Artificial Intelligence-Powered Carbon Emissions Forecasting: Implications for Sustainable Supply Chains and Green Finance

Muhammed Sameer Uddin[1*], Omaima Eltahir Babikir Mohamed[2], John Ebert[3]

Abstract

This review explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in carbon emissions forecasting within the context of sustainable supply chain management (SCM). It examines theoretical frameworks such as Resource-Based Theory (RBT), Strategic Choice Theory (SCT), and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) to understand how AI technologies can be leveraged to achieve sustainability goals and operational efficiency. The conceptual model for AI-powered emissions forecasting is discussed, highlighting the flow of data from external sources to AI-driven predictive analysis and actionable insights for emission reduction strategies. Challenges such as data availability, algorithmic accuracy, system integration, and ethical concerns, including data privacy and environmental risks, are also addressed. Recommendations for future research emphasize improving data integration, fostering collaboration across sectors, and exploring AI applications in diverse industries. Testing and validating the conceptual model through quantitative methods, scenario-based modeling, and real-time feedback loops are proposed to ensure its practical applicability. Ultimately, AI presents significant potential to drive sustainable practices while balancing environmental goals with financial performance, thus promoting long-term business resilience.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Predictive Analytics, Carbon Emissions Forecasting, Green Finance, Sustainable Supply Chain

Significance | This review discusses the AI's potential in carbon emissions forecasting, offering insights to optimize sustainability, efficiency, and financial success.

*Correspondence. Muhammed Sameer Uddin, School of Business and Technology, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN 55987, United States. Email: msameerbd@gmail.com

Editor Mohammad Asraful Alam, Ph.D., And accepted by the Editorial Board October 02, 2024 (received for review August 25, 2024)

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving global market, supply chain management (SCM) has become a crucial determinant of business success (Uddin et al., 2023b). Companies worldwide are continually seeking ways to meet consumer demands while minimizing their environmental impact. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics into supply chain (SC) operations has transitioned from being a competitive advantage to a necessity. As businesses navigate increasing environmental challenges and economic uncertainties, they must leverage advanced technologies to enhance efficiency, ensure sustainability, and maintain resilience. Globalization, product diversification, and the rapid expansion of e-commerce have significantly increased the complexity of SC operations. Managing the seamless flow of goods, services, and information from production to consumption has become more intricate, necessitating the adoption of advanced tools and technologies. AI-driven solutions offer transformative capabilities across various aspects of SCM, including demand forecasting, inventory optimization, route efficiency, and predictive maintenance. Predictive analytics, which utilizes historical data, statistical methods, and machine learning, enables companies to

Author Affiliation.
[1] School of Business and Technology, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN 55987, United States.
[2] Bank Rakyat School of Business & Entrepreneurship, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZK), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
[3] Department of Resource Analysis, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN 55987, United States.

Please cite this article.
Uddin, M. S., Mohamed, O. E. B., Ebert, J. (2024). "Artificial Intelligence-Powered Carbon Emissions Forecasting: Implications for Sustainable Supply Chains and Green Finance", Energy Environment & Economy, 2(1),1-13,10154

anticipate shifts in demand, mitigate potential disruptions, and enhance operational productivity (Oluwafunmi Adijat Elufioye et al., 2024; Uddin et al., 2025). These innovations empower businesses to make data-driven decisions, reduce inefficiencies, and improve overall performance.

Sustainability has emerged as a global priority, influenced by consumer preferences and government regulations (Uddin et al., 2024). With a growing demand for environmentally friendly products, companies are embedding sustainability into their strategic frameworks. Many nations have imposed stringent policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change (Chen et al., 2022). Climate agreements, carbon taxation policies, and corporate sustainability standards are driving organizations to innovate their supply chain strategies and work towards achieving carbon-neutral operations.

Businesses across industries are committing to reducing carbon emissions and adopting sustainable practices. Leading enterprises are leveraging AI to optimize resource utilization, enhance energy efficiency, and minimize pollution in their supply chains (Bhatia et al., 2024). AI-driven demand forecasting helps curb overproduction and excessive inventory, thereby reducing waste and conserving energy. Additionally, predictive analytics improves logistics by optimizing transportation routes, leading to fuel savings, while machine learning enables companies to evaluate supplier sustainability credentials.

Beyond environmental benefits, AI-powered SC solutions offer financial advantages by enabling companies to secure sustainability-linked financing. Organizations that can accurately forecast and lower their carbon emissions are eligible for green financing options such as sustainability-linked loans, carbon credits, and investments from environmentally conscious stakeholders. Demonstrating a commitment to emission reductions not only strengthens relationships with investors and regulatory bodies but also ensures long-term business viability (Kumar et al., 2022).

As the global business landscape continues to evolve, AI and predictive analytics are reshaping supply chain management. Companies that embrace these technologies will not only gain a competitive edge but also contribute to a more sustainable and efficient future.

2. Literature Review

Artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics have emerged as crucial tools for enhancing supply chain management (SCM), reducing carbon emissions, and driving business growth. This literature review examines the current state of research on these technologies, focusing on their most significant applications across various industries. The review is structured into four key areas: the role of AI in SCM, the application of predictive analytics, the balance between reducing a company's carbon footprint and achieving business growth, and strategies for effectively implementing AI solutions on a global scale.

2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Supply Chain Management

AI has become a transformative force in SCM, addressing challenges posed by globalization, increasing product diversity, and evolving consumer demands (Toorajipour et al., 2021). AI refers to the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, decision-making, and pattern recognition (Russell et al., 2016). Within SCM, AI is widely applied in demand forecasting, inventory management, route optimization, predictive maintenance, and supplier evaluation (Kamble et al., 2020).

One of AI's most significant contributions to SCM is improving demand forecasting accuracy by analyzing vast amounts of historical and real-time data. AI-powered forecasting techniques, such as machine learning algorithms, detect complex patterns and correlations in demand data that traditional methods often overlook (Y. Zhang & Cao, 2022). By integrating real-time inputs from sensors and external data sources, AI enables supply chains to swiftly adapt to changing consumer preferences, seasonal trends, and unforeseen disruptions. This enhanced forecasting capability helps prevent overproduction, optimize inventory levels, and improve service quality (Kumar et al., 2022). Additionally, it contributes to sustainability efforts by reducing excess inventory and minimizing resource consumption, ultimately lowering environmental impact (Dubey et al., 2020).

AI also plays a pivotal role in inventory management by ensuring optimal stock levels, thereby reducing waste and lowering storage costs. Advanced AI technologies, including reinforcement learning and natural language processing, enable dynamic inventory adjustments based on predicted demand and supplier performance (Rolf et al., 2023). AI-driven warehouse management systems can automate reordering processes by factoring in production schedules, lead times, and stock thresholds, improving operational efficiency and responsiveness.

In logistics, AI enhances route optimization by analyzing transportation networks to identify the most fuel-efficient delivery routes. This reduces transportation costs and lowers carbon emissions, aligning supply chains with corporate sustainability goals (Chen et al., 2022). Such AI-driven efficiency improvements not only support environmental sustainability but also open access to sustainability-linked financing, such as green bonds and carbon credits, further reinforcing financial viability (Ivanov, 2020).

Another critical application of AI in SCM is predictive maintenance, which leverages AI-powered monitoring systems to assess equipment health and anticipate potential failures before they occur. By preventing unexpected breakdowns, AI minimizes downtime, enhances production continuity, and ensures smooth distribution processes (Samadhiya et al., 2024).

AI further strengthens supplier management and risk assessment by evaluating supplier performance and identifying potential risks, such as delivery delays, quality issues, or non-compliance with environmental regulations (Kamble et al., 2020). By analyzing supplier data alongside external risk indicators, AI enables businesses to select reliable partners and maintain resilient supply chains.

As AI technology continues to evolve, its integration into SCM is expected to become even more widespread, supporting both environmental and financial objectives. AI-powered inventory optimization seamlessly integrates with logistics and route planning, ensuring alignment between stock levels, delivery schedules, and transportation routes to minimize costs and emissions (Wong et al., 2024). Ultimately, AI provides businesses with the tools to proactively respond to supply chain disruptions, enhance operational efficiency, and achieve long-term sustainability goals (Russell et al., 2016; Y. Zhang & Cao, 2022).

2.2 Predictive Analytics and Carbon Emissions Forecasting

Predictive analytics plays a vital role in modern supply chain management (SCM), particularly in sustainability planning and carbon emissions forecasting. By leveraging machine learning algorithms, statistical models, and historical data, businesses can anticipate disruptions, optimize operations, and minimize environmental impact (Cui & Yao, 2024). Predictive analytics identifies patterns in energy consumption, transportation logistics, and production processes, providing companies with actionable insights to reduce emissions while maintaining supply chain efficiency. Integrating predictive analytics into SCM is essential for balancing financial performance with environmental sustainability, as it enables real-time decision-making and strategic foresight (Kamble et al., 2020).

A key application of predictive analytics is the development of carbon emissions forecasting models. These models estimate CO_2 emissions by analyzing production volumes, transportation methods, energy consumption, and supplier practices (Kumar et al., 2022). For example, machine learning algorithms can analyze historical transportation data to recommend fuel-efficient delivery routes, thereby reducing logistics-related emissions (Rolf et al., 2023). Predictive models also allow businesses to simulate various operational scenarios—such as transitioning to renewable energy sources or implementing sustainable sourcing strategies—to determine the most effective ways to lower their carbon footprint. These simulations enable companies to optimize fuel usage, cut energy costs, and avoid regulatory penalties for exceeding emissions thresholds, often leading to significant financial savings (Ivanov, 2020). Furthermore, businesses that actively demonstrate reductions in carbon emissions can access sustainability-linked financial incentives, including carbon credits and green loans, enhancing both their environmental and economic performance (Kamble et al., 2020).

Beyond emissions forecasting, predictive analytics supports companies in aligning operational efficiency with sustainability goals. AI-powered models dynamically adjust production schedules to prevent overproduction, thereby minimizing resource waste and reducing excess inventory (Wang et al., 2016). Predictive maintenance systems further enhance efficiency by analyzing equipment performance data to anticipate failures, allowing businesses to schedule maintenance proactively. This reduces downtime, prevents unnecessary energy consumption, and extends the lifespan of critical machinery (Chen et al., 2022). Additionally, predictive analytics aids in supplier evaluation by assessing performance metrics and environmental compliance, enabling companies to collaborate with sustainable vendors. Partnering with environmentally responsible suppliers strengthens carbon reduction initiatives and enhances access to green financing programs designed to support sustainability-focused enterprises (Dubey et al., 2016).

One of the key advantages of predictive analytics in emissions management is its ability to incorporate external factors such as weather patterns, regulatory changes, and market fluctuations into forecasting models. This comprehensive approach provides businesses with a holistic understanding of their supply chain's environmental impact, ensuring that sustainability strategies extend beyond mere regulatory compliance to long-term carbon reduction initiatives (Chong et al., 2012).

As companies face mounting pressure to meet sustainability targets, predictive analytics is becoming increasingly essential for driving data-driven environmental initiatives. By embedding predictive models into supply chain operations, businesses can reduce emissions while maintaining profitability and competitiveness. The continued advancement of predictive analytics will play a critical role in ensuring that supply chains remain both financially resilient and environmentally sustainable, fostering long-term corporate growth and ecological responsibility in an increasingly competitive marketplace (Kumar et al., 2022; Wong et al., 2024).

2.3 AI for Business Growth and Carbon Footprint Reduction

AI-driven sustainability strategies have become essential for modern businesses seeking to balance operational efficiency, profitability, and carbon reduction targets (MD Rokibul Hasan et al., 2024). By integrating AI technologies into supply chain management (SCM), companies can optimize resource utilization, minimize waste, and reduce energy consumption, leading to both cost savings and enhanced operational performance (Kamble et al., 2020). AI's ability to process vast amounts of real-time data allows businesses to respond dynamically to shifts in demand, production levels, and environmental conditions, ultimately improving decision-making and business outcomes (Kumar et al., 2022).

One of the most significant contributions of AI to business efficiency is in demand forecasting and production planning. AI-powered models analyze historical sales data, weather patterns, seasonal fluctuations, and market trends to predict consumer demand with high accuracy (Ajayi et al., 2024). This enables companies to avoid overproduction and excessive inventory, reducing storage costs and unnecessary energy use. Machine learning algorithms optimize production schedules, ensuring that resources are utilized effectively and production processes generate minimal waste (Wang et al., 2016). These advancements not only improve resource efficiency but also significantly lower the environmental impact of manufacturing operations.

AI is also revolutionizing logistics and transportation by optimizing delivery routes to minimize fuel consumption and emissions. Wong et al. (2024) highlight that AI-driven route optimization can enhance supply chain efficiency by considering factors such as real-time traffic conditions, fuel prices, and delivery timelines. By dynamically adjusting logistics strategies, AI reduces transportation costs while lowering carbon emissions. Another crucial AI application is predictive maintenance, which detects potential equipment failures before they occur, reducing operational downtime and energy waste (Lee et al., 2019). By identifying inefficiencies in supply chain operations, AI-driven sustainability strategies create a win-win scenario where businesses can simultaneously cut costs and enhance their environmental performance.

One of the persistent challenges for companies is finding the right balance between carbon reduction goals and financial growth. Often, businesses struggle with implementing sustainable practices without compromising profitability. However, AI mitigates this challenge by providing data-driven insights into cost-effective emission reduction strategies. For example, AI can evaluate the financial viability of switching to renewable energy, adopting carbon capture technologies, or collaborating with eco-friendly suppliers (Bhatia et al., 2024). AI-powered simulations allow businesses to assess multiple scenarios and identify strategies that achieve both environmental and economic benefits. Additionally, AI-driven sustainability initiatives not only generate immediate cost savings but also strengthen long-term resilience by preparing businesses for evolving regulatory requirements and sustainability standards (Dubey et al., 2023). This forward-looking approach ensures that companies remain competitive as global sustainability regulations continue to evolve.

Beyond operational efficiency, AI-driven sustainability strategies also enhance brand reputation and long-term profitability. Businesses that actively reduce their carbon footprint attract environmentally conscious investors and customers, increasing sales and improving access to green financing options (Kumar et al., 2022). Major corporations such as Amazon and Walmart have successfully integrated AI into their supply chains to achieve net-zero carbon goals while enhancing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. These real-world examples underscore how AI is transforming SCM by aligning sustainability with business growth.

In summary, AI-driven sustainability strategies are crucial for achieving carbon reduction targets without hindering business expansion. Through predictive analytics, real-time data processing, and optimization algorithms, companies can enhance profitability while contributing to global sustainability efforts (Kamble et al., 2021). As AI continues to evolve, its role in supply chain optimization and environmental responsibility will become even more integral to long-term corporate success.

2.4 Integrating AI with Sustainable Financial Decision-Making

The integration of AI in sustainable financial decision-making is transforming how companies balance environmental goals with profitability. AI-powered tools facilitate data analysis, predictive modeling, and real-time monitoring, enabling businesses to make more informed investment and funding decisions based on accurate sustainability metrics (Kamble et al., 2021). As companies navigate the complexities of sustainable finance, AI has become an essential tool for evaluating green investments, optimizing carbon reduction strategies, and ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

One of AI's most significant contributions to sustainable finance is its ability to process vast amounts of complex data and generate actionable insights. AI systems aggregate and analyze data from sensor networks, emissions monitoring tools, supply chain databases, and external environmental reports to provide a comprehensive view of a company's sustainability performance (Rane et al., 2024). Machine learning models can detect trends and correlations that help businesses improve energy efficiency, minimize waste, and achieve long-term cost savings (Nsisong Louis Eyo-Udo et al., 2024). For instance, AI can identify the production processes with the highest carbon footprints and suggest alternative methods to reduce environmental impact while maintaining productivity.

AI also plays a pivotal role in evaluating green investments and financing opportunities. By linking carbon reduction efforts to financial metrics, AI helps companies quantify the economic benefits of sustainability initiatives. This enables businesses to access green bonds and sustainability-linked loans more effectively. AI-driven models assess key performance indicators such as emissions reductions per dollar invested, energy cost savings, and projected returns on environmentally friendly projects (Kamble et al., 2021). Additionally, Natural Language Processing (NLP) enhances this process by extracting insights from ESG reports, financial statements, and regulatory filings, ensuring that investors and financial institutions receive comprehensive sustainability assessments (Rane et al., 2024). These insights allow businesses to secure favorable financing terms, reinforcing their long-term financial resilience in a global market increasingly focused on sustainability.

AI further bridges the gap between financial growth and environmental performance by integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria into traditional financial decision-making models. Emerging AI-powered financial systems assess climate change risks, resource scarcity, and regulatory compliance to guide strategic investment decisions (Kumar et al., 2022). For example, AI-driven platforms evaluate the long-term financial impact of adopting renewable energy solutions and generate predictive models to forecast economic gains from sustainability investments. These projections enable companies to prioritize green initiatives that align with both profitability and environmental responsibility.

Despite AI's transformative potential in sustainable finance, several challenges must be addressed to maximize its effectiveness. Issues such as data standardization, algorithm transparency, and regulatory compliance can limit the reliability of AI-driven financial decisions (Sharma et al., 2020). Additionally, ensuring the security and confidentiality of sensitive environmental and financial data is crucial, as AI-driven systems are susceptible to cybersecurity threats. To overcome these challenges, experts recommend collaborative efforts between regulators, financial institutions, and technology developers to establish standardized frameworks for AI-based sustainability metrics (Goodell et al., 2021). Implementing robust cybersecurity measures is also essential to protect against data breaches and maintain stakeholder trust.

As AI continues to advance, its role in sustainable finance will expand further. Companies that effectively integrate AI into their financial strategies can not only meet regulatory requirements but also uncover new revenue opportunities by developing sustainable products and services. By leveraging AI's analytical power in conjunction with environmentally responsible business practices, organizations can enhance financial stability while minimizing their environmental footprint in an increasingly competitive global economy.

The growing adoption of AI in sustainable finance underscores its broader impact on supply chain management, carbon emissions forecasting, and overall business profitability. The next section explores how AI strategies can be holistically applied to drive sustainability and economic success, providing a framework for businesses to navigate the evolving financial and environmental landscape.

3. Conceptual Model Development

3.1 Key Elements of the Conceptual Model

The development of a conceptual model for AI-powered carbon emissions forecasting outlines the crucial elements, connections, and steps businesses can undertake to achieve their environmental targets while remaining profitable and operationally efficient. This model integrates real-time data, predictive analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) systems to create optimal strategies for reducing carbon emissions and making sustainable financial decisions.

At the core of this model is the interaction between external data sources, AI systems, and the integration of real-time data. AI-driven decision-making requires inputs from various external sources such as sensor data, supplier reports, and carbon emission metrics (Wong et al., 2024). These inputs include real-time data on energy consumption, transportation emissions, and production activities, which enable accurate predictions of carbon emissions (Kamble et al., 2021). To ensure the precision of these predictions, real-time data integration techniques are employed, including data cleaning, preprocessing, and the merging of multiple datasets. This process significantly reduces errors, gaps, and inconsistencies that could compromise the accuracy of predictive models (Islam et al., 2020).

The AI systems used for carbon emissions forecasting leverage machine learning algorithms, predictive analytics, and optimization techniques to analyze integrated data and generate actionable insights (Kumar et al., 2022). Predictive models play a vital role when disruptions occur, such as changes in production plans, shipping routes, or supplier networks, helping businesses estimate the additional carbon dioxide emissions resulting from these changes (Chen et al., 2022). By comparing the outcomes of various environmental strategies, AI models help businesses find environmentally friendly solutions that are also cost-effective.

The predictions generated by AI systems regarding carbon pollution are critical for improving supply chain management and making informed environmental decisions (A. Zhang et al., 2022). These predictions provide businesses with insights into how to reduce emissions, such as optimizing energy consumption in production, enhancing logistics and delivery systems, and selecting environmentally conscious suppliers. Furthermore, AI systems incorporate feedback loops that enable real-time monitoring and adjustments based on new data. This iterative feedback system allows businesses to continuously improve their sustainability strategies by learning from actual performance. For instance, if a particular emission reduction strategy fails to deliver the expected results, AI systems can quickly adjust operational parameters or propose alternative solutions, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the emissions reduction effort (Dubey et al., 2016).

A significant outcome of the model is its contribution to long-term financial decision-making. By leveraging AI predictions, businesses can access green financing, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credit investments by demonstrating their progress toward carbon reduction goals (Chong et al., 2021). Financial decision-makers can evaluate the costs and benefits of various sustainability initiatives to ensure they align with both environmental and business objectives (Kamble et al., 2021). AI allows businesses to assess the long-term financial risks and benefits associated with carbon reduction investments. By forecasting the potential returns of sustainability projects, companies can improve their financial stability and attract continued support from green investors (Ivanov, 2020). The combination of financial metrics and emissions reductions provides businesses with the ability to secure investments from environmentally conscious stakeholders, while staying competitive in an increasingly stringent regulatory landscape.

The conceptual model illustrates how data-driven approaches, AI systems, and predictive analytics can work synergistically to achieve the best outcomes in both sustainability and financial performance (Shao et al., 2017). This model provides a foundation for future quantitative studies aimed at assessing the effectiveness of AI-powered sustainability efforts in balancing operational efficiency with environmental objectives. Future research could involve case-specific data from diverse industries and regions to empirically validate the model's applicability. As Kamble et al. (2021) suggest, such studies would provide insights into scaling and adapting AI-powered sustainability models to fit various business contexts and needs. The evolving landscape of AI technology and sustainability metrics offers the potential for companies to innovate and achieve scalable, long-term environmental and financial success.

3.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

The conceptual model for AI-powered carbon emissions forecasting is built upon several foundational theoretical frameworks, including Resource-Based Theory (RBT), Strategic Choice Theory (SCT), Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), and Institutional Theory (IT). These theories provide insights into how businesses can effectively use AI to achieve sustainability goals while enhancing operational efficiency and maintaining a competitive edge.

Resource-Based Theory (RBT) highlights the importance of a firm's internal resources and capabilities in attaining a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In the context of this model, AI technologies, data analytics capabilities, and emissions forecasting tools are considered valuable, rare, and inimitable resources that allow firms to outperform competitors by reducing carbon emissions while optimizing costs. RBT suggests that firms investing in AI-driven innovations and data-centric decision-making can create sustainable competitive advantages by improving resource efficiency, refining production processes, and minimizing waste (Kamble et al., 2020). By integrating AI into supply chain management, businesses can leverage these strategic resources to boost operational performance and align with long-term sustainability objectives, enhancing both environmental and financial outcomes.

Strategic Choice Theory (SCT), as proposed by Child (1972), explains how managerial decisions influence a company's strategic direction within a specific context. In this model, managers play a crucial role in selecting how AI technologies are implemented and integrated into supply chain operations to meet sustainability goals. SCT emphasizes the flexibility of managers in choosing optimal sustainability strategies based on data-driven insights provided by AI systems (Chong et al., 2021). Furthermore, the theory incorporates the idea of dynamic capabilities, which enables firms to continually adapt to changing environments and respond to new information (Teece et al., 1997). Managers can use AI-powered forecasting models to explore various pollution-reduction strategies and select those that are most beneficial for both the environment and business growth. This approach helps firms stay agile and prepared for evolving regulations, market conditions, and environmental challenges.

In addition to RBT and SCT, the model incorporates Institutional Theory (IT), which focuses on how external pressures such as regulations, social norms, and stakeholder expectations shape organizational behavior (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983). As sustainability becomes increasingly crucial on a global scale, companies face mounting pressure from institutional forces to adopt environmentally friendly practices. AI-powered carbon emissions forecasting equips businesses with the tools needed to track and report on their sustainability progress, fulfilling both legal requirements and stakeholder expectations. By demonstrating measurable sustainability outcomes, businesses can enhance their legitimacy and attract green financing (Kumar et al., 2022). Aligning sustainability initiatives with institutional pressures allows firms to comply with regulatory mandates while improving their competitiveness, gaining investor trust, and accessing favorable financing options. IT underscores the role of external pressures and legitimacy, while the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) focuses on how firms adapt internally through continuous learning and resource reconfiguration.

Furthermore, Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) contributes to the model by emphasizing how firms can reconfigure their resources and capabilities in response to shifting external factors (Teece et al., 1997). AI technologies facilitate the development of dynamic capabilities by enabling companies to process real-time data, predict market fluctuations, and adjust operational strategies to mitigate carbon emissions. For instance, AI-powered systems allow firms to quickly respond to disruptions or changes in regulatory policies by recalibrating their supply chain processes and carbon reduction initiatives in real-time (Wong et al., 2024). This flexibility supports businesses in maintaining long-term sustainability and profitability, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.

Together, these theoretical frameworks—RBT, SCT, DCT, and IT—provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding how firms can leverage AI as a strategic resource to balance environmental goals with business growth. The integration of these theories into the conceptual model reveals the complex relationships between technology, decision-making, and sustainability outcomes. This interdisciplinary approach lays the groundwork for further empirical research that can examine the practical application of AI-powered sustainability models in real-world business contexts. By drawing on these theoretical underpinnings, companies can better navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the transition to a more sustainable and AI-driven business environment.

3.3 Model Framework and Flow

The conceptual model for AI-powered carbon emissions forecasting offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how data, AI systems, and predictive analytics can work together to generate positive environmental and economic outcomes. The flow of the model begins with the collection of external data sources, progresses through real-time data integration and AI-driven predictive analysis, and culminates in the generation of actionable insights that guide emission reduction strategies and sustainable financial decisions.

The process starts with the collection of external data from various sources, including sensor data, supplier reports, and carbon emissions metrics (Kumar et al., 2022). These data sources, often derived from multiple points in the supply chain, are essential to forming a robust understanding of a company's carbon emissions profile. For instance, sensors embedded in industrial machinery can measure energy usage and emissions in real-time, while supplier reports can provide valuable insights into the environmental impact of materials purchased. To maximize the utility of these data points, advanced data management systems are needed to integrate them in real-time, ensuring that the data is accurate, complete, and consistent (Chen et al., 2022).

Once the data is integrated, AI systems employ machine learning models, predictive analytics, and optimization techniques to generate actionable insights and forecasts (Zhang et al., 2022). Predictive analytics play a crucial role by examining historical data and continuously integrating new information to project future carbon emissions under various operational scenarios. These models can simulate different production processes or transportation routes, predicting the emissions associated with each option. This allows businesses to identify strategies that minimize environmental impact while ensuring efficient operations. Machine learning algorithms further refine these predictions by learning from new data inputs, making the forecasts increasingly precise over time (Gaikwad et al., 2020).

AI systems generate accurate predictions of carbon emissions and measures of sustainability success. These insights guide decision-making regarding supply chain optimization, such as adjusting production schedules, selecting the most efficient transportation routes, or identifying environmentally responsible suppliers (Kamble et al., 2020). For example, predictive models may suggest that changing a shipping route can reduce emissions by 15% while still meeting delivery timelines. By implementing these recommendations, businesses can reduce their carbon footprint while improving operational efficiency. AI-powered sustainability tools also allow companies to monitor progress in real-time, providing transparency regarding their goals for emission reductions and financial performance (Kamble et al., 2021). This level of monitoring fosters accountability and trust among investors, stakeholders, and other parties involved.

In the final stage of the model, businesses use the AI-generated insights to make informed investment decisions that promote long-term financial sustainability. These decisions may include applying for green financing, securing sustainability-linked loans, or investing in carbon credits based on their emission reduction achievements (Kumar et al., 2022). As financial institutions increasingly evaluate companies on their environmental performance, those that can provide accurate and reliable carbon forecasts are more likely to secure funding and attract investor interest. Sustainability metrics driven by AI, such as emissions per unit of output and energy efficiency rates, help companies align their environmental goals with their financial objectives. Furthermore, these metrics provide businesses with the tools to identify long-term risks and opportunities, particularly in the context of climate-related financial disclosures (Wong et al., 2024). This alignment improves both operational efficiency and the ability to attract funding for green initiatives, reinforcing the business's financial resilience.

Through the integration of data inputs, AI systems, and decision-making processes, the model enables businesses to rapidly respond to external factors such as regulatory changes or shifts in market conditions. This agility ensures that businesses can remain competitive and sustainable in a dynamic environment. The model's continuous feedback loop—where predictions are refined over time and processes are optimized for both environmental and financial success—ensures that companies can adapt to new challenges and opportunities. By providing an adaptable and evolving approach to emissions forecasting, the model supports businesses in sustaining long-term profitability while minimizing their environmental footprint.

Future quantitative research can test the effectiveness of this integrated framework by applying it to specific case studies across various industries and regions (Kumar et al., 2022). This research could offer deeper insights into how the model operates in different contexts, helping to refine its applications and improve its scalability. The model provides a solid foundation for understanding how AI-powered emissions forecasting can contribute to both environmental sustainability and business growth, offering a clear path forward for businesses seeking to align their operations with green principles while maintaining financial viability.

4. Challenges and Gaps in the Existing Literature

Despite the considerable potential of AI in carbon emissions forecasting and sustainable supply chain management (SCM), several challenges limit its effectiveness. These challenges are primarily related to data availability, algorithm accuracy, system integration, as well as ethical concerns and environmental risks associated with the adoption of AI technologies.

4.1 Limitations in Data Availability, Algorithm Accuracy, and System Integration

One of the major obstacles in utilizing AI for carbon emissions forecasting is the availability of high-quality, comprehensive data. Many businesses face difficulties in obtaining real-time data from key sources such as suppliers, transportation networks, and production facilities (Wong et al., 2024). This problem is particularly prevalent in companies with complex, global supply chains. Data gaps not only diminish the accuracy of emissions predictions but can also hinder companies from meeting carbon reduction targets. This could result in non-compliance with regulatory standards or increase operational costs due to inefficiencies (Dubey et al., 2016). Missing or inconsistent data undermines decision-making and limits the effectiveness of AI-driven solutions. Ajayi et al. (2024) further highlight that organizations relying on outdated systems often struggle to integrate new AI technologies, as legacy systems may not be compatible with modern data infrastructures.

The accuracy of AI algorithms is another critical concern. While AI systems are designed to improve over time with continuous data input, their initial performance can be hindered by inadequate training data or biased datasets (Zhang et al., 2022). For instance, AI models trained on region-specific or incomplete data may not be applicable to other regions or industries, leading to inaccurate predictions of carbon emissions. Furthermore, model overfitting, where AI systems perform well on historical data but struggle with new, unseen data, poses a significant risk, resulting in erroneous emissions forecasts (Kamble et al., 2020). To mitigate this risk, businesses can implement continuous training and testing mechanisms to ensure that models are validated against diverse and evolving datasets, thus improving their robustness and generalizability (Ivanov et al., 2023).

System integration issues also present challenges for companies looking to adopt AI-based emissions forecasting. Many businesses lack the technical expertise to integrate AI systems with their existing supply chain processes effectively, which can delay the implementation of AI-driven sustainability initiatives. Successful integration requires the establishment of robust data pipelines, real-time monitoring systems, and continuous feedback loops, all of which can be resource-intensive to develop and maintain. These technical and operational challenges complicate the adoption of AI in emissions forecasting and may result in slow or ineffective progress toward sustainability goals.

In addition to technical concerns, there are social and ethical issues associated with AI adoption. Concerns about data privacy, the potential for inaccurate predictions, and the environmental risks associated with AI technologies need to be carefully considered. These issues are explored in the next section, where we address the broader implications of AI's role in sustainability and its potential risks.

4.2 Ethical Concerns and Environmental Risks Related to AI Adoption

The adoption of AI in carbon emissions forecasting and sustainable supply chain management (SCM) raises several ethical concerns and environmental risks. While AI holds great promise in improving sustainability, its integration must be carefully managed to avoid unintended consequences.

One of the primary ethical issues associated with AI adoption is **algorithmic bias**, where AI systems prioritize short-term financial gains over long-term environmental objectives (Ajayi et al., 2024). For example, AI models designed to optimize transportation routes might prioritize cost reduction over minimizing carbon emissions, potentially undermining sustainability goals. This bias can lead to decisions that, while financially beneficial in the short term, are detrimental to the environment. To mitigate this risk, AI systems should be designed with sustainability in mind. Incorporating fairness metrics within algorithms and conducting continuous audits can help detect and address biases early (Ivanov, 2020). AI-powered feedback loops can also be used to monitor sustainability performance in real-time, ensuring that operational decisions align with long-term environmental goals rather than short-term financial savings (Dubey et al., 2016).

Another critical ethical concern is **data privacy and security**. Companies that collect and analyze data from suppliers, logistics partners, and other stakeholders may inadvertently expose sensitive information or breach confidentiality agreements (Ajayi et al., 2024). Data breaches can have significant legal and financial consequences, including penalties, compensation, and reputational damage, which can negatively affect a company's ability to secure green financing or sustainability-linked loans (Kumar et al., 2022). Ensuring the privacy and security of data is essential not only for

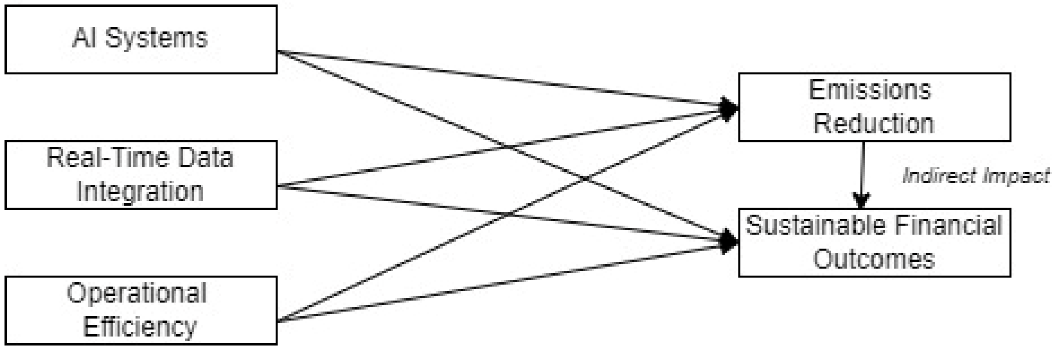

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

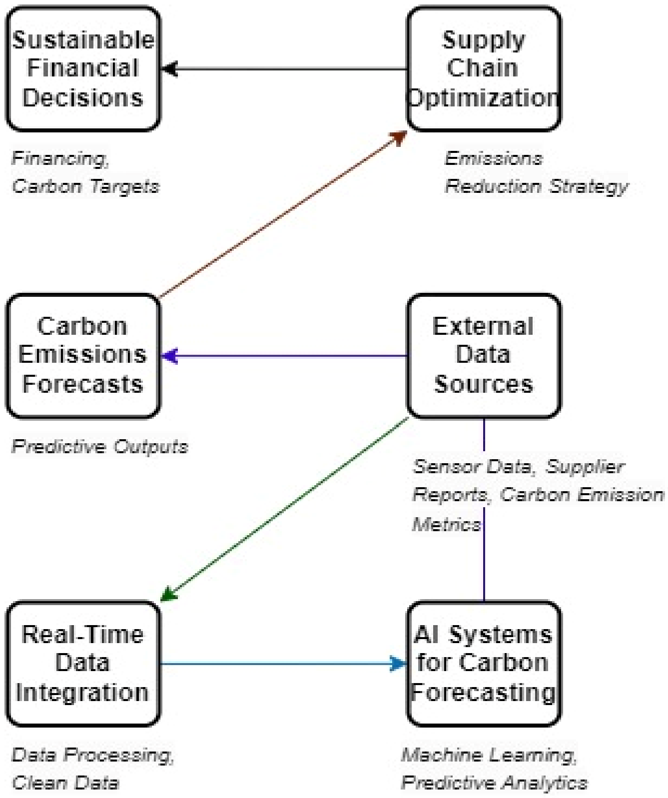

Figure 2. AI-Driven Carbon Emissions Forecasting Framework

compliance with regulations but also for maintaining trust among supply chain partners.

Furthermore, the **environmental impact of AI systems** themselves must be considered. Machine learning models, particularly deep learning systems, require substantial computing power and energy (Zhang et al., 2022). The energy consumption associated with training and running these models can contribute to a significant carbon footprint, potentially offsetting the environmental benefits of AI-driven emissions reductions. Rolf et al. (2023) suggest that future studies should focus on evaluating the net environmental impact of AI implementations, weighing both the reduction in emissions and the energy required to operate AI systems. This will help businesses and policymakers understand how to balance the benefits of AI with its environmental costs. To mitigate this issue, businesses can adopt energy-efficient computing solutions and use green data centers, as Kamble et al. (2020) recommend.

Addressing these ethical and environmental concerns requires a combination of **technical solutions, regulatory oversight, and ethical guidelines**. Companies must invest in improving data accessibility, ensuring fairness in AI algorithms, and embedding sustainability into the design and implementation of AI systems. Policymakers, researchers, and business leaders need to collaborate to navigate these challenges, maximizing the environmental and financial benefits of AI-powered carbon emissions forecasting while mitigating potential risks.

5.Recommendations for Future Research and Model Application

As AI continues to intersect with sustainable systems, robust frameworks for data integration, diverse applications, and future research are critical to refining and testing conceptual models. This section outlines key recommendations to drive advancements in AI-powered sustainability efforts and carbon emissions forecasting.

5.1 Improving Data Integration and Collaboration

AI-driven sustainable systems heavily rely on seamless data integration and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Future research should focus on enhancing **data standardization** and developing **unified data repositories** that can be accessed across industries (Mishra et al., 2021). The effectiveness of predictive models depends on the seamless integration of data from various sectors. Minimizing implementation gaps and optimizing decision-making processes require cooperation among AI developers, policymakers, and businesses (Shi et al., 2020). However, such collaboration presents challenges, such as concerns over **sensitive data**, **intellectual property** protection, and varying **data governance regulations**. Future studies could explore secure data-sharing methodologies, such as **blockchain technology** or **federated learning**, to address these challenges (Fosso Wamba et al., 2018).

For example, in **building energy management systems**, AI-powered platforms rely on synchronized data from **Internet of Things (IoT) devices**, **weather data**, and historical energy usage records (Borgeson et al., 2020). Real-time data from IoT devices can provide continuous updates on energy consumption and emissions, enabling businesses to adjust their sustainability strategies and optimize energy usage promptly (Rolf et al., 2023). By improving data-sharing protocols, businesses can reduce waste and enhance operational efficiency, helping them meet their carbon reduction targets more effectively.

To facilitate these efforts, government agencies and policymakers should promote **public-private partnerships** through regulatory frameworks and incentivize data sharing by offering tax breaks or financial incentives (Ahlstrom et al., 2021). Governments can also establish clear guidelines for **data protection** to secure sensitive information while fostering access to data, thereby increasing stakeholder trust. Future research should focus on identifying **key performance indicators** such as emissions reductions, operational cost savings, and improvements in data accuracy across industries. This **quantitative validation** will enhance collaborative models and demonstrate their applicability across diverse sectors (Kumar et al., 2022).

5.2 Potential Applications in Different Industries and Regions

AI's application in **building energy management** and **transportation logistics** for sustainability is just the beginning. Researchers should expand their focus to explore how AI can be used in **heavy industrial processes**, **manufacturing**, **agriculture**, and other sectors where emissions monitoring and energy conservation are critical (A. Zhang et al., 2022). For instance, **AI-powered predictive maintenance systems** can help the manufacturing industry minimize downtime and reduce energy waste by identifying potential issues before they occur (Rolf et al., 2023). Similarly, **AI-based emissions tracking systems** can monitor pollution levels in real-time across heavy industries, helping businesses comply with environmental regulations, avoid fines, and improve operational performance (Kamble et al., 2020).

In agriculture, AI-powered **prediction models** can optimize the use of **irrigation** and **fertilizers**, significantly reducing environmental impact while improving yields (Ajayi et al., 2024). Such applications not only benefit the environment but also help businesses achieve greater **resource efficiency**, particularly in regions where access to technology is limited.

Emerging markets and regions with constrained resources stand to benefit greatly from AI's potential to optimize resources and increase supply chain resilience. **AI-driven resource optimization tools** can assist these areas in selecting production methods that minimize energy consumption, reduce dependency on imported raw materials, and support **climate-smart agricultural practices**. Moreover, AI systems that integrate financial and sustainability metrics could attract global investments into **green infrastructure** and **renewable energy projects** (Dubey et al., 2016).

Future studies should focus on **regional case studies** to explore how AI adoption can be successfully tailored to various industries and geographical areas. Research on **sector-specific sustainability metrics** and their financial outcomes will provide valuable insights into how AI-driven sustainability strategies can be effectively applied across different regions (Bhatia et al., 2024). By examining these case studies, researchers can help businesses adapt AI-powered solutions that are both financially viable and environmentally beneficial, regardless of the region or sector in which they operate.

As AI continues to reshape the landscape of sustainability and carbon emissions forecasting, addressing data integration challenges and fostering cross-sector collaboration will be crucial. Expanding the scope of AI applications across diverse industries and regions, coupled with quantitative validation, will further advance the role of AI in achieving global sustainability goals. The recommendations outlined above pave the way for future research that can refine existing models and drive impactful advancements in AI-driven sustainability practices.

5.3 Research Directions for Testing and Validating the Conceptual Model

To rigorously test and validate the proposed conceptual model, future research should employ quantitative methods, including **longitudinal studies** and **cross-industry analyses**. Ajayi et al. (2024) highlight the importance of testing machine learning models across diverse datasets and locations to ensure their adaptability in different contexts. Researchers should develop methodologies that assess the relationships between key factors such as **AI-driven carbon reduction**, **financial performance**, and **stakeholder trust**. Experimental designs could also focus on sector-specific performance measures, such as **manufacturing efficiency**, **fuel consumption in logistics**, and **resource utilization in agriculture**. By examining how the model performs in terms of emissions reduction, cost savings, and profitability, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of its applicability across industries (Bhatia et al., 2024).

Further, scenario-based models and **sensitivity analyses** should be employed to explore how external factors, such as **regulatory changes** or **economic downturns**, influence the long-term financial viability of AI-driven sustainability models. Incorporating **reinforcement learning** techniques, which adapt to shifting circumstances, could enhance predictive analytics' adaptability in real-world settings (Ökmen & Öztaş, 2015). Ajayi et al. (2024) also recommend conducting regional studies to assess the model's viability in different global contexts. Emerging economies, which may lack the necessary infrastructure or have varying regulations, should be included to ensure that the model's principles are adaptable to diverse settings.

Additionally, integrating feedback loops from real-time applications and industry reports would help refine the model, ensuring continuous improvement over time. To test the reliability of AI models on various datasets, future studies should employ cross-validation methods, such as K-fold validation, which would enhance their applicability in real-world scenarios (Lumumba et al., 2024). Incorporating emerging technologies like blockchain for enhanced data security and digital twins for real-time simulations could further improve the accuracy and precision of AI-driven sustainability models (A. Zhang et al., 2022). These advancements would help businesses better address complex environmental challenges while ensuring strong financial outcomes.

By exploring these research directions, the conceptual model's validity and effectiveness in different industries and regions can be rigorously tested, paving the way for widespread implementation and continued improvement.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, AI-powered carbon emissions forecasting holds immense potential for enhancing sustainability in supply chain management. However, challenges related to data availability, algorithm accuracy, system integration, and ethical concerns must be addressed for successful implementation. Future research should focus on improving data integration, collaboration across sectors, and sector-specific applications. Testing the conceptual model using quantitative methods, sensitivity analyses, and real-time feedback loops will ensure its effectiveness across industries and regions. By embracing emerging technologies and refining predictive analytics, AI can significantly contribute to both environmental and financial goals, fostering long-term sustainability and business resilience.

Author contributions

M.S.U. conceptualized the study, designed the framework, and wrote the initial draft. O.E.B.M. contributed to the literature review, data synthesis, and critical revisions. J.E. reviewed and refined the manuscript, ensuring clarity, coherence, and technical accuracy. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Acknowledgment

Not declared

Competing financial interests

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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