

## Exploring the Roles of Industrial Growth, Energy Use, Human Capital, and Technological Innovation in Driving Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Evidence from Vietnam

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the impacts of industrial growth, economic growth, energy consumption, human capital, and technological innovation on greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam from 1986 to 2019. Using the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model and time-series data, the findings reveal that in the long run, industrial growth, population growth, fossil fuel consumption, and technological innovation positively influence greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, human capital development plays a crucial role in reducing emissions. In the short run, economic growth, population growth, and technological innovation exhibit varying effects on emissions. The study underscores the importance of promoting human capital investment, industrial restructuring towards greener sectors, and adopting cleaner energy sources and technologies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions while sustaining economic progress in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** greenhouse gas emissions, human capital, energy consumption, industrial growth.

## **1. Introduction**

Climate change is predominantly attributed to the emission of greenhouse gases, with a global trend indicating an escalation in such emissions, potentially leading to perilous levels of climatic alterations (IPCC, 2014). Emissions of carbon dioxide have been unequivocally identified as a principal contaminant (Edoja et al., 2016), constituting approximately 75% of total greenhouse gas emissions (Abbasi & Riaz, 2016), thereby contributing significantly to climate change. The incessant augmentation in greenhouse gas emissions, primarily driven by CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, necessitates an urgent investigation into the underlying causes. This, in turn, will facilitate the development of effective solutions which mitigated the adverse effects on the environment and ecosystems

The escalation of greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam, which amplified fourfold from 2000 to 2015 (World Bank, 2022), is a matter of significant concern. If the current response policies are not fully implemented, Vietnam will ascend to the status of a major greenhouse gas emitter by 2030. Under the business-as-usual emissions scenario, it is anticipated that Vietnam's total annual emissions will experience nearly a fourfold increase over the period from 2010 to 2030. Carbon and energy intensity in Vietnam also remains high compared to international standards (Audinet et al., 2016).

Vietnam initiated a comprehensive economic reform and transition towards a market economy in 1986, leading to impressive economic growth. From 1986 to 2019, the Vietnamese economy experienced consistent growth with an average rate of about 6.8% per year. This was accompanied by a rapid increase in energy consumption, with an average rate of 9.9% per year, primarily non-renewable energy consumption. As a result, greenhouse gas emissions have risen at an average rate of 6.8% per year during the period of 1990 and 2019, mainly due to the rapid industrialization and high economic growth and the swift consumption of fossil fuel. Vietnam faced many difficulties and challenges while carrying out the task of socio-economic development in the context of many international and domestic advantages. Additionally, climate change, extreme weather, and natural disasters have increasingly become complex and unpredictable, negatively impacting production and social life. Vietnam has formulated and issued many critical policies related to responding to climate change at the national, local, and sectoral levels. The sustainable development index of Vietnam in 2020 has increased by 39 places compared to 2016, ranking 49th out of 166 countries and territories. The industrial sector has made substantial contributions to the country's socio-economic progress. The proportion of processing and manufacturing industries within the industrial structure has seen a significant increase. However, the sector faces numerous challenges, particularly its considerable reliance on natural fuels, which has caused to a surge in poisonous gas.

Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions is an increasingly pressing challenge for Vietnam's sustainable development. However, so far, no research has been conducted that simultaneously evaluates the impact of industrial growth, economic growth, and energy consumption, along with the role of human capital and technological innovation on greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam. Consequently, the research was conducted with the goal of adding more empirical evidence on the above relationship in Vietnam, as well as clarifying the contribution level of human capital quality and innovation in technology, industrial growth, and energy consumption to the extent of greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam in the long and short term. The study expects improvements in the quality of human capital and technological innovation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while energy consumption and industrial growth are expected to increase emissions of greenhouse gases in Vietnam.

ARDL model is employed for empirical estimates based on Vietnamese data from 1986 to 2019. The use of greenhouse gas emission index, instead of the commonly used CO<sub>2</sub> emission index, is based on the severe impact of greenhouse gases on the environment and is expected to reflect the impact of industrial growth more comprehensively, economics, energy consumption, as well as the role of human capital and

technological innovation on the environment. Numerous studies have addressed the connections between industrial growth factors, economic growth, and energy consumption in relation to greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, there is existing research on the correlation between human capital, technology, and the impact of technology on greenhouse gas emissions. However, there is a lack of studies that synthesize the combined impact of these factors on greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, there is a dearth of research that specifically addresses the influence of these factors on greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam. Hence, conducting this research is not only beneficial but also imperative. This study is structured as follows: The subsequent part synthesizes the theoretical basis which is followed by research method described in Part 3, and Part 4 discusses the estimated results. Based on the experimental results, the final part provides conclusions and some recommendations.

## **2. Literature Review**

The intricate link between economic growth and environment has been explained through various theories and empirical studies, among which the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) stands out. The EKC theory posits that emissions increase with economic growth in the early stages of development, followed by a decline in environmental degradation as the economy reaches an advanced level and implements environmentally friendly technology. This is supported by studies conducted by Grossman & Krueger (1995), Panayotou (1993), Beckerman (1992), and Kaika & Zervas (2013). Moreover, when per capita income stabilizes, people demand a better living environment, which contributes to human capital development and enhances understanding of environmental pollution, as highlighted by Barić et al. (2013) and Liu et al. (2022). The EKC theory has been instrumental in guiding numerous empirical studies that explore the determinants of environmental pollution levels (Kaika & Zervas, 2013). In addition to the EKC theory, the STIRPAT model (Stochastic Impacts by Regression on Population, Affluence, and Technology) has also been a significant theoretical underpinning of empirical research on this subject. STIRPAT model was built by Dietz & Rosa (1994), where the dependent variable is explicated by factors such as population, prosperity, and technology. Over time, the STIRPAT model has evolved through modifications in the measurement methodologies of its components. Consequently, there have been studies that have expanded upon the EKC theory and numerous others that have corroborated the Environmental Kuznets Curve hypothesis. However, the conclusions drawn have been disparate. The primary reason for these divergent conclusions about the variables impacting environmental pollution emissions is the varying degrees of economic development in each case study (Zhang & Zhou, 2016).

Research documents on greenhouse gas emissions have significantly expanded in recent decades. Studies have explored the factors affecting greenhouse gas emissions from various perspectives. In these documents, greenhouse gas emissions are explored in relation to human capital, technological innovation, industrial growth, economic growth, energy consumption. Therefore, the overview of research documents is presented according to the following contents:

### **Industrial growth and greenhouse gas emissions**

Industry activities play an important role in the economic development of countries. This is the reason why industrial growth was chosen as the target area to promote economic growth. The world's industry mainly uses fossil fuels for production, so it produces greenhouse gases that damage the environment. Numerous studies have delved into the link between growth in industry sector and CO<sub>2</sub> discharges, which represent the largest proportion of greenhouse gases. In Taiwan, for instance, industrial production is closely linked to carbon dioxide emissions (Chang & Lin, 1999), while in Shanghai, industrial production has emerged as the primary driver of rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 1996 and 2007 (Zhao et al., 2010). Similarly, the growth and development of the heavy industry sector in China have had a notable positive impact on carbon dioxide emissions. Empirical evidence demonstrates that a 1% growth in heavy industry output leads to a

rise in carbon dioxide releases of 0.278% in the long run and 0.147% in the short run (Zhongping et al., 2011). Moreover, between 1993 and 2013, the investment scale of China's industrial sector emerged as the most significant factor contributing to the rise in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Zhao & Zhang, 2016). In this regard, the growth of the industrial sector has been observed to have a positive impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in various studies, including Rahman & Kashem (2017), Abokyi et al. (2019), and Ali et al. (2021). These research results addressed the positive association between the growth in industry and carbon dioxide emissions, given that the increase in added value in the industrial sector translates to more production activities and energy consumption, consequently leading to higher discharges.

Economic growth, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions

Currently, there are still several studies evaluating the bidirectional or unidirectional relationship between economic growth, energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions such as Yusuf et al. (2020), Le et al. (2020), Khan et al. (2020), Awodumi and Adewuyi (2020), Wen et al. (2021), Radmehr et al. (2021), Mohsin et al. (2021), Espoir et al. (2022), Sufyanullah et al. (2022), Lin et al. (2023), González-Álvarez and Montañés (2023), Liu et al. (2023), Minh et al. (2023), Xie et al. (2023), Raihan (2023), Idroes et al. (2023), Iqbal et al. (2023), Mitić et al. (2023), AlNemer et al. (2023), Sadiq et al. (2023), Eweade et al. (2024), Azzeddine et al. (2024). The development of industrialization and global population growth are the main factors causing climate change (Li et al., 2023). To carry out industrialization and economic growth, a large amount of input must be consumed to serve activities that create wealth for society. Among the inputs used, Industrial energy consumption accounts for 51% of global energy use (IPCC, 2007). In a study predicting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the world's largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitters, the United States, China, and India, Ahmed et al (2023) drew the conclusion that energy consumption is a source of important for greenhouse gas emissions, especially non-renewable energy, the more natural resources used, the more greenhouse gas emissions are created. Carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion are the main cause of greenhouse gas intensity (IPCC, 2007). Although fossil fuel consumption is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions leading to increased global temperatures (Wang and Azam, 2024), current studies demonstrate that there may or may not exist a relationship between energy consumption and economic growth (Dissanayake et al., 2023; Shahbaz et al., 2020). In developed countries, energy consumption and economic growth have positive impacts on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in both the short and long term, which is true for developing countries in the long term (Li et al. events, 2023). Similar to some studies, Bekun et al. (2019), Ahmed & Wang (2019), Raihan & Tuspekova (2022a, 2022b) also found similar results among these three variables. In the long run, renewable energy consumption has a significant and positive impact on economic output, while in some other countries, renewable energy consumption has a significant and negative impact on growth. economics (Shahbaz et al., 2020). Although there is a positive relationship between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and national prosperity, many countries have maintained economic growth while gradually reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Androniceanu and Georgescu, 2023). Research by Halkos & Gkampoura (2021) across 119 countries has proven this. The relationship between energy consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and economic growth in the studied countries with different income levels shows that the environmental Kuznets curve (EKC) theory is valid for countries with high-income and upper-middle-income, but not for lower-middle-income and low-income countries. Or to put it another way, in high-income and upper-middle income countries, economic growth initially requires a lot of energy consumption, leading to increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but then when development reaches a certain level, these countries care about environmental quality. This is not true in poorer countries, because growth is not enough to motivate them to improve environmental quality. Facing the great challenge of economic growth, energy consumption increases greenhouse gas emissions, all researches's implications emphasize the conversion of renewable energy consumption. Much evidence in countries with a strong shift in energy consumption have proven the above suggestions to be correct. The solutions mainly emphasize the government's role in educating people in environmental

protection activities and transition to green and renewable energy consumption to significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### Human capital, technological innovation, and greenhouse gas emissions

The role of human capital in relation to growth and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as greenhouse gas emissions, has been substantiated in a multitude of studies. Human capital has been found to make a positive contribution towards the achievement of millennium development goals in developing nations (Baldacci et al., 2008). The development of human capital reduces polluting emissions in the region, reducing the ecological footprint of countries (Serkan, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2020; Ahmed & Wang, 2019; Adikari et al., 2023). Improving labor productivity through education will also reduce CO<sub>2</sub> (Bhuiyan et al., 2023). In the long run, human capital has a statistically significant negative impact on carbon emissions, greenhouse gas emissions (Zhang et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021; Nguyen & Do, 2023). On the contrary, there are still studies with contradictory results such as human capital having a positive impact on short-term carbon emissions (Zhang et al., 2021); Greenhouse gas emissions have a positive correlation with GDP and higher education reduce emissions (Furkan et al., 2023); Or there is no causal relationship from human capital, per capita energy consumption and real GDP per capita to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Bashir et al., 2019). Thus, the previous studies show that the results are still inconsistent, however, in general, the development of human capital reduces CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gas emissions.

The relationship between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and technological innovation is also highlighted in many studies. Technological innovation is posited to concurrently enhance environmental conditions and assure productivity (Arrow et al., 1995); Economic growth is propelled by technological innovation that diminishes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Antweiler et al., 2001; Hasanbeigi et al., 2012; Santra, 2017; Abid et al., 2022). Enabling the transition from the use of fossil fuels to other sustainable energy sources requires new technologies (Nordhaus, 2007; Foxon, 2011), patents, and technological innovations that can reduce energy use further and leads to reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Voigt et al., 2014; Fernández et al., 2018; Van & Sadradin, 2021; Apostu et al., 2023; Adebayo et al., 2023; Wenlong et al., 2023; Fang, 2023). Higher economic growth will lead to more investment in more advanced technologies, and economic growth is also the main culprit in increasing emissions (Chen & Lei, 2018). On the contrary, in some other studies, the relationship between green technology and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions follows a different pattern. Low levels of technological innovation will still increase carbon emissions, but when technological innovation reaches a certain level, carbon emissions will gradually decrease (Chen et al., 2023). Regarding the impact of technological innovation and emissions, research conclusions are still inconsistent, however, in general, technological innovation reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and greenhouse gas emissions to the environment.

Upon conducting a comprehensive review of existing literature, it has been discerned by the authors that there exists a multitude of studies investigating the influence of factors such as industrial growth, the growth of economic, energy combustion, human capital and technological innovation on greenhouse gas emissions across various nations. However, the findings from these studies present an inconsistency in terms of the contributions of these factors. The heterogeneity in these results could potentially be attributed to the diverse geographical locations of these studies, the temporal periods they encompass, the distinct data sources utilized, and the varied quantitative methodologies employed. Despite the continual updates and incorporation of novel influential factors in the research literature pertaining to greenhouse gas emissions, there is a conspicuous absence of studies that evaluate the concurrent impact of industrial growth, economic growth, energy consumption, human capital, and technological innovation on greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam for the period 1986-2030. In the interim, the Vietnamese Government has ratified the National Green Growth Strategy for the period 2021-2030, thereby emphasizing the significance of promoting adjustments in energy structure, development of human capital, and national innovation. Consequently, there is an imperative need for more in-depth research on this subject to facilitate sustainable development

in Vietnam. This study, therefore, aspires to contribute additional empirical evidence concerning these relationships and simultaneously provide a foundation for the formulation of judicious policies aimed at fostering economic growth, industrial development, energy consumption, as well as human capital development and technological innovation in Vietnam in the forthcoming years.

### 3. Methodology

The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) methodology was employed, scrutinizing time-series data spanning from 1986 to 2019 pertaining to Vietnam. The variables incorporated in the model, along with their respective data collection sources, are delineated in Table 1. Prior to conducting the analysis, all variables are subjected to a natural logarithmic transformation. Previous research models have analyzed these variables for their impact on CO2 emissions and greenhouse gases. For instance, industrial growth has been proved to have a concomitant effect on CO2 releases (Ali et al., 2021). A bidirectional causal relationship has been identified between energy consumption, GDP, and greenhouse gas emissions (Lu, 2017). Furthermore, population growth has been observed to exert a positive influence on CO2 emissions (Hamilton & Turton, 2002; Lawal & Abubakar, 2019). The measurement of Human Capital (HC) was taken from the Penn World Table version 10.0 (Feenstra et al., 2015) database. This indicator has been previously utilized by Ahmed & Wang (2019) to measure human capital and assess its impact on the ecological footprint in India. To measure technological innovation, the study employs patent applications, a method used in preceding studies (Voigt et al., 2014; Van & Sadradin, 2021). In this study, it is postulated that human capital and technological innovation will contribute to a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam.

The ARDL methodology, built by Pesaran et al. (2001), is employed due to its several advantages: (1) flexibility in cointegration testing (Pesaran et al., 2001); (2) effective applicability to small sample sizes (Odhiambo, 2009); and (3) the provision of unbiased coefficients in the long-term model when applying the ARDL model (Harris & Sollis, 2003).

Based on theory and related studies, the authors construct the following research model:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{LnGGE}_t = & \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{1i} \Delta \text{LnGGE}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{2i} \Delta \text{LnGDP}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{3i} \Delta \text{LnIVA}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{4i} \Delta \text{LnP}_{t-i} \\ & + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{5i} \Delta \text{LnHC}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{6i} \Delta \text{LnPAT}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{7i} \Delta \text{LnPEC}_{t-i} \\ & + \gamma_1 \text{LnGGE}_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \text{LnGDP}_{t-1} + \gamma_3 \text{LnIVA}_{t-1} + \gamma_4 \text{LnP}_{t-1} + \gamma_5 \text{LnHC}_{t-1} \\ & + \gamma_6 \text{LnPAT}_{t-1} + \gamma_7 \text{LnPEC}_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned}$$

Where: LnGGE, LnGDP, LnIVAC, LnPEC, LnP, LnPAT, LnHC are the natural logarithms of the variables: GGE emissions, GDP, Industry (including construction) value added; Energy consumption per capita; Population growth; Patent applications; Human capital.

$\Delta$  is the first difference of the variables;  $\beta$  are the parameters;  $\varepsilon_t$  is the error term.

Table 1. Research data

| Variable names | Variable Definitions                                                      | Data source                                                                |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GGE            | Greenhouse gas emissions (tons of carbon dioxide)                         | <a href="https://ourworldindata.org">https://ourworldindata.org</a> (2024) |
| PEC            | Energy consumption per capita (KWh)                                       |                                                                            |
| HC             | Human capital index, based on years of schooling and returns to education | <a href="http://www.ggdc.net/pwt">www.ggdc.net/pwt</a> (2024)              |

|     |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                               |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GDP | A representative factor to measure the growth rate of Vietnam's economy, calculated based on real GDP at fixed prices in 2015 (%) | <a href="https://data.worldbank.org">https://data.worldbank.org</a><br>(2024) |
| PAT | Patent applications (nonresidents and residents) (This indicator is calculated per capita)                                        |                                                                               |
| IVA | Industry (including construction), value added per capita (constant 2015 US\$)                                                    |                                                                               |
| P   | Population growth (%)                                                                                                             |                                                                               |

Source: Authors' compilation

Unit root tests are first conducted to ascertain the stationarity or non-stationarity of the data. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test and the Phillips-Perron (PP) test are the two commonly used unit root tests. Subsequently, cointegration tests are performed to investigate the long-term association between the variables in the model. Hypothesis testing is conducted using the F-test statistic, which compares the upper and lower critical values. Lastly, the error correction model is estimated to examine the short-term association between the variables established earlier.

*Optimal lag selection.* The optimal lag can be determined by several methods such as AIC, SBC, SIC. The p and q values are selected to minimize the AIC, SBC, and SIC. However, the lag can also be determined automatically in the Eview software.

*Bound test.* Although economic time series tend to have a deterministic or stochastic trend, there are a group of variables that can fluctuate together. Cointegration analysis allows discovering long-run relationships between variables. There is an expectation on variables to have a long-term relationship with each other because cointegration represents a long-term and stable relationship among variables. Therefore, the variables in the model will form a single cointegrating vector. Consequently, it is necessary to test for cointegration. In the ARDL model, to check whether a long-term relationship exists or not, the Bound test is performed. This method was developed by Pesaran and Shin (1999), Pesaran et al. (2001).

The F statistic was calculated to compare with the critical values of Pesaran et al. (2001). If:

$F > \text{Upper Bound}$  : hypothesis that no cointegration relationship exists is not accepted.

$F < \text{Lower Bound}$  : accept hypothesis that no cointegration relationship exists .

$\text{Upper bound} > F > \text{lower bound}$ : there is not enough evidence to conclude about the long-term relationship. In this case, to overcome this problem, the error correction model (ECM) is applied to evaluate the cointegration of variables. With a simple linear equation:

$$y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_t + \varepsilon_t$$

ECM is defined as the residual of the above equation.

The error correction model considering the short-term impact of variables on greenhouse gas emissions is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{LnGGE}_t = & \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_{1i} \Delta \text{LnGGE}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{2i} \Delta \text{LnGDP}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{3i} \Delta \text{LnIVA}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{4i} \Delta \text{LnP}_{t-i} \\ & + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{5i} \Delta \text{LnHC}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{6i} \Delta \text{LnPAT}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^q \beta_{7i} \Delta \text{LnPEC}_{t-i} + \mu \text{ECT}_{t-1} + u_t \end{aligned}$$

In the above equation,  $\mu$  is the coefficient of the error correction term (ECT). This coefficient represents the degree of return to the equilibrium state of the economy under the impact of short-term shocks.

*Diagnostic test.* Lagrange multiplier test (LM) to test the serial correlation between the residuals at the first – order lags ( $H_0$ : There is no serial correlation of the residuals to the first – order lag).

Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey test to test heteroskedasticity ( $H_0$ : Heteroscedasticity).

Jarque Bera test to test normal distribution in residuals ( $H_0$ : residuals are normally distributed).

*Robustness checks.* Lu and White (2014), Sowah and Kirikkaleli (2022) suggested FMOLS, DOLS, CCR, FGLS, FOGLEs estimators to check robustness regressions. According to Sowah and Kirikkaleli (2022), these approaches are appropriate for addressing issues in cointegrating regressions. Thus the study chooses DOLS, FGLS and FMOLS tools to test the robustness of the model.

## 4. Results

Table 2 describes the criteria of Vietnam in the period from 1986 to 2019.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

|              | LnGGE | LnGDP | LnPEC | LnIVA | LnHC | LnPAT  | LnP   |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|--------|-------|
| Mean         | 19.33 | 1.86  | 8.10  | 6.10  | 0.75 | -11.43 | 0.27  |
| Median       | 19.43 | 1.90  | 8.12  | 6.22  | 0.73 | -11.01 | 0.07  |
| Maximum      | 20.18 | 2.25  | 9.44  | 7.07  | 1.05 | -9.41  | 0.85  |
| Minimum      | 18.50 | 1.02  | 6.99  | 5.11  | 0.52 | -17.23 | -0.09 |
| Std. Dev.    | 0.49  | 0.25  | 0.79  | 0.63  | 0.17 | 1.83   | 0.33  |
| Skewness     | -0.21 | -1.24 | 0.03  | -0.28 | 0.26 | -1.34  | 0.65  |
| Kurtosis     | 2.00  | 5.43  | 1.70  | 1.72  | 1.67 | 4.29   | 1.74  |
| Jarque-Bera  | 1.67  | 17.22 | 2.39  | 2.74  | 2.90 | 12.66  | 4.67  |
| Observations | 34    | 34    | 34    | 34    | 34   | 34     | 34    |

Source: *Author's calculations*

Vietnam experienced a remarkable economic growth rate from 1986 to 2019, placing it among the countries with high economic growth rates in the world. The country's human capital index has also exhibited a positive trend, registering an above-average score of 2. However, the rate of patent applications per capita in Vietnam has remained low. Additionally, the country's energy consumption levels as well as greenhouse gas emissions, when compared to GDP, are higher than those of many other countries. In 2016, Vietnam's total net greenhouse gas emissions stood at 316,734.96 thousand tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Notably, greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector were the highest, accounting for 65% of total emissions. The industrial processes and product use sector followed closely behind, accounting for 14.6% of emissions. Despite efforts to curb emissions, the energy sector is still projected to be the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam by 2030.

Table 3: Greenhouse gas emissions of Vietnam in the years 1994, 2000 and 2010 and estimates for the year 2030

(Unit: Million Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)

| Sectors                                  | 1994 | 2000 | 2010   | 2014   | 2016   | 2030<br>(estimate) |
|------------------------------------------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| Energy                                   | 25,6 | 52,8 | 151.88 | 175.54 | 205,83 | 648,5              |
| The industrial process and product usage | 3,8  | 10,0 | 25,84  | 38,73  | 46,09  | -                  |

Source: *Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (2014, 2020)*

The J-B test results also demonstrate the normal distribution of all variables. The mean and median values of most variables are consistent (Table 1). GGE, PEC, IVA, HC, and PAT all show an increasing trend over time, while variable P shows a decreasing trend during the period 1986-2019 (Figure 1).



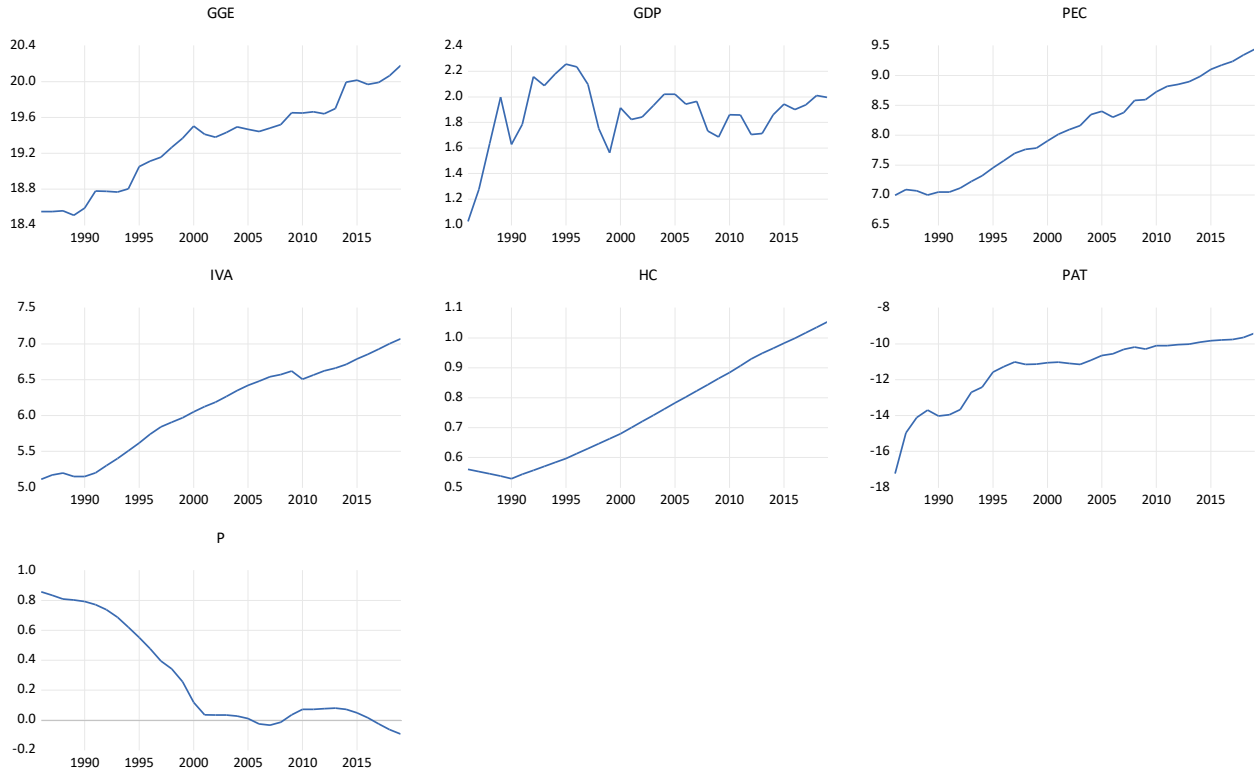


Fig. 1: The variation of variables

Table 4 shows the results of the unit root test. It is observed that some variables require first differencing to achieve stationarity, while others are stationary at the 1% and 5% significance levels. Thus, the data series satisfies the necessary conditions for proceeding with the ARDL model to analyze the impact of industrial growth, economic growth, energy consumption, human capital, and technological innovation on greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam from 1986 to 2019.

Table 4. Unit Root Test

| Variables | ADF Test        |                                      | PP Test         |                                      |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
|           | Level Intercept | 1 <sup>st</sup> Difference Intercept | Level Intercept | 1 <sup>st</sup> Difference Intercept |
| LnGGE     | -3.02           | -5.45***                             | -2.45           | -5.09***                             |
| LnIVA     | -1.09           | -3.57**                              | -1.61           | -3.57**                              |
| LnGDP     | -3.89**         | -                                    | -3.88**         | -                                    |
| LnP       | -3.84**         | -                                    | -1.17           | -2.02                                |
| LnHC      | -5.16***        | -                                    | -8.95***        | -                                    |
| LnPEC     | -3.70**         | -                                    | -3.03           | -4.89***                             |
| LnPAT     | -1.66           | -7.37***                             | -4.87***        | -                                    |

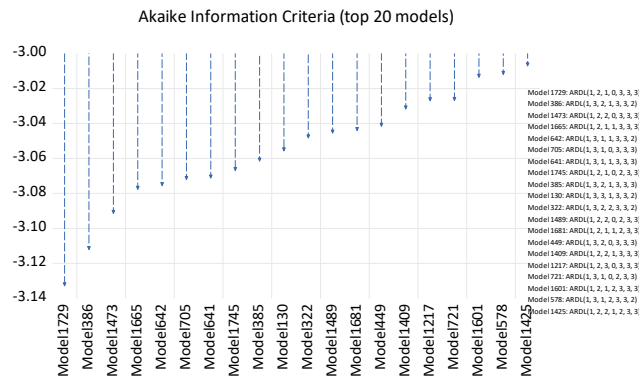
Source: Authors' calculations

Note: \*\*\*, \*\*, \* Corresponding to statistical significance levels of 1%, 5%, 10%

Table 5 and Figure 2 show that the ARDL (1, 2, 1, 0, 3, 3, 3) model has the smallest AIC value, so it is the model used for analysis.

Table 5. Optimal lag selection

| Lag | LogL   | LR     | FPE       | AIC     | SC      | HQ      |
|-----|--------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0   | 164.61 | NA     | 9.04e-14  | -10.16  | -9.84   | -10.06  |
| 1   | 417.63 | 375.43 | 1.89e-19  | -23.33  | -20.74  | -22.48  |
| 2   | 501.50 | 86.57  | 3.40e-20  | -25.58  | -20.72  | -23.99  |
| 3   | 628.57 | 73.78* | 1.42e-21* | -30.61* | -23.49* | -28.29* |



The findings from the ARDL bounds testing are presented in Table 6. The empirical evidence from the test suggests the existence of a long-term equilibrium relationship among the variables incorporated in the model. This is substantiated by the F-statistic value surpassing the critical upper bound value at a 1% level of significance. Consequently, it can be inferred that a long-term association is indeed present among the variables under consideration.

Table 6. ARDL Bound Testing Results

**F-Bounds Test**

| Test Statistic | Value | Signif. | I (0) | I (1) |
|----------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| F-statistic    | 7.46  | 10%     | 1.99  | 2.94  |
| k              | 6     | 5%      | 2.27  | 3.28  |
|                |       | 2.5%    | 2.55  | 3.61  |
|                |       | 1%      | 2.88  | 3.99  |

Source: Authors' Calculations

Table 7. Long-term coefficient estimation results

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob.  |
|----------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| LnGDP    | -0.18       | 0.12       | -1.39       | 0.1911 |
| LnPEC    | 0.52        | 0.24       | 2.17        | 0.0520 |
| LnIVA    | 1.29        | 0.40       | 3.17        | 0.0089 |
| LnHC     | -3.31       | 1.11       | -2.98       | 0.0124 |
| LnPAT    | 0.16        | 0.06       | 2.77        | 0.0179 |
| LnP      | 1.27        | 0.36       | 3.50        | 0.0049 |
| C        | 11.77       | 2.50       | 4.70        | 0.0006 |

Source: Authors' Calculations

The findings in table 7 indicate that the variable LnGDP is not statistically significant within the confines of the model, meaning that there is no evidence to conclude the existence of relationship between economic

output and carbon emissions in Vietnam. This result aligns with the study conducted by Adikari et al. (2023) on the Sri Lankan economy during the period 1978-2019. During the initial phase of the reform period, Vietnam's economic growth was predominantly driven by the agricultural sector, followed by the service sector, and subsequently the industrial sector. At that time, the agricultural practices in Vietnam employed rudimentary techniques, resulting in minimal CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Subsequently, the nation's economic focus gradually transitioned towards industrial and service activities. By 2019, the service, industrial, and agricultural sectors contributed approximately 42.47%, 36.8%, and 11.78% to the economy, respectively (General Statistics Office, 2019). Notably, it was the service sector, as opposed to the industrial sector, that played a vital role in propelling economic growth during this period. The service sector is characterized by low energy consumption, thereby contributing to Vietnam's overall lower per capita energy consumption when compared to the global average. As a result, there appears to be no definitive correlation between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the economic output in Vietnam, demonstrating the unique economic reality of the country. The variables LnPEC, LnIVA, LnHC, LnPat, and LnP demonstrate statistical significance with greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam at varying levels of significance. Specifically, at the 10% level of significance, a 1% rise in energy combustion increases greenhouse gas emissions by 0.525%. This result is congruent with the findings of Hamit-Hagggar (2012) and Lu (2017). At the 1% level of significance, the growth of the industrial sector also contributes to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. This finding corroborates the research of Zhongping et al. (2011) and Ali et al. (2021). Furthermore, population growth also positively correlates with an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, which is consistent with the research conducted by Lawal & Abubakar (2019). However, at the 5% level of significance, the impact of LnPAT (representing technological innovation) on greenhouse gas emissions is positive. This suggests that technological innovation does not contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam. This finding is in line with the research of Peizhen et al. (2014) and Van & Sadrudin (2021). The rationale behind this can be attributed to the use of a proxy variable, which, in this case, is the annual number of patents. Selecting a variable that accurately represents technological development in Vietnam poses significant challenges, as there is no official data that quantifies changes in the country's technological landscape. While the number of patents in Vietnam has exhibited an upward trend over the years, the culture of patent registration in Vietnam remains underdeveloped. Many inventors refrain from registering their patents, and the bulk of patent registrations are attributed to foreign entities. Consequently, the tangible impact of patents on real-life products has not been conclusively demonstrated through the number of patent registrations. As a result, the conventional theoretical framework may not accurately capture the influence of the patent variable on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Human capital (HC) has been empirically found to play a pivotal role in reducing carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions, thereby ensuring environmental quality. At the 5% level of significance, a 1% increase in human capital results in a 3.314% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This suggests that human capital positively contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam. This finding is consistent with several previous studies (e.g., Serkan (2009), Ahmed et al. (2020), Sharma et al. (2021), Ahmed & Wang (2019), and Adikari et al. (2023)).

Table 8. Short-term coefficient estimation results

| Variable     | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob.  |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| D(LnGDP)     | 0.31        | 0.05       | 5.90        | 0.0001 |
| D(LnGDP(-1)) | 0.24        | 0.06       | 3.76        | 0.0031 |
| D(LnPEC)     | 0.15        | 0.12       | 1.21        | 0.2489 |
| D(LnHC)      | -8.03       | 1.81       | -4.42       | 0.0010 |
| D(LnHC(-1))  | -11.70      | 2.25       | -5.19       | 0.0003 |
| D(LnHC(-2))  | 4.58        | 1.56       | 2.93        | 0.0136 |

|              |       |      |       |        |
|--------------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| D(LnPAT)     | 0.06  | 0.03 | 1.98  | 0.0727 |
| D(LnPAT(-1)) | -0.24 | 0.03 | -6.64 | 0.0000 |
| D(LnPAT(-2)) | -0.16 | 0.02 | -5.59 | 0.0002 |
| D(LnP)       | 1.09  | 0.35 | 3.08  | 0.0103 |
| D(LnP(-1))   | -0.56 | 0.44 | -1.25 | 0.2346 |
| D(LnP(-2))   | -0.92 | 0.30 | -2.97 | 0.0126 |
| CointEq(-1)* | -1.09 | 0.11 | -9.88 | 0.0000 |

The results of the error correction model derived from the ARDL model have been estimated to investigate the existence of the cointegration relationship between industrial growth, economic growth, energy consumption, human capital, technological innovation, and greenhouse gas emissions. The estimated results have been proved to be statistically significant at the 1% level (Table 8), which eliminates the suspicion of the aforementioned relationship. This finding is of utmost importance as it demonstrates the reliability of the policy recommendations proposed in this study.

Furthermore, the estimated coefficients are presented in Table 8. In the short term, the relationship between the variables and greenhouse gas emissions has been found to be significant at the 1% and 5% levels, except for the variables of industrial growth and energy consumption. The positive impacts of economic growth and population growth on greenhouse gas emissions have been observed, whereas, at the first difference level, a 1% increase in technological innovation has been found to contribute to a reduction of 0.246% in greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, the role of human capital has been found to be important in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the short term as well, with a 1% increase in human capital resulting in an 8.033% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. These findings are consistent with expectations and the results of previous studies.

To assess the stability and suitability of the estimated ARDL model, various tests including the autocorrelation phenomenon test, the variance of the error does not change, and the residual test have been conducted, and the results are presented in Table 9. All tests have failed to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that the estimated model is free from autocorrelation phenomenon, the variance of the error changes, and the model has residuals that are normally distributed. This ensures the reliability and validity of the estimated ARDL model.

Table 9: Summary of Model Tests

| Model Tests                   | Hypothesis                                        | F-statistic | Probability | Decision                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Ramsey Test                   | H <sub>0</sub> : Normally distributed residuals   | 0.64        | 0.4413      | Do not reject H <sub>0</sub> |
| Serial Correlation LM Test    | H <sub>0</sub> : No autocorrelation               | 2.18        | 0.1688      | Do not reject H <sub>0</sub> |
| Breusch – pagan -Godfrey Test | H <sub>0</sub> : error variance remains unchanged | 1.97        | 0.1239      | Do not reject H <sub>0</sub> |

The stability analysis of the CUSUM and CUSUMQ regression coefficients has been illustrated in Figure 3. Upon careful examination, it can be observed that both CUSUM and CUSUMQ lines remain within the confidence band at the 5% significance level, which suggests that the residuals of the model are stable. Consequently, it can be ascertained that the model is appropriate for analytical purposes.

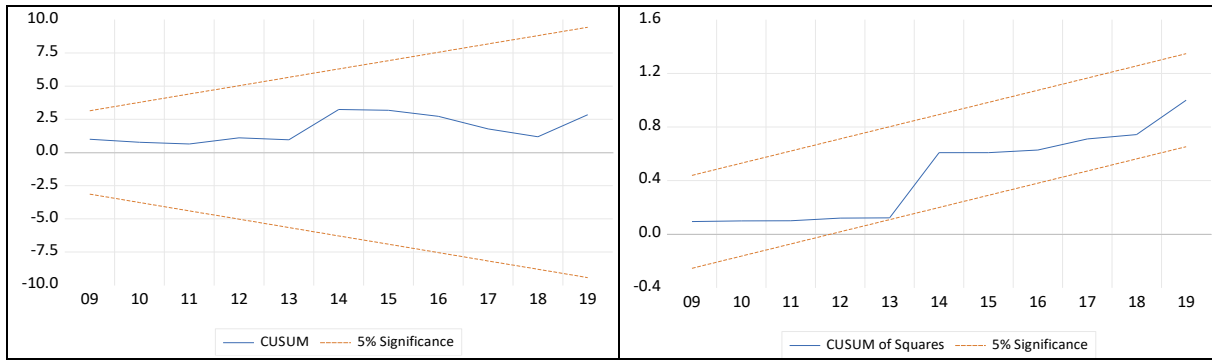


Fig. 3: The stability analysis of the CUSUM and CUSUMQ

Table 10: Robustness check

| Regressors  | DOLS      | FMOLS     | CCR       |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| LnGDP       | -0.818439 | -0.002913 | -0.004018 |
| LnPEC       | 0.237029  | 0.775771  | 0.769205  |
| LnIVA       | 2.378800  | 0.191837  | 0.140036  |
| LnHC        | -4.504085 | -1.430882 | -1.313070 |
| LnPAT       | 0.134151  | 0.017352  | 0.026145  |
| LnP         | 1.907097  | 0.082644  | 0.059344  |
| <b>Lead</b> | 1         |           |           |
| <b>Lag</b>  | 1         |           |           |

The estimated coefficients from the Dynamic Ordinary Least Squares (DOLS), Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS), and Canonical Cointegrating Regression (CCR) models consistently demonstrate the impact directions across all variables. Notably, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Human Capital (HC) exhibit inverse effects on the dependent variable, while Private Expenditure on Consumption (PEC), Investment Value Added (IVA), Public Administration and Taxes (PAT), and Population (P) show effects in the same direction as the dependent variable. These results are consistent with the findings in the research regression model, indicating robustness and reliability of the regression results.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the determinants of greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam, a rapidly industrializing economy. The findings highlight the positive long-run impacts of industrial growth, population growth, energy consumption, and technological innovation on emissions. Notably, human capital development emerges as a key factor in reducing emissions, both in the short and long run. These results have important policy implications for Vietnam's efforts to balance economic development and environmental sustainability.

Based on the findings, the study recommends a multi-pronged policy approach. First, investing in education and human capital development is crucial for promoting environmental awareness and facilitating the adoption of cleaner technologies and practices. Second, industrial policies should prioritize the transition towards green and high-value-added sectors with lower emissions intensities. Third, efforts should be made to diversify the energy mix by increasing the share of renewable sources and promoting energy efficiency measures. Finally, technological innovation policies should be aligned with environmental objectives to ensure that new technologies contribute to emissions reduction rather than exacerbating the problem.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. First, the analysis is based on aggregate national-level data, which may obscure heterogeneities and dynamics at more

granular levels (e.g., across regions, industries, or firms). Future research could explore these disaggregated dimensions to derive more nuanced policy implications. Additionally, the study does not account for potential non-linearities or threshold effects in the relationships between the variables, which could be explored using more advanced econometric techniques.

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