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Anne Toppinen, Heimo Karppinen & Kati Kleemola (eds.)

Using SA8000 criteria as a tool to understand employee sentiments on corporate responsibility: case of Chinese manufacturing SMEs

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Increasingly complex social and labor issues are becoming a major concern affecting Chinese companies in their pursuit of a growth and profitability. While disciplinary research has delved into basic facets of job satisfaction, less attention has been given to tackling the applicability of influential international corporate responsibility benchmarking initiatives. Using Social Accountability SA8000 standard as a tool, our study aimed to explore the facets of employee perceptions of their organization's ethical behavior through a survey of 835 employees from twenty export processing and labor-intensive private manufacturing SMEs in the Pearl River Delta of China. Results of our semi-confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the SA8000 standard is able to capture some core dimensions of employee sentiments towards their employer's ethical behavior. Based on the applicability of a four-dimensional measurement scale, including employee benefits and welfare, discrimination, work health and safety, and corporate governance, our results build ground for further examination of business ethics and employee job satisfaction in manufacturing companies.

Keywords: Social Accountability 8000, job satisfaction, business ethics, semi-confirmatory factor analysis, China,