

UNDERSTANDING INTENTION TOWARD ANIMAL WELFARE BETWEEN IRANIAN STOCKPERSON

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Abstract

Although conventional livestock farming has been successful at production and cost-benefits rate however, besides these successes, modern livestock system, also, created ethical, social and environmental challenge. In other words, it is really unsuccessful at the issues of environmentally friendly production, animal health and animal welfare. In this situation, organic livestock has been introduced as an alternative for conventional livestock. Organic livestock is guided by a set of fundamental goals and ideas. Providing animal welfare can be related to some overall goals for organic. As such understanding how different actors perceive it is a precondition for the successful improvement of animal welfare. To our knowledge, no studies undertake to investigate stockmen's intention toward animal welfare in Iran and MENA region. As such, the aim of this study is to investigate the intention of stockmen regarding importance and necessity of animal welfare at Sirjan County in Kerman province in the middle of Iran through a psychological perspective. Therefore, 100 industrial stockmen through simple random sampling were selected who, as we assume, will be the key stakeholders, and will contribute to the animal welfare in Iran. Data were analyzed using the SPSS. The results through a multiple regression revealed that attitude toward animal welfare, moral norm, control perceived behaviour and outcome expectations were predictor of stockmen' intention toward animal welfare. The findings of this study provided preliminary data toward improvement of animal welfare between Iranian stockmen.

Key words: *animal welfare, industrial stockperson, intention, Iran*

Introduction

Although conventional livestock farming has been successful at production and cost-benefits rate however, besides these successes, modern livestock system, also, created ethical, social and environmental challenge. In other words, it is really unsuccessful at the issues of environmentally friendly production, animal health and animal welfare. In this situation, organic livestock has been introduced as an alternative for conventional livestock. Organic livestock is guided by a set of fundamental goals and ideas. Providing animal welfare can be related to some overall goals for organic. Organic livestock farming has an explicit goal of improved animal health and welfare compared with non-organic

farming (Vaarst and Alroe, 2012). The welfare of animals can be defined in many ways (Kauppinen et al., 2010) and there are many different conceptions of what welfare is, and animal welfare is both an evaluative concept, as well as a normative concept, which involves both value judgments and ethical concerns (Vaarst and Alroe, 2012). In organic agriculture, a number of animal welfare issues differ clearly when compared to non-organic farming. This means that not only is there an explicit goal of improved livestock welfare, but—more important—an underlying philosophical and ethical idea and definition of what constitutes good animal welfare. As such, understanding how different actors perceive it is a precondition for the successful improvement of animal welfare (Kauppinen et al., 2010). The role of the stockperson in the welfare and productivity of farm animals has received increasing attention over recent years (Coleman et al., 2000). For example, stockperson behavior has been shown to be strongly related to fear and reproductive performance in pigs (Coleman et al., 2000). Therefore, the most relevant attitudes are those of the farmers and the farmer who as a care giver has a vital influence on animal welfare (Kauppinen et al., 2010).

In this paper we deal with the question of how a group of stakeholders, such as farmers, perceive animal welfare and potentials for their behavior in Iran. This is especially interesting in Iran, which is marked by Islamic country, because Islam frequently advocated for respect to animal. We believe that farmers, who will be key stakeholders, will play an important role in deployment animal welfare in Iran. As such the aim of this research is investigated intention toward animal welfare in industrial dairy sector in Iran.

Materials and methods

The study was designed as a cross-sectional survey. The population of interest consists of industrial dairy farmers in Sirjan city, eastern Iran. The study sample consisted of 100 farmers selected through a random sampling. The participants aged from 25 to 71 and had a mean age of 49/17 years (SD = 11/05). All farmers were males.

The variables were quantitatively tested using the survey methodology to understand individual intention. An in-depth literature review was used to develop the questionnaire to collect data for this study. Data were collected through personal interviews based on a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used for a face-to-face survey with farmers, conducted in the period from 2013. Researchers received all completed questionnaires directly after the survey; no intermediaries were involved into the analysis or interpretation of results. All farmers received the right to refuse to participate, to refuse to answer any question they deemed to be too sensitive or that they felt uncomfortable about. The questions were scored on a 1-5 point scale (very low, low, moderate, high, very high) to reduce the statistical problem of extreme skewness.

Results and discussion

A multiple regression analysis, with intention regarding animal welfare as the dependent variable, and with attitude, moral norm, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and moral norm as independent variables, revealed that attitude, self-efficacy and outcome expectations are significant predictors (Table 1).

These three variables predicted 47% of the variance in intention regarding animal welfare, with outcome expectations appearing to contribute most to the model, ($\beta=0.61$, $p<0.000$),

followed by self-efficacy ($\beta=0.19$, $p<0.000$) and then attitude ($\beta =0.15$, $p<0.009$). Analysis revealed that relationships between moral norm and intention were not significant.

Table1. Enter regression of variables on intention regarding animal welfare

Independent variables	b	Std.er	Beta	Signif T
Outcome expectations	0.79	0.10	0.61	0.000
Self-efficacy	0.14	0.03	0.19	0.000
Attitude	0.06	0.02	0.15	0.009
Constant= -0/17, F= 55/40, Sig= 0/000				
Variable	Multi. R	R ²	R ² Adjust	
Intention	0.68	0.47	0.46	

Intention is a plan or motivation which influences human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It refers to the individual attempts to doing special behavior and clearly, probably the occurrence of behavior is directly dependent on his/her intention (Ajzen, 1991). The past research revealed that attitude is the most important factor which can influence intention (Kielland et al., 2010; Breuer et al., 2000; Coleman et al., 1998). Attitude refers to “the degree of a person’s favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). As such we expected that farmers attitude toward animal welfare directly influence their intention toward animal welfare. The second factor which can influence farmers' intention is self-efficacy. It refers to the “people’s perception of ease or difficulty in performing the behavior of interest” (Liao et al., 2007), or “the extent to which individuals perceive the behavior to be under their volitional control” (Fielding et al., 2008). We added to other factor to framework, moral norm and farmers' expectation regarding animal welfare. Expectations refers, individual’s beliefs about costs and benefits of the behavior or judgments about the results of behavior have an important effect on intention (Bundura, 2004). Outcome expectations are the anticipated consequences of a behavior. It is the relative value that an individual places on each outcome expectation (Winters et al., 2003). When animal welfare can contribute to more production in animal (Kauppinen et al., 2012) farmers' expectation regarding their benefits can influence their intention toward animal welfare. Moral norms are internal moral rules or values, motivated by anticipated self-administered rewards or punishments (Arvola et al., 2008). Moral norms originate from the psychologist Schwartz’s (1977) norm-activation theory of altruism. Schwartz’s theory claims that pro-environmental actions occur in response to personal moral norms about them and that these are activated in individuals who believe that environmental conditions pose threats to other people, other species, or the biosphere and that actions they initiate could avert those consequences (Stern et al., 1995). Since many researchers (Kauppinen et al., 2010; Vaarst and Alroe, 2012) acknowledged that animal welfare behavior is a moral behavior we added it to our framework.

Conclusion

Our analysis revealed that expectation about outcome of animal welfare, attitude and self-efficacy can determine farmers' intention toward animal welfare. And moral norm was not significant predictor of intention. Based on this finding we can conclude that farmers see animal welfare more instrumental than humanity and morality. Furthermore, for policy implication we suggest that at first stage, farmers be aware about the effects of animal

welfare and their animal productivity. This clarity makes them more motivated to doing behavior regarding animal welfare.

Our results, also, revealed that self-efficacy of animal welfare will be expected to have an impact on the possibility of doing this behavior. This finding suggests that animal welfare programs should seek to gain widespread support from the community parts to animal welfare and provide strategies that ensure us people find it easy to engage in this behavior. Researchers aiming to increase animal welfare behavior may need to focus on the strategies that strengthen farmers' plans and objectives to animal welfare. Promoting farmers' confidence through educational programs in order to enable them to overcome any perceived barriers and difficulties in actions resulting in welfare behavior, will improve adherence to animal welfare behavior among the population. Furthermore, while attitude was another significant variable, in order to increase animal welfare behavior, we should learn about and understand farmers' attitudes toward animal welfare. We believe that in Iran, the success of many policy instruments will be limited unless we succeed in installing a more positive attitude toward this behavior practices in the minds of stakeholders.

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