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**Impact of Climate Change Agreements on National
Environmental Policies: A Cross-National Analysis**

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Impact of Climate Change Agreements on National Environmental Policies: A Cross-National Analysis



Article history

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the impact of climate change agreements on national environmental policies, a cross-national analysis.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that international agreements significantly influence domestic environmental policies. Countries that are parties to major climate agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, often adopt more rigorous environmental regulations and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This influence is more pronounced in nations with robust political institutions and a high degree of international engagement. The analysis also indicates that the effectiveness of these agreements in shaping national policies is contingent on the presence of supportive domestic factors, such as public awareness, political will, and economic incentives.

Additionally, nations with higher levels of economic development tend to implement more comprehensive environmental policies in response to international commitments. Overall, the findings suggest that while international climate agreements are crucial drivers for national policy changes, their impact is mediated by internal political and socio-economic contexts.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Policy convergence theory, diffusion of innovations theory and institutional theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the impact of climate change agreements on national environmental policies, a cross-national analysis. Practical recommendations should emphasize the importance of fostering international partnerships, capacity building, and technology transfer to support the implementation of climate-related policies at the national level. Policymakers should prioritize policy coherence, harmonization, and integration across sectors to ensure a holistic approach to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development.

Keywords: *Climate Change, Agreements, National Environmental Policies, Cross-National Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

The impact of climate change agreements on national environmental policies is a critical area of study that examines how international treaties and accords influence the domestic policies of participating nations. In developed economies like the United States, environmental policies are robust and constantly evolving. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been a central agency in implementing and enforcing environmental regulations. From 2010 to 2020, the EPA reports a 10% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, showcasing the impact of policies such as the Clean Power Plan. Similarly, in Japan, the Ministry of the Environment plays a vital role in setting and implementing environmental policies. One notable policy is the Basic Environment Plan, aiming for a 26% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2013 levels. These policies are supported by research indicating a positive correlation between stringent environmental regulations and reduced pollution levels (Smith, 2018).

In Brazil, environmental policies have focused on combating deforestation and promoting sustainable land use. The Forest Code, enacted in 2012, set regulations for landowners to conserve a percentage of their land as forested areas. Additionally, Brazil established the Amazon Fund, a financial mechanism to support projects aimed at reducing deforestation rates in the Amazon rainforest. From 2018 to 2022, these policies contributed to a significant 15% decrease in deforestation rates, highlighting the impact of targeted conservation efforts. Research indicates that sustainable land management policies are crucial for preserving biodiversity and mitigating climate change impacts in developing economies (Silva, 2021).

In Indonesia, environmental policies have centered on addressing deforestation and promoting sustainable forestry practices. The Forest Moratorium, initiated in 2011, placed a temporary halt on issuing new permits for logging and palm oil plantations in primary forests and peatlands. This policy was instrumental in reducing deforestation rates by approximately 50% from 2015 to 2020. Furthermore, Indonesia's efforts in promoting certified sustainable palm oil production have garnered international recognition, demonstrating the country's commitment to balancing economic development with environmental conservation. Studies emphasize the importance of regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms in achieving sustainable forest management goals (Suharto, 2018).

In China, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment has implemented a series of comprehensive environmental policies to combat pollution. The Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan, launched in 2013, targeted a significant reduction in particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations. By 2020, this plan led to a notable 33% decrease in average PM_{2.5} levels across major cities, showcasing the effectiveness of targeted policies. Additionally, China has been actively promoting renewable energy adoption through policies supporting the expansion of electric vehicles (EVs). From 2018 to 2022, there was a remarkable 30% increase in EV sales, driven by incentives and infrastructure development. Research underscores the critical role of government initiatives in driving environmental improvements and transitioning to sustainable energy sources (Wang, 2017).

India's environmental policies have also been instrumental in addressing key challenges such as air pollution and climate change. The National Clean Air Program (NCAP), launched in 2019, aims to reduce particulate matter pollution by 20-30% within five years, focusing on key urban areas with high pollution levels. Concurrently, India has made significant strides in renewable energy development through policies like the Renewable Energy Expansion Plan. This plan targets

an ambitious goal of achieving 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022, with solar energy playing a pivotal role. Such initiatives have not only contributed to environmental sustainability but also fostered economic growth and job creation in the renewable energy sector. Studies affirm the positive correlation between renewable energy policies and reductions in carbon emissions, highlighting the importance of long-term sustainability strategies (Patel, 2019).

In Mexico, environmental policies have prioritized addressing pollution and promoting sustainable development. The General Law on Climate Change, enacted in 2012, set targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing renewable energy use. Mexico's National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation aims to enhance resilience to climate impacts, particularly in vulnerable communities. These policies have led to a 15% decrease in carbon emissions intensity from 2015 to 2020, demonstrating progress towards climate mitigation goals. Studies emphasize the need for holistic approaches to environmental policymaking that integrate climate action with socioeconomic development (Garcia, 2019).

In Argentina, environmental policies have targeted land conservation and sustainable agriculture. The National Forest Law, enacted in 2007, promotes forest conservation and sustainable management practices. Argentina's Agro-Ecological Zoning program identifies suitable areas for agricultural expansion while preserving ecologically sensitive regions. From 2018 to 2022, there was a 10% increase in protected forest areas, reflecting the impact of conservation policies. Additionally, Argentina has implemented measures to promote organic farming and reduce agrochemical use, contributing to environmental sustainability in the agricultural sector. Research emphasizes the role of integrated land-use planning in balancing economic development with conservation objectives (Lopez, 2017).

In Egypt, environmental policies have focused on addressing pollution and enhancing resource efficiency. The National Solid Waste Management Strategy, introduced in 2017, aims to improve waste collection and recycling practices. Egypt's Renewable Energy Investment Plan targets a significant increase in renewable energy capacity, with a focus on solar and wind power. These initiatives have led to a 20% decrease in waste mismanagement rates and a 30% increase in renewable energy capacity from 2018 to 2023. Studies highlight the importance of waste management strategies and renewable energy investments in achieving sustainable development goals (Ahmed, 2021).

In South Africa, environmental policies have been crucial in addressing issues such as water scarcity and biodiversity conservation. The National Water Act of 1998 established a framework for water resource management, emphasizing equitable access and sustainable use. Through initiatives like the Working for Water program, which focuses on invasive alien plant control, South Africa has made significant progress in restoring water ecosystems and enhancing water quality. From 2018 to 2022, there was a notable 20% increase in water quality in major rivers, highlighting the positive impact of targeted conservation efforts. Research underscores the importance of integrated water management strategies in ensuring water security and ecosystem resilience (Mthembu, 2020).

In Sub-Saharan economies like Kenya, environmental policies are gaining traction. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) oversees policies such as the Plastic Ban, resulting in an 80% reduction in plastic bag usage since its implementation in 2017. Nigeria, another Sub-Saharan economy, focuses on sustainable energy through policies promoting renewable energy sources like solar and wind. These policies have led to a 25% increase in renewable energy

adoption from 2018 to 2023. Studies show that such policies are crucial for sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa (Davis, 2020).

Participation in Climate Change Agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, can be analyzed from various conceptual perspectives that intertwine with National Environmental Policies. Firstly, there's the aspect of voluntary participation, where countries choose to join climate agreements based on their national interests and environmental priorities. This aligns with national policies that emphasize sustainability, emission reduction targets, and renewable energy development. For example, countries like Sweden and Denmark, known for their strong environmental policies, actively participate in climate agreements to uphold their commitments to carbon neutrality and renewable energy targets (Smith, 2019).

Secondly, economic incentives play a crucial role in participation. Countries may join climate agreements to access funding, technology transfers, or market opportunities related to clean energy and carbon trading. This linkage to national policies is evident in countries like China and India, where participation in climate agreements is tied to their goals of transitioning to a low-carbon economy, attracting green investments, and enhancing energy security. These countries leverage international cooperation to support their domestic environmental policies and promote sustainable development pathways (Jones, 2021). Thirdly, geopolitical considerations influence participation. Countries may engage in climate agreements to enhance their global standing, foster diplomatic relations, or address regional environmental challenges. This nexus between geopolitics and national environmental policies can be observed in agreements involving multiple countries, such as the European Union's unified approach to climate action, reflecting shared environmental objectives and policy coordination among member states. Additionally, alliances like the Climate Vulnerable Forum highlight cooperation among vulnerable nations to advocate for stronger climate policies and support adaptation efforts (Garcia, 2020).

Lastly, there's the aspect of regulatory alignment, where participation in climate agreements reinforces national policies by aligning regulatory frameworks, standards, and reporting mechanisms. Countries integrate international commitments into their domestic environmental laws and regulations, ensuring coherence and accountability. This alignment is crucial for effective implementation and monitoring of climate actions, facilitating transparency and trust among participating countries. Overall, participation in climate agreements serves as a catalyst for advancing national environmental policies, fostering collaboration, and driving collective efforts towards addressing global climate challenges (Brown, 2018).

Problem Statement

As global efforts intensify to combat climate change through agreements like the Paris Agreement, there is a growing need to assess the impact of these international accords on the formulation and implementation of national environmental policies across diverse nations. Climate change agreements often entail commitments and targets related to emissions reductions, renewable energy adoption, and adaptation measures. However, the extent to which these global commitments influence and shape the development and implementation of national environmental policies remains a topic of critical inquiry. This study aims to conduct a cross-national analysis to evaluate how participation in climate change agreements influences the trajectory, effectiveness, and coherence of national environmental policies in various countries. Recent research indicates that countries' participation in climate change agreements has implications for their domestic environmental agendas. For instance, studies have highlighted how participation in international

climate accords can lead to policy convergence or divergence among nations, impacting the consistency and comprehensiveness of their environmental strategies (Brown, 2018). Moreover, the effectiveness of climate change agreements in driving tangible policy outcomes at the national level, such as emission reductions, clean energy transitions, and adaptation planning, remains an area of inquiry (Garcia, 2020). Understanding these dynamics is essential for policymakers, stakeholders, and researchers seeking to enhance the synergy between global climate action and national environmental governance.

Theoretical Framework

Policy Convergence Theory

This theory, originated by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, posits that international agreements and institutions lead to policy convergence among participating nations. It suggests that countries align their policies to meet common goals and standards established through international agreements. In the context of climate change agreements, this theory is relevant as it helps understand whether participating nations converge or diverge in their national environmental policies as a result of global climate accords (Keohane & Nye, 2018).

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Developed by Everett Rogers, this theory focuses on how innovations spread and are adopted across different contexts. In the context of climate change agreements, this theory can be applied to examine how successful environmental policies and practices from one country can be adopted or adapted by others through international cooperation. It helps explore the diffusion of climate-related innovations and best practices across nations, influencing their national environmental policies (Rogers, 2019).

Institutional Theory

Originated by Douglas North and further developed by scholars like Scott and Meyer, institutional theory emphasizes the role of institutions and formal rules in shaping behavior and decision-making within organizations and societies. Applied to climate change agreements, this theory helps analyze how international institutions and governance structures influence the design, implementation, and effectiveness of national environmental policies. It considers factors such as regulatory frameworks, norms, and compliance mechanisms in shaping policy outcomes (Scott & Meyer, 2021).

Empirical Review

Smith (2018) evaluated the impact of the Paris Agreement on national environmental policies within developed countries. Utilizing a quantitative analysis approach, policy documents and environmental performance indicators from OECD countries were examined. The findings revealed a substantial correlation between participating in the Paris Agreement and the adoption of more stringent environmental regulations and targets among member nations. Countries that ratified the agreement showcased a higher commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting renewable energy sources, and implementing sustainable practices. This trend was particularly evident in countries with robust institutional frameworks and strong political will to address climate change challenges. The study's analysis also highlighted the role of international cooperation and peer pressure in shaping national environmental policies, as countries sought to align with global climate objectives and demonstrate leadership in sustainability.

Recommendations from the study emphasized the need for continued collaboration and information sharing among signatory nations to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of environmental policies, thus contributing significantly to achieving the goals set forth in the Paris Agreement.

Garcia (2019) investigated the influence of climate change agreements on renewable energy policies specifically within developing economies. Employing a comparative case study approach, renewable energy policies in Brazil, India, and South Africa were analyzed. The study uncovered a notable increase in investment and policy support for renewable energy initiatives in the studied countries following their participation in climate agreements. Policymakers in these nations recognized the importance of transitioning to clean and sustainable energy sources to mitigate climate change impacts, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and enhance energy security. The findings highlighted successful policy measures such as feed-in tariffs, renewable energy targets, and incentives for private investment in renewable projects. However, challenges such as regulatory barriers, funding gaps, and technological constraints were also identified, necessitating continuous efforts to overcome these obstacles. Recommendations from the study emphasized the significance of leveraging international partnerships, accessing climate finance mechanisms, and fostering innovation to accelerate the adoption of renewable energy technologies and achieve ambitious climate targets in developing nations.

Patel (2020) examined the impact of climate finance mechanisms on adaptation policies, particularly in vulnerable small island developing states (SIDS). The study utilized interviews and surveys with policymakers and stakeholders in SIDS to gather empirical data. The findings underscored the crucial role of climate finance, particularly through agreements like the Green Climate Fund, in facilitating the implementation of adaptation measures in vulnerable regions. Climate finance mechanisms provided financial resources, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to SIDS, enabling them to develop and implement adaptation strategies. Key adaptation measures included coastal protection, resilient infrastructure, water resource management, and disaster risk reduction initiatives. However, challenges such as limited access to finance, complex application procedures, and insufficient capacity were identified as barriers to effective adaptation action. Recommendations from the study emphasized the need for enhancing financial mechanisms, simplifying procedures, and providing targeted support to vulnerable communities to build resilience and address climate-related challenges effectively.

Jones (2021) investigated the role of technology transfer in supporting climate change mitigation policies across nations. Employing a meta-analysis of technology transfer initiatives and their impact on emission reduction strategies, the study revealed a positive correlation between technology transfer agreements and the adoption of cleaner technologies and practices in participating countries. Technology transfer facilitated the diffusion of climate-related innovations, knowledge sharing, and capacity building among nations, contributing to enhanced climate resilience and mitigation efforts. The findings highlighted successful technology transfer mechanisms such as technology partnerships, capacity-building programs, and collaborative research initiatives. However, challenges such as intellectual property rights, technology costs, and institutional barriers were identified as impediments to effective technology transfer. Recommendations from the study emphasized the importance of scaling up technology transfer programs, addressing legal and financial barriers, and fostering innovation ecosystems to accelerate climate action and sustainable development on a global scale.

Brown (2018) explored the concept of policy convergence among EU member states following the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Using a longitudinal analysis of environmental policies and regulatory frameworks in EU countries, the study found evidence of policy convergence in emission reduction targets and renewable energy promotion strategies among EU nations. The research revealed that the Kyoto Protocol played a significant role in harmonizing environmental policies and fostering cooperation among EU member states to achieve collective climate objectives. Key policy measures included emissions trading systems, renewable energy incentives, and energy efficiency standards implemented across EU countries. However, challenges such as policy implementation gaps, enforcement issues, and divergent national interests were identified as hurdles to achieving full policy convergence. Recommendations from the study emphasized the need for strengthening coordination and harmonization of environmental policies within the EU framework, enhancing policy implementation mechanisms, and fostering shared responsibility among member states to achieve ambitious climate targets and enhance regional sustainability.

Wang (2020) assessed the effectiveness of climate change agreements in reducing deforestation rates in tropical countries. Utilizing satellite imagery and statistical modeling, the research analyzed deforestation trends before and after countries joined climate agreements. The findings revealed a statistically significant decline in deforestation rates in countries actively participating in climate accords, highlighting the potential of international agreements to promote sustainable forest management. The study attributed the reduction in deforestation rates to policy measures such as forest protection, reforestation programs, and sustainable land management practices implemented as part of climate change agreements. However, challenges such as illegal logging, land-use conflicts, and weak enforcement mechanisms were identified as ongoing threats to forest conservation efforts. Recommendations from the study emphasized the need for integrating forest conservation measures into climate agreements, enhancing monitoring and enforcement capabilities, and promoting sustainable land-use practices to safeguard tropical forests and mitigate climate impacts effectively.

Lopez (2019) examined the impact of climate change agreements on fisheries management policies in coastal nations. Through case studies and stakeholder interviews in selected countries with significant marine resources, the study found that climate agreements influenced the adoption of sustainable fishing practices and marine conservation policies. Participating countries implemented measures such as marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries management plans, and ecosystem-based approaches to address climate-related challenges and ensure the long-term sustainability of marine ecosystems. The findings highlighted successful collaboration and knowledge sharing among coastal nations, contributing to improved fisheries governance and conservation outcomes. However, challenges such as overfishing, illegal fishing activities, and pollution remained critical issues requiring continuous attention and concerted efforts. Recommendations from the study emphasized the importance of promoting international cooperation, enhancing scientific research and monitoring capacities, and implementing effective fisheries management strategies to address climate impacts and achieve sustainable marine resource management globally.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into

already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gap: The studies by Smith (2018) and Brown (2018) primarily focused on the impact of international climate agreements on national environmental policies within developed countries and EU member states, respectively. However, there is a research gap in understanding how these agreements influence environmental policies in non-OECD countries or regions outside the European Union. Investigating the conceptual nuances of policy convergence or divergence in diverse geopolitical contexts could provide valuable insights into the global effectiveness of climate change agreements and their implications for environmental governance worldwide.

Contextual Gap: While Garcia (2019) and Patel (2020) examined the influence of climate change agreements on renewable energy policies and adaptation strategies in developing economies and small island states, respectively, there is a research gap in exploring the contextual factors that shape policy implementation and effectiveness. Understanding the specific challenges, opportunities, and contextual barriers faced by different countries or regions in implementing climate-related policies could contribute to developing tailored and contextually relevant strategies for climate action and sustainable development.

Geographical Gap: The studies by Wang (2020) and Lopez (2019) focused on assessing the impact of climate change agreements on deforestation rates in tropical countries and fisheries management policies in coastal nations, respectively. However, there is a research gap in examining the geographical diversity of climate change impacts and policy responses across different ecosystems and geographical regions. Exploring how climate agreements influence environmental policies and conservation efforts in diverse geographical settings, such as arid regions, mountainous areas, or urban landscapes, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the global implications of climate change agreements on environmental governance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, a cross-national analysis of the impact of climate change agreements on national environmental policies reveals significant strides towards global sustainability. Studies examining the influence of agreements like the Paris Agreement, Kyoto Protocol, and climate finance mechanisms have highlighted positive correlations between participation in these accords and the adoption of stringent environmental regulations, renewable energy targets, adaptation measures, and conservation strategies across nations. The findings underscore the critical role of international cooperation, peer pressure, and financial mechanisms in shaping policy convergence, innovation diffusion, and capacity building among countries. Moreover, successful examples of technology transfer, policy harmonization, and collaborative initiatives have demonstrated the potential of climate change agreements to drive climate action, enhance resilience, and mitigate environmental challenges on a global scale.

However, despite these advancements, challenges such as regulatory barriers, funding gaps, institutional constraints, and geographical disparities persist, necessitating continuous efforts to overcome these obstacles. There is a clear need for enhanced collaboration, information sharing,

and capacity building among nations, particularly in developing economies and vulnerable regions, to ensure effective implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of environmental policies. Addressing conceptual, contextual, and geographical research gaps through further empirical studies and interdisciplinary approaches can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics between climate change agreements and national environmental governance.

In essence, the impact of climate change agreements on national environmental policies reflects a dynamic interplay of political, economic, social, and environmental factors, highlighting the interconnectedness of global climate action and sustainable development. As countries strive to achieve the ambitious goals set forth in climate agreements and enhance their resilience to climate change impacts, ongoing cooperation, innovation, and policy coherence will be essential in realizing a more sustainable and equitable future for generations to come.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Future research should delve deeper into the conceptual frameworks of policy convergence, diffusion of innovations, and institutional theories to understand the underlying mechanisms driving the impact of climate change agreements on national environmental policies. Exploring the dynamics of international cooperation, peer pressure, and knowledge transfer can enhance theoretical insights into how countries align their environmental strategies with global climate objectives. Additionally, integrating behavioral theories and stakeholder analysis can provide a more nuanced understanding of the drivers and barriers influencing policy adoption and implementation.

Practice

Practical recommendations should emphasize the importance of fostering international partnerships, capacity building, and technology transfer to support the implementation of climate-related policies at the national level. Facilitating knowledge exchange platforms, best practices sharing, and collaboration networks can accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices, renewable energy technologies, and adaptation measures across diverse economies and regions. Moreover, promoting public-private partnerships, innovation ecosystems, and green financing mechanisms can incentivize investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, clean energy projects, and ecosystem restoration initiatives.

Policy

Policymakers should prioritize policy coherence, harmonization, and integration across sectors to ensure a holistic approach to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and monitoring systems is crucial for achieving transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in implementing environmental policies. Furthermore, enhancing access to climate finance, capacity-building support, and technical assistance for vulnerable communities and developing economies can enhance their resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change impacts. Emphasizing participatory decision-making processes, inclusivity, and social equity considerations in policy design and implementation can foster public trust, engagement, and ownership of climate-related initiatives.

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