulated that Sustainable Hospital Governance positively contributes to Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

Integrating Healthcare Total Quality Management and Sustainable Hospital Governance to Build a Hospital's Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The main findings of this study indicate that Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) and Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) do not operate in isolation but complement one another in building Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA). HTQM focuses on improving service quality, process efficiency, patient satisfaction, and organizational innovation through a culture of continuous improvement (Hidayah et al., 2022; Zehir & Zehir, 2023), while SHG emphasizes transparency, accountability, and a sustainability orientation in hospital management (van Schie et al., 2024). The integration of these two capabilities generates synergies that can improve service quality, strengthen stakeholder trust, build organizational reputation, enhance resource efficiency, and strengthen the ability to adapt to environmental changes. Research also indicates that the integration of quality and sustainability yields better organizational performance than the separate implementation of each (Lee & Lee, 2022). From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), the synergy between HTQM and SHG forms a unique and difficult-to-imitate organizational capability, thereby serving as the primary foundation for creating a Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

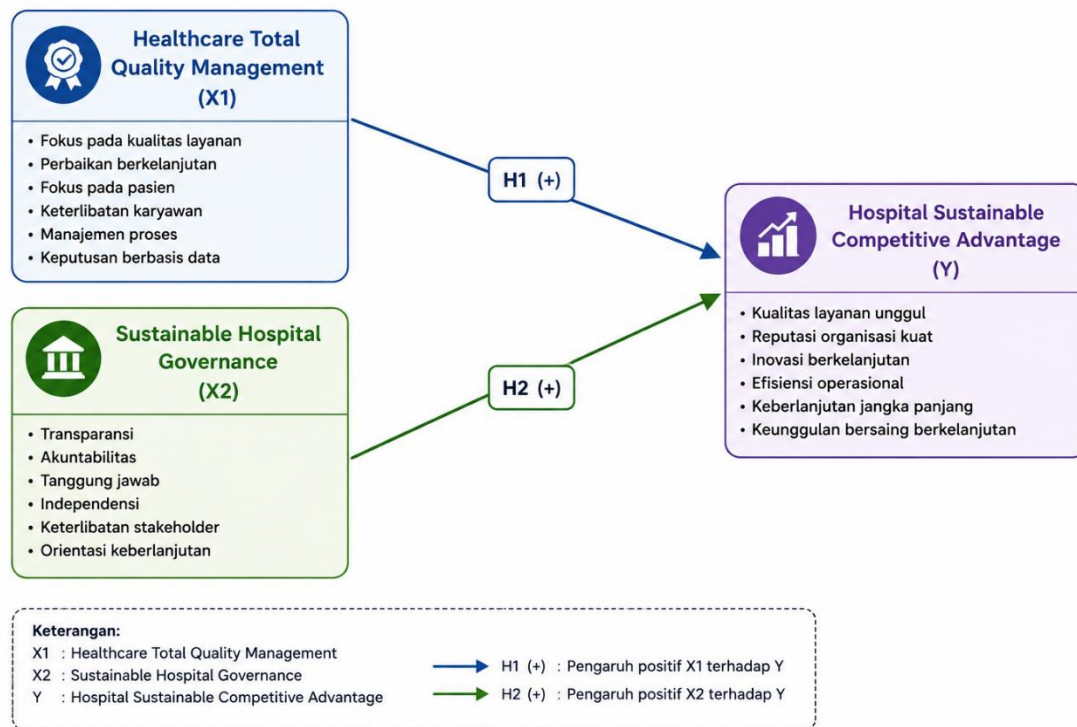


Figure 3: Model of SLR Results Synthesis

Theoretical Implications

The results of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) reinforce the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which states that quality and governance capabilities are strategic resources capable of creating sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, this study enriches the literature on hospital management by demonstrating that Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) functions as a strategic quality capability, Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) as a strategic governance capability, and that these two capabilities synergistically contribute to creating Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA).

Practical Implications

For hospital management, the results of this study indicate that sustainability strategies must not only focus on improving service quality but must also be supported by transparent, accountable, and long-term-oriented governance. Therefore, hospitals need to develop a culture of sustainable quality, strengthen their governance systems, increase the involvement of all stakeholders, integrate quality and governance aspects into organizational strategies, and develop sustainability indicators as part of strategic performance measurement to support the creation of sustainable competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a systematic literature review of various studies discussing Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM), Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG), and Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage (HSCA), the following conclusions can be drawn. First, Healthcare Total Quality Management (HTQM) is a strategic capability that plays a crucial role in improving service quality, patient safety, operational efficiency, patient satisfaction, and hospital organizational performance. The implementation of HTQM—which is oriented toward continuous improvement, patient-centered care, employee engagement, and quality leadership—can create added value that is difficult for competitors to replicate, thereby serving as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Second, Sustainable Hospital Governance (SHG) is a governance system that integrates the principles of accountability, transparency, responsibility, independence, fairness, and a sustainability orientation into hospital management. A review of the literature indicates that good governance can increase stakeholder trust, strengthen the organization's reputation, reduce operational risks, and support the hospital's long-term sustainability.

Third, the results of the literature synthesis indicate that Healthcare Total Quality Management and Sustainable Hospital Governance have a positive relationship with Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Hospitals that are able to integrate a culture of quality with sustainable governance tend to be better able to maintain a competitive advantage, improve service quality, optimize resources, and adapt to changes in the external environment.

Fourth, from the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), HTQM and SHG can be viewed as strategic resources and capabilities that possess the characteristics of being valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Therefore, these two variables serve as a crucial foundation for building Hospital Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that a hospital's success in creating sustainable competitive advantage is determined not only by the quality of medical services but also by the organization's ability to establish an integrated, sustainable quality management and governance system.

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