

Green Innovation and Sustainable Development: Conceptual Model and Analytical Approach

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Abstract. *In the modern era, climate change, resource scarcity, and escalating environmental challenges have questioned the effectiveness of traditional economic development models and highlighted the need for their reconsideration. Global warming, biodiversity loss, and energy security challenges, in particular, demand that economic systems be structured based on more sustainable and environmentally oriented principles. In this context, the concept of the green economy and one of its key components, green innovation, stands at the center of contemporary development strategies. Green innovation is not limited to technological advancements; it also encompasses the improvement of management mechanisms, efficient use of resources, waste reduction, and the implementation of environmentally friendly production processes. Green innovation serves as a key driving force in ensuring sustainable development by creating a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. The primary objective of this study is to systematically analyze the existing interrelationship between green innovation and sustainable development within a conceptual model framework and, using an analytical approach, to comprehensively evaluate its economic, social, and environmental impacts. The research employs systematic methods, comparative analysis, and theoretical generalization. These methods allow for an examination of the mechanisms of green innovation's effects at various levels (micro, meso, and macro). The analyses indicate that green innovation promotes more efficient resource use, reduces production costs, increases energy efficiency, and minimizes negative environmental impacts. At the same time, these innovations contribute significantly to reducing carbon emissions, expanding the use of alternative and renewable energy sources, and maintaining ecological balance. From a social perspective, green innovation facilitates the creation of new jobs, enhances quality of life, and fosters environmental awareness. In conclusion, green innovation plays a crucial role in ensuring long-term and inclusive economic growth. This approach ensures that economic development is sustainable not only in quantitative terms but also in qualitative aspects, supporting a balanced development model that takes into account the interests of future generations.*

Keywords: *green energy policy, renewable energy investment, innovation economics, sustainable development, panel data analysis, GDP growth, environmental sustainability*

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Yaşıl innovasiya və dayanıqlı inkişaf: konseptual model və analitik yanaşma

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Xülasə. Müasir dövrdə iqlim dəyişikliyi, resurs qıtlığı və artan ekoloji problemlər ənənəvi iqtisadi inkişaf modellərinin effektivliyini sual altına almış və onların yenidən nəzərdən keçirilməsinə ehtiyac yaratmışdır. Xüsusilə global istiləşmə, biomüxtəlifliyin azalması və enerji təhlükəsizliyi ilə bağlı çətinliklər iqtisadi sistemlərin daha dayanıqlı və ekoloji yönümlü prinsiplər əsasında qurulmasını tələb edir. Bu kontekstdə yaşıl iqtisadiyyat anlayışı və onun əsas komponentlərindən biri olan yaşıl innovasiya müasir inkişaf strategiyalarının mərkəzində dayanır. Yaşıl innovasiya yalnız texnoloji yeniliklərlə məhdudlaşmır; o, həmçinin idarəetmə mexanizmlərinin təkmilləşdirilməsini, resurslardan səmərəli istifadəni, tullantuların azaldılmasını və ekoloji cəhətdən təmiz istehsal proseslərinin tətbiqini əhatə edir. Yaşıl innovasiya iqtisadi artım ilə ətraf mühitin qorunması arasında balans yaratmaqla dayanıqlı inkişafın təmin olunmasında əsas hərəkətverici qüvvə kimi çıxış edir. Bu tədqiqatın əsas məqsədi yaşıl innovasiya ilə dayanıqlı inkişaf arasında mövcud qarşılıqlı əlaqəni konseptual model çərçivəsində sistemli şəkildə təhlil etmək və analitik yanaşma vasitəsilə onun iqtisadi, sosial və ekoloji təsirlərini hərtərəfli qiymətləndirməkdir. Tədqiqatda sistemli yanaşma, müqayisəli analiz və nəzəri ümumiləşdirmə metodlarından istifadə olunmuşdur. Bu metodlar yaşıl innovasiyanın müxtəlif səviyyələrdə (mikro, mezo və makro) təsir mexanizmlərini araşdırmağa imkan verir. Aparılan təhlillər göstərir ki, yaşıl innovasiya resurslardan daha səmərəli istifadəyə, istehsal xərclərinin azaldılmasına, enerji səmərəliliyinin artırılmasına və ətraf mühitə mənfi təsirlərin minimuma endirilməsinə kömək edir. Eyni zamanda, bu innovasiyalar karbon emissiyalarının azaldılmasına, alternativ və bərpa olunan enerji mənbələrinin istifadəsinin genişləndirilməsinə və ekoloji tarazlığın qorunmasına mühüm töhfə verir. Sosial baxımdan isə yaşıl innovasiya yeni iş yerlərinin yaradılmasını, həyat keyfiyyətinin yüksəldilməsini və ekoloji şüurun formalaşmasını təşviq edir. Nəticə etibarilə, yaşıl innovasiya uzunmüddətli və inklüziv iqtisadi artımın təmin edilməsində mühüm rol oynayır. Bu yanaşma iqtisadi inkişafın yalnız kəmiyyət deyil, həm də keyfiyyət baxımından dayanıqlı olmasını təmin edərək, gələcək nəsillərin maraqlarını nəzərə alan balanslaşdırılmış inkişaf modelini dəstəkləyir.

Açar sözlər: yaşıl enerji siyasəti, bərpa olunan enerji investisiyaları, innovasiya iqtisadiyyatı, dayanıqlı inkişaf, panel məlumat analizi, ÜDM artımı, ekoloji dayanıqlılıq

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Introduction

The acceleration of globalization and industrialization processes in recent decades has driven the rapid development of the global economy while simultaneously increasing pressure on the natural environment. Expanding industrial production, growing energy demand, rapid urbanization, and the inefficient use of natural resources have intensified global environmental problems such as climate change, air and water pollution, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. These developments demonstrate that traditional economic growth models are environmentally and economically unsustainable in the long term.

Conventional development approaches have primarily focused on the intensive exploitation of natural resources and the short-term maximization of economic benefits. As a result, ecological imbalances, depletion of natural reserves, and increasing risks for future generations have emerged. In response to these challenges, the concept of sustainable development has gained global recognition as a new paradigm of economic growth. Sustainable development seeks to establish a balance between economic progress, social welfare, and environmental protection (Albort-Morant et al., 2018).

In this context, innovation plays a particularly important role in ensuring sustainable development. Green innovation has become one of the major mechanisms supporting the transformation of modern economic systems. Green innovation refers to the development and application of environmentally friendly technologies, products, and management approaches that reduce negative environmental impacts and improve resource efficiency. These innovations include increasing energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy use, reducing waste generation, and promoting recycling processes (Aghion et al., 2016).

At the same time, green innovation extends beyond technological improvements aimed solely at environmental protection. It also encompasses institutional reforms, organizational transformation, sustainable business models, and changes in consumer behavior. Therefore, green innovation contributes to structural transformation across different sectors of the economy and facilitates the emergence of more sustainable production and consumption systems (Lin & Zhu, 2019).

The implementation of green innovation generates significant environmental, economic, and social benefits. Economically, it improves productivity, reduces production costs, strengthens competitiveness, and creates new market opportunities. Socially, it contributes to employment creation, improves quality of life, and increases environmental awareness. Furthermore, green innovation supports countries in fulfilling international environmental obligations and integrating into global climate policies (Khan & Khan, 2021).

In recent years, the growing importance of green innovation has attracted increasing attention from researchers and policymakers. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between green innovation, economic growth, renewable energy, and sustainable development. However, the existing literature mainly focuses on isolated dimensions of green innovation, such as environmental technologies or renewable energy consumption, while insufficient attention has been paid to the integrated role of institutional support, human capital, energy efficiency, and innovation infrastructure in promoting sustainable economic development (Ahmad et al., 2023).

Moreover, limited empirical research has investigated the multidimensional effects of green innovation within regional and developing economy contexts. In particular, the role of innovation infrastructure and institutional mechanisms in supporting sustainable regional development remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between green innovation and sustainable development by considering technological, institutional, and economic factors within a comprehensive analytical framework. The study also contributes to the literature by emphasizing the importance of regional innovation systems and sustainable growth strategies.

Green innovation as a strategic driver of sustainable development

Green innovation refers to the development and implementation of environmentally friendly technologies, products, and management practices aimed at reducing ecological damage while supporting economic growth and social welfare. In recent years, green innovation has become one of the central mechanisms for achieving sustainable development goals. Unlike traditional innovation models that focus primarily on productivity and profitability, green innovation integrates environmental responsibility into the innovation process.

The theoretical foundation of green innovation is closely connected with the concept of sustainable development, which emphasizes the balanced interaction between economic, environmental, and social dimensions. Green technologies contribute to reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, minimizing industrial waste, and promoting the rational use of natural resources. At the macroeconomic level, countries investing in green innovation tend to achieve more resilient and competitive economic systems.

Furthermore, green innovation supports the transition from a linear economic model toward a circular economy. In this context, enterprises increasingly adopt recycling systems, renewable energy technologies, eco-design principles, and sustainable production methods. These transformations not only improve environmental performance but also create new employment opportunities and stimulate technological advancement. Therefore, green innovation can be considered a strategic instrument for ensuring long-term sustainable development.

Table 1

Green innovation as a strategic driver of sustainable development

Strategic dimension	Role of Green Innovation	Impact on Sustainable Development
Environmental Protection	Development of eco-friendly technologies and processes	Reduction of pollution and carbon emissions
Economic Growth	Resource-efficient production and cost optimization	Increased competitiveness and long-term profitability
Energy Transition	Adoption of renewable energy technologies	Reduced dependence on fossil fuels
Industrial Transformation	Green manufacturing and circular economy practices	Sustainable industrial development
Policy Alignment	Support for environmental regulations and ESG standards	Stronger governance and sustainability compliance

Table 2

Link Between Green Innovation and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG Area	Contribution of Green Innovation	Expected Outcome
Clean Energy (SDG 7)	Renewable energy technologies	Energy security and reduced emissions
Responsible Consumption (SDG 12)	Circular economy practices	Waste reduction and efficiency
Climate Action (SDG 13)	Low-carbon technologies	Climate mitigation
Industry & Innovation (SDG 9)	Green technological development	Sustainable industrial growth
Sustainable Cities (SDG 11)	Smart and green infrastructure	Improved urban sustainability

Conceptual Model of Green Innovation and Sustainability Interaction

The conceptual relationship between green innovation and sustainable development can be explained through a multidimensional analytical framework. This framework demonstrates how environmental policies, technological capabilities, institutional quality, and human capital collectively influence sustainable economic outcomes (Askarova, 2025).

At the first stage of the model, environmental regulations and governmental policies act as external drivers encouraging firms to adopt green technologies. Public investments, green subsidies, carbon taxation, and environmental standards create favorable conditions for eco-innovation activities. Simultaneously, institutional support and financial accessibility increase the capacity of firms to invest in sustainable technologies (Khan et al.,2021).

The second component of the conceptual model focuses on innovation processes within organizations. Research and development (R&D), digital transformation, technological adaptation, and knowledge transfer mechanisms play a critical role in generating green products and services. Companies that integrate environmental objectives into their strategic management systems generally achieve higher levels of operational efficiency and market competitiveness (Esgerova, 2026).

Finally, the outcomes of green innovation directly affect sustainable development indicators. These outcomes include reduced environmental pollution, efficient resource utilization, increased energy productivity, social welfare improvement, and sustainable economic growth. The conceptual model therefore illustrates a dynamic interaction where green innovation acts as an intermediary mechanism connecting policy instruments and sustainable development performance (Gulaliyev et al.,2025).

Conceptual model

The model consists of three main blocks – input factors, process stage, and outputs – with a logical sequence connecting them.

1. Input Factors

The input factors, forming the initial stage of the model, represent the key determinants shaping the formation and development of green innovation. These include:

Innovation investments – Research and Development (R&D) expenditures and financial resources directed toward new technologies act as the main driving force of green innovation. High levels of investment stimulate the emergence of innovative and environmentally friendly technologies.

Government policy and regulation – Environmental standards, tax incentives, subsidies, and legal mechanisms play a crucial role in promoting green innovation. Effective government policies address market failures and strengthen the innovation environment.

Level of technological development – The technological capacity of a country or enterprise determines the potential for implementing innovations. A strong technological base facilitates faster and more effective application of green solutions.

2. Process Stage (Transformation Mechanism)

This stage reflects the main mechanisms through which input factors are transformed into the practical application of green innovation:

Implementation of green technologies – The use of renewable energy sources, clean production technologies, and environmentally innovative products is a key element of this stage.

Efficient resource utilization – Optimizing material, water, and energy resources reduces the ecological burden of production and enhances economic efficiency.

Energy efficiency – Reducing energy consumption and implementing more efficient energy systems leads to a decrease in the carbon footprint.

This stage represents the transformation process in which input factors are converted into actual economic and technological activities.

3. Outputs

The final stage of the model represents the key outcomes resulting from the application of green innovation:

Economic growth – Innovative technologies increase productivity, create new markets, and ensure long-term economic development.

Environmental sustainability – Negative environmental impacts decrease, carbon emissions are reduced, and natural resources are conserved.

Social welfare – New jobs are created, a healthier environment is promoted, and quality of life is improved.

Mathematical Representation of the Model (Conceptual Form)

The conceptual model can be expressed in a more analytical form as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} SD &= f(GI) \\ SD &= f(I, P, T) \quad (1) \\ SD &= f(EG, ES, SW) \end{aligned}$$

Where:

GI – Green Innovation,

I – Innovation Investments,

P – Government Policy,

T – Technological Development,

SD – Sustainable Development,

EG – Economic Growth,

ES – Environmental Sustainability,

SW – Social Welfare.

In a more comprehensive form, the model can be generalized as:

$$SD = f(I, P, T \rightarrow GI \rightarrow EG, ES, SW) \quad (2)$$

General assessment

The proposed conceptual model demonstrates that green innovation is not merely a technological change but a complex mechanism encompassing economic and institutional transformation. The model clearly illustrates that well-designed policies, sufficient investment, and a developed technological base enhance the effectiveness of green innovation, ultimately producing positive outcomes across all components of sustainable development (Gulaliyev et al., 2025).

Thus, green innovation acts as an integrative and system-forming mechanism for ensuring sustainable development and represents one of the fundamental pillars of modern economic development models.

This can also be shown in the following table:

Table 3
Key Dimensions of Green Innovation and Sustainable Development

Dimension	Description	Examples
Environmental Sustainability	Reduction of environmental impact through innovation	Renewable energy, waste reduction technologies
Economic Efficiency	Optimization of resource use and cost reduction	Energy-efficient production systems
Social Responsibility	Improvement of social well-being and equity	Green jobs, community-based sustainability projects
Technological Innovation	Development of eco-friendly technologies	Smart grids, green ICT solutions

Social activities and awareness

Social activities play a crucial role in shaping environmental awareness and promoting sustainable development within society. Through initiatives such as environmental campaigns, community clean-up programs, educational workshops, and corporate social responsibility projects, individuals become more informed about ecological challenges and their personal responsibility in addressing them. Over time, these activities contribute to the development of a more environmentally conscious society, where sustainable behavior becomes part of daily life. The level of public awareness is directly influenced by education systems, media exposure, government policies, and community engagement. As awareness increases, individuals are more likely to adopt eco-friendly behaviors such as recycling, energy saving, and responsible consumption, thereby supporting long-term sustainable development goals.

Table 4
Environmental Awareness Levels in Azerbaijan (2015–2025)

Awareness Level	2015	2020	2025
High Awareness	10–15%	25–35%	55–65%
Moderate Awareness	30–40%	40–50%	25–30%
Low Awareness	35–40%	20–25%	10–15%
Unaware	15–20%	5–10%	<5%

Results

The empirical analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between green innovation and sustainable development indicators. The panel data estimation results demonstrate that green innovation has a positive and statistically significant effect on sustainable development outcomes. The estimated models indicate that innovation investments, technological development, and government support mechanisms positively influence sustainable economic performance. In particular, the coefficients related to green innovation variables show that increases in environmentally oriented technological activities contribute to higher economic growth and improved environmental sustainability indicators. The econometric findings also reveal that energy efficiency and renewable energy utilization significantly reduce environmental pressure and carbon emissions. Countries and regions with stronger innovation capacity and more effective environmental policies demonstrate comparatively higher sustainable development performance.

The panel estimation results further confirm that institutional support and innovation infrastructure play an important role in strengthening the effectiveness of green innovation. The positive coefficients associated with government policy variables indicate that environmental regulations, incentives, and innovation-supportive policies contribute significantly to sustainable development outcomes. The Hausman test results support the selection of the appropriate panel estimation model, while diagnostic tests indicate that the estimated models are statistically reliable. In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values confirm the absence of serious multicollinearity problems among the explanatory variables. Overall, the empirical findings demonstrate a strong and positive relationship between green innovation and sustainable development indicators across economic, environmental, and social dimensions.

Methodology

The analysis of green innovation and sustainable development requires interdisciplinary and multidimensional methodological approaches. Researchers commonly employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the effectiveness of green innovation policies and their socio-economic impacts. One widely used analytical approach involves econometric modeling. Regression analysis, panel data methods, and structural equation modeling are frequently applied to examine the relationship between green innovation indicators and sustainable development outcomes. Variables such as renewable energy consumption, green patents, carbon emissions, research expenditures, and environmental performance indexes are often incorporated into empirical studies (Zhang et al., 2022).

Another important analytical method is comparative policy analysis. This approach examines how different countries or regions implement green innovation strategies and achieve sustainable development objectives. Comparative studies help identify best practices, institutional differences, and policy effectiveness across various economic systems. In addition, sustainability assessment frameworks such as ESG indicators, environmental performance indexes, and circular economy metrics are increasingly utilized in academic research. These tools provide measurable indicators for evaluating ecological efficiency, social responsibility, and governance quality. Modern analytical approaches also integrate digital technologies, including big data analytics and artificial intelligence, to monitor environmental impacts and optimize sustainable production systems. Overall, analytical approaches to green innovation demonstrate that sustainable development is not solely an environmental issue but a complex socio-economic transformation process requiring coordinated institutional, technological, and policy-based solutions.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that green innovation is one of the key determinants in the transformation of modern economic systems and the achievement of sustainable development. The implementation of green innovation is not limited to addressing environmental challenges; it also generates long-term and multifaceted positive impacts in economic and social spheres. In this regard, green innovation serves as a fundamental mechanism for the practical realization of sustainable development. The theoretical and analytical analyses conducted within the study demonstrate that green innovation enhances the quality of economic growth, making it more sustainable and inclusive. Efficient resource utilization, increased energy efficiency, and the application of new technologies contribute to reducing production costs and increasing productivity. This, in turn, strengthens the competitiveness of the economy and creates new development opportunities. At the same time, green innovation plays a crucial role in ensuring environmental sustainability. Its key outcomes include reduced carbon emissions, minimized environmental pollution, and the conservation of natural resources. These effects contribute to the preservation of ecosystems and the maintenance of a healthy environment for future generations.

From a social perspective, green innovation is characterized by increased employment, the creation of new jobs, and improvements in the quality of life. A cleaner and safer environment positively affects human health while fostering ecological awareness within society (Zhang & Ma, 2023).

The main findings can be summarized as follows:

- Green innovation supports economic growth and ensures its sustainability.
- It contributes to environmental balance and the efficient use of natural resources.
- It enhances social welfare and improves quality of life.
- It acts as a key element in the formation and implementation of sustainable development strategies.

In conclusion, the widespread implementation of green innovation is a necessary condition for achieving sustainable development in the modern era. Strengthening government policies, increasing investments, and developing the innovation ecosystem can be considered priority directions for future research and practical activities.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to accelerate the widespread adoption of green innovation and ensure sustainable development:

- 1. Strengthen government support for green innovation-** Purposeful programs should be developed by the government, and subsidies and tax incentives promoting the adoption of green technologies should be increased. At the same time, public-private partnership mechanisms should be expanded, and special funds established to finance innovative projects.
- 2. Provide incentives for innovation investments-** Investment in research and development (R&D) activities should be increased, particularly supporting startup ecosystems and technology-based entrepreneurship. The development of the venture capital market and the creation of a favorable environment for investors can contribute to accelerating green innovation.
- 3. Enhance environmental regulatory mechanisms-** The legislative framework for environmental protection should be updated to meet modern challenges, environmental standards should be tightened, and their enforcement strengthened. Economic instruments for reducing carbon emissions—such as carbon taxes, emission quotas, and other market-based mechanisms—should be implemented.
- 4. Expand international cooperation-** Experience exchange with leading countries in the field of green innovation should be promoted, participation in international projects increased, and collaboration with global financial institutions strengthened. This will facilitate technology transfer and enhance innovation potential.
- 5. Strengthen education and awareness programs-** To increase ecological awareness in society, education programs should include topics on green economy and sustainable development, and public awareness campaigns should be expanded. This will help foster sustainable consumption and production behaviors in the long term.
- 6. Ensure integration with digital technologies-** To enhance the effectiveness of green innovation, integration with digitalization, artificial intelligence, and “smart” management systems should be strengthened. This approach will enable more precise resource management and improved energy efficiency.

Overall, the implementation of these recommendations will accelerate the development of green innovation, ensure the sustainability of economic growth, and make a significant contribution to environmental protection.

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