

# Modeling Agricultural Logistics Distribution Center Location Based on ISM

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**Abstract**—Governments in many countries are applying themselves to improve life of peasants, and planning and building agricultural logistics distribution center is key content of New Countryside Construction in china nowadays. This paper uses theories and methods of Interpretative Structure Model (ISM) to discuss and analyze on agricultural logistics distribution center location. The first is to select main factors of modeling agricultural logistics distribution center location. The second is to map the relationship between all location factors with the aid of directional hierarchy graph and adjacency matrix. The third to construct the ISM of agricultural logistics distribution center location. The last is to explain the ISM for providing scientific and reasonable suggestions on the agricultural logistics distribution center location. Compared with urban logistics distribution center location, less research work has been done to agricultural logistics distribution center location, and ISM is seldom applied to study such issues. So, the fruit of research in this paper is a comparatively novel and meaningful work.

**Index Terms** --ISM ;agricultural logistics; logistics center location

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are many different approaches to discuss logistics distribution center location, such as genetic algorithm (George B. Vairaktarakis, 2003)[1], AHP (Umit Akinc, 2005) [2], Entropy Method (Kamlesh Mathur, 2007) [3], Fuzzy Neural Network (Katta G. Murty, 2006) [4], Hybrid PSO (Carlos F. Daganzo, 2009) [5]. Generally every approach is only regarded as either qualitative method or quantitative method[6-15]. Compared with other quantitative or qualitative methods, ISM (Interpretative Structure Modeling) combines quantitative with qualitative and majors in qualitative. Also, it has less component of uncertainty and more advantages than other qualitative analysis method. ISM belongs to a conceptual model, which can convert unclear and half-structure ideas into visualized model with good structure.

At present, most of the studies focused on urban logistics distribution center location, little for agricultural logistics distribution center location. There are many

interlocking factors that effect agricultural logistics distribution center location and the relation of these factors between each other is complex[16-21]. ISM is seldom applied to study such issues about modeling agricultural logistics distribution center location, so this is interesting and meaningful work.

Agricultural logistics starts lately and develops slowly. In recent years, in order to improve the life of farmers as much as possible, Chinese Government have introduced many policies and pour a large sum of money to develop and promote logistics of New Countryside Construction rapidly. Compared to industry logistics, agricultural logistics' requirements are higher, and the location selection factors are more complicated. The characteristics of agricultural logistics in China can be summarized in five words: "more", "casual", "weak", "large" and "high". Its specific performance appears in the following three areas[16], which can increase agricultural logistics cost, raise empty carrying rate of the vehicles in countryside, and slow velocity of circulation between countryside and city.

1) Links of the agricultural logistics nodes are "loose" and "casual", the scale of logistics operation is "weak" and the logistics nodes are "more", lacking of core businesses;

2) Logistics volume and the number of agricultural product varieties is very "large", and there are "large" different logistics capacity in different seasons;

3) There are "high" requirements of products' quality and logistics technology in the agricultural supply chain, which appears to be green logistic, and the logistics technology needs to be widely used in the packaging, processing, transportation and storage to ensure the quality and safety of agricultural products.

So, how to reduce logistics cost of agriculture and speed up circulation between countryside and city is one of the key factors that ensures improving the life of farmers. Naturally, agricultural logistics distribution center location of the New Countryside Construction has also be paid more attention to. In fact, from the year of 2008, how to design and plan agricultural logistics distribution center location has begun to get the wide

attention and deep concern from the Chinese Government and many experts on rural affairs. As a result, the research result in this paper has more theoretical and practical significance.

## II. BASIC WORKING PRINCIPLE OF ISM

### A. Theory and Method of ISM Technology

ISM, developed by J. White Felter professor in 1973[8], is used to analyze the problem related with the complex social economical system, whose feature is to decompose the complex system into some subsystems, using people's practical experience and knowledge, and finally construct the system of a multi-lever progressive structure model with the help of computer.

System structure based on ISM can be mapped by directional hierarchy graph (seen in Fig. 1) or adjacency matrix graph with  $m \times m$  (seen in Fig. 2). In this paper, we mainly adopt matrixes to describe system structure. In Fig. 2,  $m$  denotes number of system element,  $S_i$  denotes a row system element,  $S_j$  denotes a column system element, and sets matrix element  $a_{ij}$  to 1 while there is relation between  $S_i$  and  $S_j$ , or sets matrix element  $a_{ij}$  to 0.  $i \in [1, m]$ ,  $j \in [1, m]$ .

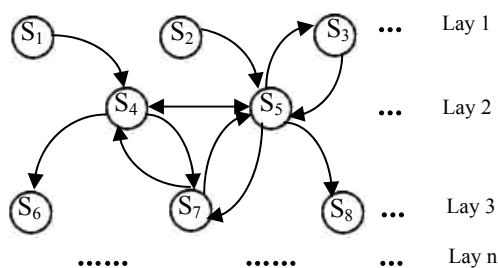


Figure 1. Directional hierarchy graph

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & \cdots & a_{1m} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & \cdots & a_{2m} \\ \cdots & \cdots & \cdots & \cdots \\ a_{m1} & a_{m2} & \cdots & a_{mm} \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 2. Adjacency matrix graph

### B. Working Steps of Building ISM

Main working steps of building ISM are shown as follows:

- 1) Organizing working group who are in charge of modeling work.
- 2) Proposing question
- 3) Choosing elements which constitute the system.
- 4) Constructing adjacency matrix and reachable matrix on the basis of key elements.
- 5) Establishing ISM after resolving the reachable matrix.
- 6) Making rational explanation according to ISM.

## III. ESTABLISHMENT ISM OF AGRICULTURAL LOGISTICS DISTRIBUTION CENTER LOCATION

### A. Chosing Key Factors of Agricultural Logistics Distribution Center Location

Based on "Brain Storm" from experts group and a lot of literature related with the research, the research group draws a total of 14 key factors (seen in Table (I) [22-25], which can largely determine the success of modeling agricultural logistics distribution center location. According to requirements of ISM, let elements of the collection is  $S$ , and  $S = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_{14}\}$ .

TABLE I.  
KEY FACTORS OF AGRICULTURAL LOGISTICS DISTRIBUTION CENTER LOCATION

No.	Key factor	No.	Key factor
$S_1$	Climate	$S_8$	Competitor condition
$S_2$	Hydrogeology	$S_9$	Traffic conditions of rural town
$S_3$	Topography	$S_{10}$	Situation of rural public infrastructure
$S_4$	Logistics service level	$S_{11}$	Condition of existing facilities
$S_5$	Supplier of agricultural product	$S_{12}$	Rural environment protection requirement
$S_6$	Rural market situation	$S_{13}$	National rural policy
$S_7$	Characteristics of agricultural products	$S_{14}$	Human resource

### B. Establishing Adjacency Matrix

Adjacency matrix is used to describe the relationship between the system elements. The element  $a_{ij}$  of adjacency matrix can be expressed as 0 or 1, matrix element  $a_{ij}=1$  on behalf of the  $S_i$  has a direct impact on the element  $S_j$ , or else  $a_{ij}=0$ . Based on the discussion and suggestion of experts group and working group members, the adjacency matrix  $A$  of the agricultural logistics distribution center location is established as Table II and Table III.

TABLE II.  
ADJACENCY MATRIX  $A$  (1)

	$S_1$	$S_2$	$S_3$	$S_4$	$S_5$	$S_6$	$S_7$
$S_1$	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
$S_2$	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
$S_3$	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
$S_4$	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
$S_5$	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
$S_6$	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
$S_7$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_8$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_9$	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
$S_{10}$	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
$S_{11}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{14}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE III.  
ADJACENCY MATRIX  $A(2)$

	$S_8$	$S_9$	$S_{10}$	$S_{11}$	$S_{12}$	$S_{13}$	$S_{14}$
$S_1$	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
$S_2$	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
$S_3$	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
$S_4$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_5$	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
$S_6$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_7$	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
$S_8$	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
$S_9$	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_{10}$	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
$S_{11}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
$S_{14}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### C. Constructing Reachable Matrix

According equations(1) and equation (2), by using rules of Boolean algebra ( $0+0=0$ ,  $0+1=1$ ,  $1+0=1$ ,  $1+1=1$ ,  $0 \times 0=0$ ,  $0 \times 1=0$ ,  $1 \times 0=0$ ,  $1 \times 1=1$ ) for operation, we can get the reachable matrix with aid of MATLAB 7. The reachable matrix  $M$  is shown in Table IV and Table V.

$$\begin{cases} A_i = (A+I)^i \dots\dots i \in [1, r] \\ M = A_{r-1} = A_r \dots\dots r \in [n-1, n] \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

TABLE IV.  
TREACHABLE MATRIX  $M(1)$

	$S_1$	$S_2$	$S_3$	$S_4$	$S_5$	$S_6$	$S_7$
$S_1$	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
$S_2$	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
$S_3$	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
$S_4$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_5$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_6$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_7$	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
$S_8$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_9$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_{10}$	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
$S_{11}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{14}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE V.  
TREACHABLE MATRIX  $M(2)$

	$S_8$	$S_9$	$S_{10}$	$S_{11}$	$S_{12}$	$S_{13}$	$S_{14}$
$S_1$	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
$S_2$	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
$S_3$	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
$S_4$	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_5$	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_6$	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_7$	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_8$	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_9$	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
$S_{10}$	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
$S_{11}$	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
$S_{14}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

### D. Obtaining Reachable Sets, Antecedent Sets and Factor Set of Highest Level

By mean of reachable sets  $R(S_i)$  and antecedent sets  $A(S_i)$ , we can obtain factor sets of highest level as  $L(S_i)$  (seen in Table VI).

TABLE VI.  
FIRST-CLASS REACHABLE SET AND ANTECEDENT SET

	$R(S_i)$	$A(S_i)$	$L(S_i)$
$S_1$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3$	$S_1, S_2, S_3$
$S_1$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3$	$S_1, S_2, S_3$
$S_1$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3$	$S_1, S_2, S_3$
$S_4$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8$
$S_5$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8$
$S_6$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8$
$S_7$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_7$	$S_7$
$S_8$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8$
$S_9$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_9, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_9$	$S_9$
$S_{10}$	$S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_{10}$	$S_{10}$
$S_{11}$	$S_{11}$	$S_{11}$	$S_{11}$
$S_{12}$	$S_{11}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{13}$	$S_{12}$
$S_{13}$	$S_{12}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{13}$	$S_{13}$
$S_{14}$	$S_{14}$	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_7, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{13}, S_{14}$	$S_{14}$

In Table VI,  $L(S_i)=R(S_i)\cap A(S_i)$ , and there are the related three kinds of data sets described as follows.

1) *Reachable sets:*

In reachable matrix  $M$ , if all the corresponding row elements of  $S_i$  are 1, all factors of the corresponding column gather to constitute Antecedent sets  $R(S_i)$ .

2) *Antecedent set:*

If all the corresponding column elements of  $S_i$  are 1 in reachable matrix  $M$ , all factors of the corresponding row gather to constitute antecedent sets  $A(S_i)$ .

3) *Factor sets of highest level*

After finding out  $L(S_i)$ , delete corresponding rows and columns from reachable matrix, then continue searching for new  $L(S_i)$  from the remaining reachable matrix till find out no  $L(S_i)$  from every level. All the highest level sets founded from every level constitute  $\{L(S_i)\}$ .

### E. Generating Reduced Reachable Matrix

Through sets division, we can get reachable matrix  $M_0$  ordered by set level  $L(S_i)$ , which is shown in Table VII and Table VIII. After levels division, there may be strongly connected sets among all levels. The sets communicating with each other are called strongly connected blocks at the same level elements in the same region. For example, in Table VII and Table VIII, there are sets with strongly connected blocks such as  $\{S_4, S_5, S_6, S_8\}$  and  $\{S_1, S_2, S_3\}$ .

TABLE VII.  
REACHABLE MATRIX  $M_0$  (1)

	$S_{11}$	$S_{12}$	$S_{14}$	$S_{13}$	$S_4$	$S_5$	$S_6$
$S_{11}$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{14}$	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
$S_4$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_5$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_6$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_8$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_7$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_9$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_{10}$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_1$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_2$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
$S_3$	0	1	1	1	1	1	1

TABLE VIII.  
REACHABLE MATRIX  $M_0$  (2)

	$S_8$	$S_7$	$S_9$	$S_{10}$	$S_1$	$S_2$	$S_3$
$S_{11}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{14}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_4$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_5$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_6$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_8$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_7$	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
$S_9$	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
$S_{10}$	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
$S_1$	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
$S_2$	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
$S_3$	1	0	1	1	1	1	1

All elements strongly connected blocks contact with each other among  $M_0$  and then constitute a loop, which can be selected as a representative. In such a way of ordering and sorting,  $S_4$  and  $S_1$  as the representative elements respectively, we can get the reduced reachable matrix  $M_1$  (seen in Table IX).

TABLE IX.  
REDUCED REACHABLE MATRIX  $M_1$

	$S_{11}$	$S_{12}$	$S_{14}$	$S_{13}$	$S_4$	$S_7$	$S_9$	$S_{10}$	$S_1$
$S_{11}$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{12}$	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{14}$	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$S_{13}$	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
$S_4$	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
$S_7$	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
$S_9$	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
$S_{10}$	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
$S_1$	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1

### F. Establishing Hierarchical Structure Model

According to the conclusion from Table IX, we can map directional hierarchy graph, and get the hierarchical structure model of agricultural logistics distribution center location (shown in Fig. 3), where  $S_0$  denotes the element of locating agricultural logistics distribution center.

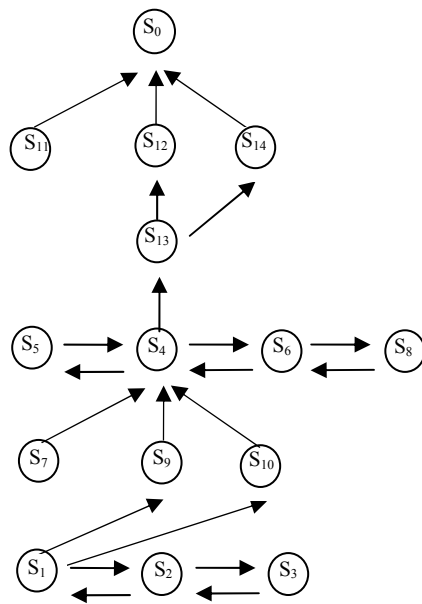


Figure 3. Hierarchical structure model

#### G. Factors Analysis Of Agricultural Logistics Distribution Center Location Based on ISM

Based on the above hierarchical structure model, we can obtain the corresponding ISM, which is shown in Fig. 4. From Fig. 4, we can differ influence degree of every factor that affects agricultural logistics distribution center location and the relationship among all factors.

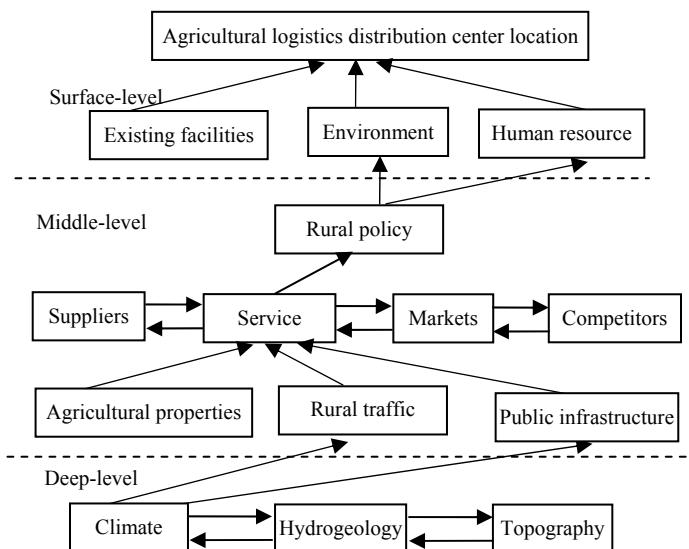


Figure 4. Explanative structure model based on ISM

In Fig. 4, all the factors are divided into three categories according to their influence degree on agricultural logistics distribution center location: Surface-level factors, middle-level factors and deep-level factors. Observe from the figure, we can obtain the three categories with detail as follows: Surface-level factors include status of existing facilities, requirements of rural environmental protection, human resource; middle-level

factors include national rural policy environment, the condition of agricultural product suppliers, logistics service level, rural market situation, competitors, characteristics of agricultural products, traffic conditions of rural town and the condition of rural public infrastructure; deep-level factors include climate, hydrogeology and topography.

Among the three categories, deep-level factors play the most important role in the agricultural logistics distribution center location, middle-level factors play less role, and surface-level factors play the least role.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Analyzing from the above ISM, We can made the following recommendations aim at how scientifically and reasonably to locate agricultural logistics distribution center.

- Climate, hydrogeology and topography are the deepest factors that mainly affect agricultural logistics distribution center location. Besides, these three factors affect construction of rural traffic and rural public infrastructure directly. Therefore, decision-makers should start to make a feasibility analysis on deep factors such as climate, hydrogeology and topography.
- There are more complex relationships derived from large number middle-level factors such as rural policy, supplier of agricultural product, logistics service level, rural market situation and human resource. Decision-makers should understand the relationship among middle-level factors especially with the strong connected block. If climate is available, and hydrogeology and topography can also meet the requirements of logistic center location, traffic conditions of rural town and situation of rural public infrastructure should make further improvement as soon as possible.
- With further promotion and development of New Countryside Construction, the Chinese Governments pay more attention to and pours huge amount of money into construction of rural logistics infrastructure. However, Compared with urban logistics distribution center location, less research work has been done to agricultural logistics distribution center location, especially in China. Development of Chinese agricultural logistics is just in the early stage, which needs the support of the governments and various walks of society to create favorable conditions and harmonious environments for agricultural logistics distribution center location. Because the ISM technology is seldom applied to study such issues about modeling agricultural logistics distribution center location, so this research is interesting, meaningful and exploratorywork, and the result of research in this paper is just for reference.

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