

TAKING THE 'C' SERIOUSLY – BUILDING COMMUNITIES IN COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAMS

BRIAN S. BUTLER

DIANE M. TRAVIS

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

CATHY RIDINGS

ZACH ZACHARIAH

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

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CSA ARE

- **A model for organizing last-mile supply chain**
- **A set of relationship building practices**
- **A philosophy/mindset for working with customers**

SOCIAL MEDIA IS...

- **A specific set of technologies for communicating and coordinating**
- **A model for engaging with customers**
- **The new way of doing business**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **How do the aspects of CSA models relate to CSA outcomes?**
 - Approach
 - Relational practices
 - Logistical arrangements
- **How do the aspects of social media relate to CSA outcomes?**
 - Technology
 - Relational capabilities
 - Transactional capabilities
- **How do the aspects of CSAs and social media interact?**

METHODS, SAMPLE, AND DATA

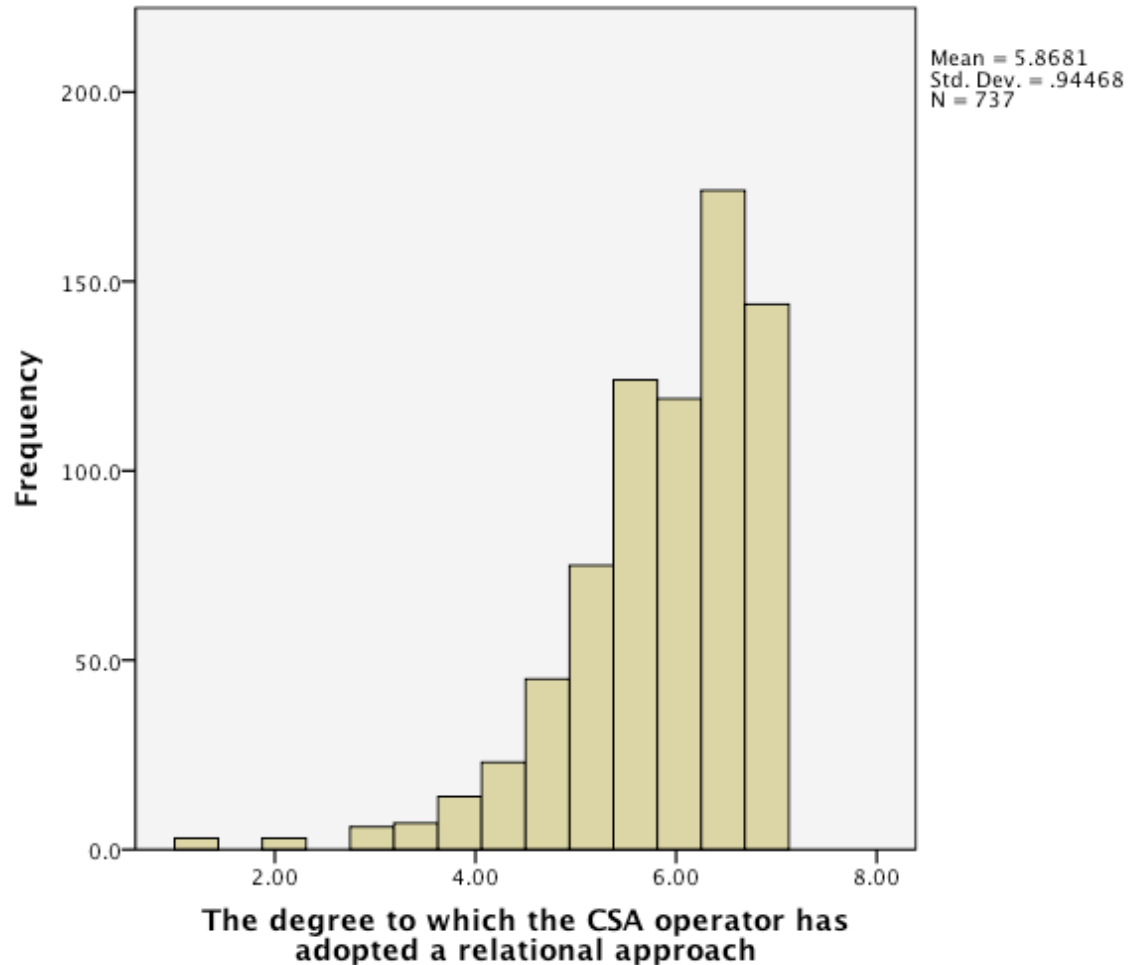
- **Survey of CSA operators**
- **Survey and measure development**
 - Draw from prior literature
 - Interviews and pretests
 - Pilot test (Sample: 100, Responses: 21)
- **CSA operators with an active listing in the LocalHarvest database (N = 4384)**
- **874 Responses (20%)**
- **After data cleaning, N=812**

CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH

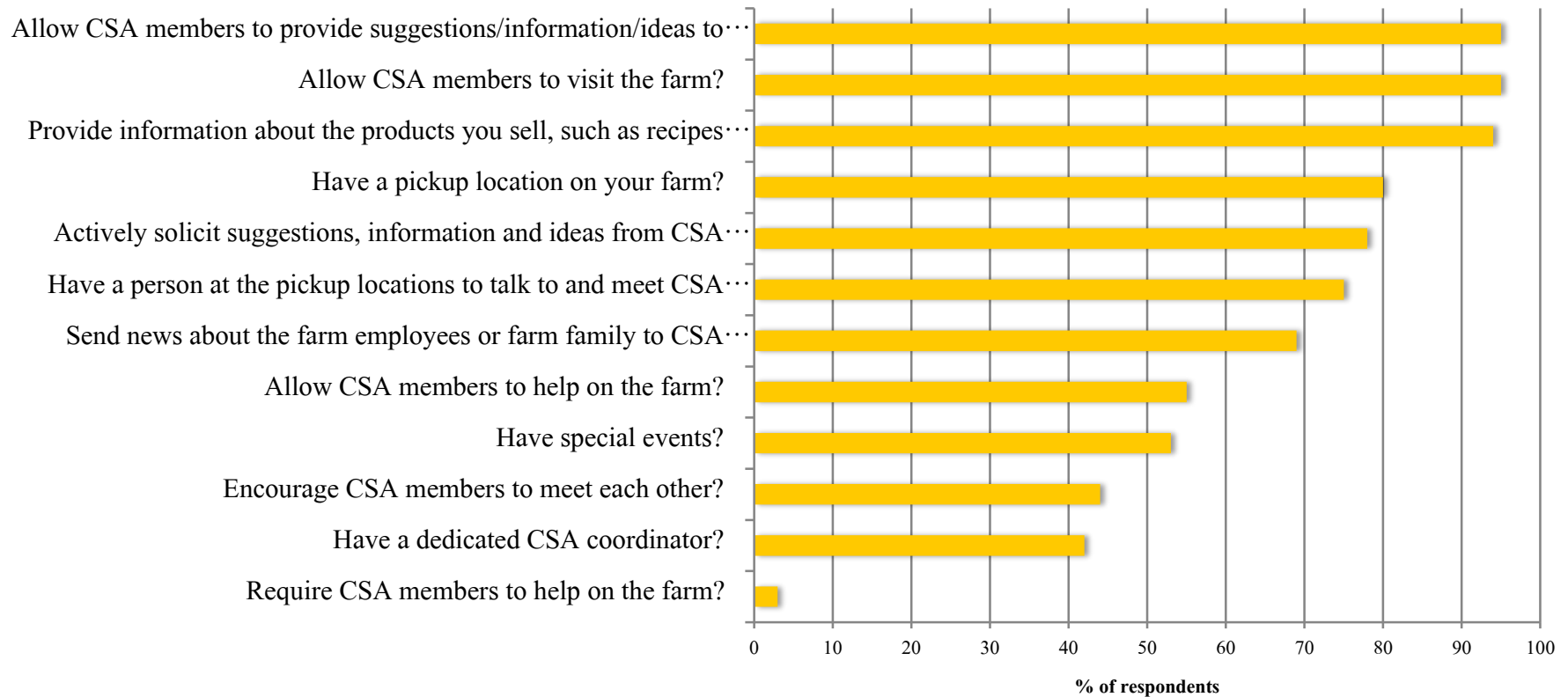
- **Multi-item measure, 7 item Likert scale, Cronbach alpha = 0.864**
- **Items**
 - In our CSA, the focus is on building long-term relationships with specific customers
 - Our CSA marketing communications involve personally interacting with individual customers
 - Our contact with our CSA customers is personal
 - When a customer signs up for our CSA, we believe they expect one-on-one personal contact with us.
 - When we meet our CSA customers, our interaction is informal and social.
 - Our CSA activities are intended to develop cooperative relationships with our customers.
 - Our CSA planning focuses on issues related to specific customers we deal with.
 - Our CSA resources (e.g. people, time, money) are invested in establishing and building personal relationships with individual customers.

(Adapted Modified from: Homburg, Mèuller, & Klarmann, 2011)

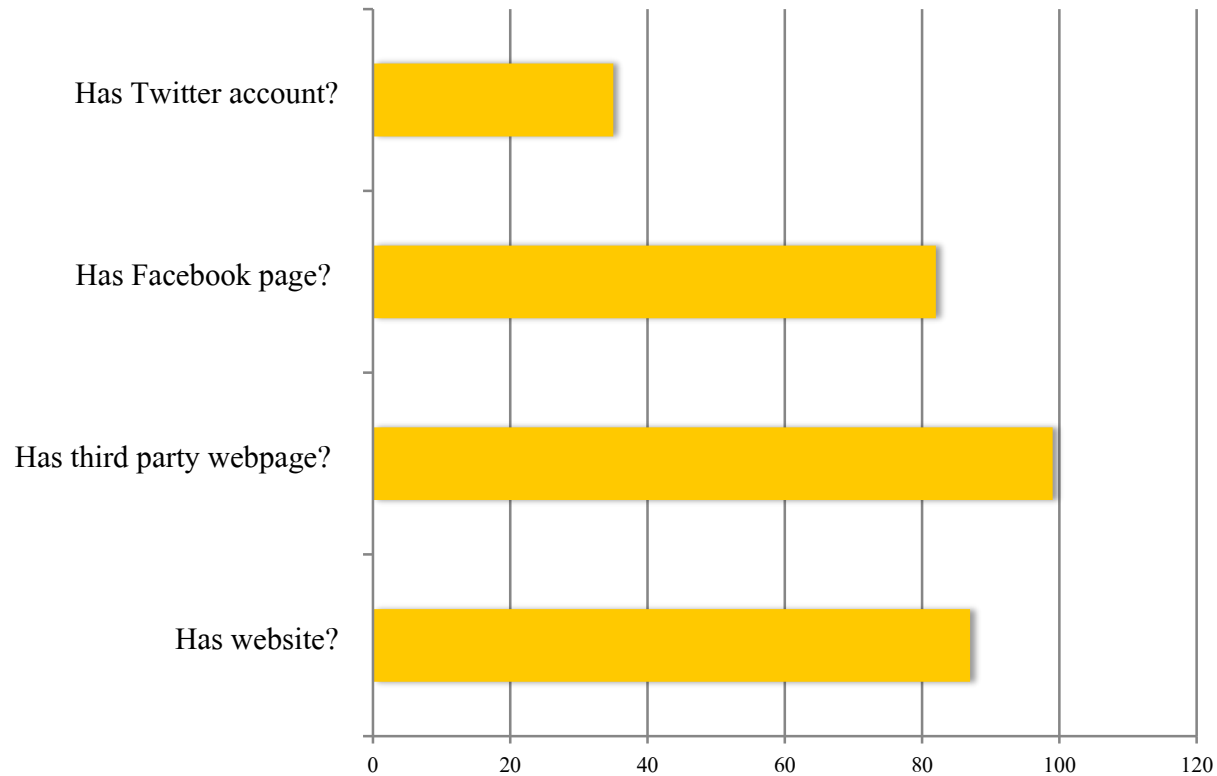
CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH



CSA RELATIONAL PRACTICES



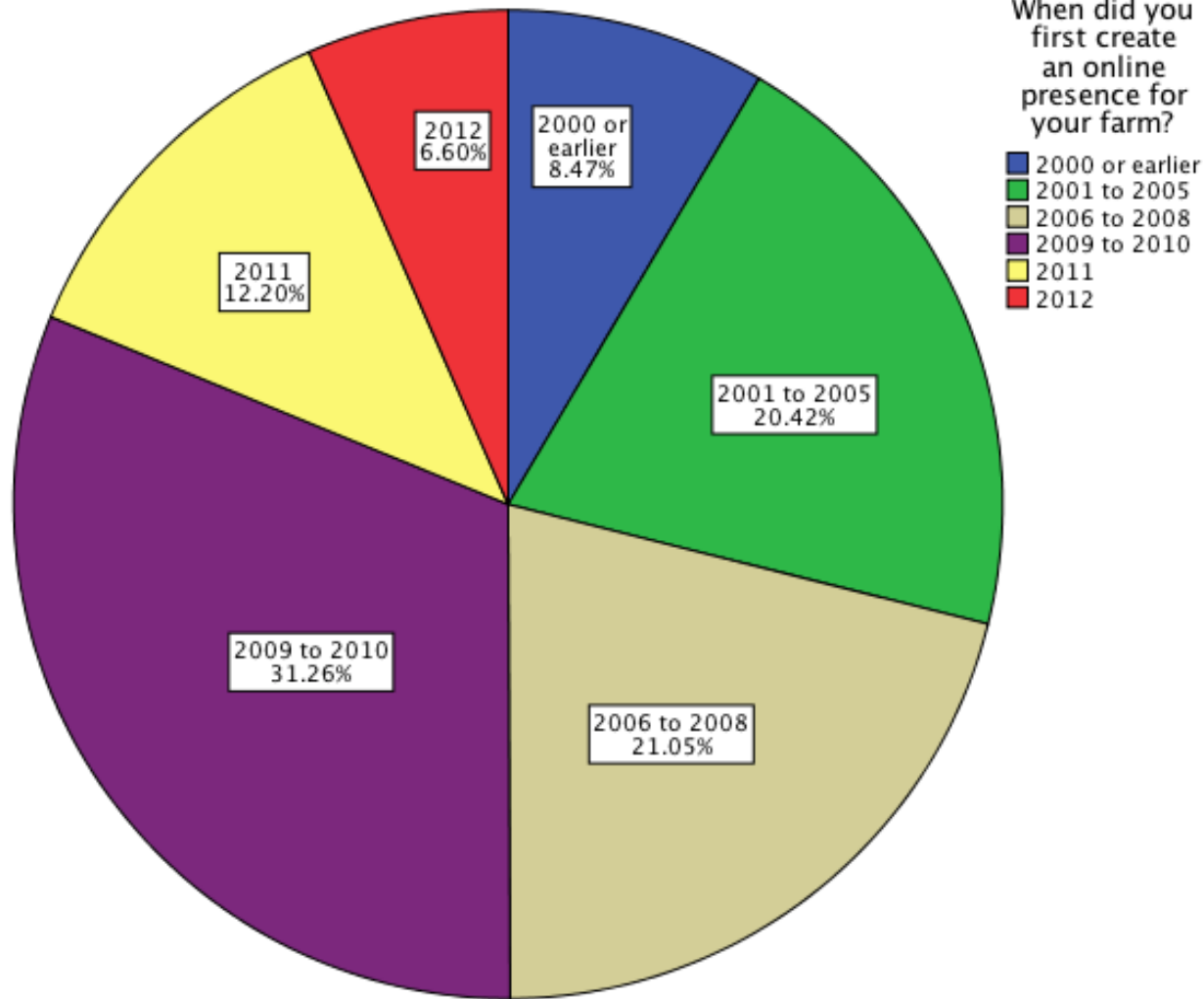
SOCIAL MEDIA INFRASTRUCTURE



SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

- How often is your website updated?
 - Mean Response: Between a few times a year and monthly
- How often is your third party webpage updated?
 - Mean Response: Less than a few times a year
- How often is your Facebook page updated?
 - Mean Response: Monthly – weekly
- How often is your Twitter account updated?
 - Mean Response: A few times - weekly

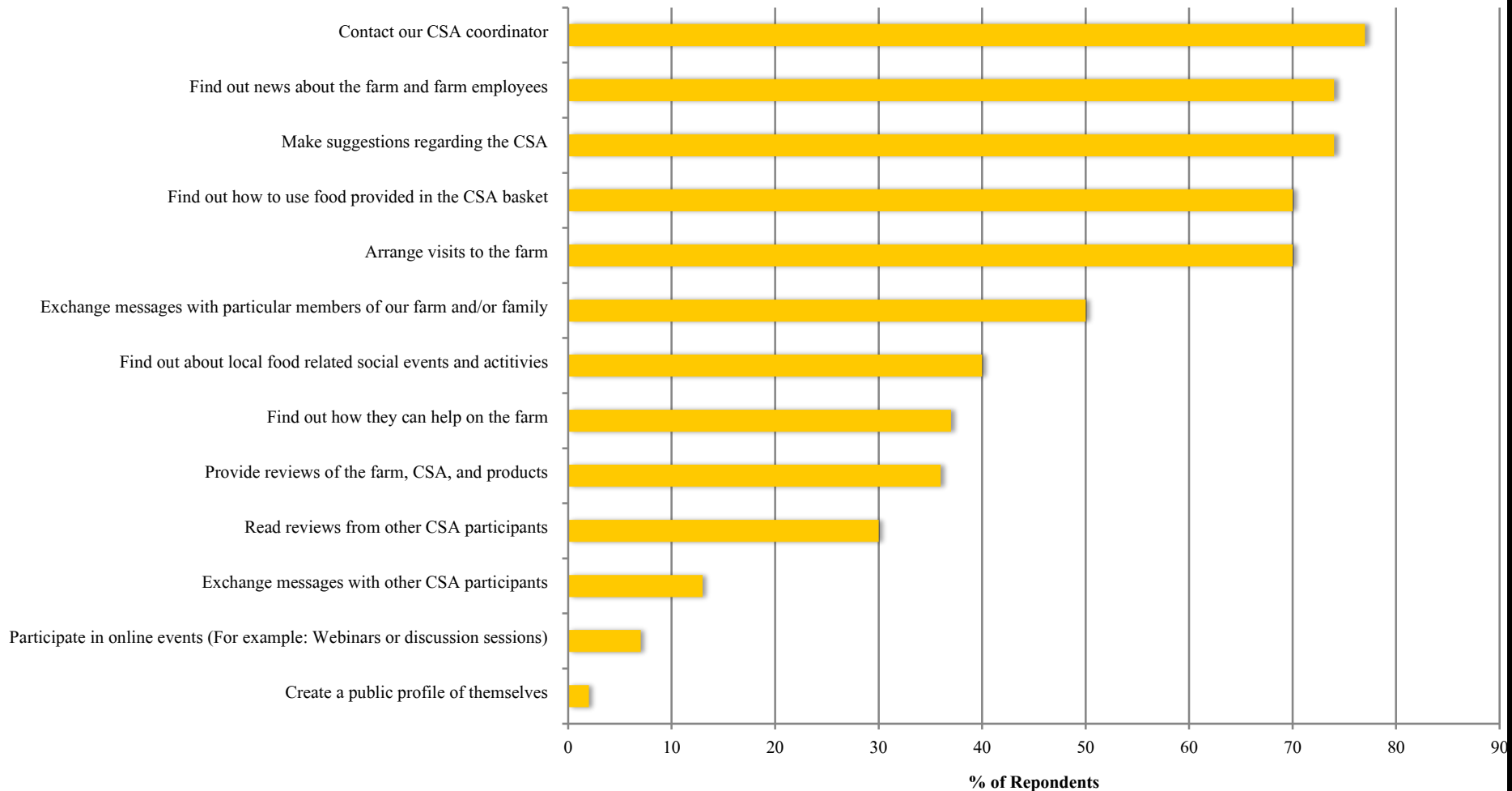
ONLINE PRESENCE – HOW LONG



TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE



RELATIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE

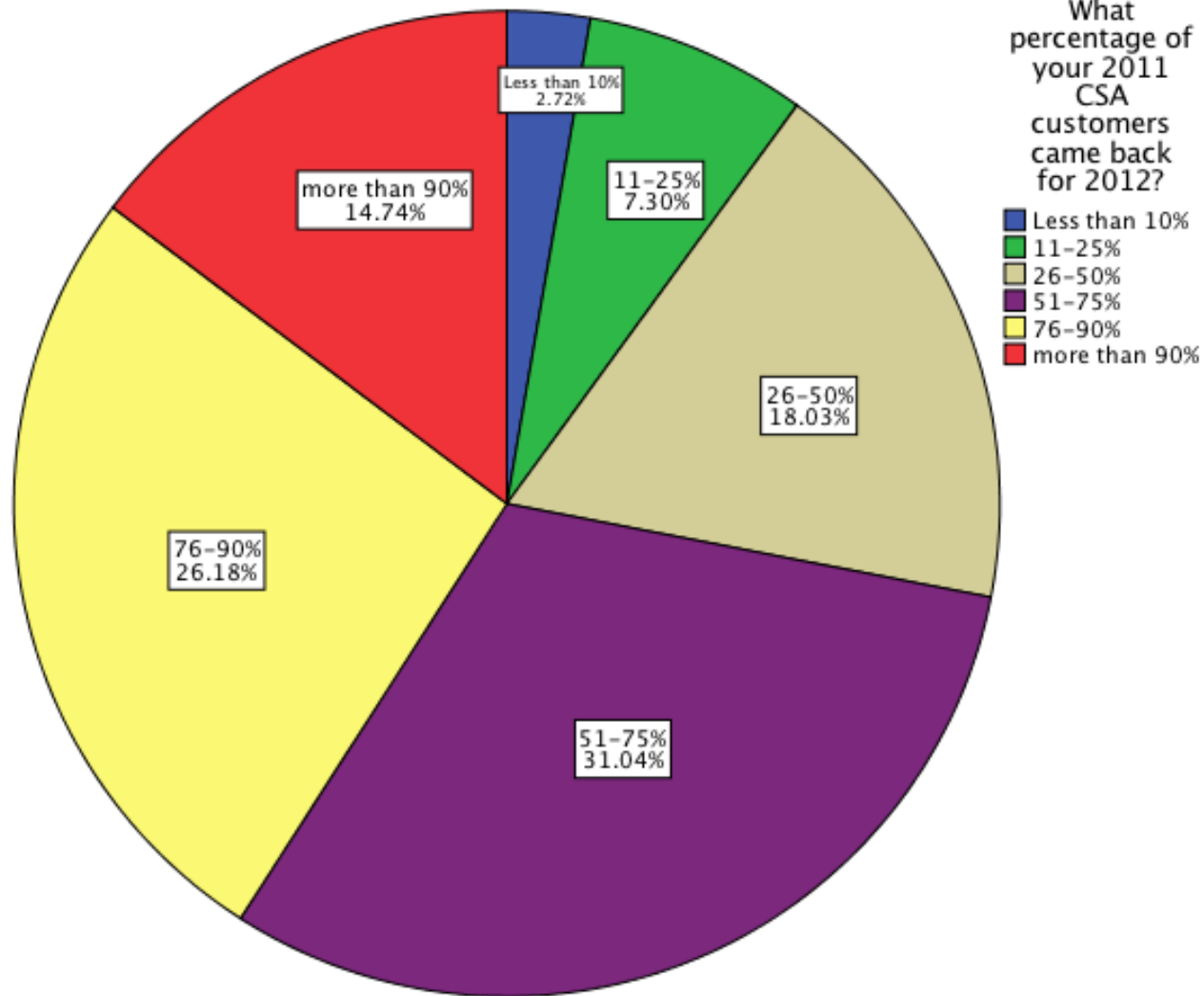


CSA OUTCOMES

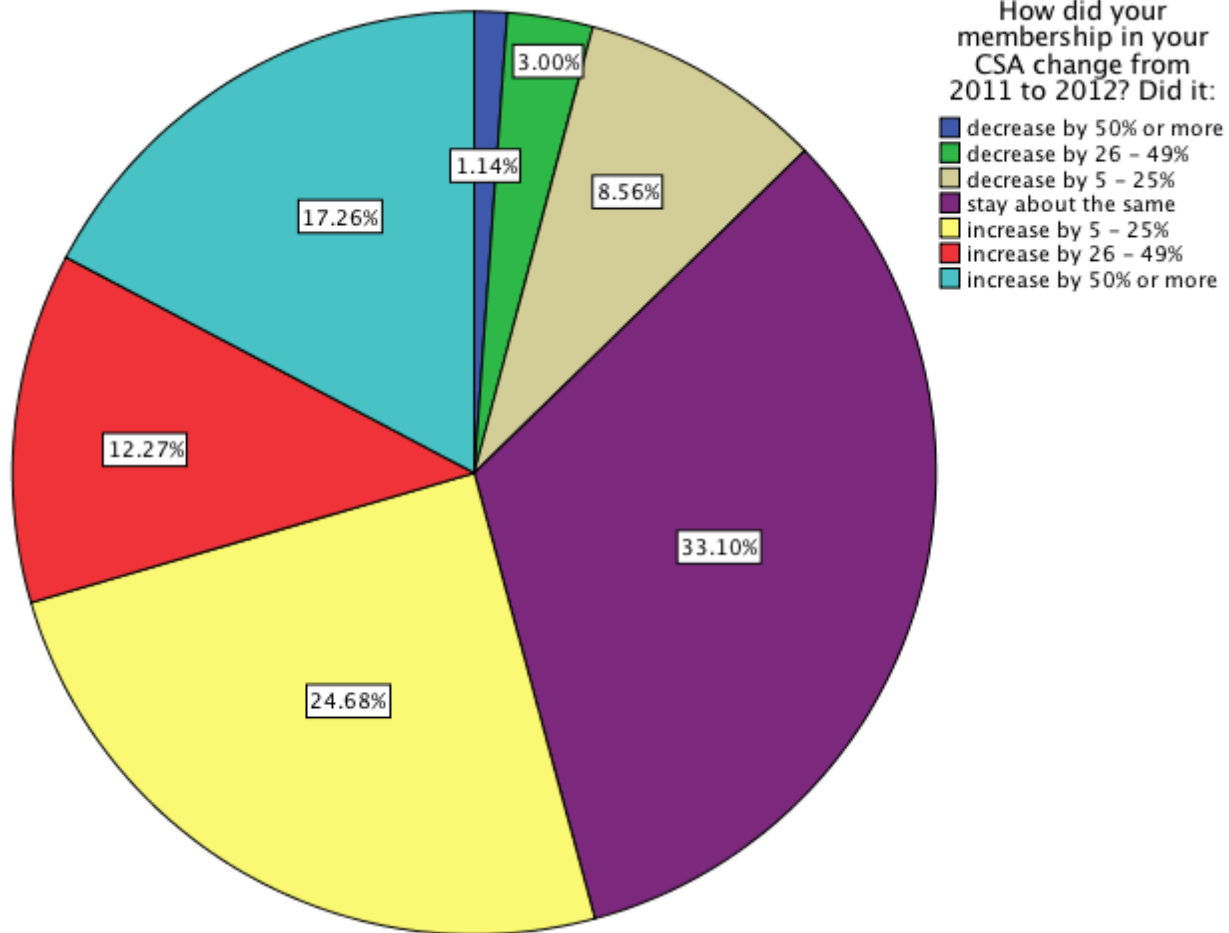
- **Financial outcomes**
- **Participant growth/acquisition [single item]**
- **Participant retention (i.e. turnover) [single item]**
- **Participant Satisfaction**
- **Product and Process efficiency**
- **Revenue, demand, and price uncertainty**
- **Farmer satisfaction with the CSA**

(Multi-item measures, 7 item Likert scale, unless otherwise noted)

PARTICIPANT RETENTION



PARTICIPANT GROWTH/DECLINE



OUTCOMES AND CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH

	CSA Relational Approach
Participant Retention	0.138**
Participant Growth	0.141**
Profitability of the CSA	0.142**
Product Quality Impacts	0.192**
Process Efficiency Impacts	0.185**
Participant Commitment (Affective)	0.542**
Revenue Stability	0.407**
Farmer Satisfaction with the CSA	0.201**

Partial correlation controlling for number of CSA participants.

** : $p \leq 0.001$

ONLINE PRESENCE AND CSA OUTCOMES

Has a website?

- Profitability (Higher) & Retention (Lower)

Has a Facebook page?

- None significant

Has a twitter account?

- None significant

How often ___ is updated

- Website & Participation Satisfaction (positively associated)
- Twitter & Participant Satisfaction (negatively associated)

TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CSA OUTCOMES

Sign up on line

- Lower retention

Pay online

- Lower retention, higher growth

Finding out pickup and location times

- Lower retention, higher growth

Find out what's in the upcoming box

- Higher process efficiency, Lower retention

Change Contact info

- None significant

Notification of a pickup

- Higher product quality, Higher farmer satisfaction, Higher retention

Select what is in the upcoming box

- Higher affective commitment, Higher retention

Results based on MANOVA analysis, N = 812

TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CSA OUTCOMES

- **Providing support for “passive consumer” activities online is associated with higher participant growth...and lower participant retention**
- **Active engagement and support for “active consumer” behavior is associated with higher participant retention**

RELATIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE AND CSA OUTCOMES

- **Contact the CSA coordinator**
 - Lower retention
- **Exchange messages with particular members of the farm/CSA**
 - Higher participant satisfaction and affective commitment
- **Find out about local food events, make suggestions about the CSA, arrange visits to the farm**
 - Not significant
- **Participant in online events**
 - Lower product, process outcomes
 - Lower revenue and demand stability
 - Higher affective commitment
- **Find out how they can help on the farm**
 - Higher product, process outcomes
 - Higher revenue and demand
 - Lower retention

CSA RELATIONAL FOCUS AND INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA CAPABILITIES

Comparing the likelihood of different transactional ICT capabilities across low, moderate, and high levels of relational focus:

- Sign up for the CSA
- Pay for the CSA
- Change their contact information
- **Receive a notification about a pickup (e.g., email, text)**
- Find out what will be in their basket for the next pickup
- **Select from available items for their next basket**
- Find out pickup locations/times
- Change pickup location/time

Only 25% (2/8) were significantly different.

CSA RELATIONAL FOCUS AND INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA CAPABILITIES

Comparing the likelihood of different relational ICT capabilities across low, moderate, and high levels of relational focus:

- Contact our CSA coordinator
- **Exchange messages with particular members of our farm and/or family**
- **Find out about local food related social events and activities**
- **Make suggestions regarding the CSA**
- **Arrange visits to the farm**
- **Participate in online events (e.g. Webinars or discussion sessions)**
- **Find out how they can help on the farm**
- Create a public profile of themselves
- Find out how to use food provided in the CSA basket
- Read reviews from other CSA participants
- **Provide reviews of the farm, CSA, and products**
- Exchange messages with other CSA participants
- Find out news about the farm and farm employees

In this case, 53% (7/13) were significantly different.

CONCLUSIONS

- **Its not just a matter of having social media infrastructure – it’s how you use it.**
- **Transactional capabilities**
 - Providing “set-up” activities online is associated with higher participant growth...and lower participant retention
 - Providing information and options for individuals boxes is associated with higher participant retention
- **Relational capabilities**
 - Non-trivial interactions with the logistical arrangements, relational practices, and CSA overall approach