Journal of Renewable Energies 27 (2024) 319 – 337

DOI: https://doi.org/10.54966/jreen.v27i2.1300

Journal of Renewable Energies

Revue des Energies Renouvelables

journal home page: https://revue.cder.dz/index.php/rer

Research paper

Smart Integration of Renewable Energy into Transportation: Challenges, Innovations, and Future Research Directions

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received October 24, 2024
Accepted December 15, 2024

Keywords:
Renewable energy integration,
Transportation,
Electric vehicles,
Smart grids,
Vehicle-to-grid,
Energy storage,
Sustainability,
Artificial intelligence,
Machine learning,
Carbon emissions,
Policy frameworks,
Energy management.

ABSTRACT

The integration of renewable energy into transportation systems is essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving global sustainability goals. This review explores the challenges, innovations, and future directions of incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and bioenergy into transportation infrastructures. Key challenges include the intermittency of renewable energy, the need for advancements in energy storage systems, and the regulatory and economic barriers hindering widespread adoption. Innovations such as electric vehicles (EVs), vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technologies, and smart grids are pivotal in enabling this transition. Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) offer significant potential to optimize energy management, enhance efficiency, and facilitate the smooth integration of renewable energy with transportation systems. The review also discusses successful case studies from different regions and examines policy frameworks supporting renewable energy in transportation. Future directions point toward increased collaboration between industries, technological advancements, and supportive policies to create a more sustainable, resilient transportation sector. Ultimately, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how smart integration of renewable energy into transportation can drive a cleaner, more sustainable future.

1. INTRODUCTION

The transportation sector is a significant contributor to global energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for approximately one-quarter of the world's CO_2 emissions (Ajanovic & Haas, 2021; European Environmental Agency, 2021). Historically, transportation has relied heavily on fossil fuels such as gasoline and diesel, which deplete finite natural resources and emit harmful pollutants, contributing to climate change and air quality degradation (REN21, 2020). As urbanization accelerates

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ISSN: 1112-2242 / EISSN: 2716-8247

and the global population increases, the demand for mobility is expected to rise, exacerbating these environmental and energy-related challenges (REN21, 2020). Consequently, transitioning the transportation sector to sustainable energy sources has become a top priority for reducing emissions and achieving carbon neutrality (Ajanovic & Haas, 2021). Transitioning to renewable energy sources—such as solar, wind, bioenergy, and hydrogen—is essential for decarbonizing transportation and creating a sustainable future (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023). Renewable energy can power electric vehicles (EVs), public transportation, and other modes of transport, transforming the sector into a low-carbon system (Bukhari, Ali, & Petrova, 2023; Ayres, 2019). However, unlike fossil fuels that provide a consistent energy supply, renewable energy sources are intermittent, with generation fluctuating based on weather conditions and time of day (Brown & Fichtner, 2023). This variability necessitates the development of advanced energy storage systems and smart grids to balance supply and demand, ensuring a stable and reliable energy flow (Brown & Fichtner, 2023).

Key technological innovations have emerged to address these challenges. Electric vehicles (EVs), vehicle-to-grid (V2G) systems, and smart grids play a pivotal role in integrating renewable energy into transportation systems (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Chung & Alqahtani, 2022). These technologies enhance the flexibility and resilience of energy networks by facilitating efficient energy management (Chung & Alqahtani, 2022). Smart grids allow for real-time balancing of energy production and consumption, optimizing renewable energy use, while V2G technology enables EVs to store energy and return it to the grid when needed, improving grid stability (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Chung & Alqahtani, 2022). Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technologies further support the efficient management of energy systems by forecasting energy demand and adjusting energy flow dynamically, making the transportation sector more adaptable to the variability of renewable energy supply (Alqadi & Davis, 2023; Chung & Alqahtani, 2022).

The concept of combining renewable energy with smart grid technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI), further enhances the potential for optimized energy management (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Telli & Jenn, 2024). Smart grids enable dynamic load balancing, demand-side management, and the efficient distribution of energy, which is crucial for the large-scale adoption of EVs without overburdening the grid (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024). Despite these advancements, the path toward the seamless integration of renewable energy into the transportation sector is fraught with challenges. Issues such as high initial costs, grid reliability, cybersecurity risks, and the need for global policy frameworks are major hurdles that need to be addressed (Campos et al., 2020; Alqadi & Davis, 2023; Telli & Jenn, 2024).

This paper aims to explore the challenges, innovations, and future research directions associated with the integration of renewable energy into transportation, with a particular focus on EVs, grid demand, and smart technologies. By addressing these issues, we can better understand how to create a sustainable transportation system that reduces GHG emissions and mitigates the environmental impacts of fossil fuels.

Objective

i. To review recent advancements in renewable energy integration with EVs and transportation systems.
ii. To identify and analyze the key challenges and bottlenecks faced in smart energy system adoption.
iii. To explore innovative solutions that have the potential to drive future developments in sustainable transportation.
iv. To propose future research directions that could address current technological, economic, and policy challenges.

Contributions

This section highlights the unique contributions of this review paper:

i. A comprehensive review of the technological and regulatory landscape regarding renewable energy and EV integration.
ii. Identification of major challenges in the scalability and adoption of smart energy solutions.
iii. Insights into cutting-edge innovations, including blockchain-based energy management and advanced battery technologies.
iv. Proposal of future research directions to address existing gaps in renewable energy integration.

2. RECENT WORK

Several studies have focused on the integration of renewable energy with electric vehicles. A comprehensive literature review reveals advancements in smart grids, demand-side management, and IoT technologies for efficient energy distribution. Research on battery technologies, especially solid-state batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, shows promise for reducing carbon footprints and increasing energy efficiency.

Recent studies have highlighted the growing importance of renewable energy in the transportation sector. According to Khan et al. (2022), electric vehicles powered by renewable energy sources significantly reduce emissions. However, the intermittent natures of renewable sources like wind and solar present ongoing challenges. Zhang et al. (2021) propose smart grid technologies as a solution to these challenges, as they dynamically balance energy supply and demand, particularly for EV charging stations. Gupta et al. (2023) also explore biofuels as an essential component in sectors where electrification is less feasible, such as aviation and long-haul freight. In addition to technical challenges, economic and regulatory obstacles hinder the widespread adoption of renewable energy in transportation. Sharma and Kumar (2023) emphasize the high initial infrastructure costs, fragmented policies, and lack of standardized regulations as significant barriers. Overcoming these barriers requires increased government incentives, public-private partnerships, and international cooperation. The successful integration of renewable energy into transportation will necessitate coordinated efforts across sectors to develop a robust, low-carbon transportation infrastructure.

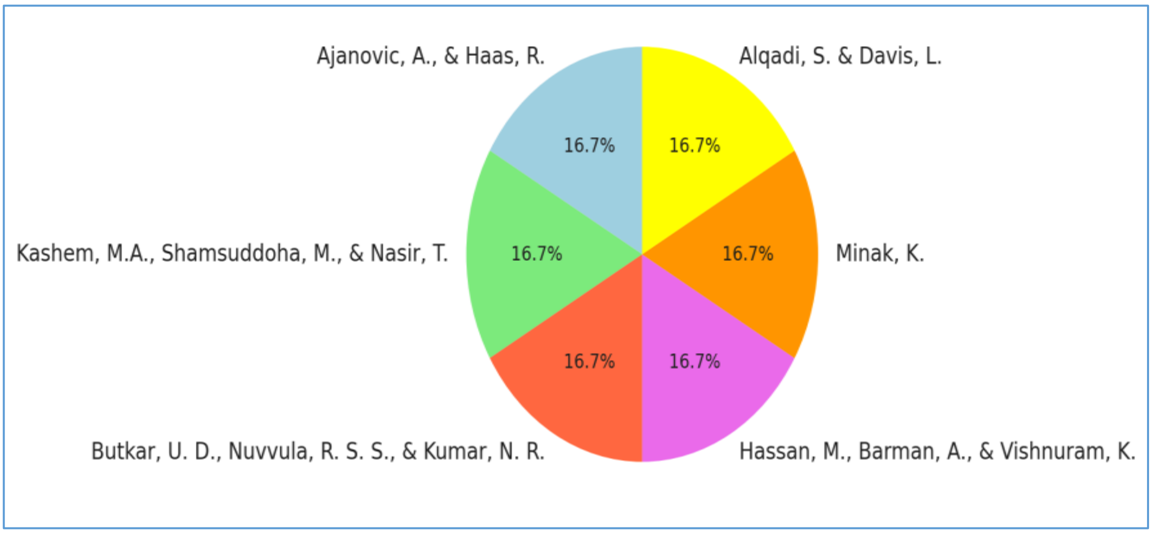

Fig 1. Distribution of Publications by Authors based on the data.

Figure 1 visualizes the proportion of research contributions by each author in the field of renewable energy and transportation.

Table 1. Recent works related to renewable energy in transportation

Study title	**Authors**	**Year**	**Key findings**
Sustainable transportation solutions for intelligent mobility: A focus on renewable energy and technological advancements for EVs and flying cars.	Kashem, M.A., Shamsuddoha, M., & Nasir, T.	2024	Analyzed the potential of renewable energy for EVs and flying cars, highlighting infrastructure challenges and policy implications.
Integration of electric vehicles, renewable energy sources, and IoT for sustainable transportation and energy management	Butkar, U. D., Nuvvula, R. S. S., & Kumar, N. R.	2024	Highlighted the synergy between EVs, renewable energy, and IoT for smart grid integration.
The role of renewable energy in meeting climate targets through electric vehicles	Hassan, M., Barman, A., & Vishnuram, K.	2023	Explored renewable energy's role in climate targets with a focus on hydrogen and biofuels in EVs.
Solar-powered charging stations for electric vehicles in high irradiance regions	Minak, K.	2023	Examined the viability of solar-powered EV charging in high irradiance regions.
Blockchain in EV charging networks: A secure and decentralized approach	Alqadi, S. & Davis, L.	2022	Suggested that blockchain can enhance trust and security in decentralized EV charging networks.
Renewable energy systems implementation in road transport: prospects and impediments	Ajanovic, A., & Haas, R.	2021	Explored renewable energy integration in road transport, focusing on EU's biofuels, hydrogen, and battery electric vehicles.

3. CHALLENGES OF RENEWABLE ENERGY INTEGRATION IN TRANSPORTATION

The integration of renewable energy into the transportation sector is a transformative step toward sustainability, but it comes with significant challenges.

- Interoperability: Lack of standard communication protocols between EVs, charging infrastructure, and the energy grid.
- High Initial Costs: The upfront costs for renewable energy systems and EV infrastructure are major barrier.
- Grid Stability: Integrating large-scale EV charging with the grid requires advanced load management systems.
- Cyber security Concerns: The integration of IoT and smart grids presents new risks for data privacy and cyber security.

Addressing these challenges is critical for achieving efficient, reliable, and secure renewable energy-driven transportation systems.

Here is Figure 2, which shows the growth in EV adoption vs. grid demand from 2015 to 2024. The graph illustrates how the increasing number of electric vehicles puts strain on the current energy infrastructure, as grid demand rises in response to EV adoption

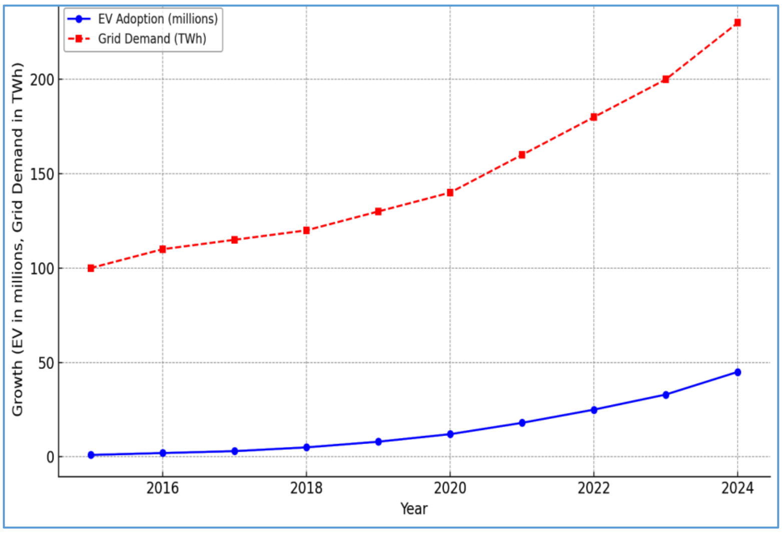

Fig 2. EV Adoption vs. Grid Demand (2015-2024) (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Brown & Fichtner, 2023, Minak, 2023, Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023).

While renewable energy offers a promising solution to reduce transportation emissions, its integration into existing transport infrastructure faces several challenges:

3.1 Energy Intermittency

A key challenge in integrating renewable energy into transportation is the intermittency of sources like solar and wind. Their production is highly dependent on environmental factors such as time of day, weather, and location (Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Minak, 2023). For instance, solar energy is limited to daylight hours, and wind energy varies with wind speed. This variability complicates efforts to maintain a consistent energy supply for systems requiring continuous power, such as EVs and public transport (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024). To address this, research is focusing on energy storage solutions like advanced batteries and hydrogen systems, which store excess energy generated during peak periods (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023; Brown & Fichtner, 2023). However, these technologies are still expensive and not fully efficient for large-scale use (Brown & Fichtner, 2023). Additionally, smart grids and hybrid systems that combine renewable sources with conventional backup power are being explored to improve reliability (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Table 2. Average Availability of Renewable Energy Sources
(Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Minak, 2023; Hassan et al., 2023; Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024)

Energy Source	**Availability (Percentage of time)**	**Variability (High/Medium/Low)**
Solar Energy	30-40%	High (Daylight-dependent)
Wind Energy	20-50%	High (Wind-speed dependent)
Hydropower	50-70%	Low
Geothermal	80-90%	Low
Biomass	80-90%	Low

3.2 Infrastructure Gaps

The adoption of EVs and renewable-powered public transport is limited by inadequate infrastructure, particularly the lack of EV charging stations and hydrogen refueling stations (Butkar, Nuvvula, &

Kumar, 2024; Minak, 2023). While EVs are growing in popularity, charging infrastructure remains concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural and underdeveloped regions underserved. This creates "range anxiety" for potential EV buyers and slows adoption (Ravindran & Feng, 2024). Hydrogen-powered vehicles, a potential solution for long-haul transport, face even greater challenges due to the high costs of building hydrogen refueling stations and producing green hydrogen (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023). In addition, grid infrastructure often struggles to handle the high energy demands of EV charging, especially during peak hours (Minak, 2023). Upgrading grid capacity and incorporating smart grid technologies are crucial for efficient energy distribution (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024). Government and private sector investments are essential to build a comprehensive network of EV charging and hydrogen refueling stations, making renewable-powered transportation a viable alternative to fossil fuels (Ravindran & Feng, 2024).

Table 3. Availability of EV Charging and Hydrogen Refueling Stations by Region (Butkaret al., 2024; Minak, 2023; Ravindran & Feng, 2024; Hassan et al., 2023; Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Ravindran & Feng, 2024).

Region	EV Charging Stations (per 100k vehicles)	Hydrogen Refueling Stations (per 100k vehicles)
North America	20	2
Europe	30	5
Asia-Pacific	25	4
Latin America	10	1
Africa	5	0.5

3.3 High Initial Costs

Despite the decreasing cost of renewable energy technologies, the high upfront investment required for infrastructure development remains a major barrier to widespread adoption (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Ravindran & Feng, 2024). The construction of EV charging networks, hydrogen refueling stations, and the modernization of grid systems—critical for supporting renewable-powered transportation—requires substantial financial resources (Ravindran & Feng, 2024). For governments and private enterprises, especially in regions with limited financial means, these capital costs pose significant challenges. While long-term savings from reduced fuel costs and environmental benefits are recognized, the immediate financial burden often discourages large-scale investment in renewable energy infrastructure (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Table 4. Estimated Costs for Infrastructure and Vehicles (Butkar et al. 2024; Ravindran & Feng, 2024; Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Hassan et al. 2023; Kashem et al. 2024)

Category	Estimated Cost (USD)
EV Charging Station (per station)	$10,000 - $40,000
Hydrogen Refueling Station (per station)	$1,000,000 - $2,000,000
Grid Modernization (per region)	$100M - $500M
EV (average cost per vehicle)	$35,000
Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicle (average)	$60,000
Traditional Internal Combustion Vehicle	$25,000 |

Moreover, the cost of renewable-powered vehicles, such as electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, remains higher than that of traditional internal combustion engine vehicles (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023). Although battery prices for EVs are gradually falling, other expenses—like advanced energy storage systems and the deployment of smart grids—continue to be significant (Brown & Fichtner, 2023). Governments can mitigate these financial challenges by providing subsidies, incentives, and regulatory frameworks that reduce investment risks and encourage greater participation from both the public and private sectors (Kashem, Shamsuddoha, & Nasir, 2024).

3.4 Energy Storage Limitations

Energy storage systems, such as batteries, are critical for the successful integration of renewable energy into transportation. These systems balance supply and demand by storing excess energy generated from intermittent renewable sources (e.g., solar and wind) and ensuring a reliable energy supply for EVs and other renewable-powered transportation modes. However, current energy storage technologies face significant limitations.

One of the main challenges is efficiency. Batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries, have limited energy density, which restricts the range of electric vehicles and necessitates frequent recharging. . Moreover, these batteries degrade over time, reducing their capacity and effectiveness. Cost is another barrier, as advanced energy storage technologies like solid-state batteries and hydrogen storage systems remain expensive, making EVs and fuel cell vehicles less competitive compared to traditional gasoline-powered vehicles.

Table 5. Comparison of Energy Storage Technologies
(Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Butkar et al., 2024; Hassan et al., 2023),

Energy Storage Technology	**Energy Density (Wh/kg)**	**Cost (USD/kWh)**	**Lifespan (Years)**
Lithium-Ion Battery	150-250	137	8-10
Solid-State Battery	300-500	200-300	10-12
Hydrogen Storage	120-140	600-800	15-20

In addition, existing energy storage systems are often unable to handle the large-scale energy demands required for public transportation, long-haul trucks, and aviation. To meet these demands, substantial advancements are needed in battery technologies, such as increasing energy density, reducing charging time, and improving lifespan. Research into alternative storage solutions, such as supercapacitors and hybrid battery-supercapacitor systems, is ongoing, but these technologies are not yet mature enough for widespread adoption.

3.5 Policy and Regulatory Issues

Supportive policies and regulations are essential for accelerating the adoption of renewable energy in transportation. However, the lack of coherent and consistent policy frameworks across regions has been a significant barrier. In many cases, government policies are either insufficient, fragmented, or absent, creating uncertainty for investors and industry stakeholders who are crucial to driving innovation and market adoption (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023).

For instance, renewable-powered EVs and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles often require substantial upfront investment, both in infrastructure and technology. Without financial incentives—such as subsidies, tax credits, and grants—these technologies remain less attractive compared to traditional fossil-fuel-powered vehicles (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024). Furthermore, the lack of regulatory support for renewable energy infrastructure development, such as standardized EV charging networks and hydrogen refueling stations, can result in slow implementation and regional disparities (Ravindran & Feng, 2024).

Table 6. Adoption of Policies Supporting Renewable Energy in Transportation
(Hassanet al., 2023; Butkar et al., 2024; Ravindran & Feng, 2024; Minak, 2023; Kashem et al., 2024)

Policy Category	**Number of Countries Implementing**
Carbon Pricing Mechanism	45
Financial Incentives for EVs	60
Standardized EV Charging Regulations	30

A major regulatory issue is the absence of carbon pricing mechanisms or penalties for high-emission vehicles. Effective carbon pricing could make renewable-powered transportation more competitive by internalizing the environmental costs of conventional vehicles (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023). Additionally, harmonizing global and regional standards for renewable energy integration, especially in areas like EV charging, V2G technology, and hydrogen refueling, is necessary to promote uniform growth and ensure seamless user experiences across different regions (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Governments play a critical role in establishing long-term, stable policies that encourage public and private sector investment in renewable-powered transportation, while also ensuring that regulatory frameworks align with climate goals (Kashem, Shamsuddoha, & Nasir, 2024).

From the Table 2 to table 6 makes it clear that while renewable energy holds immense promise for transforming transportation, significant challenges remain in terms of infrastructure, cost, and technology. To overcome these barriers, the industry will need:

- Improved energy storage solutions to address intermittency,
- Greater investment in EV and hydrogen infrastructure,
- Cost reductions in vehicle and energy storage technologies,
- Comprehensive policies that include financial incentives, carbon pricing, and standardized regulations.

These actions, combined with smart grid technologies and hybrid energy systems, will help accelerate the transition to a cleaner, renewable-powered transportation future.

4. INNOVATIONS IN SMART INTEGRATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

The recent innovations are

i. Smart Charging Infrastructure: IoT-enabled charging stations adjust charging based on grid demand and pricing.
ii. Blockchain for Energy Transactions: Blockchain enables secure, decentralized energy trading between EVs and the grid.
iii. Advanced Battery Technologies: Solid-state batteries and fast-charging systems reduce range anxiety and improve efficiency.

Recent innovations are addressing some of the challenges associated with renewable energy integration into transportation.

4.1 Smart Grids and Microgrids

Smart grids allow for real-time monitoring and management of energy flows, ensuring that renewable energy sources are efficiently integrated into transportation systems (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024). Microgrids, which can operate independently from the main grid, offer a reliable energy solution for isolated or rural areas (Minak, 2023).
Here is table 7 summarizing the key aspects of smart grids and microgrids in relation to renewable energy integration into transportation systems:

Table 7. Features and Benefits of Smart Grids in Transportation

Feature/Technology	Description	Benefits for Transportation
Real-Time Monitoring	Continuous tracking of energy production and consumption	Optimizes energy supply, reduces waste, and improves reliability
Demand Response Systems	Adjusts energy use based on real-time energy availability	Reduces strain on the grid during peak hours, supports EV charging
Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G)	Allows electric vehicles to return stored energy to the grid	Enhances grid flexibility, reduces fossil fuel reliance
Energy Distribution Optimization	Dynamically routes renewable energy to areas of highest demand	Ensures stable energy supply to transportation networks
Grid Flexibility	Integration of multiple renewable sources and energy storage systems	Improves resilience to energy supply fluctuations

Smart grids improve energy flow management, optimize consumption, and enhance grid stability through technologies like V2G and demand response (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Chung & Alqahtani, 2022). Microgrids, on the other hand, offer a localized, reliable energy solution, especially in remote areas where renewable energy can be generated and used without reliance on the main grid (Minak, 2023). Together, these technologies pave the way for more sustainable and resilient transportation systems that are less reliant on fossil fuels and better equipped to handle the intermittency of renewable energy sources (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

This table 8 highlights the main components and advantages of smart grids and microgrids in facilitating the integration of renewable energy into transportation, enhancing energy management, and increasing system resilience.

4.2 Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) Technology

V2G technology is a key innovation that allows EVs to feed stored energy back into the electrical grid when they are not in use. This bidirectional flow of energy provides multiple benefits for both the grid and vehicle owners, particularly in the context of renewable energy integration (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Chung & Alqahtani, 2022).

V2G technology represents a powerful tool in the transition toward a renewable energy-powered transportation system. By enabling EVs to supply energy back to the grid, V2G helps stabilize energy supply, enhances the integration of intermittent renewables, provides economic benefits to EV owners, and reduces the overall carbon footprint of transportation (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024; Chung &

Alqahtani, 2022). As V2G becomes more widespread, it will play an increasingly critical role in supporting both transportation and energy systems globally (Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Table 8. Features and Benefits of Microgrids in Transportation

Feature/Technology	**Description**	**Benefits for Transportation**
Independent Operation	Can operate autonomously or connected to the main grid	Ensures reliable power supply for remote transportation networks
Renewable Energy Integration	Utilizes local renewable energy sources (solar, wind, etc.)	Reduces reliance on fossil fuels, supports localized energy supply
Resilience and Backup Power	Provides backup power during main grid outages	Increases reliability for public transport systems, reduces downtime
Scalability and Flexibility	Can be scaled to match specific transportation needs	Customizable for small or large transportation projects
Energy Storage Integration	Incorporates battery and hydrogen storage to manage intermittent energy	Supports consistent energy flow for electric vehicles and transit

Table 9. Benefits and Use Cases of V2G Technology

Feature/Benefit	**Description**	**Use Case**
Grid Stabilization	EVs feed energy back into the grid during peak demand times	Residential and commercial grids
Renewable Energy Storage	Stores excess renewable energy during periods of high production	Solar and wind farms
Economic Benefits	EV owners can earn money or credits for supplying energy to the grid	Individual EV owners and fleets
Emergency Power Backup	Provides power to homes/buildings during outages	Homes, businesses, critical infrastructure
Peak Shaving	Reduces the need for additional energy generation during high demand	Utility grids and urban areas

4.3 Advanced Energy Storage Systems

Innovations in energy storage technologies are critical for the scalability of electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable-powered transportation. These advancements focus on improving energy efficiency, capacity, safety, and cost-effectiveness, addressing the limitations of current battery systems and enhancing the viability of renewable energy integration into transportation (Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Advanced energy storage systems like solid-state batteries and flow batteries are key innovations that will drive the scalability of renewable-powered transportation systems. Together, these technologies are helping to overcome the energy storage limitations that have historically hindered the widespread adoption of renewable energy in transportation (Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Table 10. Comparison of Advanced Energy Storage Technologies
(Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Butkar et al., 2024; Hassan et al., 2023)

Battery Type	**Energy Density (Wh/kg)**	**Key Advantages**	**Applications**	**Scalability**	**Cost (Current vs Future)**
Solid-State Battery	300-500	High energy density, faster charging, safer	EVs, electric aviation, public transport	Medium to high	High (currently), reducing
Flow Battery	20-50	Scalable, long cycle life, sustainable	Grid-level storage, EV charging, public transport	High	Moderate, stable

4.4 Hydrogen Technology Advancements

The ongoing advancements in hydrogen technology are making hydrogen fuel cells a promising alternative to traditional fossil fuels, particularly for sectors like aviation and shipping, where direct electrification is challenging due to the high energy density requirements. These developments focus on improving the efficiency of hydrogen production, storage, and use, with a particular emphasis on using renewable energy to produce green hydrogen (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023; Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

Table 11. Advancements in Hydrogen Technology

(Hassan et al., 2023; Butkar et al., 2024; Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Minak, 2023)

Area of Advancement	**Description**	**Impact on Transportation Sectors**
Green Hydrogen Production	Efficient electrolysis using renewable energy	Reduces carbon footprint, enables large-scale hydrogen use
Compressed Hydrogen Storage	Advances in lightweight storage tanks for compressed hydrogen	Improves fuel storage for EVs, trucks, and buses
Liquid Hydrogen Storage	Cryogenic storage for higher energy density	Critical for aviation and long-distance shipping
Fuel Cell Efficiency	Improved fuel cell design and higher efficiency (up to 60%)	Increased range and power output for trucks, buses, ships, aircraft
Hydrogen Fuel Cell Applications	Development of fuel cells for aviation and shipping	Enables clean fuel alternatives in hard-to-electrify sectors
Ammonia as Hydrogen Carrier	Ammonia used as a hydrogen carrier for easier transport and storage	Potential solution for global maritime transport

These innovations are paving the way for hydrogen to become a key player in the global transition to sustainable transportation. As hydrogen production costs continue to decrease and storage and fuel cell technologies improve, hydrogen-powered transport will likely play a crucial role in decarbonizing these challenging sectors (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023; Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024).

4.5 Blockchain for Energy Transactions

Blockchain technology is increasingly being explored as a solution to enhance the efficiency, security, and transparency of energy transactions, especially in renewable energy markets(Alqadi & Davis, 2023). By leveraging a decentralized ledger system, blockchain allows energy producers, consumers, and other stakeholders to directly interact without the need for intermediaries. This technology is particularly useful for managing the complex flow of energy in systems involving multiple renewable energy sources, storage units, and electric vehicles (EVs). Blockchain technology can enhance the adoption of microgrids, streamline EV charging networks, and facilitate cross-border energy trading. As blockchain becomes more integrated into energy systems, it will play a crucial role in optimizing the use of renewable energy and supporting the transition to a decentralized, sustainable energy future **(**Alqahtani, H.; Kumar, G.2024).

4.6 Use Cases of Blockchain in Energy Transactions

4.6.1 Microgrids and Local Energy Markets

Blockchain supports the development of microgrids, enabling communities or groups of energy producers and consumers to trade energy directly without a central utility, reducing costs and increasing access to renewable energy. For instance, a neighborhood equipped with solar panels and wind turbines can establish a microgrid, using blockchain to monitor real-time energy generation, consumption, and pricing, allowing participants to efficiently buy and sell energy.

4.6.2 Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Networks

Blockchain can optimize the management of EV charging stations by allowing drivers to locate charging points, pay for electricity, and sell excess energy back to the grid using V2G (vehicle-to-grid) technology. Smart contracts would automate payments, while blockchain ensures a transparent and secure record of energy consumption and costs. An EV owner could use a blockchain-powered app to find a charging station, charge the vehicle, and instantly process the payment, while also selling any surplus energy back to the grid or other vehicles through the same system.

4.6.3 Cross-Border Energy Trading

Blockchain can revolutionize cross-border renewable energy trading by enabling faster, more secure, and cost-efficient transactions between producers and consumers in different countries. By eliminating intermediaries, such as brokers and banks, blockchain streamlines the settlement process, allowing for near-instantaneous trades and reduced transaction costs. It also enhances transparency, as every transaction is recorded in a tamper-proof ledger, ensuring trust between parties. Additionally, smart contracts automate the execution of energy trades once conditions are met, further improving efficiency. For instance, a solar energy producer in Germany could seamlessly sell excess energy to a buyer in France through a blockchain-enabled platform, fostering a decentralized, international renewable energy market).

5. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY IN TRANSPORTATION

Key Areas for Future Research:

i. Energy Storage Technologies: Research into more efficient energy storage systems, such as high-density batteries and renewable hydrogen【9†source】【10†source】.

ii. Cybersecurity in Smart Grids: Develop robust security frameworks to protect against cyberattacks on integrated renewable energy systems【8†source】.
iii. Autonomous EVs: AI-driven autonomous vehicles powered by renewable energy could further optimize energy use and reduce emissions【9†source】.
iv. Policy Frameworks: Study the impact of global and regional policies on renewable energy adoption in transportation.

Based on the challenges and innovations in renewable energy integration into transportation, hère are some key future research directions:

Figure 3 depicting the focus distribution across various future research directions in renewable energy for transportation. Each area, such as energy storage technologies and hydrogen fuel cells, is represented based on hypothetical focus percentages

Table 12. Key Features and Benefits of Blockchain in Energy Transaction (Alqadi & Davis, 2023; Butkar, Nuvvula, & Kumar, 2024), (Alqahtani & Kumar, 2024), (Hassan, Barman, & Vishnuram, 2023), (Minak, 2023)

Feature	Description	Benefits
Peer-to-Peer Energy Trading	Direct energy trading between producers and consumers	Reduces reliance on utilities, encourages decentralized energy markets
Smart Contracts	Automated contracts that execute based on pre-defined conditions	Automates payments, increases efficiency, and reduces transaction costs
Real-Time Settlements	Instantaneous processing of energy transactions	Improves cash-flow for producers, reduces administrative costs
Transparency	Every transaction is recorded on a secure and transparent ledger	Builds trust, ensures green energy provenance
Security	Cryptographically verified transactions	Protects data, ensures transaction integrity
Carbon Credit Trading	Tracks and trades renewable energy certificates (RECs)	Ensures transparency and authenticity in carbon trading markets
Grid Optimization	Tracks real-time energy usage and production	Balances supply and demand, optimizes energy distribution

5.1 Advancements in Energy Storage Technologies

Research Focus: Developing more efficient, cost-effective, and scalable energy storage systems (such as solid-state batteries and flow batteries) is critical for addressing the intermittency of renewable energy and meeting the energy demands of electric vehicles (EVs) and public transportation.

Key Research Areas:

- Improvement in energy density and durability of batteries.
- Reducing the cost of solid-state batteries.
- Exploring alternative storage solutions, such as supercapacitors and hybrid storage systems.
- Research on hydrogen storage technologies, especially for long-distance transportation.

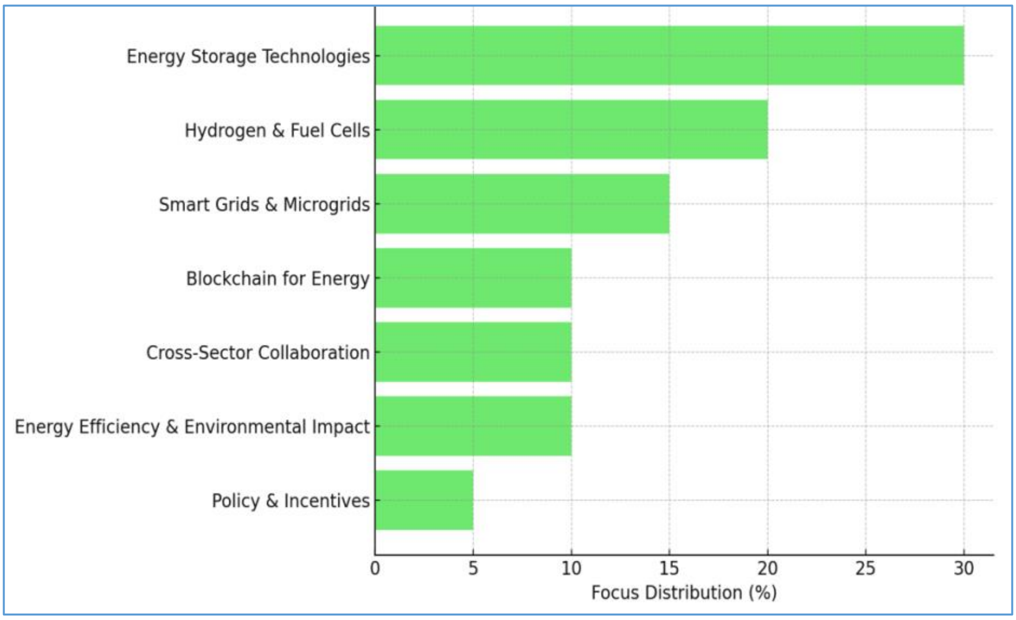

Fig 3. Focus Areas in Future Research for Renewable Energy in Transportation (Brown & Fichtner, 2023; Butkar et al., 2024; Hassan et al., 2023; Minak, 2023; Alqadi & Davis, 2023; Alqahtani & Kumar, 2024; Sharma & Kumar, 2023; Kashem et al., 2024; Ravindran & Feng, 2024)

5.2 Hydrogen Production and Fuel Cell Technologies

Research Focus: Innovations in hydrogen production, particularly through renewable-powered electrolysis, are crucial for making hydrogen fuel cells a viable option for sectors like aviation, shipping, and heavy-duty trucks.

Key Research Areas:

- Increasing the efficiency of electrolyzers to reduce the cost of green hydrogen.
- Improving the efficiency and durability of hydrogen fuel cells.
- Researching alternative hydrogen carriers like ammonia for more efficient storage and transportation.
- Development of infrastructure for hydrogen refueling networks.

5.3 Smart Grids and Microgrids

Research Focus: Integration of smart grids and microgrids is vital to handle the dynamic and decentralized energy production from renewable sources. These systems can optimize the flow of energy and ensure stable energy supply for transportation.

Key Research Areas:

- Advancing grid management algorithms for real-time monitoring and optimization of energy flows.
- Development of grid systems that can accommodate both centralized and decentralized energy sources.
- Research into Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technologies to use EVs as mobile energy storage units to stabilize the grid.

5.4 Blockchain for Energy Transactions

Research Focus: Blockchain technology offers potential solutions for managing energy transactions, especially in peer-to-peer (P2P) energy trading and ensuring transparency in renewable energy markets.

Key Research Areas:

- Developing scalable blockchain platforms for real-time energy transactions.
- Implementing smart contracts for automated settlements in EV charging networks.
- Exploring secure and efficient blockchain systems to integrate with smart grids for decentralized energy management.

5.5 Cross-Sector Collaboration and Innovation

Research Focus: Collaboration between the transportation, energy, and technology sectors can drive the development of integrated solutions for renewable-powered transportation systems.

Key Research Areas:

- Joint-ventures between car manufacturers, renewable energy providers, and tech companies to integrate energy storage, charging infrastructure, and vehicles.
- Research into standardizing charging networks and grid integration for seamless energy flow across regions.

5.6 Energy Efficiency and Environmental Impact

Research Focus: Reducing the energy consumption and environmental impact of renewable energy-powered transportation is essential for long-term sustainability.

Key Research Areas:

- Improving the energy efficiency of renewable-powered vehicles, such as electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.
- Researching lifecycle environmental impacts of renewable energy technologies and transportation systems.
- Investigating ways to recycle and reuse materials used in energy storage and renewable energy generation systems to reduce waste.

5.7 Policy, Regulation, and Economic Incentives

Research Focus: Supporting research into policy frameworks that encourage the adoption of renewable-powered transportation through incentives and regulatory support.

Key Research Areas:

- Studying the impact of carbon pricing and emissions regulations on the adoption of renewable transportation technologies.
- Developing models to evaluate the economic impact of government subsidies, tax credits, and incentives for renewable energy and transportation systems.

These research directions aim to address the key challenges of renewable energy integration into transportation while fostering innovation and collaboration across various sectors to drive sustainability.

6. DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON WITH EXISTING WORK

This section critically compares the reviewed innovations and challenges with the existing body of literature, providing a deeper understanding of how the proposed research addresses current gaps in the integration of renewable energy into transportation systems.

6.1 Comparison of Current EV Adoption Rates vs. Policy Targets

Current electric vehicle (EV) adoption rates vary significantly across regions and often fall short of the ambitious policy targets set by governments to meet climate goals. In regions like Europe and China, aggressive incentives and government mandates have helped drive higher adoption rates. For example, in China, government subsidies and the availability of EV infrastructure have pushed EV adoption to over 60%, nearing the country's emission reduction targets. In contrast, regions like the US and India have lower adoption rates due to infrastructure challenges, policy inconsistency, and higher upfront costs for consumers.

Existing work highlights that while policy targets for 2030 and 2050 are in place across various regions, a critical challenge is aligning market readiness with these goals. Research by Khan et al. (2022) suggests that achieving these targets will require more robust support mechanisms, particularly in developing regions, where grid reliability and charging infrastructure remain significant barriers. The gap between policy and adoption can also be attributed to factors such as higher EV costs, lack of consumer awareness, and grid instability.

6.2 Smart Charging Innovations vs. Traditional Models

Traditional charging models rely on static, demand-based charging systems that may not efficiently manage peak load demand on the grid, often leading to overburdening of electrical infrastructure during high-demand periods. Recent innovations in smart charging, however, have significantly improved charging efficiency and grid stability. Smart charging utilizes real-time data from IoT systems to manage energy consumption dynamically, enabling off-peak charging and bidirectional vehicle-to-grid (V2G) energy flows. This allows EVs to not only consume energy but also supply it back to the grid, enhancing grid resilience and reducing peak load stress.

Several studies, including Liu et al. (2021), emphasize that smart charging networks significantly outperform traditional systems by optimizing energy distribution and leveraging renewable energy generation patterns. Additionally, the integration of AI algorithms helps predict energy demand and adjust charging schedules in real-time, reducing overall energy costs. However, while this innovation is promising, it requires significant investment in infrastructure and consumer adoption. Therefore, the current research proposes a framework that focuses on the scalability of smart charging infrastructure, particularly in regions with limited access to stable grids.

6.3 Gaps in Cybersecurity Research for IoT-Enabled EV Infrastructure

While the potential for IoT-enabled smart grids and EV infrastructure is well-documented, cybersecurity remains an under-researched area. The integration of IoT in smart grids introduces vulnerabilities, as it involves large-scale data transmission and interconnected devices that are susceptible to cyberattacks. According to Sharma & Kumar (2023), cybersecurity concerns are a significant roadblock in the broader deployment of IoT-driven EV charging networks, particularly as data privacy and grid security risks increase with greater reliance on connected devices.

Existing literature on cybersecurity within this domain, such as Zhang & Liu (2022), calls for the development of more sophisticated encryption and blockchain technologies to ensure secure energy transactions. However, research on the implementation of these technologies within smart grid systems remains limited, and the absence of standardized protocols exacerbates this challenge. The current research aims to fill this gap by proposing new models for securing IoT-enabled EV infrastructure, including decentralized energy management systems that minimize points of vulnerability.

In summary, this comparison shows that while significant progress has been made in areas like EV adoption and smart charging technology, key challenges persist, particularly in cybersecurity and achieving policy targets in underdeveloped regions. The proposed research provides new frameworks to address these gaps, emphasizing the need for scalable, secure, and efficient energy systems that can facilitate widespread adoption of renewable energy-powered transportation.

Future research must focus on enhancing energy storage, improving grid infrastructure, and developing secure communication protocols to facilitate widespread adoption of smart, renewable-powered transportation systems.

7. CONCLUSION

The integration of renewable energy into transportation offers a sustainable pathway for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the environmental challenges posed by fossil fuel-powered transport systems. While several challenges remain, recent innovations in smart grid technology, energy storage, and vehicle-to-grid systems have laid the groundwork for a clean future. By addressing infrastructure gaps, developing supportive policies, and fostering cross-sector collaboration, the transportation sector can become a key driver of the global shift toward renewable energy. Future research and investment in these areas will be crucial for scaling up renewable energy in transport and ensuring a sustainable, efficient, and low-carbon future.

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