Cleaner Production with Emphasis on Environmental Sustainability and Organizational Performance: An Empirical Study in Southern Brazil


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Abstract

As a result of globalization and breakneck industrial development, concerns about pollution and the environment encompass a global level. However, environmental degradation can undermine an entire local ecosystem, and some negative impacts may also be felt in different biomass. Accordingly, organizations can minimize the environmental impact by making use of environmental practices, such as methodologies on Cleaner Production (CP). Cleaner Production refers to actions that allow a company to qualify itself as an efficient user of raw materials and energy during the production process, aiming to increase productivity and consequently, to increase competitiveness and improve organizational performance. The Automotive Metal-Mechanic Cluster (AMMC) of Serra Gaúcha, Brazil, is seen as an important industrial Pole in Brazil, due to its high concentration of spare parts, agricultural machinery and transport vehicles production companies. The AMMC is currently the second largest cluster of its kind in Brazil. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between CP, environmental sustainability and organizational performance, in 298 companies of the Serra Gaúcha Cluster. In this regard, a survey was realized and Structural Equation Modeling(SEM) was implemented for data analysis. The results show that companies the AMMC in the Serra Gaúcha seek alternative processes to reduce costs and contribute to the company’s image for their customers. Moreover, practices related to environmental sustainability, such as CP are often used among Metal-Mechanic Companies. It was also observed that CP practices influences environmental sustainability, as well as organizational performance, showing that the CP methodologies contribute to increase production capacity and flexibility, and improving aspects of health and safety. It is evident the contribution of CP for the performance and competitiveness of organizations. It is worth noting that companies in the Serra Gaúcha tend to work committed to environmental sustainability welfare workers, society and the environment, while still moving up by coercive and normative pressures.

Key-words: cleaner production, environmental sustainability, organizational performance, Brazilian metal-mechanic industry.