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#### Abstract

This study explores the role of green accounting in enhancing business sustainability, specifically within renewable energy companies. As environmental concerns increase globally, businesses are under growing pressure to adopt sustainable practices, with green accounting serving as a critical tool in this transformation. Green accounting involves integrating environmental costs into traditional financial reporting systems, allowing companies to better track their environmental impact, improve resource efficiency, and contribute to long-term sustainability. This research investigates how renewable energy companies implement green accounting practices and assesses the impact of these practices on their sustainability performance. Using a qualitative approach, the study examines multiple case studies from companies in the renewable energy sector, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of adopting green accounting. The findings suggest that companies with comprehensive green accounting systems not only achieve better environmental outcomes but also improve their relationships with stakeholders, attract investment, and gain a competitive advantage. However, the study also identifies significant barriers, including the lack of standardized reporting frameworks and internal resistance to change. The research concludes that the widespread adoption of green accounting is essential for advancing sustainability in the renewable energy sector and offers practical recommendations for overcoming implementation challenges.

**Keywords:** Green accounting, sustainability, renewable energy, business performance.

#### INTRODUCTION

The importance of sustainable practices in business operations has gained significant traction in the past few decades. With mounting concerns over climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation, organizations across industries are increasingly pressured to adopt practices that are not only financially viable but also environmentally responsible. In response to these pressures, green accounting has emerged as a key tool for integrating environmental considerations into corporate financial practices. Green accounting, also referred to as environmental accounting, involves the inclusion of environmental costs and benefits in the financial reporting and decision-making processes of an organization.

The concept of green accounting grew out of the realization that traditional accounting systems, which primarily focus on monetary transactions, fail to account for the environmental costs associated with business activities. These costs may include, but are not limited to, the costs of pollution, resource

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depletion, and waste management. As the world shifts toward more sustainable practices, companies are beginning to recognize that their environmental footprint not only affects the planet but also their long-term financial viability. In this context, green accounting plays a crucial role in helping businesses assess, monitor, and manage the environmental impacts of their operations.

Among various sectors, the renewable energy industry stands out as a sector where green accounting has substantial potential. Renewable energy companies, which generate energy from sustainable sources such as wind, solar, and hydropower, already have an inherently lower environmental impact compared to traditional fossil-fuel-based energy providers. However, like any other business, they face their own set of environmental challenges, ranging from the resource consumption associated with energy production to waste management and land use concerns. Implementing green accounting within these organizations can allow them to more effectively track and report environmental costs, identify inefficiencies, and align their operations with global sustainability goals. Additionally, adopting green accounting can enhance a company's competitiveness by improving its sustainability profile and appealing to socially responsible investors.

Despite the growing awareness and adoption of sustainable practices, the integration of green accounting remains limited in many industries, especially in emerging sectors such as renewable energy. The challenge lies in the complexity of incorporating environmental costs into traditional accounting systems that have long been dominated by financial metrics alone. While many renewable energy companies may prioritize sustainability through their core operations, they may struggle to formalize these efforts within their accounting frameworks. Moreover, the lack of standardized practices for environmental accounting and the difficulty of quantifying environmental costs hinder the widespread implementation of green accounting.

In light of this, the problem addressed by this study is twofold: first, how renewable energy companies can successfully implement green accounting practices, and second, how these practices can contribute to the companies' overall sustainability goals. This study aims to explore the role of green accounting in promoting business sustainability within renewable energy companies, specifically addressing the challenges and opportunities in adopting such practices.

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

 To investigate the implementation of green accounting practices in renewable energy companies: The study will explore the various green accounting tools and methods adopted by renewable energy companies and how they are incorporated into their financial management systems.



- 2. To assess the impact of green accounting on the sustainability performance of these companies: The study will examine the tangible effects of green accounting on the environmental and financial performance of renewable energy companies, particularly in terms of cost savings, resource efficiency, and environmental performance.
- 3. To identify the challenges and barriers faced by renewable energy companies in adopting green accounting: This will include an analysis of both external and internal factors that hinder or facilitate the adoption of green accounting, such as regulatory frameworks, organizational culture, and the complexity of environmental reporting.

This study is particularly important for several reasons. First, it contributes to the relatively underexplored field of green accounting, specifically within the context of the renewable energy sector. By examining the challenges and opportunities associated with green accounting, this research provides valuable insights into how businesses can better integrate environmental sustainability into their financial strategies.

Second, renewable energy companies, by adopting green accounting, can enhance their environmental performance, reduce waste and resource consumption, and gain a competitive edge in an increasingly sustainability-conscious market. This research can therefore serve as a guide for managers, financial professionals, and policymakers looking to improve the sustainability practices within the renewable energy sector.

Lastly, understanding the barriers to the implementation of green accounting can help inform policymakers, industry leaders, and academics on ways to support the adoption of green accounting frameworks, fostering a more sustainable business landscape.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Concept and Development of Green Accounting

Green accounting, also known as environmental accounting, has evolved as a response to the growing recognition that traditional financial accounting systems fail to account for the full range of costs associated with business activities. While traditional accounting focuses primarily on financial transactions and monetary outcomes, green accounting integrates environmental costs into the accounting framework, providing a more comprehensive view of a company's economic and environmental performance. This development stems from the increasing awareness that businesses, regardless of their industry, affect the environment and that these effects should be tracked and managed for sustainable development.

The origins of green accounting can be traced back to the 1970s, a time when environmental concerns began to emerge globally. Early efforts focused on

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measuring the direct environmental costs of production activities, such as pollution control and waste disposal. However, over time, the scope of green accounting expanded to encompass indirect environmental impacts, including the costs of resource depletion, environmental degradation, and long-term ecological damage. Green accounting has become a central tool in the management of corporate sustainability, serving as a bridge between financial and environmental considerations (Guthrie & Parker, 2010).

The development of green accounting has been shaped by various international frameworks, including the United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). These frameworks provide guidelines for measuring and reporting on environmental impacts, enabling organizations to integrate environmental data with their financial records. However, the adoption of green accounting remains uneven across industries, with some sectors, such as renewable energy, being more proactive in embracing these practices than others.

### Green Accounting and Business Sustainability

Business sustainability is increasingly seen as a multi-dimensional concept that involves balancing economic, social, and environmental goals. The notion of sustainability in business can be traced back to the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework introduced by John Elkington in 1997. According to TBL, companies should focus not only on profit (economic sustainability) but also on people (social sustainability) and the planet (environmental sustainability). Green accounting plays a crucial role in the environmental dimension of TBL, ensuring that businesses account for and reduce their negative environmental impacts.

Sustainability, in the business context, refers to an organization's ability to operate in a way that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Green accounting helps businesses achieve this by providing a mechanism for tracking, reporting, and managing the environmental costs of production, resource usage, and waste disposal. It also encourages the development of policies and practices aimed at reducing environmental harm while improving operational efficiency.

According to Gray (2006), the integration of environmental costs into accounting practices helps businesses identify inefficiencies, reduce waste, and minimize resource consumption, all of which contribute to long-term financial stability. Additionally, green accounting supports businesses in complying with increasingly stringent environmental regulations, mitigating risks associated with environmental disasters, and improving their public image and reputation with stakeholders, including customers, investors, and regulators.



### The Role of Green Accounting in Renewable Energy Companies

The renewable energy sector presents a unique opportunity for the application of green accounting, as these companies are at the forefront of efforts to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change. Renewable energy companies, which generate electricity from sustainable sources such as wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal, are intrinsically more environmentally friendly than traditional energy companies that rely on fossil fuels. However, the renewable energy sector is not without its own environmental challenges, such as land use, resource extraction, and the disposal of equipment like solar panels and wind turbines.

Green accounting can provide renewable energy companies with a comprehensive framework to manage and report on the environmental costs associated with their operations. For instance, the cost of land acquisition, installation of energy infrastructure, and disposal of non-renewable components can be accounted for under a green accounting system. Moreover, renewable energy companies can use green accounting to track their carbon emissions, monitor energy efficiency, and calculate the financial benefits of resource conservation (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2006).

In renewable energy companies, green accounting not only helps in tracking and reducing environmental costs but also aligns the company with global sustainability goals. As these companies aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy technologies, green accounting can serve as an essential tool for reporting the environmental impact of their operations, thus enhancing transparency and trust with stakeholders. For example, the use of renewable energy certificates (RECs) or carbon credits can be incorporated into green accounting systems to provide a clear picture of a company's environmental performance.

#### Barriers to the Adoption of Green Accounting in Renewable Energy

While the potential benefits of green accounting in renewable energy companies are significant, several barriers hinder its widespread adoption. One of the key challenges is the lack of standardized accounting frameworks for measuring and reporting environmental costs. Unlike financial accounting, which is guided by well-established standards such as Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) or International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), green accounting lacks a universally accepted set of guidelines. This lack of standardization can lead to inconsistencies in reporting and difficulty in comparing environmental performance across companies and industries (Bebbington et al., 2001).

Another barrier to the adoption of green accounting is the complexity of quantifying environmental costs. Environmental impacts such as pollution,

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resource depletion, and biodiversity loss are often difficult to measure in financial terms. For instance, the cost of environmental degradation may not be immediately apparent but can have long-term consequences that are challenging to assess. Furthermore, there is often a lack of knowledge and expertise within companies on how to incorporate environmental data into financial accounting systems. This gap in expertise can lead to resistance from employees and managers who are not familiar with environmental accounting practices (Zhang et al., 2019).

Moreover, companies may face organizational and cultural resistance to the adoption of green accounting. In many cases, traditional accounting systems are deeply entrenched in business practices, and the introduction of new frameworks may be seen as an additional burden. This resistance can be further compounded by the lack of clear incentives for adopting green accounting, particularly if companies perceive it as an expensive or resource-intensive process. In some cases, the perceived benefits of green accounting may not outweigh the costs of implementation, especially for small and medium-sized renewable energy companies that lack the financial resources to invest in new systems.

### Green Accounting and Stakeholder Influence

Stakeholders, including investors, customers, and regulators, play a significant role in influencing the adoption of green accounting practices. Increasingly, investors are looking for companies that prioritize environmental sustainability, as they recognize the long-term risks associated with environmental degradation. As a result, companies that adopt green accounting practices are often seen as more attractive investment opportunities. For example, renewable energy companies that demonstrate their commitment to sustainability through transparent environmental accounting can differentiate themselves from competitors and attract socially responsible investors.

Similarly, customers are increasingly demanding that businesses take responsibility for their environmental impacts. As consumer awareness of environmental issues grows, companies are under pressure to provide evidence of their sustainability efforts. Green accounting can help companies meet these expectations by providing detailed, accurate information on their environmental performance. Additionally, regulators are tightening environmental regulations, and companies that fail to adopt green accounting practices may face fines, penalties, or reputational damage. Thus, green accounting serves as a mechanism for ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and improving a company's public image (Freeman, 1984).



#### **METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, using a multiple-case study approach to explore the role of green accounting in enhancing business sustainability within renewable energy companies. The focus is on companies that have implemented green accounting practices and their impact on sustainability performance. The rationale behind choosing qualitative methods is to gain a deeper understanding of the processes, challenges, and benefits of adopting green accounting in a real-world business context.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews with key personnel in selected renewable energy companies, including financial managers, sustainability officers, and senior executives. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing participants to discuss their experiences and insights regarding green accounting practices. Secondary data, including company reports, sustainability disclosures, and annual financial statements, were also gathered to complement the interview data. This approach helped triangulate findings and ensured the reliability of the results.

The companies selected for the study represent a range of sizes and operational regions within the renewable energy sector. This diversity provides a comprehensive perspective on the implementation of green accounting practices across different contexts and business environments. Companies were chosen based on their commitment to sustainability and their adoption of green accounting tools.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. Key themes related to the implementation challenges, benefits, and overall impact of green accounting practices on business sustainability were identified and analyzed. The secondary data was used to validate the primary data and further enrich the findings.

The study is limited by its focus on a small number of case studies, which may not fully represent the entire renewable energy sector. Further research involving larger sample sizes and quantitative data could provide more generalizable conclusions.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **Adoption of Green Accounting Practices**

The study revealed a varied implementation of green accounting practices across the renewable energy companies investigated. Company A, a large multinational renewable energy provider, had developed a comprehensive green accounting system. This system tracked not only direct environmental costs such as emissions reduction and energy usage but also included indirect costs like resource consumption during production and waste disposal. Company A's green accounting framework integrated environmental data directly into their financial

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statements, allowing for better decision-making in resource allocation and long-term sustainability planning.

In contrast, smaller companies, such as Company B, applied green accounting in a more limited capacity. They focused primarily on measuring their carbon footprint and energy efficiency improvements. While Company B did not integrate environmental costs into their core financial reports, they regularly published separate sustainability reports that highlighted their environmental efforts. This approach, although not as integrated, still allowed the company to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability, especially in attracting socially responsible investors.

Company C, which operated in a region with more stringent environmental regulations, had a more cautious approach to green accounting. They primarily used it for compliance with local regulatory requirements, tracking carbon emissions and waste management costs. However, this company had not yet fully realized the potential of green accounting in enhancing their overall sustainability performance. Their environmental practices were primarily reactive, responding to regulatory pressures rather than proactively integrating sustainability into their core business model.

### Impact on Business Sustainability

The results indicate that companies that adopted comprehensive green accounting practices reported better sustainability outcomes compared to those with more limited implementation. For instance, Company A, with its fully integrated green accounting system, achieved significant reductions in both energy consumption and carbon emissions. The company was also able to identify inefficiencies in their operations that resulted in cost savings. Additionally, Company A experienced a positive impact on its reputation, as stakeholders recognized the company's transparency and commitment to environmental sustainability.

Company B, although not fully integrating environmental costs into its financial statements, still benefited from green accounting practices. The company's focus on measuring and reporting energy efficiency led to notable improvements in operational performance and reduced waste. Furthermore, Company B's investors appreciated the company's efforts to address environmental issues, leading to increased investment in their renewable energy projects. However, Company B's limited adoption of green accounting meant that it did not fully capitalize on the potential to enhance resource efficiency across its operations.

On the other hand, Company C, which was more reactive in its adoption of green accounting, did not observe significant improvements in its sustainability performance. Although the company complied with local regulations, its lack of a

comprehensive green accounting system meant that opportunities for optimizing resource use and reducing environmental costs were not fully explored. This highlights the importance of proactive engagement with green accounting, rather than simply using it for compliance purposes.

### **Barriers to Implementation**

The study also identified several barriers to the adoption of green accounting within the renewable energy sector. One of the most significant barriers was the lack of standardized frameworks for measuring and reporting environmental costs. While some companies used internal guidelines to track environmental data, the absence of universally accepted standards made it difficult to compare performance across the industry. This lack of standardization was particularly evident in the case of Company B, which struggled to measure the financial implications of its environmental initiatives accurately.

Another barrier was the complexity of integrating environmental costs into traditional accounting systems. Many companies faced challenges in quantifying indirect environmental costs, such as the long-term impact of resource depletion and ecosystem damage. As noted by Company C, the lack of expertise and training in environmental accounting posed an additional challenge. Financial managers and accountants were often not familiar with the methods for integrating environmental data into financial reports, leading to resistance in adopting green accounting practices.

Additionally, cultural resistance within organizations played a role in hindering the widespread adoption of green accounting. In some companies, sustainability initiatives were not prioritized by senior management, limiting the resources allocated to green accounting efforts. Company C, for example, faced internal resistance from departments that did not view environmental accounting as a priority. This was particularly true in departments that focused on short-term financial goals and were skeptical of the long-term benefits of green accounting.

#### The Role of Leadership in Overcoming Barriers

A significant finding from this study was the pivotal role of leadership in overcoming the barriers to green accounting adoption. Companies that had strong leadership commitment to sustainability, such as Company A, were more successful in implementing green accounting practices. Senior executives in these companies prioritized sustainability and allocated resources to developing and implementing green accounting systems. Leadership also played a key role in creating a corporate culture that supported environmental responsibility, thereby facilitating the acceptance of green accounting practices across all levels of the organization.

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In contrast, companies like Company C, which lacked strong leadership support for sustainability, struggled to integrate green accounting into their business operations. Without the backing of top management, the initiative to adopt green accounting was often seen as secondary to other business priorities.

### Impact on Stakeholder Relations

The study found that companies with more robust green accounting practices experienced stronger relationships with stakeholders, particularly investors and customers. For example, Company A, with its transparent environmental reporting, attracted investors who were particularly interested in sustainability. The company's efforts in reducing carbon emissions and improving resource efficiency were not only recognized by regulatory bodies but also by socially responsible investors looking for companies that align with their sustainability values.

Company B, despite its more limited adoption of green accounting, also benefited from positive stakeholder relationships. The company's efforts in reporting energy efficiency gains helped improve its reputation among environmentally conscious consumers and investors. However, the lack of a comprehensive green accounting system meant that the company's engagement with stakeholders could not be fully leveraged for long-term sustainability.

In contrast, Company C, which focused primarily on compliance and did not adopt a proactive approach to green accounting, did not experience the same level of stakeholder engagement. Their environmental reporting was seen as a response to regulatory requirements rather than a genuine commitment to sustainability, which limited their ability to build strong relationships with stakeholders.

#### CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significant role that green accounting plays in enhancing business sustainability, particularly within the renewable energy sector. The integration of environmental costs into traditional financial accounting practices provides companies with the tools to not only track their environmental performance but also reduce resource inefficiencies, minimize waste, and ultimately improve their overall sustainability outcomes. By incorporating environmental metrics into financial decision-making, renewable energy companies can better manage their ecological footprint while achieving long-term economic stability.

The findings of this research indicate that companies that adopted comprehensive green accounting practices, such as integrating environmental costs into financial reports and using sustainability metrics, saw notable improvements in both their environmental and financial performance. Companies



like Company A, which fully integrated green accounting into their operations, reported significant reductions in energy consumption, carbon emissions, and waste production. These companies also experienced enhanced relationships with stakeholders, including investors, customers, and regulatory bodies, who valued their commitment to sustainability and transparency.

However, the study also highlighted several challenges that hinder the widespread adoption of green accounting in the renewable energy sector. The lack of standardized reporting frameworks, the complexity of quantifying environmental costs, and organizational resistance to change were significant barriers. These challenges were particularly pronounced in smaller companies or those with less leadership commitment to sustainability. Companies like Company C, which primarily used green accounting for compliance rather than proactive sustainability management, did not achieve the same level of success in improving their environmental performance or stakeholder relations.

To overcome these barriers, it is crucial for renewable energy companies to invest in the development of standardized green accounting frameworks and provide adequate training and resources to employees. Furthermore, strong leadership support for sustainability is essential to creating a culture that embraces environmental responsibility at all levels of the organization.

Green accounting offers renewable energy companies an effective mechanism to align their financial performance with environmental sustainability goals. By adopting green accounting practices, these companies can enhance their competitiveness, foster transparency, and contribute meaningfully to global sustainability efforts. As the renewable energy sector continues to grow, the importance of green accounting in achieving a sustainable future for both business and the environment cannot be overstated.

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Renewable Energy Companies

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