

# A Theoretical Framework for Wildlife Consumption Motivation studies

Name: Zhang Zheng  
University No.: 3035447439  
Supervisor: Timothy C. Bonebrake

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## ABSTRACT

Wildlife consumption has been a serious threat to both wildlife conservation and public health in China for a long time, especially after the outbreak of COVID-19. In order to curb this behaviour, many conservationists have been studying the motivations for wildlife consumption. However, although some patterns have been observed in the previous studies, more information is lacking to explain these patterns and identify the determining factors for wildlife consumption, due to the lack of a holistic attitudinal framework to guide the design of questionnaire. In this study, by reviewing previous attitudinal studies in the fields of both wildlife conservation and public health, a theoretical framework combining three established attitudinal study theories is constructed, which takes into consideration of previous behaviours, social & personal norms, attitudes towards the behaviour, external conditions, and individual's perceived ability. This theoretical framework is expected to be applied in the design of future study aiming at figuring out and analysing the motivations for wildlife consumption behaviour.

## INTRODUCTION

The wildlife conservationists are increasingly recognising the importance of demand reduction intervention in wildlife trade control since most supply-end control measures failed to address the root demands driving wildlife trade. Consequently, understanding the demand is imperative since any subsequent intervention design is based on that.

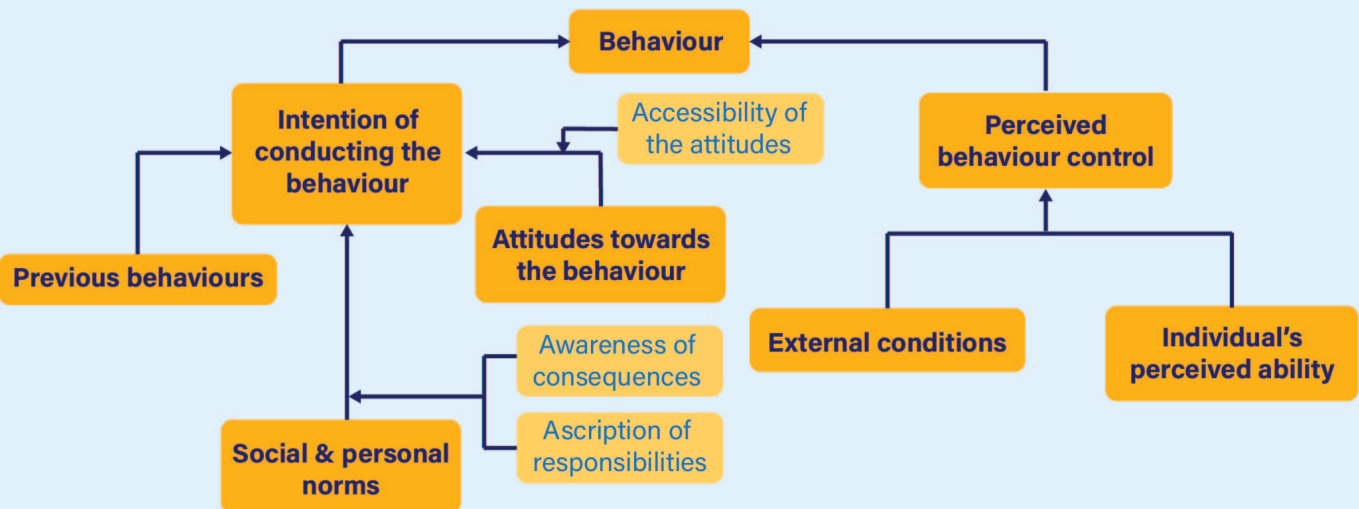
Many studies have examined and categorised the motives of wildlife consumption. Some of the most common motivations behind the consumption behaviour include good taste, showing off social status, for its medicinal and nutritional function, and so on. However, these studies usually stopped here, and little is known about the specific reasons of these motivations and in what social context the consumption behaviours are occurring.

Consequently, only a more holistic approach to examine the attitudes of consumers, context of the behaviour and the behaviour itself can lead to the identification of the motivations for wildlife consumption behaviour and a comprehensive understanding of the behaviour itself. However, the relationship between a person's behaviour and their attitudes for it is neither straightforward nor intuitive. Consequently, a theoretical guidance is needed to, on the one hand, scope the factors among all other irrelevant factors that determine how a person would behave, and, on the other hand, define the relationship between these factors and the behaviour.

This study aimed at constructing a holistic theoretical framework that can be applied to wildlife consumption motivation questionnaire design.

## RESULTS

After consulting previous attitudinal studies, a theoretical framework combining three established attitudinal study theories is constructed: the theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1985), the altruistic behaviour theory by Schwartz (1997), and the attitude - to - behaviour process models (ABPMs) by Fazio (1986).



This new framework indicated that, behaviour is determined by the intention of conducting the behaviour and the perceived behaviour control. The previous behaviours - the individual's experience of consuming wildlife, social and personal norms - how the significant people around the individual view the behaviour, and how the individual themselves view the behaviour, and attitudes towards the behaviour itself - the evaluations of the subsequent outcomes of the behaviour - determine the intention of conducting the behaviour. At the same time, the effect of social and personal norms on the intention is mediated by the person's awareness of consequences and ascription of responsibilities; the effect of attitudes towards the behaviour is mediated by the accessibility of the attitudes. On the other hand, perceived behaviour control is determined by external conditions - e.g. regulations, availability of products - and individual's perceived ability - e.g. the individual's ability to afford the products.

This framework can guide the design of questionnaire in future researches concerning motivations for wildlife consumption to elicit relevant information and identify key factors determining the behaviour.

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