

Title of doctoral dissertation: Food safety culture self-assessment model and its empirical verification.

The importance and development of approaches that strengthen an organizational culture focused on food safety is increasingly evident in modern agri-food industry organizations. The above is a consequence of the state in which safety as such, as well as its varieties regarding food, are, like never before, a part of the basic rights and values of every person - consumer. This reality also applies to every organization operating within the food chain. Food has been, is, and always will be a matter of fundamental importance for humanity. Its production and distribution have economic, social, and environmental impacts.

The intensified and newly identified safety hazards – stemming from, among other factors, climate change, increasing antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and intensified urbanization – significantly and negatively impact food safety and security, deepening disparities in access to sources of adequate and safe food.

These conditions and contexts have led to legal changes, initially within so-called private law and later within statutory law, contributing to the creation of new requirements and standards, without the implementation of which participation in a highly competitive market environment seems to be, if not impossible, then significantly difficult. One such requirement is to “maintain and provide evidence of an appropriate food safety culture”. Therefore, building, assessing, and improving a food safety culture, as well as the development of measurement tools for the organization's self-assessment in this regard, become a market and legal necessity.

These considerations led to the formulation of the following research problems in the form of questions:

- Main Theoretical Question, MTQ: Does the FSC phenomenon fit into the management of food quality and safety in the organization of the food industry, and if so, to what extent?
- Main Empirical Question, MEQ : Does the developed food safety culture self-assessment model meet the condition of usefulness in the surveyed organizations?

These problems formed the basis for defining two primary research objectives, one theoretical and one empirical, as follows:

- Main Theoretical Objective, MTO: Recognition of the state of research and conditions for the development of the phenomenon of food safety culture (FSC) in the agri-food industry.

- Main Empirical Objective, MEO: Development and verification of the FSC self-assessment model in selected organizations.

With the above in mind, in the first stage of the work the focus was on recognizing the state of knowledge about food safety culture, including “just culture” – fair treatment culture. This was done both in the context of the phenomenon of organizational culture, as well as issues related to food safety. The conducted query then allowed to propose an original tool for self-assessment of the level of food safety culture, including the culture of fair treatment – “just culture” and to carry out its practical verification in organizations of the agri-food industry. The described assumptions and conditions are reflected in the structure of the doctoral dissertation.

The first two chapters of the dissertation are theoretical and aim to fulfill the main theoretical objective (MTO) and are intended to help provide an answer to the main theoretical question (MTQ). In the first chapter, the author focuses on issues related to food quality and safety, both through the prism of hazards and instruments for its protection. The second chapter, in turn, discusses the theoretical aspects of food safety culture in the context of organizational culture. The third chapter, empirical in nature, presents the results of the author’s research and thus serves the main empirical objective (MEO) and aims to answer the main empirical question (MEQ). It also contains a detailed description of the research methodology employed by the author, along with descriptions of the scientific methods used.

The culmination of the work is a summary that is a resumption of the author's considerations, both theoretical and practical, and is also a synthetic reference to individual questions and research objectives.

The legal and normative status is as of September 30, 2024.

Keywords: food safety culture, just culture, self-assessment model, organizational culture, food safety