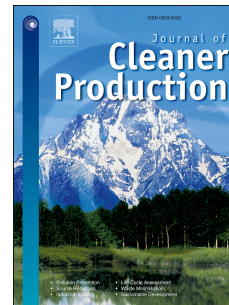


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An exploratory study of UK companies' taxonomy based on environmental drivers

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Abstract

The rise in customers' and society's environmental awareness has pushed companies to improve their environmental management. Nevertheless, there are still many companies that are reluctant to go beyond the legal requirements, towards a more ambitious environmental framework. This research focuses on the drivers that encourage firms to improve their environmental management. As the importance of these drivers might be different depending on the maturity stage in which the company is, this study proposes a classification of companies that specifies which drivers are more important in each of these groups. None of the previous environmental management studies in the literature has been based on this relationship. The data for the study are obtained from an online survey conducted among UK companies. Firstly, factor analysis is used to find the interrelation among the different drivers proposed in the literature, obtaining three groups of factors. Secondly, Cluster Analysis is adopted to have a classification of the different UK companies according to the three factors. Finally, the most compact and coherent clustering solution is analyzed from the perspective of maturity stages leading to a final classification of companies focused on the identified factors. Globally, lower maturity stages are associated with a strong focus on formal requirements, while higher maturity stages are associated with an intense focus on internal improvement. This classification will allow practitioners and policy makers to better focus on specific drivers and help companies move forward according to their maturity stage. A roadmap for improving environmental performance somehow emerges, providing a good framework for decision support.

Keywords environmental management, maturity stage, environmental driver, taxonomy, factor analysis, cluster analysis

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