



The food concerns of urban consumers

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Outline

- Background – public health importance
- Types of concerns about food
- International food concerns
- Conclusions

Background

- Metabolic disease epidemic.
- Risk perceptions – predictive of behaviour, familiarity, dread, control.
- Food concerns - mainly safety but there are others – credence values see logos on food labels.
- Supermarket expansion – safety & credence logos
- Fear and insecurity,
 - Furedi – Anglo-America – helpless humans
 - Avner Offer (2011), insecurity, stress and obesity.

Concern Themes

- **Safety** – purity and contamination
- **Health & Nutrition** – types of foods, negative nutrients
- **Care for others** – people, animal welfare
- **Environment** – planet
- **Basics** - prices, honesty of labels
- **Most studies:**
 - About food safety, other themes excluded, except Hohl & Gaskell 2008,
 - Cross-sectional
 - Not well studied: antecedents, roles in behaviour, international differences.

International food concerns

Aims:

- Examine a broad range of concerns.
- Examine likely influence of concerns on:
 - support for food policies
 - avoidance of energy dense, nutrient poor (EDNP) foods
 - environmental purchasing intentions
- Examine likely predictors, age, sex, education, universalist values, powerlessness, control over food

Survey 2012

Method:

- On line survey of 1000 adults in UK, USA, France Shanghai and Australia (2000).
- 20 minute questionnaire, 50 concern items
- Mainly closed 5 point ratings of concerns (Not concerned to Very concerned); control, policy support and purchasing intentions; *open ended questions*

Analyses:

- Confirmatory factor analysis,
- Linear regression of factor scores by predictors,
- Structural equation modelling;
- *Leximancer content analyses of open ended questions.*

Measured predictor variables

Nutrition & Health Foods high in salt, fat, sugar, calories; additives, processed foods, food allergies, types of fats.

Environment Food wasted during production, waste of food by consumers, building on farm land, sewerage from animal production, depletion of ocean fish stocks, acidification of oceans. greenhouse gas emissions.

Animal Welfare Animal cruelty, slaughtering animals, transport of animals, caged egg production.

Safety Foodborne illnesses, poor storage of food, microbiological contamination, pesticide residues, hormone residues, clean handling of food, chemical food additives, routine use of animal antibiotics, imported foods.

Control (Self efficacy) Nutrition status, health status, environmental issues, treatment of animals, food system, safety of the food, avoid food produced with new technologies, types of food you buy.

Support for Policies Support small-scale farmers, avoid cheap labour, discourage foreign ownership, clear country of origin labelling

Outcome variables

Support for policy

Support small-scale farmers, avoid cheap labour, prevent foreign ownership, provide clear country of origin labelling

Avoid purchasing of Energy Dense Nutrient Poor foods

Buy food low in sugar, salt or fat

Environmental food purchasing intentions

Purchase certified environmentally-friendly food products; buy certified 'organic' or authenticated food products' buy free range eggs

Results

Several highly reliable scales were constructed (CFA)

Nutrition concerns

Environmental concerns

Animal welfare concerns

Safety concerns

Control over food (self efficacy)

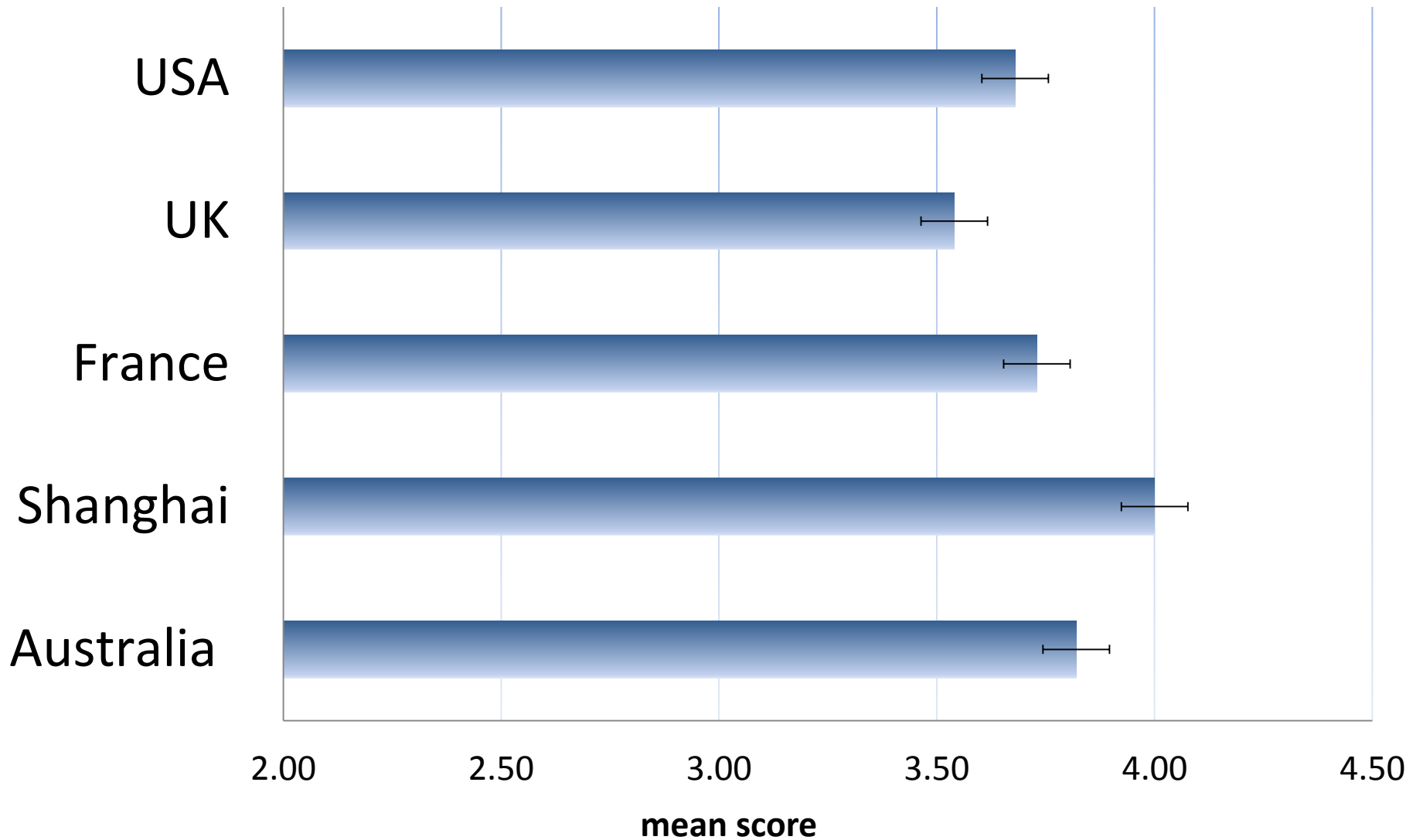
Support for environmental food policies

Avoidance of Energy Dense Nutrient Poor foods

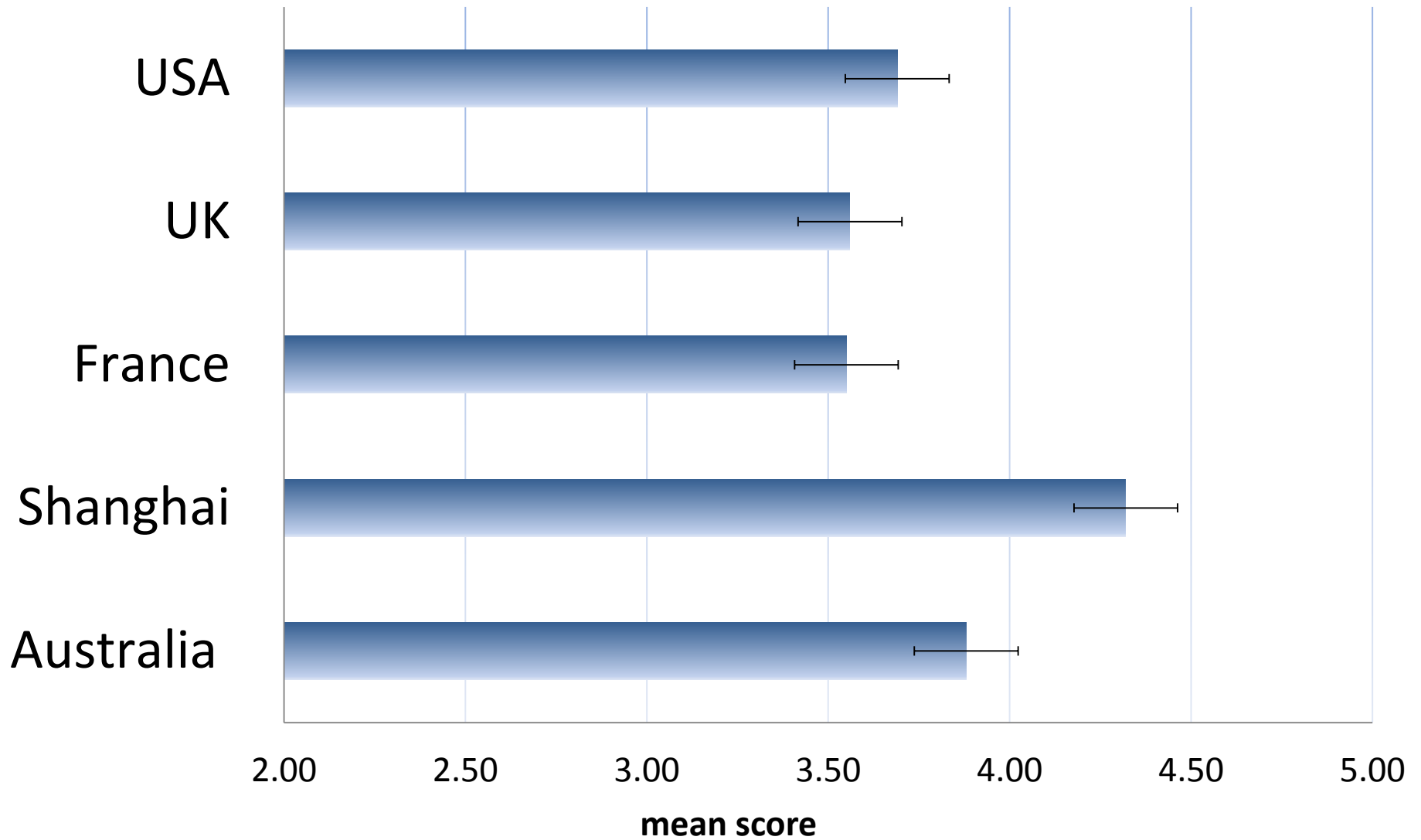
Environmental purchasing intentions

How do the 5 countries rate?

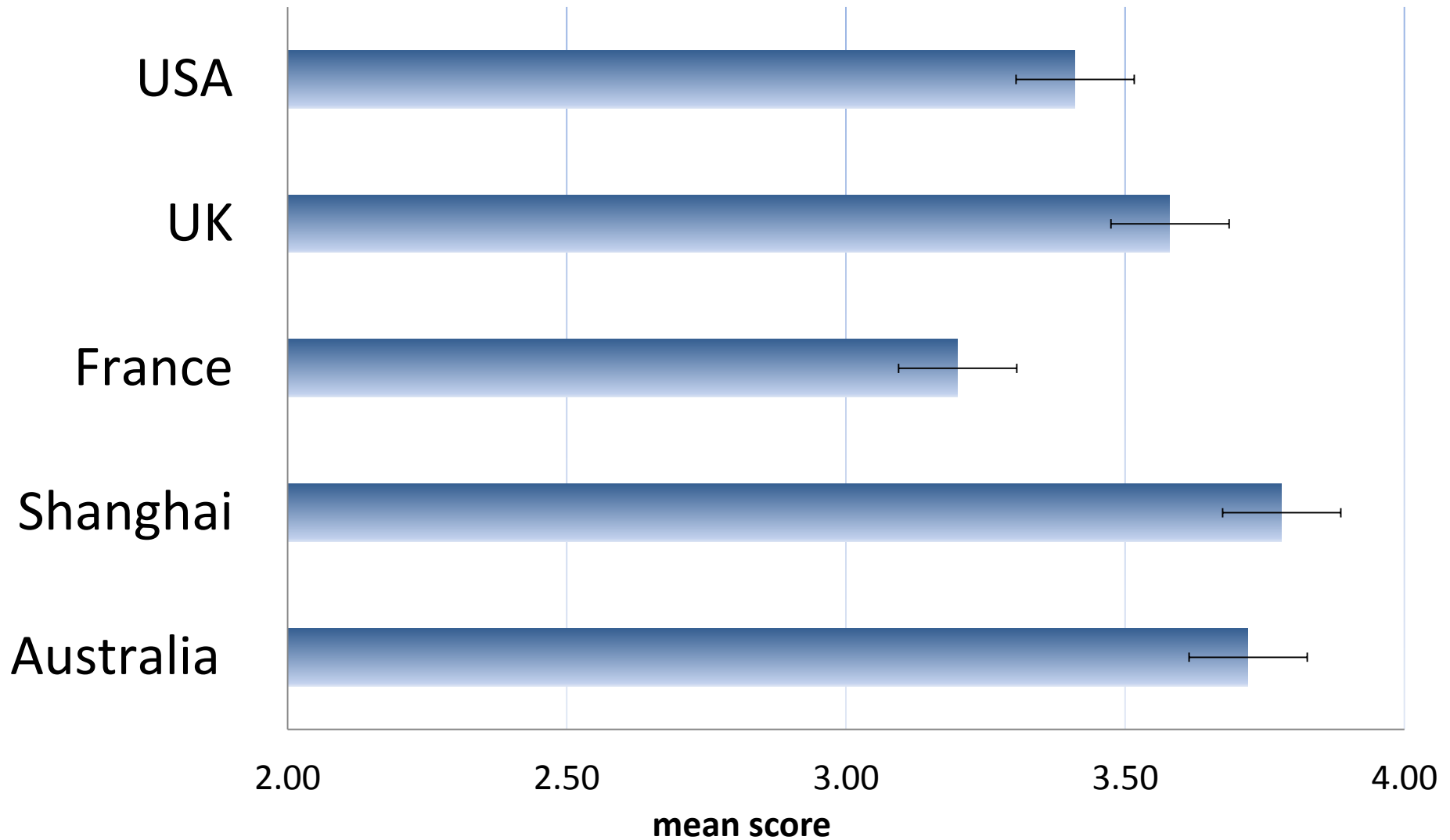
Nutrient concerns



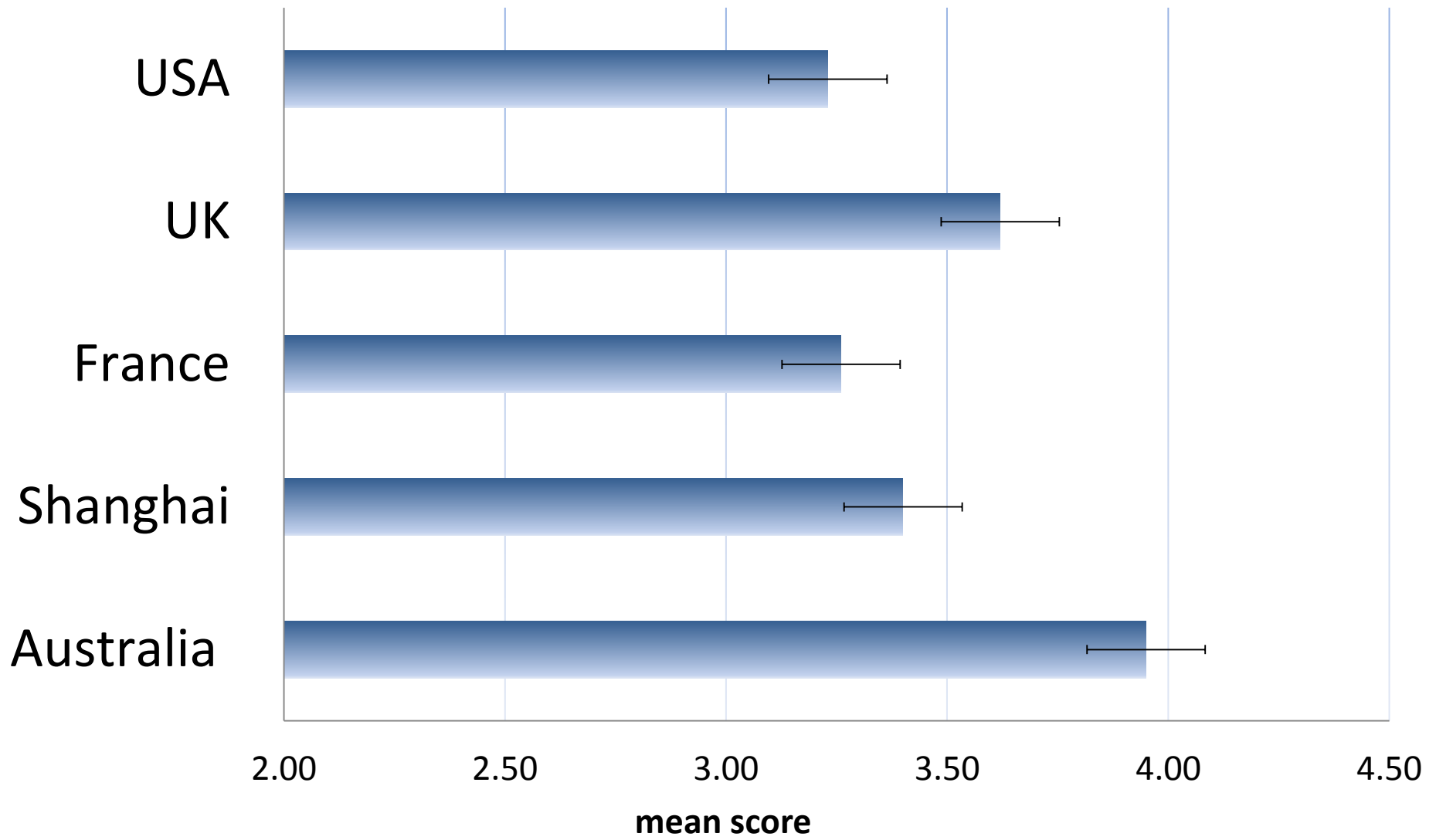
Safety concerns



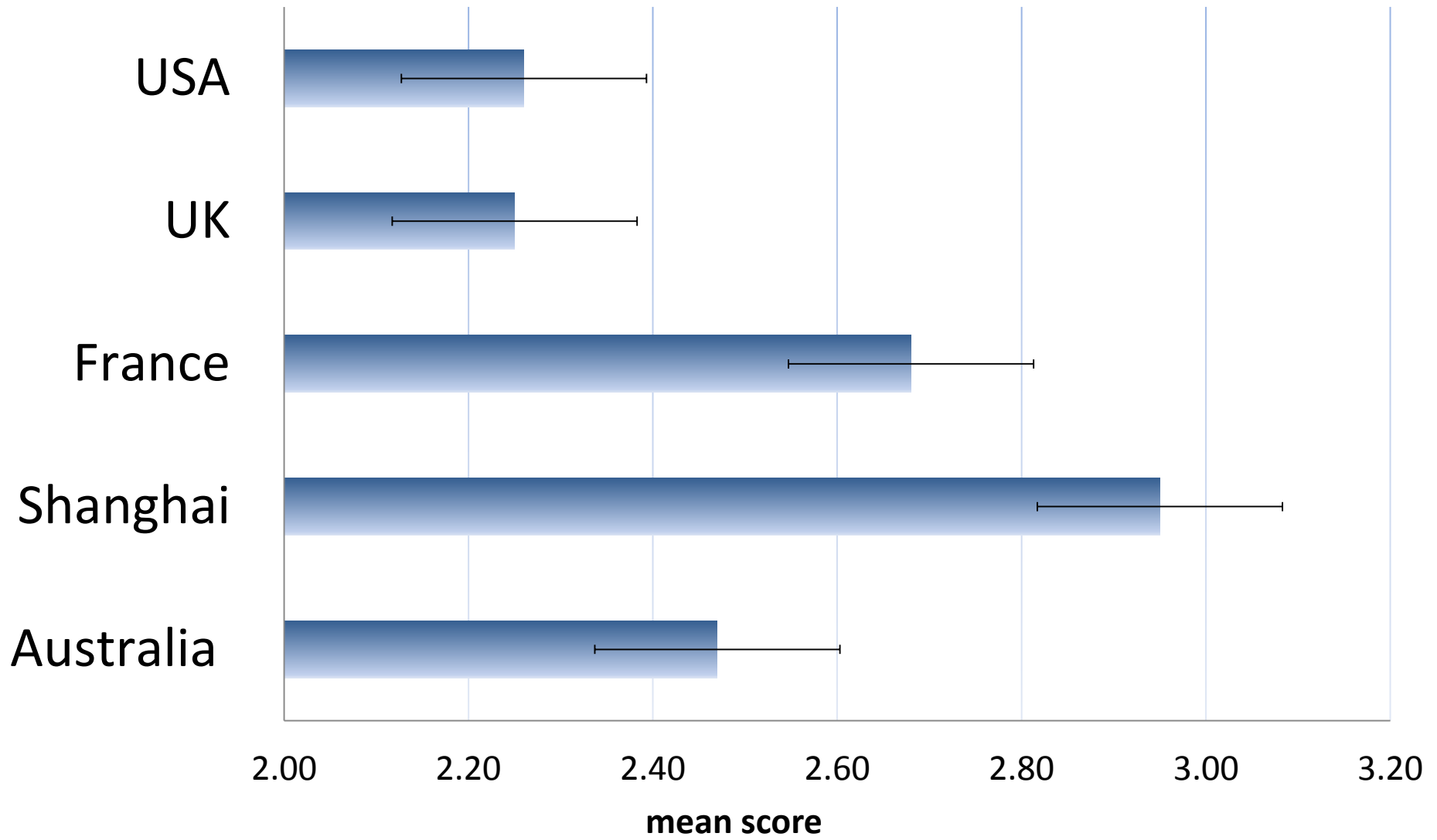
Environmental concerns



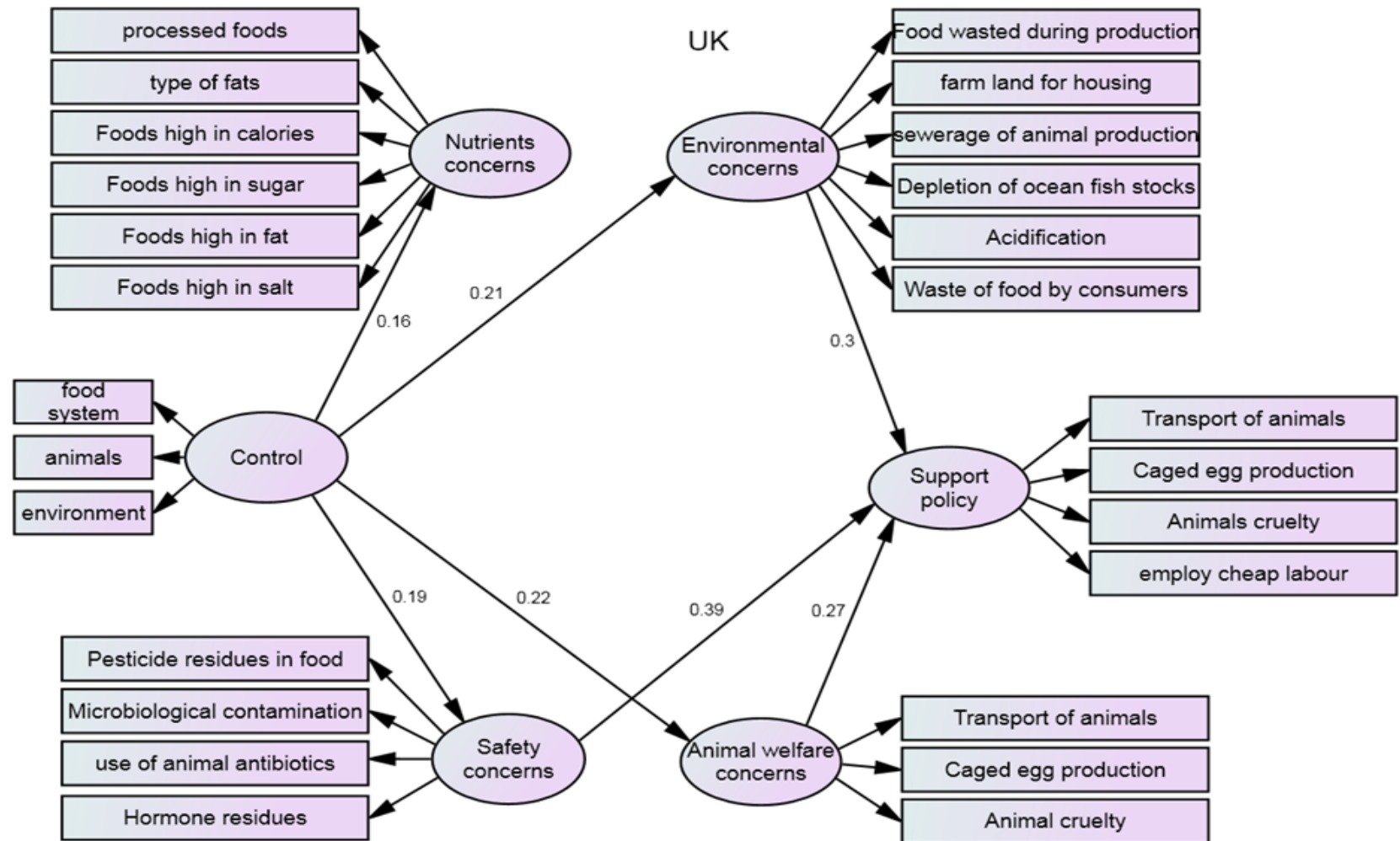
Animal welfare concerns



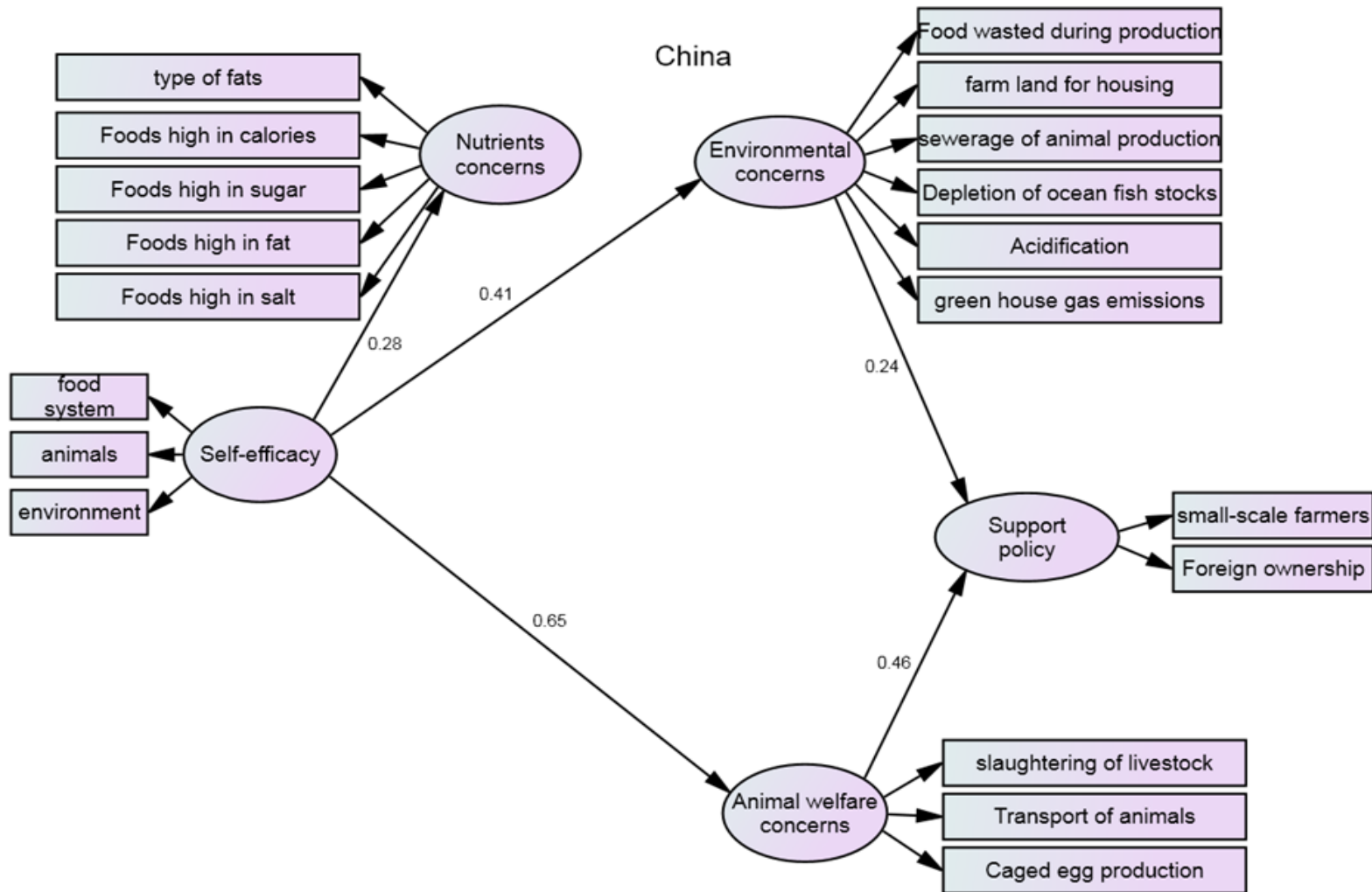
Self-efficacy



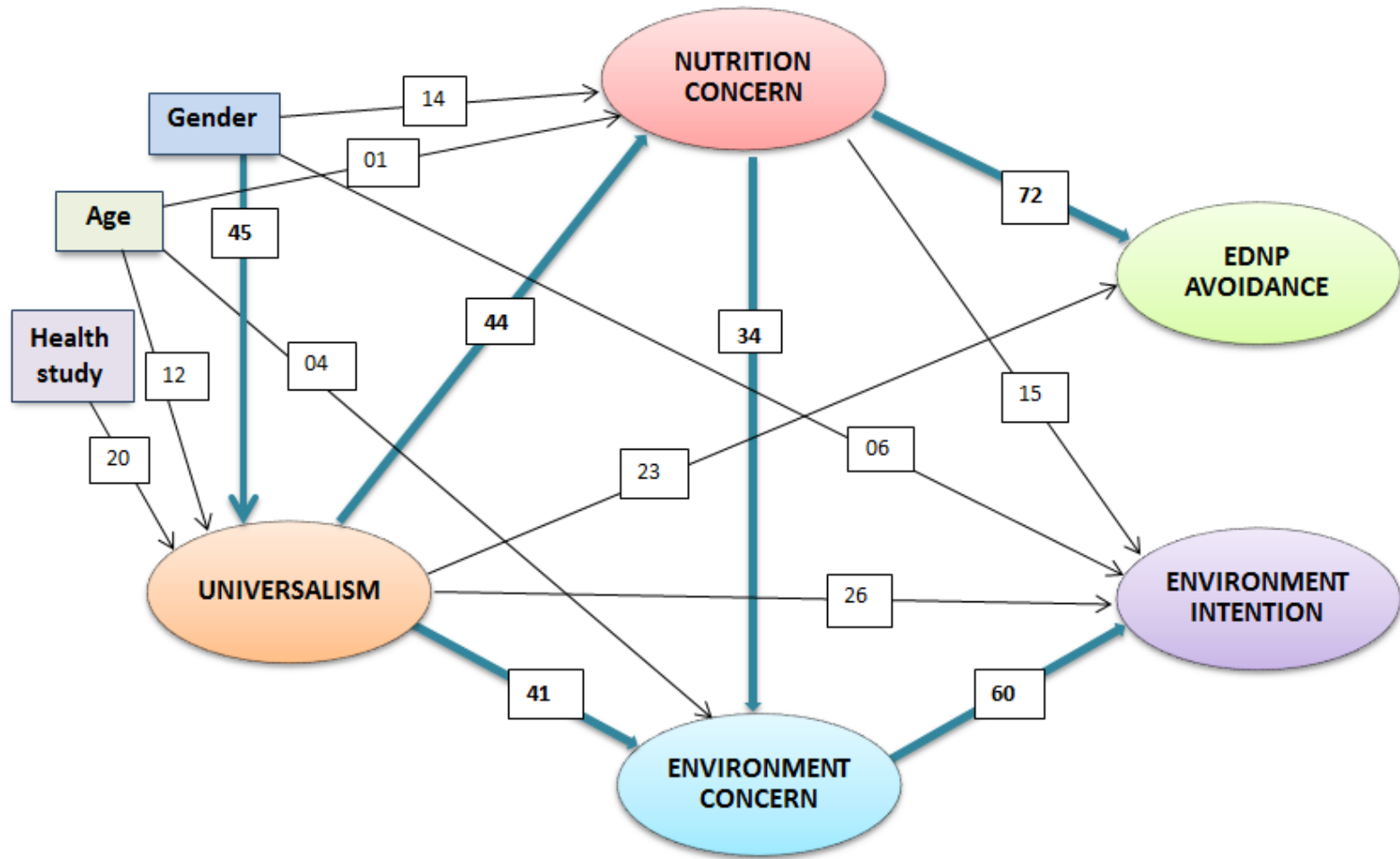
SEM: UK & Ireland



SEM: Shanghai



SEM: prediction of food purchasing intentions(Australia)



Conclusions

Consumers hold several major concerns about food in addition to safety concerns.

Food concerns influence purchasing intentions and policy support. Do they influence food intake & health status?

Concerns influence support for policy & EDNP food avoidance differently between countries – needs further examination;

Need longitudinal studies to establish influences on concerns & food consumption behaviours;

Monitoring of changes in concerns and their influences.

Thank you!

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