Round 1
Reviewer 1
Please include any specific comments for the author concerning his/her manuscript. These comments will be sent to the author. Please use as much space as necessary. Please be as constructive as possible and include clear and specific suggestions stating which aspects of the manuscript must/should be improved, and your rationale.
1. - 2.
- The Introduction is well written, however it should contain a more clear summary of the outcomes of the exercise.
- The multi-level governance system of environmental regulations in China could be explained with 3-4 sentences
- The literature review regarding similar studies in China and elsewhere is very small. The authors should reconsider this section and highlight the key messages from similar empirical studies
- The paper would benefit from a review of the effect of environmental regulations in SOEs in particular
3.
- The quality of the graphs is subpar. The unit in Figure 1 should be clarified: is it ton of CO2 equivalents?
4.
- A general comment, crucial in my opinion: The structure of the results section needs heavy revision. The way the responses are presented is not informative to the reader. The authors should consider organizing the main outcomes in the form of tables and graphs, in a manner where the reader can easily find the key takeaways. The section is somewhat confusing in its current structure
5.
- The concluding section should tilt towards policy recommendations based on the specific results and not so much towards references (they should be included in another section)

Reviewer 2
The manuscript explores the impact of multi-level environmental regulations on the performance of a state-owned enterprise (SOE) in the petrochemical industry, specifically focusing on SINOPEC Yangzi Petrochemical Company (SYPC) in China. The study begins by discussing contrasting perspectives on the influence of environmental regulations on firm productivity, with the Porter
Hypothesis proposing that regulations can drive technological innovation and enhance economic performance. Given China's significant industrial footprint and stringent environmental regulations, the paper aims to contribute to the under-researched area of multi-level perspectives on the subject. Through document analysis and semi-structured interviews with SYPC staff, the study reveals that environmental regulations from central and local governments and SINOPEC headquarters have distinct yet interconnected effects on SYPC's technological innovation and economic performance. The 'weak' version of the Porter Hypothesis is validated, showing that stringent regulations encourage technological innovation. The central government provides guiding concepts, while local laws offer detailed standards and implementation plans, fostering innovation in response to stricter local standards and potential supervision and punishment. Additionally, the study sheds light on how a state-owned enterprise like SYPC actively implements environmental policies while strategically circumventing specific regulations as part of SINOPEC's overall strategy.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to the discussion on the impact of environmental regulations on state-owned enterprises. While existing literature often suggests preferential treatment for SOEs due to government relations, the case of SYPC demonstrates a more nuanced reality where the company actively complies with environmental policies while strategically navigating regulations. The manuscript concludes by emphasizing the implications for ecological policy-making, highlighting the central government's role in shaping rules at various levels and suggesting avenues for future research on different types of regulations and firms in diverse contexts.

Overall, the abstract is a good representation of the overall plan and shows the main aspects of the work. The introduction has a proper structure; it states the research problem, briefly describes the history and explains the current situation; the study's contributions, how to handle the research problem and the case study are also mentioned. The background of the research has been examined in a structured way, and the situation in China is also well depicted. Various aspects of the subject have been discussed in detail in the study. Finally, the results of this study are well described.

My comments are as follows:
1- The text contains several grammatical errors that require correction.
2- To provide a comprehensive analysis, the authors are to include information about other factors that have been previously studied and their impact on the firm's performance. It is also necessary to explain the significance of environmental regulations over other factors. The following resources can be utilized to achieve this purpose.

https://www.acadlore.com/article/JOSA/2023_1_3/josa010305
https://www.acadlore.com/article/JOSA/2023_1_1/josa010104
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11846-021-00506-4
Reviewer 3
The Influences of Multi-Level Environmental Regulations on Firm Performance in China ECONJOURNAL-D-23-00192
The paper used a state own company as a case study showing the effect of multi-level environmental regulations on firm performances. Due to limited data and through interview with the firm manager, the author concludes that there is positive effect of regulations on the firm performance. However, there are a couple of important points to be addressed before considering for publication.
1. It is not clear about the the contribution of the paper, given that theoretical framework of the paper is weak. Undoubtedly, the multi-level regulations must be align, the mechanism/chanal through which the effect of the regulations on firm performances is missing.
2. The important issue the current study has not addressed is that due to limited data the conclusion of the paper is not reliable because there are so many confounding factors that may affect the profitability of the firm. For instance, management practices (see for example published works of Nicholas Bloom and his co-authors) is one of the factors.
3. Since the paper used a SOE, the generalization of the result is also weak.
Transfer Authorization
Round 2
Reviewer 1
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While some of the specific comments have been addressed and the manuscript has improved, the main issue remains: The results from the multi-level analysis need to be presented in a coherent way to generate useful policy implications. A table summarizing the results from different aspects of the multi-level analysis would be very helpful for the reader.

In addition, the Literature review section remains inadequate and should be enhanced with relevant studies.

Reviewer 2
The authors did not give sufficient consideration to my comments (numbers 2 and 4). The second comment was the most critical flaw in the manuscript: “To provide a comprehensive analysis, the authors are to include information about other factors that have been previously studied and their impact on the firm’s performance. It is also necessary to explain the significance of environmental regulations over other factors”. Moreover, they must provide a case-by-case response letter.

Round 3
Reviewer 1
The authors have respond to most of the comments outlined in the first review of the manuscript.

Please add CO2 or CO2 equivalents as a unit in Figure 1 (assuming this is the case).

Table 2 helps convey the main results, however it would seem more appropriate in Section 4. Moreover, the findings could be better organized and include tangible results on the fronts mentioned regarding SYPC performance.
Reviewer 2
Please include any specific comments for the author concerning his/her manuscript. These comments will be sent to the author. Please use as much space as necessary. Please be as constructive as possible and include clear and specific suggestions stating which aspects of the manuscript must/should be improved, and your rationale.
Congratulation to the authors

Round 4
Reviewer 1
The authors have addressed the comments on the manuscript accordingly