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Evaluation of Italian Companies' Perception about ISO 14001 and Eco Management and Audit Scheme III: Motivations, Benefits and Barriers

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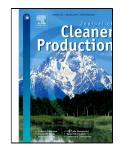
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Federica Murmura*, Lolita Liberatore**, Laura Bravi*, Nicola Casolani**

Abstract

In recent decades the adoption of Environmental Management Systems, as frameworks for integrating corporate environmental protection policies and programs, started to become a growing practice among both domestic and multinational companies around the world. Therefore this research wants to present the results of an empirical survey carried out among Italian companies which are certified with the Environmental Management System ISO 14001 and the European Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). The aim is to identify the type of companies that have implemented an EMS standard, to examine the motivations that have prompted them to introduce it, to state the benefits and barriers perceived and to evaluate differences and similarities between these two systems. The research was carried out through a questionnaire proposed to 1657 certified organizations and 190 companies participated. The Analysis of Variance; chi-test (χ2 test) and Pearson's correlation were used to analyze the items of motivations, benefits and barriers. The results of the survey show that EMAS certification seems to be strictly correlated to ISO 14001; in fact the majority of companies which operate in International markets have both standards; moreover companies of larger size opened up primarily to certification compared to those of smaller size and are prompted to certification for different reasons. Time also is a relevant discriminating factor. As for the analysis of perceived benefits and barriers, this showed an important relation of similarity between ISO 14001 and EMAS. The research gave the contribution on how to manage effectively the firm attention to environmental issues.

Keywords: ISO 14001; EMAS; Environmental Management Systems; Quality; Environment.

1. Introduction

In the early seventies, because of the sudden oil crisis the theme of sustainability has gained high social importance. The Institute of Supply Management (ISM) defines sustainability as "the Triple Bottom Line – the integration of social, environmental, and economic objectives" (ISM, 2008). As for environmental sustainability, the first steps were made in the 1970s, when in Europe state and regional programs, laws on air and water pollution protection, waste disposal and protection of nature were approved. In these years both in Britain (1972) and Germany (1976), a comprehensive legislation on protected natural areas, had been developed. Even in Italy it can be seen the signs of this growing sensitivity in 1975, when for the first time the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Environment was established and an year later the Merli law on the regulation of water discharges was implemented, while in 1979 the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Environment (CIPA) was

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