

An Analysis of the Article in Corporate Environmental Policy Statements in Mainland China: To
What Extent Do They Conform to ISO 14000 Documentation?

Journal Article Review

In the abstract section of the book *Corporate Environmental Policy Statements in Mainland China: To What Extent Do They Conform to ISO 14000 Documentation?*, the authors briefly describe and explain the decision of local authorities to promote mechanisms that incorporate environmental concerns into the internal management of enterprises in the country.

China, being one of the biggest industrial giants of the world, is presently encountering problems with regards to the proper disposal of its wastes and policies in the prevention of pollution. Devoted to changing China's present state, the people have finally decided to take effective action to alter the seemingly hopeless fate of the environment which they have neglected. This can be observed in the rapid adoption of the ISO14000 standards, also taking into account the significant increase in ISO14001 registrations in China.

The study conducted by Chung, Fryxell and Carlos (2005) examined the environmental policy statements of 106 certified facilities in mainland China against a strict interpretation of the mandatory requirements of the ISO 14001:1996 standard and the nonmandatory ISO14004 requirements in order to effectively explain and understand concepts regarding the implementation of environmental management systems in an emerging economic giant. The authors decided to analyze the environmental policy statement because it is the core element in the ISO system of environmental management of each facility and there are relatively clear and

specific requirements on what a policy statement must include. An analysis of the environmental policy statements and their contents show that conformance to the relevant requirements of both the mandatory ISO14001 standard and the nonmandatory ISO14004 standard is not exactly exemplary and that the facilities in their sample seldom went beyond the what was expected as requirements. Through the use of ISO14001 and ISO14004 conformance scores as dependent variables, the authors found that conformity to ISO14001 and overall conformance to ISO14000 series can be somehow explained by the degree of the commitment of the top management, the experience with informal environmental management systems, and the form of ownership of the facilities (Springerlink, 2005).

Comprehending the article, one can say that the organizations in China do not exert effort at attaining an excellent form when it comes to their environmental management system. They merely make sure that their EMS qualifies and is certified. Afterwards, they do not modify it to fit its genuine purpose to protect the people, save the environment, and participate in the world's trend of social responsibility works.

Goetsch & Davis () write that *“satisfying ISO 14001 and applicable regulatory requirements may be sufficient for initial registration, but to maintain registration the organization will have to demonstrate that it is continually improving environmental performance.”* In the case of China, the organizations are already contented with the fact that their EMSs are registered. The environment and the present condition of the other things that EMSs aim to protect regularly change. This allows us to believe that the EMS of an organization must be sustainable and continually evolving. However, with the way the organizations behave, achieving this goal is quite impossible. The qualification and certification of an EMS does not assure that it can be as

effective and appropriate in the near future, with the fact that needs and demands change, and that they have no interest in modifying their design.

If I were to start improving the present registration/certification procedures in China, I would most likely begin in the certifying agency/regulatory body. To assure the sustainability of all EMSs that have been registered, an alteration of the procedures of the body is appropriate. A regular updating or checking of EMSs may require much effort and time, but the purpose will be satisfied. A regular checking can also help organizations in what are the needed modifications that they can adjust in their present designs for the near future, which would simultaneously help in maintaining the standard of the system.

WORKS CITED

- Chung, S., Fryxell, G., & Carlos, W. (2005). Corporate environmental management policy statements in Mainland China : to what extent do they conform to ISO 14000 documentation? *Environmental Management*, 35(4), 468-482.
- Goetsch & Davis ()
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