The Laboratoire d'Economie et de Gestion de l'Ouest (LEGO - UR2652) offers a doctoral research grant funded 100% by the Brittany region and the Doctoral School "Economics and Management Sciences" of the Université de Bretagne Occidentale Brest.

The challenge to which the research responds is to propose a set of soft incentive techniques (via nudges) in order to engage consumers in an effort to learn sustainable and responsible food practices. The main research question is therefore: "how and on what occasions can we encourage the learning of new food practices for the adult public? ». The main interest is to be able to provide elements of a response to associations and communities that are trying to promote consumer learning about sustainable food practices.

The PhD student recruited will be based in Brest (29000) for a period of 3 years from 01 September 2020.

Deadline to apply: Monday 08 June 2020

Hosting structure : Le Laboratoire d'Economie et de Gestion de l'Ouest (LEGO)

LEGO is a university research laboratory supported by two universities (Université de Bretagne Occidentale and Université de Bretagne Sud) and an engineering school (Institut des Mines Telecom Atlantique). It focuses mainly on the study and analysis of exchanges between socio-economic actors. To do this, it relies on nearly 100 researchers, including 25 doctoral students with multidisciplinary skills from economics, management and management sciences.

The Laboratory is structured around four areas of expertise:

- Digital, networks and territories
- Responsible practices and nutrition
- Governance and organizational resilience
- Health and Wellness

The work of the proposed thesis falls within the field of expertise "Responsible practices and food" of the laboratory. Within this framework, the laboratory collaborates with national organisations (e.g. ADEME), public authorities (Finistère department, Lorient agglomeration, Brest Métropole), and industrialists and associations of the agri-food sector in Brittany.
Description of the proposed doctoral contract

The health crisis we are experiencing and the confinement imposed by the authorities has been an opportunity for many of our co-citizens to discover new ways of supplying short circuits and local products. But are these new habits going to continue over time? More generally, the urgent need to contain global warming to +2°C is a major planetary challenge for the coming years. The food system (production - processing - distribution - consumption - recycling) is a major contributor to CO2 emissions. Eating more sustainably does not mean for a consumer to be interested only in the content of his plate (e.g. eating less meat) but to consider a whole ecosystem. An ecosystem is made up of places of purchase, places of life and activities (professional, cultural and physical activities), places of information, etc.

The issue, within which the proposed research falls is for adults to learn how to eat better, healthier and more sustainably, and thus to learn how to make better use of their ecosystem. The main interest is to be able to provide elements of a response to all the actors concerned by health and sustainability in terms of food. Thus, the main issue of the proposed research is the following: "how and on what occasions should we promote the learning of new food practices for the adult public? ». Three stages in the research are planned:

1. Identify the factors that trigger change in eating behaviour.

Eating behaviours are subject to cultural and family heritage, and tend in adulthood to become routines embedded in socio-economic activities (e.g. the pace of work and family life). Changing dietary habits therefore implies significant changes in the individual's perception of the ecosystem (e.g., a life event such as the arrival of a child, or a health crisis, etc.), and a temporary breakdown of the links between the elements of this ecosystem. The identification of what Shove and Pantzar (2005) call the elements of integration of new practices, their importance and their role in changing a food practice need to be studied; they represent the starting point for learning a new food practice.

2. Understand and identify the learning of new food practices.

Trying out new eating behaviours does not necessarily lead to new habits. The perpetuation of more responsible behaviours implies a learning phase on the part of consumers.

3. Encourage learning of new healthy eating practices.

Depending on the factors that trigger a new practice and the type of learning of this practice, the forms of incentives available to organisations (associations and public bodies in particular) to encourage responsible behaviour may change. This is why various soft incentive techniques, such as "nudges", can be tested in order to associate these techniques with the expected forms of learning and the categories of people targeted.
Profile required

The candidate must hold a Master 2 degree and have university research training in the field of management sciences. Knowledge in marketing, consumer behaviour, communication, and/or psychology is desirable. Knowledge of the food industry would be a bonus.

Motivation for thesis work, interpersonal skills and an appetite for the field will be necessary. As with all research work, the candidate will have good writing skills and a critical and analytical mind.

Documents to be sent

Applications should be sent to Patrick Gabriel (patrick.gabriel@univ-brest.fr) and Samuel Guillemot (samuel.guillemot@univ-brest.fr) before Monday 08 June and must include:

- A CV including examples of research topics already covered and/or research interests
- A copy of the Master’s transcript with indication of the ranking if known
- A letter of reflection specifying how the candidate intends to take ownership of the subject, accompanied by a work plan and a bibliography (about 2-3 pages).

The selected candidates will be auditioned on Wednesday, June 17, 2020.

Notification of decisions: Monday 22 June 2020

Contacts

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