

The role of green innovation in promoting sustainable economic development in Gweru, Zimbabwe

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Article History

Received on 8 January 2024

1st Revision on 12 February 2024

2nd Revision on 27 February 2024

3rd Revision on 5 March 2024

4th Revision on 2 April 2024

Accepted on 3 April 2024

Abstract

Purpose: In developing countries, such as Zimbabwe, the nexus between green innovation and sustainable economic development has not been thoroughly investigated. To fill this gap, this study examined the role of green innovation in promoting sustainable economic development in Gweru and Zimbabwe.

Research Methodology: Interpretivist philosophy underpinned qualitative data collection through a multi-case study method and thematic analysis approaches. Fifteen purposively and conveniently sampled participants participated in face-to-face interviews and focus-group discussions.

Results: The study's findings revealed that green innovation was a precursor to sustainable economic development through the reduction of carbon emissions and climate change, supply of clean energy, and increasing agricultural production, all of which enable employment generation and improved standards of living.

Limitations: This study was limited to only green solar entrepreneurs in Gweru City, and other cities were not covered. The study was qualitative; hence, the results cannot be generalized to other cities in the country.

Contributions: This study contributes by expanding the body of knowledge on the green innovation agenda for Small to Medium Enterprises in the solar power systems of Zimbabwe; in addition, the use of protection policies can stimulate friendly environmental businesses in all sectors of the economy.

Keywords: Carbon emissions; Climate change; Green innovation; Sustainable economic development

How to cite: Mabhandu, W. (2024). The role of green innovation in promoting sustainable economic development in Gweru, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism and Entrepreneurship*, 5(2), 75-91.

1. Introduction

Green innovation (GI) has gradually gained recognition not only as a powerful tool in promoting sustainable economic development but also as a contributor to the reduction of carbon emissions in a context where there is an increasing demand for and use of clean energy. Several countries, including Zimbabwe, are increasing their efforts to preserve environmental quality. Currently, the quality of the environment is worsened by spiking temperatures, which lead to devastating floods and droughts that damage flora and fauna (Najmi, Kanapathy, & Aziz, 2021). Thus, green innovation is essential for achieving cleaner environments. This could boost sustainable and competitive businesses and address the challenges caused by climate change. In Zimbabwe, green entrepreneurs are encouraged to take advantage of the call for new economic policies that enable reasonable and responsible businesses to preserve the environment and fulfil stakeholder demands. Recently, entrepreneurs in SMEs have begun to realize the need to develop and deploy products and trending technologies that promote environmental sustainability and stimulate economic performance (Sadiq et al., 2022; Savarese, Huybrechts, & Hudon, 2021). At the height of climate-related problems, it is imperative for green