

OECD Conference on Public Environmental Policy and The Private Firm

Comments on Survey & Methodology

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Valuable Research

- Important topic
- Large, diverse facility-level sample
- Multiple countries
- Wide range of information
- Broad research team

Sample Composition

- Variation in response rates (low in US, France)
- Low and high-pollution industries
- Japan – smaller, less polluting plants
 - 55% uninspected, 65% not stringent
- US – bigger, more polluting plants
 - 5% uninspected, 5% not stringent
- So care needed in cross-country comparisons

Qualitative Information

- Broader applicability, better response rate
- Can ask about perceptions and motivations
- But harder to quantify effects
 - ‘implement EMS’ (vs. specific practices)
 - ‘potential negative env. impact’ (vs. tons emitted)
 - ‘concrete actions’ to reduce ... (vs. dollars invested)
 - ‘change (last 3 yrs) in env. impacts’ (vs. emissions)
- Benchmark? (#inspections, industry-level data)

Endogeneity, Causality

- Policy stringency+inspections=>adopt EMS
 - or small+clean= not stringent+no EMS
- Env. Accounting => facility-level R&D
 - firm-level R&D labs, little facility level R&D?
- Env. Performance=>Financial Performance
 - or more profitable have money to take action
- End-of-Pipe vs. Change-in-Process ‘choice’
 - or small+clean => more CIP (not facing CaC reg?)

Recap

- Valuable dataset, interesting research
- Sample composition – control for size+industry
- Strengths/weaknesses of qualitative data
- Anchor to quantitative data (where possible)
- Causality or Correlation? (cautious conclusions)