

The Impact of China's Carbon Market Trading on the Production Cost of Enterprises

Feiman Lu^{1,a}, Zhengyang Yao^{2,b}, Zihan Zhu^{3,c,*}

¹*Shenzhen Foreign Language School, No.1 Yantian Road, Shenzhen, China*

²*San Domenico High School, 1500 Butterfield Rd, CA, 94960, San Anselmo*

³*University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 506 S. Wright St. Urbana, IL USA*

a. Maddylyu@163.com, b. curry_yao@regentquant.com, c. Zihan11@illinois.edu

**corresponding author*

Abstract: The growth of China's carbon market, from its origin to its current size, demonstrates the country's dedication to corporate involvement and carbon reduction. Businesses' operations, risk management, investor relations, innovation culture, and level of global competitiveness are all profoundly impacted by carbon trading. It elevates sustainability from a policy compliance to a long-term success strategic necessity in a climate-focused world. The significant implications of China's carbon market on company behavior are thoroughly examined in this essay, including how they affect production methods, innovation, social responsibility, goal-setting, and future directions. Considering industry differences, profit consequences, and increasing investments in ESG principles, it also analyses their impact on business carbon emissions and financial indicators. In the end, the paper explores the complex connection between carbon emissions and business practices, highlighting the wide-ranging ramifications of China's carbon trading market on enterprise operations and sustainability strategies.

Keywords: Carbon Market Trading, China, Carbon emission

1. Introduction

When it comes to climate change and global warming, one topic that gets a lot of attention is the impact of excessive emissions of greenhouse gases on the Earth's climate system. Rising global temperatures, frequent extreme weather events, and rising sea levels have aroused widespread concern and concern from the international community. In response to this threat, the international community has taken a variety of measures. Under the Paris Agreement, countries are required to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon trading is an internationally implementable mechanism that helps countries meet these commitments. As of the end of 2020, the carbon market had successfully executed its agreements over a period of five to six years. In 2017, China initiated a nationwide carbon market, marking its inaugural inclusion of the electricity sector. Drawing from the favorable outcomes of the carbon market's trial phase, the national carbon market formally entered trading operations in July 2021. The disparities observed between these two carbon markets serve as a factual groundwork for examining how China's carbon market pilot might influence technological innovation within corporate entities [1]. Understanding the historical development of China's carbon trading market is crucial. It provides context for evaluating its influence on corporate behavior. Over

the years, China has progressed from laying the groundwork for the market to implementing pilot programs and expanding coverage. Each milestone reflects the nation's commitment to carbon reduction and sets the stage for corporate engagement. The impact of carbon trading on enterprises is far-reaching and multi-dimensional. It reshapes their economic incentives, operations, risk management strategies, investor relations, innovation culture and global competitiveness. Carbon trading changes the corporate landscape, moving sustainability from a mere compliance requirement to a strategic imperative for long-term success in a world focused on mitigating climate change [2]. This article will embark on a comprehensive exploration of the profound impact of China's carbon trading market on corporate behavior. This article will encompass a thorough examination of the development milestones that have shaped this market's evolution. Moreover, the article will delve into a detailed analysis of how the emergence of the carbon trading market in China has influenced various facets of corporate behavior. From production practices to innovation, social responsibility, goal-setting, and future development directions, this article will unveil the transformative effects of this market. Additionally, the article will dissect the market's impact on corporate carbon emissions and financial indicators, considering the heterogeneity of industries, implications for profits and costs, and the burgeoning investment in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. The main purpose is to explore the interaction between carbon emissions and corporate behavior.

2. The development of China's Carbon Trading Market

The inception and evolution of carbon markets have triggered a transformative shift in corporate behavior, compelling businesses to reassess their environmental strategies and engage in proactive emissions reduction initiatives. These markets, primarily designed to combat climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, operate as a mechanism to assign a monetary worth to carbon emissions. As corporations are increasingly held responsible for their environmental impact, the carbon market has become a pivotal tool in encouraging sustainable practices and driving emissions reductions.

The influence of carbon markets on corporate actions is multifaceted, spanning both operational and strategic dimensions. Operationally, the imposition of a carbon price encourages companies to internalize the previously externalized costs of pollution, motivating them to invest in cleaner technologies and adopt energy-efficient practices to mitigate financial liabilities. Strategically, participation in carbon markets can enhance a corporation's reputation by signaling its dedication to environmental stewardship, attracting environmentally conscious investors, and bolstering brand image. Furthermore, carbon markets incentivize innovation by rewarding companies that innovate and implement low-carbon technologies, fostering a competitive landscape that stimulates green economic growth.

However, the effectiveness of carbon markets in shaping corporate behavior hinges on several factors, including the stringency of emissions reduction targets, the stability of pricing mechanisms, and the enforcement of regulatory frameworks. While carbon markets have undeniably influenced corporate actions towards sustainability, their long-term impact is contingent upon the continuous refinement and expansion of these markets, alongside the establishment of robust global agreements that align corporate interests with the imperative of climate change mitigation. In this context, the ongoing evolution and maturation of carbon markets offer a compelling avenue for academia, policymakers, and businesses to collaboratively explore their potential in driving meaningful environmental change through corporate action [3].

The United States initiated voluntary participation in the greenhouse gas emissions reduction market, setting the precedent for such participation. With China's rapid industrialization, emissions of industrial gases, including carbon dioxide, have witnessed a dramatic upsurge. Since 2005, China has consistently been the largest global CO₂ emitter, contributing over a quarter of total global

emissions by 2019. The inevitability of China's carbon market development became apparent in 2007 when a national carbon market was established under the guidance of the State Council's Premier. At the national institutional level, an overseeing body led by the State Council's Premier was established to address energy conservation, emissions reduction, and climate change response. In 2008, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) formed the Department of Climate Change Response, actively engaging in climate change mitigation efforts. At the local institutional level, all provinces and municipalities established their dedicated climate response departments to oversee emission reduction and environmental protection activities within their respective jurisdictions. In 2011, the launch of local pilot phases marked the official commencement of carbon market development, progressing from 2011 to 2013. Subsequently, in June 2013, Shenzhen inaugurated China's first carbon emissions trading pilot market, followed by the establishment of seven more pilot carbon markets in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Hubei, and Guangdong. Fujian joined as the eighth pilot carbon market in China. The second phase involved the preparation of a unified national carbon market spanning from 2014 to 2019. A significant milestone was reached in 2014 with the release of the National Development and Reform Commission's (NDRC) Interim Measures for the Administration of Carbon Emission Trading, which outlined the foundational structure of a unified national carbon market at the national level.

China aims to officially launch its national carbon market in 2017. was jointly issued by the United States and China in 2015.

In December 2017, the National Carbon Emissions Trading Market Construction Program (Power Generation Sector) was released.

The release of the National Carbon Emissions Trading Market Construction Program (Power Generation Sector) in December 2017 marked the establishment of the national carbon trading market, and in 2018, the main tasks of the carbon market construction will be to concretize the technical operations such as data submission and registration.

After a series of inspections and evaluations, Hubei and Shanghai became China's carbon trading.

The third stage is the gradual development and maturity of the national unified carbon market (2020 to present). 2020 is the year when the construction of the national carbon market enters the stage of deepening and perfecting. After nearly three years of preparation and simulation operation, the unified national carbon market for the power industry was officially launched in July 2021, and in addition to the power generation industry, it will gradually cover key industries such as steel, petrochemicals, chemicals, aviation, and other key industries with large emissions. 2021, China's carbon emission right registration system started to provide 2,225 carbon emission rights to 2,650 households.

In 2021, China's carbon emission rights registration system started to handle account opening procedures for 2,225 compliance enterprises. After

In 2021, China's carbon emission rights registration system began to process account opening procedures for 2,225 compliant enterprises. After comprehensive docking and coordination, the national carbon market will be officially opened by the end of June 2021.

The national carbon trading market will be opened by the end of June 2021, after full coordination and harmonization [4].

3. Analysis of the Influence of the Emergence of Trading Market On the behavior of enterprises

The emergence of carbon trading markets represents a pivotal moment in the global effort to combat climate change. As nations and industries grapple with the pressing need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, these markets have gained prominence as a means of incentivizing and regulating corporate behavior. In this essay, we will delve into the profound effects that carbon trading markets

have on various facets of corporate conduct, including production, innovation, social responsibility, goals, and future development direction.

One of the most tangible impacts of carbon trading markets on corporate behavior is a significant shift in production and operational practices. As businesses participate in these markets, they are compelled to reevaluate their carbon footprint. This often results in a concerted effort to reduce emissions through more energy-efficient production processes and environmentally conscious operations. The drive to cut emissions not only aligns with sustainability goals but also reduces operational costs, making it a win-win strategy.

Innovation is at the heart of any response to climate change, and carbon trading markets play a pivotal role in catalyzing it. Corporations engaged in these markets are motivated to invest in research and development aimed at creating cleaner technologies and more sustainable practices. This innovation can span from improving energy efficiency within existing processes to developing groundbreaking solutions in renewable energy, waste reduction, and carbon capture technologies.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved from being a buzzword to an integral aspect of a company's identity. Participation in carbon trading markets is often seen as a demonstration of a company's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. It can significantly enhance a company's reputation and serve as a powerful marketing tool, resonating with consumers who increasingly prioritize eco-conscious brands.

Carbon trading markets necessitate the establishment of precise carbon reduction targets. In response, companies set ambitious sustainability goals and strive to meet these objectives. The clear metrics provided by these markets enable companies to track their progress accurately and make data-driven decisions to achieve emission reductions efficiently. This not only aids in regulatory compliance but also fosters a culture of accountability and environmental consciousness within the organization.

The impact of carbon trading markets extends to shaping a company's future development direction. Companies, faced with the necessity of reducing emissions, may pivot towards low-carbon business models. This transition could involve diversification into renewable energy, green technologies, or the production of sustainable products and services. The carbon trading landscape thus serves as a guiding force in corporate strategic planning.

Carbon trading markets have financial implications for companies. Beyond the obvious cost savings associated with emission reductions, some businesses can generate revenue by selling carbon credits when they surpass their reduction targets. Furthermore, carbon prices in these markets can directly affect a company's financial performance, introducing a new variable that must be considered in risk assessments and financial planning.

Participation in carbon trading markets can facilitate international expansion for corporations. By demonstrating a commitment to global sustainability goals, companies may find it easier to enter new markets that prioritize environmental responsibility. Additionally, access to markets with carbon pricing mechanisms can significantly influence corporate decisions regarding expansion and investment.

4. The Impact of Carbon Markets

Carbon markets are designed to put a price on carbon emissions, encouraging corporations to reduce their carbon footprint and transition to cleaner, more sustainable practices. As of 2020, the global carbon market was valued at around \$215 billion. Carbon markets operate on the principle of cap-and-trade or carbon pricing, where companies are allocated a certain amount of carbon allowances or credits. In the European Union's Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), for example, the cap set for 2020 was approximately 1.8 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent. Companies can buy or sell these allowances in a market, and those who emit less than their quota can sell their excess allowances. For

instance, in 2019, the price of carbon in the EU ETS fluctuated between €20 to €30 per ton of CO₂. Energy-intensive industries such as power generation, steel production, and cement manufacturing face significant challenges in reducing carbon emissions. These sectors, responsible for nearly 20% of global CO₂ emissions, have felt the financial impact of carbon markets the most. Companies in these sectors sometimes must purchase carbon allowances, leading to higher operational costs. For example, a steel company producing 10 million tons of steel could have emissions costs of around €200 million to €300 million annually at the prices. On the flip side, the renewable energy sector, including wind, solar, and hydroelectric power, has experienced substantial growth, with global renewable capacity increasing by 200 GW in 2019. These industries benefit from carbon markets by generating carbon credits through clean energy production. Companies in this sector can sell these credits to carbon-intensive industries, creating a favorable business environment that saw investments in renewables reach \$282.2 billion in 2019. Technology and service-based industries, which contribute roughly 10% of global emissions, have a different relationship with carbon markets. Although they have lower direct emissions, their role in reducing carbon in other sectors is vital. Financially, participation in carbon emission trading may increase liabilities. A company emitting 1 million tons of CO₂ over its allocation, at a rate of €25 per ton, would incur an additional liability of €25 million. This can influence the company's asset-liability ratio. However, investments in sustainability can offset these costs. A power company investing €1 billion in renewable infrastructure, for example, would see a substantial increase in its total assets.

5. Data Analysis

Carbon markets have emerged as a pivotal mechanism in the global effort to combat climate change by providing a tangible way to monetize carbon emissions. This innovative approach introduces a powerful economic incentive for enterprises to actively reduce their carbon output and transition towards more sustainable practices. These markets primarily function through two key strategies: the cap-and-trade framework and carbon pricing strategies, both of which play a crucial role in shaping the behavior of participating entities.

Under the cap-and-trade framework, enterprises are allocated specific carbon allowances, which essentially represent a cap on their permissible carbon emissions. This allocation is typically based on historical emissions data or other relevant criteria. Companies that can reduce their emissions below the allocated threshold can sell their surplus allowances, thereby generating revenue. Conversely, those that exceed their allowances must purchase additional allowances, incurring financial penalties. This fundamental economic structure provides a powerful motivation for businesses to find innovative ways to reduce their carbon emissions.

The implications of the carbon market system are profound and multifaceted, and they vary across different industrial sectors. Energy-intensive sectors such as power generation, steel manufacturing, and cement production face particularly significant challenges in achieving substantial emission reductions. However, the presence of carbon markets goes beyond mere incentive; it acts as a critical catalyst for change within these sectors.

For industries with high emissions profiles, carbon markets serve as a driving force that compels them to adopt cleaner technological innovations and enhance energy efficiency measures. Failing to adapt to these new standards could result in financial consequences, including the costs associated with purchasing additional carbon allowances. These economic pressures, stemming from participation in carbon markets, effectively act as a fulcrum for technological innovation and a paradigm shift towards environmentally friendly practices.

In essence, carbon markets play a pivotal role in not only incentivizing emissions reduction but also in shaping the trajectory of entire industries towards more sustainable and eco-friendly methodologies. The economic dynamics of these markets provide a powerful impetus for companies

to invest in research and development, explore cleaner energy sources, and implement more efficient processes, ultimately contributing to a greener, more sustainable future for our planet.

Conversely, sectors entrenched in renewable energy generation, encompassing wind, solar, and hydroelectric modalities, stand to gain substantially. Such sectors, by virtue of their clean energy production, are positioned to accrue carbon credits, which can subsequently be commercialized to entities with higher emission trajectories. This not only diversifies their revenue generation but also fortifies the economic rationale for amplified investments in renewable energy infrastructural development [5].

In the realm of technology and service-oriented industries, where inherent carbon emissions are comparatively diminutive, the advent of carbon markets furnishes a unique proposition. It bestows upon them a vanguard role in research and development initiatives, propelling them to ideate and manifest advanced solutions that facilitate emission curtailment across various sectors.

From a fiscal perspective, engagement in carbon emission trading presents a nuanced scenario for enterprises. On one hand, it could augment a firm's liabilities, primarily attributed to the financial outlays necessitated by the procurement of allowances or credits. Concurrently, it catalyzes the impetus for investments in sustainable infrastructure and technological innovations, potentially amplifying the asset base of the firm. Over an extended temporal frame, although the incipient phases of carbon trading engagement may exert fiscal pressures, the overarching benefits—characterized by sustainable operational paradigms and attenuated carbon-associated risks—may bolster a firm's market stature and valuation.

6. Conclusion

Carbon trading markets have emerged as a transformative mechanism in the global fight against climate change. These markets provide companies with a tangible means to monetize carbon emissions, thereby introducing a powerful economic incentive to actively reduce carbon output and transition toward sustainable practices. The primary strategies within these markets are the cap-and-trade framework and carbon pricing strategies, both of which profoundly influence the behavior of participating entities.

From a fiscal perspective, engaging in carbon emission trading presents a nuanced scenario for companies. On one hand, it may increase liabilities due to financial outlays required for the procurement of allowances or credits. Simultaneously, it catalyzes investments in sustainable infrastructure and technological innovations, potentially amplifying a company's asset base. Over an extended temporal frame, while the initial phases of carbon trading engagement may exert fiscal pressures, the overarching benefits—characterized by sustainable operational paradigms and reduced carbon-associated risks—may bolster a company's market stature and valuation.

In conclusion, carbon trading markets play a pivotal role in reshaping how companies approach emissions reduction and sustainability. They incentivize innovation, guide industries toward eco-friendly practices, and contribute to a sustainable future. While initial fiscal challenges may arise, the long-term advantages encompass sustainability, operational efficiency, and enhanced competitiveness in a world increasingly focused on environmental responsibility. Carbon markets, with their economic drivers, are integral to the transition toward a more sustainable and greener planet.

Author Contribution

All the authors contributed equally, and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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