

Chinese Egg Producers' Attitudes and intentions towards Improving Animal Welfare

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Background

- ◆ China is the largest egg producer¹
- ◆ Battery cages: a welfare issue²
- ◆ Global cage-free transition³
- ◆ Producers' views remain unknown



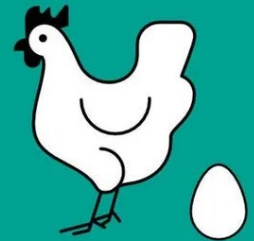
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2019 CAGE FREE EGG CHINA SUMMIT

2019非笼养鸡蛋
(中国)高峰论坛

18 June 2019
1pm-5:30pm

Shanghai
Marriott Hotel
City Centre
Ballroom 1



中国标准化协会标准

T/CAS

STANDARDS OF CHINA ASSOCIATION

269-2017

FOR STANDARDIZATION

农场动物福利要求 蛋鸡

Farm animal welfare requirements: Laying hen

Why do producers (not) change to higher welfare production systems?

- Personal factors⁴⁻⁷;
- Regulatory factors⁴⁻⁷
- Market factors^{5,8-11};
- Social influences factors¹²⁻¹⁶;
- Feasibility factors^{5-7,10,12};



Photo by Xu Wenlong

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

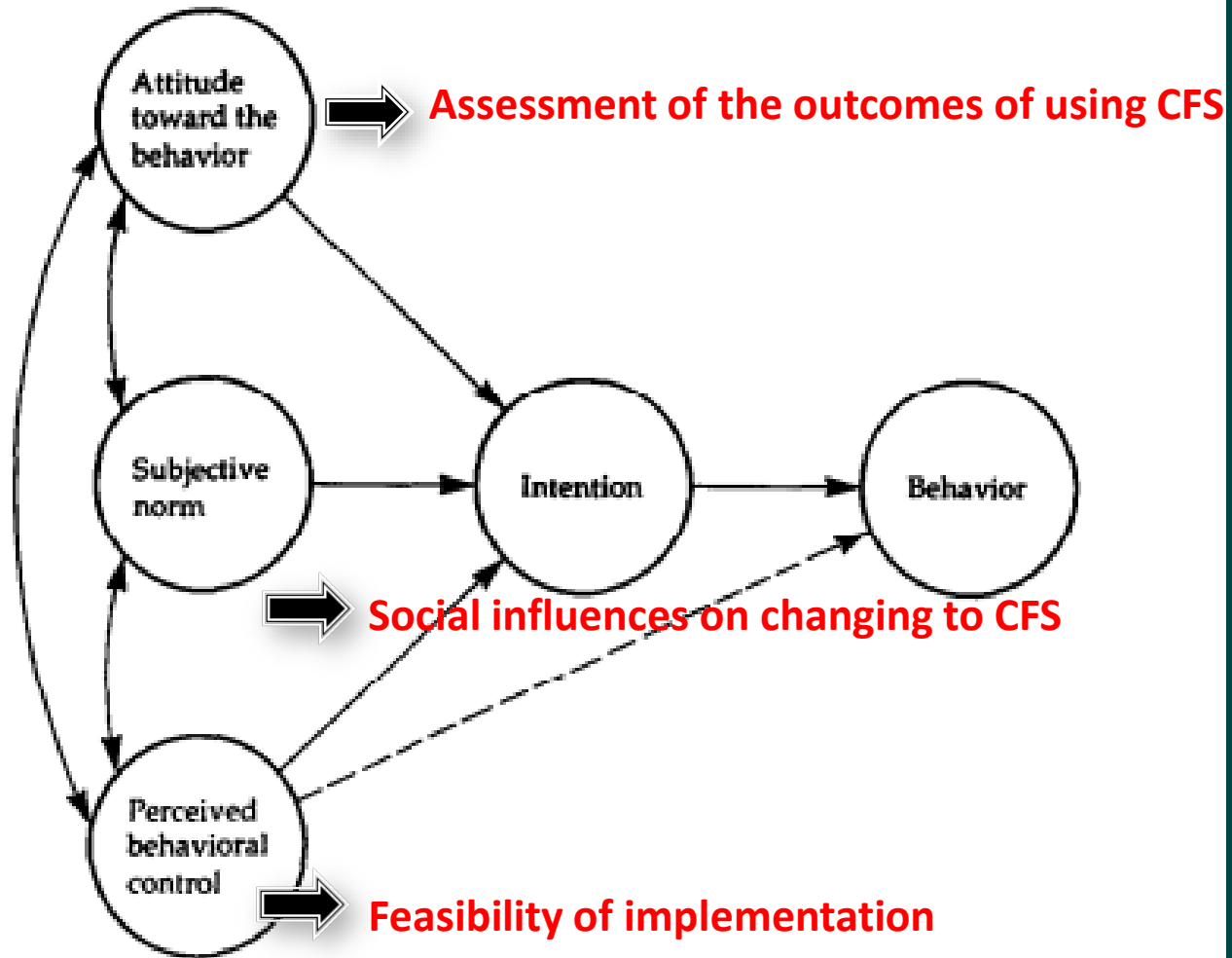


FIG. 1. Theory of planned behavior.

Research aim and objectives

◆ Aim:

Explore producers' attitudes towards CFS and other external factors that influence their intentions to convert to CFS.



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Objectives:

- Investigate how producers interpret hen welfare and perceive CFS.
- Explore which stakeholders motivate producers to adopt CFS.
- Identify the challenges that impede producers' adoption of CFS.

Methodology: interviews

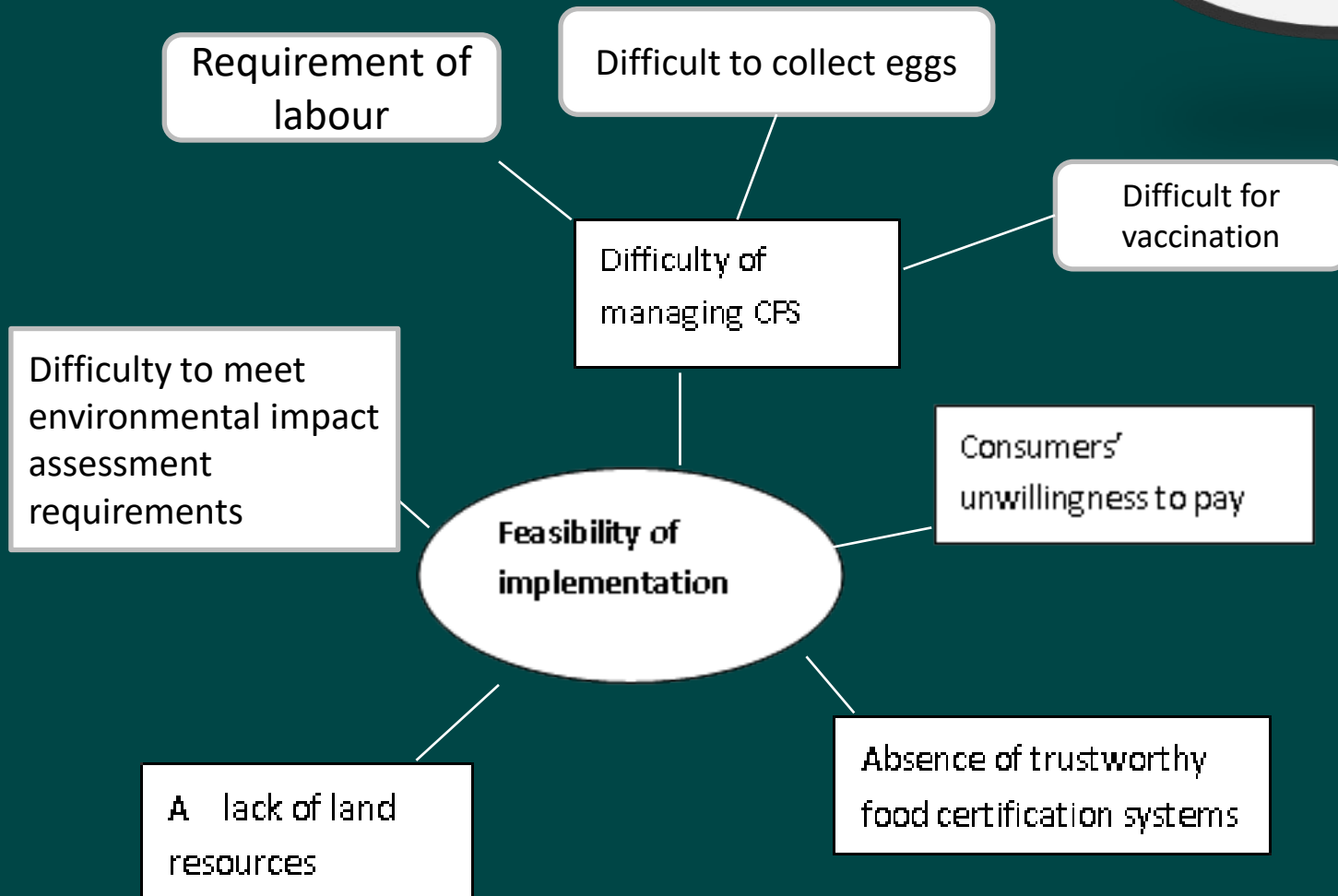
- ❖ Open-ended, semi-structured interviews over phone
- ❖ Participants recruited through Wechat
- ❖ Eight managers interviewed between Nov.2019 and Jan.2020
- ❖ Guided interview questions developed based on TPB
- ❖ Farm size between 50,000-25 million birds



Photo by RSPCA

Data analysis: Thematic analysis¹⁸

- ◆ Nvivo
- ◆ Inductive & deductive analysis¹⁸



Results 1: Assessment of the outcomes of using CFS

- ✓ Good for hen health
- ✗ Not beneficial to hen welfare
- ✗ Lower productivity
- ✗ Reduced profitability
- ✗ Poorer food safety

“Hens are kept in cages for many generations, their natural behaviours have been eradicated.” (P8).

“...food, water, temperature and humidity are the most suitable for hens, this is the best welfare.” (P2).



Discussion 1: Assessment of the outcome of using CFS



- Defining animal welfare as biological functioning;
- Lack of understanding of animal welfare science and animal behaviour
- Negative economic outcome
- Tailored training is necessary



Photos by [Compassion in World Farming](#)

Results 2: Social influences on changing to CFS

- ✗ Consumers
- ✗ Government
- ✗ Agricultural experts
- ✗ Animal welfare organisations
- ✓ Food business companies

*“Government will not support cage free systems, they want to ensure food supply...”
(P1).*

*“Few consumers care (about welfare)...they don’t have the concept.”
(P2).*



Discussion 2: Social influences on changing to CFS



- ❖ Lack of public awareness of animal welfare¹⁹;
- ❖ Governmental support of intensification of livestock industry;
- ❖ Animal welfare research is productivity oriented²⁰;
- ❖ Lack of advocacy of CFS from animal welfare organisations;
- ❖ Pressure from food businesses provides opportunities to change



Photo by [Compassion in World Farming](#)

Results 3: Feasibility of implementation

- ✘ Consumers' unwillingness to pay;
- ✘ The absence of trustworthy food certification systems;
- ✘ A lack of land resources;
- ✘ Difficulty to meet environmental impact assessment requirements;
- ✘ Difficulty of managing CFS;

“people are willing to pay...this is the key issue...as long as there is market demand, the industry can change rapidly.” (P2)

“market and food certification walk hand in hand...there must be recognised certification systems.” (P2)

Discussion 3: Feasibility of implementation

- ◆ Economic viability of CFS is the primary concern;
- ◆ Various production systems need to be allowed;
- ◆ Start with less expensive CFS that are suitable for the farm setup;
- ◆ Creating and developing a market for cage-free eggs is critical;
- ◆ Engaging all stakeholders, particularly food businesses;
- ◆ Raising awareness of food safety and quality among consumers
- ◆ Training producers to employ CFS



Photo by [Compassion in World Farming](#)

Conclusion and Critique



Conclusion

- ◆ TPB is useful
 - Identified the major factors
- ◆ Low intention to change:
 - Negative assessment of using CFS;
 - Minimal social influences;
 - Challenges beyond control;
- ◆ Practical approach:
 - Marketing cage-free eggs;
 - Engaging all stakeholders;
 - Farm-appropriate production systems;
 - Training producers to use CFS.

Critique

- ◆ Participant bias
- ◆ Social desirability bias
- ◆ Results not generalisable
- ◆ A lack of definitions of CFS



Photo by [Compassion in World Farming](#)

Reference List

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- ¹⁸ Braun and Clarke (2006) *Qual. Res. Psychol.* 3, 77–101.
- ¹⁹ You et al (2014). *PLoS One*, 9, 1–10.
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