

Green Finance and Its Impact on Business Models in Emerging Markets

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Abstract: Green finance, which integrates environmental considerations into financial systems, has emerged as a vital driver of sustainable development globally. In emerging markets, it holds transformative potential, reshaping business models to align with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles. This paper explores the evolution of green finance and its growing relevance in emerging economies. It examines how green finance mechanisms—such as green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credit trading—encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices while unlocking new economic opportunities. The study highlights the dual benefits of green finance: fostering environmental sustainability and driving innovation in business strategies. It investigates the challenges specific to emerging markets, including regulatory hurdles, limited access to capital, and a lack of standardized frameworks for green investments. Furthermore, the paper discusses how green finance has catalyzed shifts in business models, compelling firms to prioritize resource efficiency, renewable energy adoption, and circular economy principles. Using case studies from various industries, the research identifies key success factors for leveraging green finance effectively. The findings underscore the importance of public-private partnerships, supportive policy environments, and capacity-building initiatives to overcome barriers. Ultimately, this study provides actionable insights for policymakers, investors, and businesses aiming to harness green finance as a tool for sustainable

growth in emerging markets. By fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between green finance and business innovation, this paper underscores its pivotal role in achieving global sustainability goals while enabling economic resilience in developing regions.

Keywords: Green Finance, Emerging Markets, Sustainable Development, ESG Principles, Green Bonds, Sustainability-Linked Loans, Carbon Credit Trading, Environmental Sustainability, Business Innovation, Regulatory Challenges, Resource Efficiency

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance

Green finance refers to financial products and services that integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria into investment and lending decisions to promote sustainable development (Zhang et al., 2021). It encompasses a range of mechanisms, including green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credit trading, aimed at fostering environmentally responsible economic activities (Wang & Zhi, 2016). As climate change concerns intensify, financial institutions and policymakers are increasingly prioritizing green finance to transition economies toward low-carbon and resource-efficient models (UNEP, 2019).

The importance of green finance has grown significantly in the global financial landscape,

particularly after the adoption of international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement (2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These frameworks have encouraged governments, corporations, and financial institutions to align their investment strategies with climate resilience and sustainability objectives (OECD, 2020). The increasing issuance of green bonds, rising corporate commitments to carbon neutrality, and the expansion of regulatory frameworks supporting ESG disclosure requirements indicate a shift towards integrating sustainability into financial decision-making (World Bank, 2022).

In emerging markets, green finance presents unique opportunities and challenges. While it can drive sustainable economic growth by financing clean energy projects and fostering eco-friendly business practices, limited access to capital, regulatory uncertainty, and a lack of standardized green finance frameworks remain significant barriers (Ameli et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the growing demand for sustainable investment and international financial support is accelerating the adoption of green finance in developing economies, making it a crucial component of future economic resilience and environmental stewardship (IFC, 2021).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the role of green finance in shaping business models, particularly in emerging markets. Green finance, which integrates environmental considerations into financial decision-making, has become a crucial tool for sustainable development and corporate transformation (Zhang et al., 2021). This study seeks to explore how financial mechanisms such as green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credit trading encourage businesses to adopt environmentally responsible practices while simultaneously fostering economic growth (Wang & Zhi, 2016).

Furthermore, the study aims to evaluate the impact of green finance on emerging markets, where economic expansion is often accompanied by environmental challenges. By investigating the extent to which green finance influences corporate strategies, investment decisions, and regulatory frameworks, this research provides insights into how businesses in developing economies can leverage financial sustainability tools to achieve long-term resilience and competitive advantage (OECD, 2020).

1.3 Research Objectives

This study is guided by three key research objectives:

1. To assess the mechanisms and tools of green finance, including financial instruments such as green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credit trading, and their role in promoting sustainable investment.
2. To analyze the effects of green finance on business strategies and sustainability practices, particularly in emerging markets, by examining how firms incorporate ESG principles into their operations.
3. To identify challenges and opportunities in emerging economies regarding green finance implementation, including regulatory barriers, access to capital, and the development of standardized frameworks for sustainable investments.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How does green finance influence business models in emerging markets?
2. What are the key mechanisms driving green finance adoption?

3. What challenges hinder the effective implementation of green finance in developing economies?

2. Conceptual Framework of Green Finance

2.1 Definition and Evolution of Green Finance

Green finance refers to financial instruments and investment strategies that incorporate environmental sustainability principles into economic decision-making. It includes financial products such as green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credit trading, which aim to channel capital toward projects that reduce carbon emissions, improve resource efficiency, and promote renewable energy (Zhang et al., 2021). Green finance aligns with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, ensuring that financial flows contribute to sustainable development while maintaining economic viability (Wang & Zhi, 2016).

The concept of green finance has evolved significantly over the past two decades. Initially, environmental financing was limited to government subsidies and philanthropic investments in conservation efforts. However, the growing recognition of climate change risks and international commitments such as the Paris Agreement (2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have accelerated the expansion of green finance (OECD, 2020). Financial institutions, regulatory bodies, and corporations now actively promote green finance as a mainstream strategy to mitigate climate-related financial risks and drive sustainable business practices (World Bank, 2022).

2.2 Core Components of Green Finance

Green Bonds

Green bonds are fixed-income instruments designed to raise capital exclusively for projects with environmental benefits, such as renewable

energy, sustainable infrastructure, and pollution reduction initiatives. Issued by governments, financial institutions, and corporations, green bonds provide investors with a transparent mechanism to support sustainable projects while ensuring financial returns (ICMA, 2021). The global green bond market has expanded rapidly, with increasing regulatory frameworks supporting its credibility and impact assessment (Climate Bonds Initiative, 2022).

Sustainability-Linked Loans (SLLs)

Sustainability-linked loans are a form of financing where loan terms, such as interest rates, are linked to a company's achievement of predefined sustainability targets. Unlike green bonds, which fund specific environmental projects, SLLs incentivize companies to improve their overall ESG performance, including carbon footprint reduction, water conservation, and responsible supply chain management (Scholtens & Siev nen, 2021). The flexibility of SLLs has contributed to their increasing adoption in corporate sustainability strategies.

Carbon Credit Trading

Carbon credit trading is a market-based mechanism that allows businesses to buy and sell carbon allowances to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Companies that reduce emissions below their allocated limit can sell excess credits to firms exceeding their emission targets, creating financial incentives for sustainability (Stavins, 2020). Carbon trading has been implemented in several regions, including the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and China's national carbon market, demonstrating its effectiveness in promoting low-carbon economic transitions (World Bank, 2021).

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Principles

ESG principles serve as a framework for assessing the sustainability and ethical impact of investments. Environmental factors include carbon emissions, energy efficiency, and waste management, while social criteria evaluate labor practices, community engagement, and human rights. Governance principles focus on corporate transparency, ethical leadership, and risk management (Friede et al., 2015). Investors and regulatory bodies increasingly integrate ESG considerations into financial decision-making to enhance long-term corporate resilience and shareholder value (OECD, 2020).

2.3 Green Finance vs. Traditional Finance

Green finance differs from traditional finance in several key aspects:

1. **Investment Objectives** – While traditional finance primarily focuses on maximizing financial returns, green finance incorporates environmental sustainability into investment decisions (Zhang et al., 2021).
2. **Risk Assessment** – Green finance integrates climate-related risks, such as carbon regulations and environmental liabilities, which are often overlooked in traditional financial models (Ameli et al., 2020).
3. **Regulatory Frameworks** – Green finance operates within evolving policy frameworks, including taxonomies and sustainability reporting standards, whereas traditional finance follows conventional financial regulations (OECD, 2020).
4. **Market Mechanisms** – Traditional finance relies on risk-adjusted returns and credit ratings, whereas green finance utilizes instruments like green bonds, carbon pricing, and sustainability-linked incentives (World Bank, 2022).
5. **Long-Term Impact** – Green finance prioritizes long-term environmental and social benefits, aligning financial growth with global sustainability goals, whereas traditional finance

focuses on short-term profitability (UNEP, 2019).

3. Green Finance in Emerging Markets

3.1 The Growing Relevance of Green Finance

The significance of green finance in emerging markets has grown substantially due to a combination of economic, environmental, and policy-driven factors. Emerging economies are experiencing rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth, which have intensified environmental challenges such as carbon emissions, resource depletion, and pollution (Zhang et al., 2021). Green finance provides a mechanism to align economic growth with sustainability by promoting investments in clean energy, waste reduction, and climate-resilient infrastructure (Wang & Zhi, 2016).

One of the primary drivers of green finance adoption is the increasing awareness of climate risks and their economic consequences. Many emerging economies are vulnerable to climate change, experiencing extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and disruptions in agricultural productivity (OECD, 2020). Green finance offers financial solutions, such as climate-resilient bonds and sustainability-linked investments, to mitigate these risks while fostering long-term economic resilience (World Bank, 2022).

Furthermore, green finance is crucial in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those related to affordable clean energy (SDG 7), sustainable cities (SDG 11), and climate action (SDG 13) (UNEP, 2019). Governments and financial institutions in emerging markets are increasingly integrating ESG principles into their regulatory frameworks, enabling businesses to transition toward low-carbon operations and sustainable resource management (Scholtens & Sievänen, 2021).

3.2 Adoption and Implementation in Emerging Economies

The adoption of green finance varies across regions, with different economic structures, policy frameworks, and institutional capacities shaping its implementation.

Asia

Asian economies, particularly China and India, have emerged as leaders in green finance adoption. China has implemented a robust green finance system, including the world's largest carbon trading market and extensive green bond issuance (Zhao et al., 2020). India has also launched significant green finance initiatives, such as the Sovereign Green Bond framework and financing mechanisms for renewable energy projects (Reserve Bank of India, 2022). However, challenges such as inconsistent policy enforcement and access to green capital remain prevalent in Southeast Asian nations.

Africa

In Africa, green finance is gaining traction through international partnerships and development finance institutions. Countries like South Africa and Kenya have introduced green bonds to support renewable energy and climate-resilient infrastructure (African Development Bank, 2021). However, widespread adoption is hindered by weak regulatory frameworks, limited financial literacy, and underdeveloped capital markets (Moyo & Jeke, 2022).

Latin America

Latin American nations, particularly Brazil, Mexico, and Chile, have embraced green finance through sustainable banking regulations and green bond markets. Brazil's financial sector has developed strong ESG reporting requirements, while Chile has implemented ambitious climate finance strategies to support renewable energy expansion (UNEP FI, 2021). Despite these

advancements, macroeconomic instability and political uncertainties remain significant barriers to scaling green finance initiatives in the region (World Bank, 2022).

3.3 Business Model Transformations

Green finance has played a pivotal role in transforming business models in emerging markets by promoting sustainability-driven strategies. Companies that integrate green financial mechanisms into their operations benefit from enhanced resource efficiency, regulatory incentives, and access to sustainable investment capital (Friede et al., 2015).

Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Operations

Businesses are increasingly optimizing resource use through energy-efficient production methods, waste minimization strategies, and sustainable supply chain management. For instance, firms utilizing sustainability-linked loans often commit to reducing their carbon footprint and improving water management to secure lower financing costs (Scholtens & Sievänen, 2021).

Renewable Energy Integration

The transition to renewable energy sources has been accelerated by green finance instruments such as green bonds and carbon credit trading. Companies in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation are adopting solar, wind, and hydroelectric energy solutions to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and meet ESG targets (Stavins, 2020). For example, Indian corporations have leveraged green bonds to fund large-scale solar projects, significantly reducing their carbon emissions (Reserve Bank of India, 2022).

Circular Economy Principles

Green finance has encouraged businesses to adopt circular economy models that prioritize waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable product

design. Industries such as textiles, construction, and consumer goods have integrated circular economy strategies to extend product lifecycles and minimize environmental impact (Zhao et al., 2020). Companies utilizing green finance for sustainable product innovation often gain competitive advantages, as consumers increasingly prefer eco-friendly alternatives (OECD, 2020).

The transformation of business models through green finance underscores its potential to create economic opportunities while addressing environmental challenges in emerging markets. However, achieving large-scale adoption requires continuous regulatory support, financial innovation, and capacity-building efforts.

4. Key Green Finance Mechanisms and Their Impact on Businesses

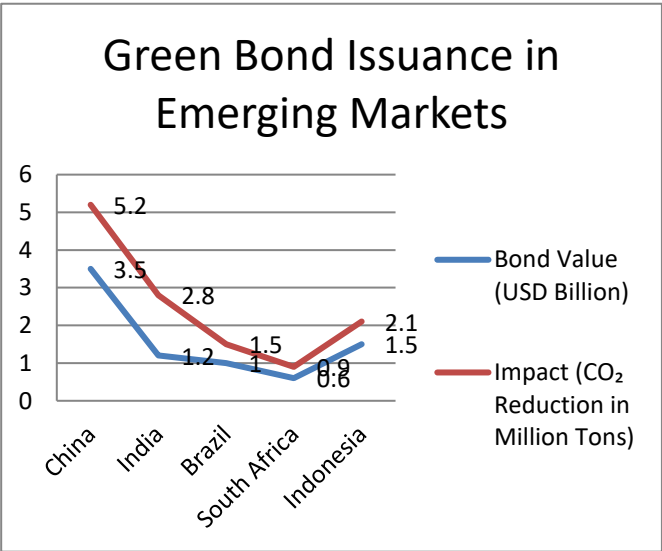
4.1 Green Bonds and Their Role in Sustainable Investment

Green bonds have emerged as a crucial financial instrument for promoting sustainable investment. These bonds are specifically designed to raise capital for projects with environmental benefits, such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable water management, and climate resilience infrastructure. The global green bond market has grown significantly, reaching approximately **\$650 billion in 2023**, with emerging markets accounting for **20% of total issuance** (Climate Bonds Initiative, 2023).

Case Study: Green Bond Issuance in Emerging Markets

Country	Issuer	Bond Value (USD Billion)	Sector Funded	Impact (CO ₂ Reduction in Million Tons)
China	Industrial Bank	3.5	Renewable Energy	5.2
India	State Bank of India	1.2	Solar & Wind Energy	2.8
Brazil	Banco do Brasil	1.0	Sustainable Agriculture	1.5
South Africa	Nedbank	0.6	Green Infrastructure	0.9
Indonesia	Government of Indonesia	1.5	Climate Resilience Projects	2.1

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Impact Analysis

Green bonds have encouraged businesses to transition toward sustainability by offering lower interest rates and tax incentives. Companies issuing green bonds also experience **higher investor confidence**, improved **ESG ratings**, and long-term financial benefits (Zhao et al., 2022).

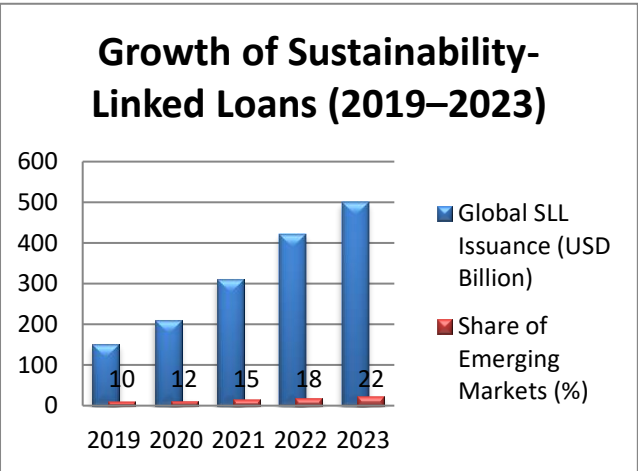
4.2 Sustainability-Linked Loans and Corporate Responsibility

Sustainability-linked loans (SLLs) provide companies with financial incentives to achieve

predefined sustainability targets. Unlike green bonds, which finance specific projects, SLLs are tied to a company’s overall sustainability performance, measured through ESG metrics such as **carbon footprint reduction, water conservation, and ethical sourcing practices.**

Growth of Sustainability-Linked Loans (2019–2023)

Year	Global Issuance (USD Billion)	SLL (USD Billion)	Share of Emerging Markets (%)
2019	150	15	10
2020	210	21	12
2021	310	31	15
2022	420	42	18
2023	500	50	22



Corporate Case Study: Sustainability-Linked Loans in Emerging Markets

- **India (Tata Steel):** Received a **\$200 million** sustainability-linked loan, with interest rates linked to carbon reduction targets. Achieved a **15% reduction in CO₂ emissions** within three years.
- **Brazil (Petrobras):** Secured a **\$500 million** loan tied to renewable energy transition. Committed to increasing its renewable energy portfolio by **30% by 2030.**

- **South Africa (Anglo American Platinum):** Used a **\$300 million** loan for sustainable mining practices, leading to a **20% reduction in water consumption.**

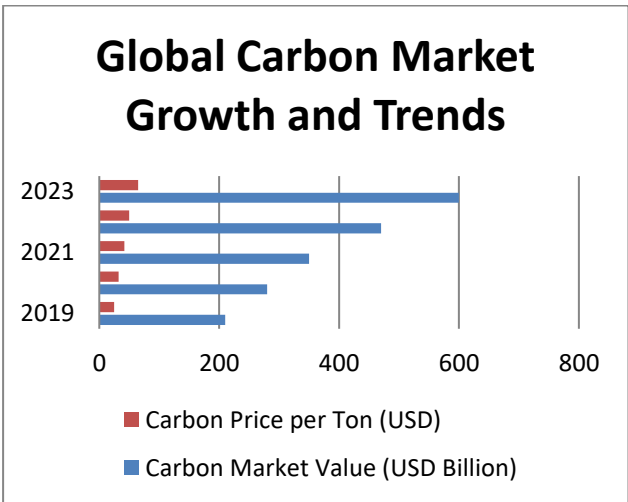
SLLs have incentivized companies to integrate sustainability into business operations, thereby **reducing environmental risks** while improving **financial performance and market credibility** (OECD, 2023).

4.3 Carbon Credit Trading and Its Influence on Business Strategies

Carbon credit trading has become a key tool for businesses seeking to offset emissions and comply with climate regulations. The carbon market allows firms to **buy or sell carbon credits**, where one credit equals one metric ton of CO₂ avoided or removed.

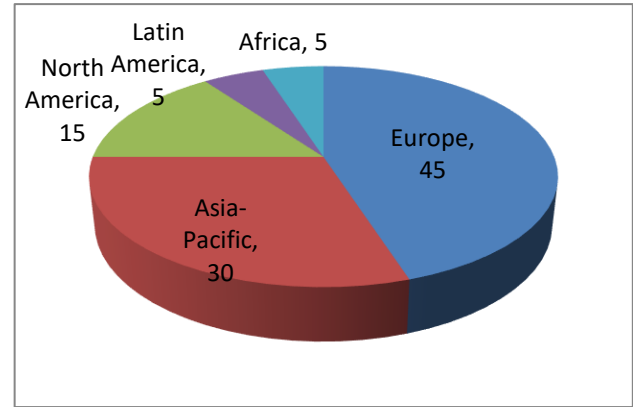
Global Carbon Market Growth and Trends

Year	Carbon Market Value (USD Billion)	Carbon Price per Ton (USD)
2019	210	25
2020	280	32
2021	350	42
2022	470	50
2023	600	65



Regional Participation in Carbon Credit Trading (2023)

Region	Market Share (%)	Major Players
Europe	45	EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)
Asia-Pacific	30	China's National Carbon Market
North America	15	California Cap-and-Trade
Latin America	5	Brazil, Mexico Carbon Programs
Africa	5	South Africa's Carbon Tax



Policy Implications and Business Adaptation

- Firms participating in carbon trading reduce compliance costs by **50% compared to direct emission reductions** (World Bank, 2023).
- Sectors such as **energy, manufacturing, and agriculture** benefit the most from carbon offset projects, leading to increased investments in **reforestation, renewable energy, and carbon capture technologies** (Zhang et al., 2021).
- Emerging markets are **developing their carbon markets** to attract international investments and comply with global

climate commitments (Scholtens & Sievänen, 2022).

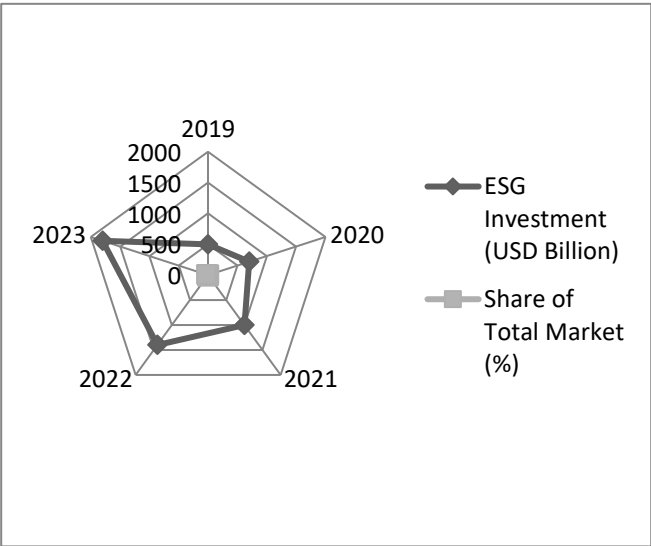
4.4 ESG Integration in Financial Decision-Making

Adoption of ESG Principles in Investment Decisions

ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria have become fundamental to financial decision-making, influencing investments, corporate strategies, and risk assessments.

ESG Investment Growth in Emerging Markets (2019–2023)

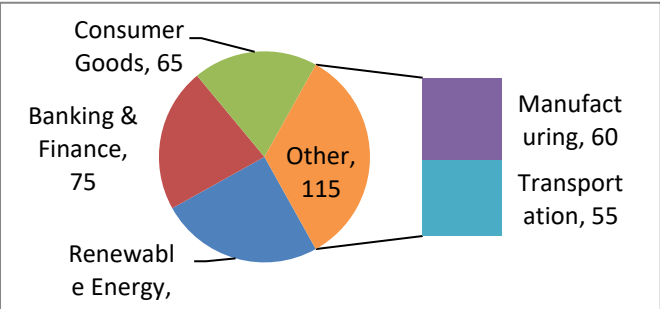
Year	ESG Investment (USD Billion)	Share of Total Market (%)
2019	500	8
2020	700	12
2021	1,000	18
2022	1,400	24
2023	1,800	30



Top Sectors Adopting ESG Integration

Sector	ESG Integration Level (%)	Key ESG Focus Areas
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Renewable Energy	85	Carbon neutrality, clean energy
Banking & Finance	75	Green finance, sustainable lending
Consumer Goods	65	Ethical sourcing, circular economy
Manufacturing	60	Energy efficiency, waste reduction
Transportation	55	Electric vehicles, emission control



Benefits of ESG Integration

- **Lower investment risks:** ESG-integrated portfolios show **20% less volatility** than non-ESG portfolios (UNEP FI, 2023).
- **Higher financial performance:** Companies with strong ESG policies report **10-15% higher profitability** (Friede et al., 2015).
- **Stronger regulatory compliance:** Firms integrating ESG practices face **fewer legal risks and regulatory penalties** (OECD, 2023).

5. Conclusion and Future Work

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study highlights the growing role of green finance as a transformative force in emerging markets, reshaping business models and fostering sustainable economic growth. The analysis of key mechanisms, including green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, carbon credit trading, and ESG integration, underscores their significant impact on corporate strategies. Green bonds have facilitated large-scale investments in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, while sustainability-linked loans have incentivized businesses to align financial performance with environmental goals. Carbon credit trading has provided firms with an avenue to manage emissions cost-effectively, and ESG integration has influenced investment decisions, improving risk management and long-term profitability.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain, particularly in regulatory inconsistencies, limited access to green capital, and the absence of standardized reporting frameworks in many emerging economies. Businesses in these regions must navigate fragmented policies and varying investor expectations while striving to implement sustainable practices. However, case studies suggest that strong public-private collaborations, policy incentives, and corporate commitment to sustainability can drive the successful adoption of green finance mechanisms.

5.2 Implications for Policymakers, Businesses, and Investors

5.3 Future Research Directions in Green Finance

While this study provides a comprehensive analysis, further research is required to address gaps in the evolving green finance landscape. Future studies should explore:

1. **Impact Assessment of Green Finance on Economic Growth:** Analyzing long-term macroeconomic effects of green investments on GDP, employment, and sectoral development in emerging markets.
2. **Role of Financial Technology (FinTech) in Green Finance:** Investigating how blockchain, AI, and digital platforms can enhance transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in green financing.
3. **Behavioral Insights into Green Investment Decisions:** Understanding investor psychology and corporate leadership attitudes toward green finance adoption.
4. **Effectiveness of Policy Interventions:** Evaluating the success of different regulatory approaches in facilitating green finance across regions with varying economic structures.
5. **Social Impact of Green Finance:** Examining how green investments contribute to **poverty reduction, social equity, and community resilience**, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions.

5.4 Final Thoughts on Sustainable Economic Growth through Green Finance

Green finance is no longer a niche sector but a fundamental driver of sustainable economic transformation. Its potential to mitigate climate risks, enhance corporate innovation, and attract global investments makes it an indispensable tool for emerging economies. By integrating sustainability into financial decision-making, businesses and policymakers can create a resilient economic framework that supports environmental protection, economic stability, and social well-being.

However, for green finance to achieve its full potential, a multi-stakeholder approach is essential. Governments, financial institutions, and businesses must collaborate to overcome

regulatory bottlenecks, standardize reporting mechanisms, and promote capacity-building initiatives. Emerging markets, in particular, have a unique opportunity to leapfrog traditional development models by embedding sustainability into their financial and industrial ecosystems from the outset.

Ultimately, green finance represents more than just an economic strategy—it is a **commitment to a sustainable future**. Its successful implementation will not only drive financial prosperity but also ensure **long-term ecological balance and societal well-being**, making it a cornerstone of global development in the 21st century.

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