Normative and Cognitive Determinants of Sustainable Technology Adoption within Organizations - Managerial Perspective

In the face of the growing importance of sustainable development, the restaurant sector faces a significant challenge: the need to reconcile its key economic and societal contributions with increasing environmental pressures. The gastronomic sector represents over 75% of all enterprises within the HoReCa industry (Hotels, Restaurants, and Catering Services) in the European Union, providing millions of jobs and contributing to economic stability. However, food service activities account for a significant portion of food waste in Europe, which translates into a substantial share of greenhouse gas emissions as well as water and energy consumption. Consequently, the need to implement sustainable technologies, those that allow to reduce environmental impact while maintaining the sector's economic and social role, is increasingly emphasized.

Although sustainable technologies are widely recognized as crucial tools for achieving many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), little is known about what drives restaurant managers to adopt them. This project focuses on identifying which cognitive and normative factors, related to reasoning, beliefs, values, and a sense of responsibility, shape managerial attitudes and intentions regarding the adoption of sustainable technologies within organizations. It is essential to understand not only the strategic and business-related conditions of such decisions but also the influence of social and moral obligations that may either strengthen or weaken motivation to sustainable technology adoption.

The project uses a mixed-methods research approach. Initially, in-depth interviews with restaurant managers will be conducted to identify both barriers and motivators for the adoption of sustainable technologies. Based on the collected data, a theoretical model will be developed to describe how specific factors influence both attitudes and intentions of managers toward sustainable technology adoption. This model will then be tested quantitatively through a nationwide survey conducted among restaurant managers – key decision-makers. This approach will allow precise identification of which cognitive and normative factors encourage or hinder the adoption of sustainable technologies.

From a scientific point of view, the project fills a significant gap in sustainability research in the restaurant sector by focusing on strategic managerial decisions. Such managerial perspective has been rarely explored in the literature. At the same time, the project allows for the development and adjustment of behavioral theories in the context of managing small and medium-sized enterprises in the HoReCa industry. This represents a substantial contribution to the interdisciplinary field that connects management and environmental sciences. The results will also provide a basis for formulating new theoretical concepts and developing measurement tools that enable further research in this area.

Moreover, the findings will offer practical recommendations for public policy, educational programs, and support strategies for restaurants and other service enterprises in making sustainable, environmentally friendly decisions. The project outcomes will help to better understand the decision-making processes of restaurant managers, thereby facilitating more effective support for the sector's transition to more sustainable business practices. This could lead to increased business competitiveness and resilience, and help achieve sustainable development goals such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, limiting food waste, promoting responsible resource use and consumption, and optimizing working conditions.