

The study examines the question of the handicraft's possible structural and individual predisposition for the concept of a "sustainable development".

On this score, proceeding from the global sustainability concept, guidelines are derived for an implementation on a regional level. On the basis of the value chain concept answers are given to the question, which demands are made on enterprises by a sustainable development and which guidelines, goals and criteria can serve the enterprises as orientation marks during a sustainable development process. A comprehensive legal, economical and sociological definition of the notion of *handicraft* defines handicraft as the object of study in particular for the following empirical examination among decision makers in handicraft and industry. In addition, special characteristics of the handicraft sector are worked out for the following analysis of a "structural sustainability" of the handicraft.

First, the empirical main section of the study examines the question to what extent the type of production relating to crafts shows characteristics of a structural sustainability. However, sustainability in companies moreover presupposes a decision makers high commitment readiness for a "sustainable enterprise development". Second, a quantitative empirical analysis among decision makers in handicraft and industry (N = 196) examines, which psychological, organizational and structural factors direct the commitment readiness for a sustainable enterprise development. On this score, an explanation model for the operational context, developed in the environmental psychology, is modified, specified and submitted to an empirical examination. By the aid of multivariate analysis methods the theoretical model of the "sustainability readiness" is statistically examined to identify barriers and driving factors for the sustainability ambitions of the entrepreneurs and to verify whether or not decision makers in handicraft and industry differ in their readiness for sustainable development.

As the investigations show, handicraft enterprises offer favorable structural conditions for implementing a sustainable enterprise development. Moreover, compared to decision makers within the industry sector, the examined decision makers in the handicraft sector excel by a significantly higher readiness for sustainable enterprise development. The preconditions for a sustainable development therefore seem to be particularly favorable in handicraft enterprises. The pattern of results indicates that handicraft enterprises could serve as efficient starting point for the adjustment of economics towards sustainability. On the basis of numerous enterprise examples, the thesis concludes with recommendations for the promotion of a sustainable enterprise development in the handicraft sector.