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Factors impacting on cleaner production: case studies of Chinese pharmaceutical manufacturers in Tianjin, China

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Abstract

The literature contains a number of studies exploring factors impacting on cleaner production, but few studying these factors simultaneously. This study has identified these factors in the literature and represented their relationships with cleaner production in a conceptual framework. The key factors included in this framework are ISO14001 certification, eco-innovation of product and process, industrial and government regulations, and environmentally-friendly culture. Nine major Chinese pharmaceutical companies in Tianjin, China, have been used as case study companies to explore the impact of these key factors on cleaner production. The analysis reveals that companies that have ISO14001 certification are likely to be one step ahead; however ISO14001 certification is not the only factor leading these manufacturing companies to be active in cleaner production. It is green process innovation rather than product innovation that directly impacts on cleaner production. The environmentally-friendly culture significantly influences the promotion of cleaner production. It is concluded that the industry needs to promote process-oriented innovations and build environmentally-friendly culture in order to be more active in cleaner production in the long-run. This paper provides case-based insight for cleaner production and environmental sustainability researchers and the strategic direction for manufacturing companies to achieve cleaner production and environmental sustainability.

Keywords

Cleaner production, Process innovation, ISO14001, Environmentally-friendly culture

Highlights:

1. The study explores key factors impacting on cleaner production.
2. Process innovation impacts cleaner production more profoundly than product innovation.
3. ISO14001 certified companies are one step ahead in cleaner production.
4. ISO14001 is not the only way for companies to be active in cleaner production.
5. An environmentally-friendly culture promotes cleaner production.

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