



Extension Study of The Desires of Local and Imported Chicken Consumers in The City of Kut in Iraq

دراسة ارشادية لرغبات مستهلكي الدجاج المحلي والمستورد في مدينة الكوت بالعراق

Ali Hashim Abdulrazzaq & Mohammed Ali Makki Jasim Al-Rubaei

Faculty of Agriculture - Wasit University- Iraq

alihashim@uowasit.edu.iq - momaki@uowasit.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT: Poultry meat is a complete source of protein, iron and minerals, and is also cheaper than red meat. In recent years, the poultry meat market in Iraq has been developing significantly and with this large production and unlimited access to fresh poultry meat in addition to the increasing health care, the consumer is looking for products that. It is characterized by very good quality. The study aimed to compare consumers' desires for local and imported chicken in the city of Kut. The criteria that consumers use when purchasing it based on surveys carried out on 150 respondents. This study belongs to the descriptive studies that describe the desires of consumers for local and imported chicken in the city of Kut. The results indicated that most of the people surveyed consumed local chicken meat with a rate of (72.7%), and that consumers preferred the whole carcass at a rate of (91%). Consumers are guided first and foremost by the freshness of the meat, then its price, as (80%) of the respondents chose chicken for its appropriate price, and (66.35%) of them chose a specific weight that suits them to purchase a chicken carcass. Also, (94.4%) of the respondents chose frozen chicken based on taste and smell. The results also indicated that almost half of the respondents preferred to buy live chicken, while the percentage of those who preferred to buy frozen chicken was (41.3%), provided that it be of local origin. Buying high-quality poultry meat, the respondents first expect higher health safety, then higher nutritional value and better palatability when buying poultry meat, while (64.9%) of the respondents indicated the importance of the expiration date affixed to the frozen chicken carcass. The most important recommendations included working to improve local productivity in the poultry industry that competes with imported ones. As well as introducing producers to safety controls and standards in accordance with international recommendations through agricultural extension programs directed to them.

Keywords: Local Chicken, Imported Chicken, Kut City, Consumer Desires

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural extension does not work in the countryside only, but rather extends its work to cities, where it works to conduct research that represents feedback on what the farm produces and rural workers, including farmers and those with professions related to agriculture, and the extent of palatability, acceptance or rejection, and works to guide producers to improve their products (Al-Habal: 2021), and contributed Affordability in the poultry meat industry is the choice of consumers around the world, especially in developing countries. Poultry and chicken meat products are globally popular, which can be explained by the fact that high-quality chicken products are available at reasonable prices, although production costs may vary. Poultry products, especially chicken products, are consumed mainly in Iraq, as the consumption and demand for poultry meat has increased significantly in Iraq in the past two decades. This increase in demand for poultry meat began after the economic boom in the region after 2003,

which left a large gap between demand and local agricultural production and led to an increase in food imports from abroad. (Eleroglu et al.: 2013).

The rise of food imports has familiarized local consumers with international standards for food quality, product safety, and food packaging. These changes must have influenced consumer behavior and preference in Iraq. Consumers evaluate meat primarily based on visual impressions and smell. One of these attributes is the fatness of meat. If it is too high, it causes frustration for the consumer to buy it. Poultry meat is a food item that is visually evaluated, and which the consumer cares about. The color and structure of the meat are of great importance.

Consumers prefer first and foremost meat of red color, as well as natural carcasses of yellow color, which is associated with the origin of meat from breeding by unconventional methods and proper nutrition of the animal. Important sensory attributes that can be evaluated after heat

treatment and meat consumption include meat palatability, which includes the taste and smell of meat as well as juiciness, which is the opposite of dryness or moisture and tenderness of meat and is one of the parameters of meat texture (Salawu et al.: 2014). Poultry meat consumers are more and more concerned about the quality and safety conditions of raw materials and products offered on the market (Aral et al.:2013). Consumers attach increasing importance to the quality of raw materials and products offered on the market. As well as good quality of poultry, they are also associated with a higher level of health safety, i.e. raw materials free of pathogenic microorganisms and physical substances and contaminations (Ayesha and Khadijah: 2017).

THE STUDY PROBLEM:

With the high production quantity and unlimited access to fresh poultry meat as well as with the increasing concern for health, poultry meat and the standards used by consumers when purchasing it (Castilini et al.: 2008). Although chicken meat is widely consumed throughout Iraq, studying consumer preferences for chicken meat is considered a determining factor for strategies to develop poultry production to fill the gaps in local demand and global competition in the market. This research will provide vital information regarding this issue by comparing consumer desires for local and imported chicken in the city of Kut. This study examines consumer preference and demand for chicken meat in terms of the variety, size, color, and taste of chicken meat, and some other vital aspects that the consumer takes into consideration when purchasing chicken meat.

PREVIOUS STUDIES:

Livestock constitutes an important aspect of the agricultural sector, as its importance is no less important than the plant aspect, as livestock production is of great importance to agricultural income and contributes to about 45% of the total Iraqi agricultural income. Given the population increases in developing countries, including Iraq, the low production and productivity of the agricultural sector, the deterioration of the underlying structures, and the many structural imbalances, the sectors of these countries suffer from difficulties and problems that hinder their development process. Among these problems is the scarcity of capital and the large supply of unskilled labor. Local production is not sufficient to meet the need and the demand for meat in general and poultry meat in particular increases (Al-Hayali: 1988), which necessitated the import of large quantities of it to fill the deficit in the agricultural supply of this product. This problem has expanded after the difficulty of obtaining

poultry feed and other necessary supplies due to their high prices and poor quality that are imported by the private sector. It has also caused a large waste of foreign currencies, in addition to the risks of relying on external sources to provide the population's needs for consumer goods, which has constituted a burden. In addition to the challenges facing Iraq, in addition to the factors that led to an increase in demand for this agricultural product, and the high prices of red meat led most individuals to consume poultry meat because of the nutrients it contains that are necessary for human life, such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and other nutrients, so it is necessary to conduct many research and studies, including analyzing the demand functions for poultry meat, in order to be able to reach results that serve the poultry industry and the development of livestock, as well as plant production in the country, in order to increase the supply of this product in order to achieve the desired goal of achieving self-sufficiency in its consumption. The problem of the research was summarized in the decrease in the quantities supplied of locally produced poultry meat to cover the increasing demand for it annually due to the decrease in its production locally on the one hand and the increase in the size of the population and the rise in the prices of red meat on the other hand, and then resorting to importing this meat to fill the deficit in the local supply and this.

The matter burdened the state budget. Its importance stems from the importance of poultry meat as one of the important food sources that is rich in many nutrients necessary for human life, such as proteins and others (Donald and Malon:1981). A study entitled "Technical and Economic Feasibility Study of Broiler Production Projects in the Central Region of Iraq" was conducted and showed that local production of poultry meat is not sufficient to meet the needs of the population, and that it is constantly decreasing during the period studied. The increase in demand for proteins from animal sources in systems is related to Chicken and poultry meat products are widespread throughout the world, especially in developing countries (Alazawi and Aljumaili, :2020). World popularity, which can be explained by the fact that high quality chicken products are available at reasonable prices, although their production costs may vary (Chen and Antonelli:2020) Poultry products especially chicken products are mainly consumed in Iraq.

Poultry meat consumption and demand have increased significantly in Iraq in the past two decades (Elsesy et al.:2015). The increase in demand for poultry meat began after the

economic boom in the region after 2003, which left a large gap between demand and local agricultural production and led to an increase in food imports from abroad (Fischer-Tahir: 2021). This increase is related to the rise in demand for poultry products coupled with the increase in import of chicken meat from abroad, which may affect continued growth in Iraq (Hasan et al.:2019). The impact of the rise in food imports on consumer behavior and preference in Iraq. Although chicken meat is widely consumed in Iraq, consumer demands for purchase and consumption were not quantitative.

Understanding consumer demands and the nature of their consumption provides the necessary scope for marketers and how to effectively position their products and services in relevant market sectors. This is crucial to enhancing the functioning of commodity value chains by establishing and maintaining exchange relationships that meet consumer needs (Mohammed et al.: 2020). Studying consumer preferences for chicken meat is a determining

will provide vital information regarding this issue by determining the preference for chicken meat by the residents of Kut city. This study examines consumer preference and demand for chicken meat in terms of the variety, size, color, and taste of chicken meat, and some other vital aspects that the consumer takes into consideration when purchasing chicken meat.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The study was conducted in the city of Kut in the Wasit Governorate in Iraq. The city of Kut is located on the banks of the Tigris River, about (180 km) south of the capital, Baghdad, and represents the administrative center of the Wasit Governorate, as in Figure No. (1). The area of Wasit Governorate is estimated at about (17,153 km²) and constitutes It represents 4% of the area of Iraq (441,000 km²). Wasit Governorate is also famous for the production of foodstuffs, especially grains such as wheat, barley, sesame, dates, and vegetable crops. It is also characterized by the spread of poultry and



factor for poultry production development strategies to fill the gaps in local demand and global competition in the market. This research

fisheries industry projects.

Fig. (1) Map of Iraq showing Wasit Governorate.

Source: Wasit Agriculture Directorate:2023.

Study Population and Sample

The study population represents the population of Wasit Governorate, and their number is estimated according to the results of the population statistics for the year 2014 to be approximately (1,032,838) people. The urban population reached (539,692) people, amounting to 52.4% of the total population. While the population of the city of Kut is 422 thousand people (Iraqi Ministry of Planning: 2020). A number of (150) consumers of poultry meat were

selected in the study area from the entire research community

Data Collection and Methodology

The concept of the method is the method used by the researcher to address the subject of the study to reach the scientific truth (Rashad: 2014). This study belongs to a group of descriptive studies that seek to describe the desires of consumers for local and imported chicken in the Kut city. Data was collected during the period March - June 2023, and reliance was placed on collecting data

for the study through primary sources represented by the questionnaire as a basic tool with the interview, in addition to secondary sources represented by reference books and reports. The questionnaire for the study was constructed by reviewing the study's literature and previous studies related to the research topic to identify on the most important factors related to consumer preferences in order to determine the axes of the research tool and its formulation. After completing the construction of the questionnaire for the study, it was presented to a group of arbitrators specialized in the field of study in order to ensure the adequacy of the study tool in terms of its connection to the objectives of the study and the suitability of each paragraph for the

field. In which it was written and the suitability of each paragraph to measure what it was written for, the number of paragraphs, their comprehensiveness, and the diversity of their content, evaluating the level of linguistic formulation and production, and adding any suggestions or amendments they deem appropriate. To calculate the reliability degrees of the items for each axis of the questionnaire, the reliability of the data related to the internal and external factors studied was analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha method, as in Table No. (1), where it was found that the axis measures exceeded the recommended level of reliability (0.75). , which indicates a very good level of reliability (0.825).

Table (1) Reliability of data using Cronbach's alpha

N of items	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized	Cronbach's alpha
8	0.840	0.825

The data for the study, which was collected through the questionnaire, was transcribed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, and the following statistical tests were used:

- Cronbach's Alpha test to calculate the reliability scores of the questionnaire's axis items.
- Arithmetic averages to describe the research variables.
- Percentages and frequencies to describe the research variables.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

First: Identifying the personal characteristics of the respondents using frequencies and percentages:

This section dealt with the statistical analysis of the personal characteristics of the respondents that are related to the subject of the study, which represented the following characteristics: gender, age of the respondents, marital status, educational level, type of profession, and total monthly income using frequencies and percentages. The results were as follows:

Table (2) represents the personal characteristics of the respondents with frequencies and percentages

Variable	Category	Frequency	%	Mean	Rang	S.D
Gender	Male	94	62.4			0,485
	Female	56	37.6			
	Total	150	%100			
Age year	30-15	90	59.6	31,523	43	13,201
	45-30	27	17.9			
	60-45	33	22.5			
	Total	150	%100			
Marital status	Married	104	69.3	2,666	2	0,526
	Single	42	28.2			
	Other	4	2.5			
	Total	150	%100			
education	Literate	14	9,3	7,59	15	5,064
	Reads and writes	30	20			
	Primary	48	31,7			
	Secondary	38	25,2			
	University	20	13,8			
Total	150	%100				
Occupation	Student	17	11.4	4,680	6	2,183
	Officer	13	8.6			
	Free	29	19.3			

	Doctor	5	3.4			
	Engineer	11	7.6			
	Employed	28	18.7			
	Handyman	47	31			
	Total	150	%100			
Monthly income	Low income	84	56.2			
	Average income	58	38.6	1,49	2	0,599
	High income	8	5.2			
	Total	150	%100			

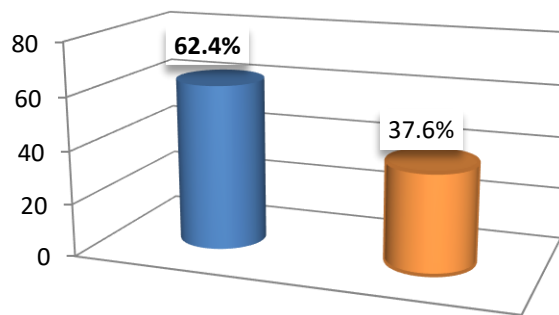
Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

1- Gender:

Figure No. (1) shows the type of respondents in the study sample, as the number of males reached (94), with a percentage of (62.4%). This indicates that the research sample was mostly male, while the number of females was (56), with a percentage of (37.6). % The reason may be due to the lack of women’s movement, mobility, and presence in public places, which is caused by many factors, including family traditions, raising

children, and taking care of them. It must be noted that the recent developments that the world is witnessing, which are accelerating in all aspects of social, economic, cultural, and technological life, must reconsider grants to women. Its status and positive and active role in participating in building, developing and advancing society. Figure No. (1) shows the percentage of the type of respondents in the study sample.

Figure No. (1) Distribution of respondents according to gender



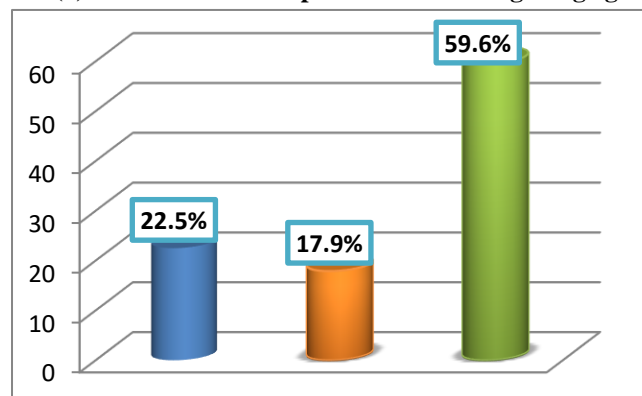
Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

2- Age of The Respondents:

It is clear from Figure No. (2) the distribution of the ages of the respondents into the three age groups, as it was found that most of the respondents are young people aged (15-45) years, at a rate of (77.5%), and that the majority of them are from the first age group (15-35). years, with a

percentage of (59.6%). This indicates that most of the study sample are from the promising youth category, and this category within the adoption categories represents the group that enjoys the ease of adopting innovations and information, especially in the field of choosing good foods, food security, and other modern areas in society.

Figure No. (2) Distribution of respondents according to age groups



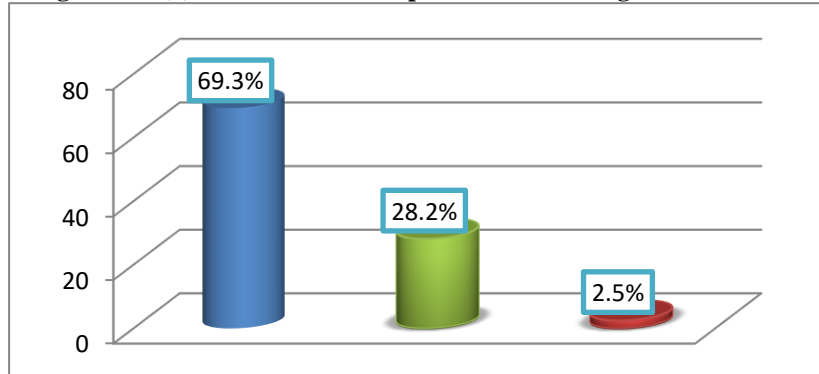
Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

3- Social Status:

Figure No. (3) shows the distribution of respondents according to marital status, which includes three social categories. Most of the respondents (69.3%) were married, while the category of unmarried (single) amounted to

(28.2%) of the total respondents. This represents that Those who have a family are the largest respondents in this study, which explains their consumption of local and imported chicken meat, as families are more consumers than individuals.

Figure No. (3) Distribution of respondents according to marital status



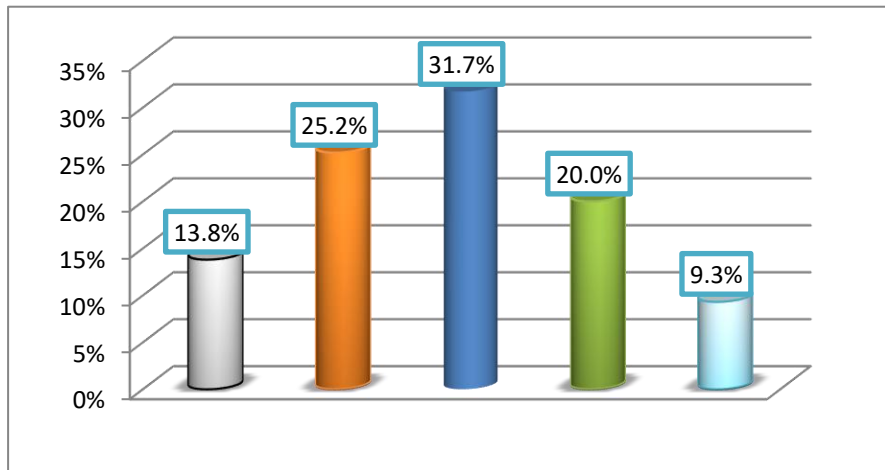
Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data

4- Educational Level:

Figure No. (4) shows the distribution of the respondents according to their educational level, which shows that the majority of the respondents (61%) are illiterate or have a simple level of education. This indicates that the majority A

percentage of the respondents were from the uneducated category, which may affect their choices in consuming poultry meat, while the percentage of those who obtained university education did not exceed (13.8%) of the total respondents in this study.

Figure No. (4) the distribution of respondents according to educational level



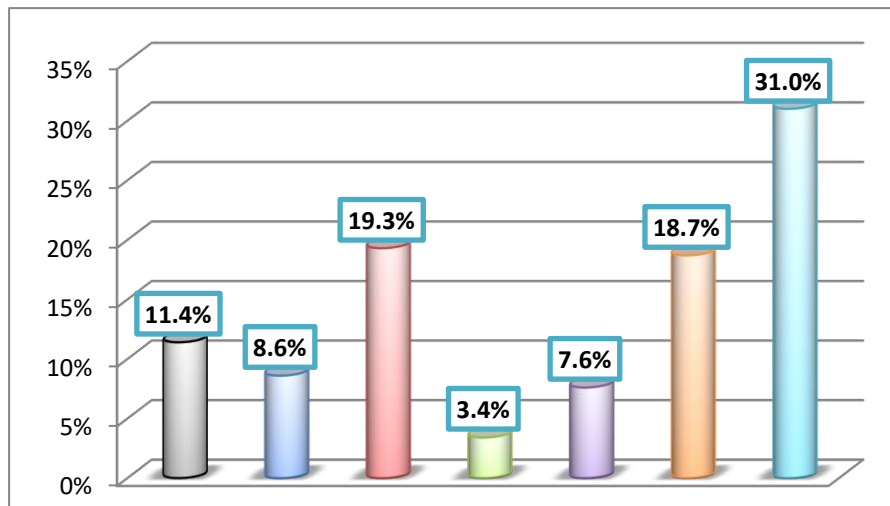
Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

5- Profession:

Figure No. (5) shows the distribution of respondents according to the profession or work in which the respondents work, which divided the respondents into seven social categories according to profession, which shows that the majority of the respondents (57.6%) of the respondents work in the public and governmental sectors and who represent the categories of employee, engineer, and doctor. The number of self-employed and

police officers was (10, 11, 5, 29, and 13), respectively, while the earning respondents had the highest percentage, as their number reached (47) respondents, representing (31%) of the study sample. This indicates that most of the respondents have a job that they do and are able to do. Purchasing poultry meat available in the market, given its competitive and appropriate prices compared to other meats.

Figure No. (5) distribution of respondents according to the profession



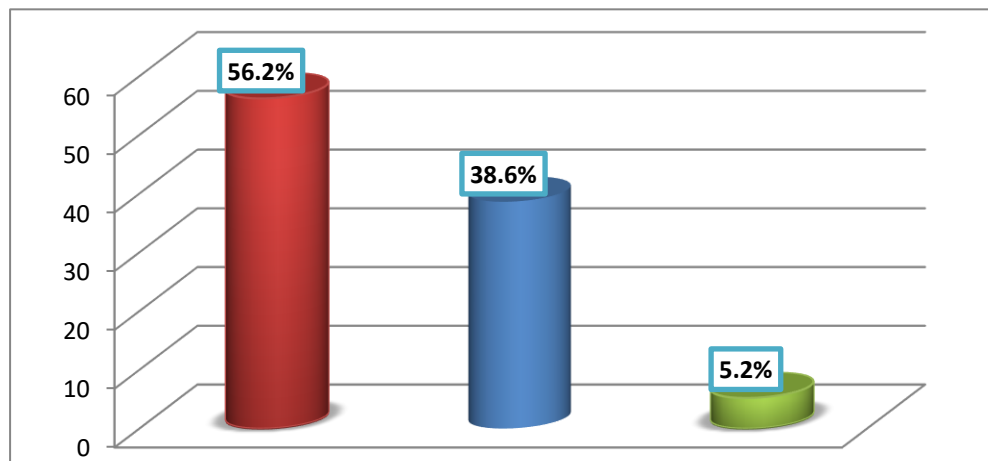
Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

6- Monthly Income:

It is clear from Figure No. (6) the distribution of respondents according to monthly income into three social categories: a high-income group, a middle-income group, and a low-income group. The low-income group was the highest category

with a number of (84) respondents, and a percentage of (56.2%) were low-income people. Evidence of their preference for fairly suitable poultry meat compared to high-priced red meat and fish meat.

Figure No. (6) represents the distribution of respondents according to their monthly income



Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

Secondly: The Preference for Consuming Local and Imported Chicken Meat by The Respondents.

This section dealt with the statistical analysis of the preference for consuming local and

imported chicken meat by the respondents through a set of questions. The analysis was done using frequencies and percentages, and the results were as follows:

Table (3) Preference for consumption of local and imported poultry meat by respondents.

	The phrases	always		sometimes		rarely	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1.	How much do you prefer poultry meat over other meat?	78	52	45	30	27	18
2.	When buying poultry from commercial markets, do you read the expiry date?	60	40	70	46,7	20	13,3
3.	To what extent do you prefer commercial markets over street vendors when buying poultry	92	61,3	45	30	13	8,7
4.	To what extent is it preferred to buy local poultry over imported poultry	109	72,7	21	14	20	13,3
5.	To what extent is fresh poultry meat preferred over frozen poultry meat?	74	49,3	56	37,4	20	13,3
6.	Are poultry meat prices reasonable when purchasing	120	80	21	14	9	6
7.	Do you require a specific weight when purchasing live and frozen poultry	99	66	32	21,3	19	12,6
8.	To what extent is the quality of meat, palatability and taste of local chicken preferred for reasons: (distinctive smell - taste - color of meat)	113	75,3	33	22	4	2,7
9.	To what extent is it preferable to buy whole poultry over buying cut-up poultry or parts of it	74	39,3	62	41,3	14	9,4

Source: Collected and calculated from the study sample data.

It is clear from the results of Table (3) that more than half of the respondents (52% and 45%) always and sometimes respectively prefer to consume poultry meat over other meats, and (66%) of the respondents who obtain frozen poultry from commercial markets are always keen to consume. Being guided by the expiration date on the product, a percentage of (61.3% and 30%) of the respondents always and sometimes, respectively, obtain poultry from commercial markets and prefer it to street vendors, while a percentage of (72.7%) of the respondents always prefer to buy live local poultry. Of the respondents (49.3% and 37.4%), respectively, they always and sometimes prefer to buy fresh poultry over imported poultry. In terms of prices, the majority of respondents (80%) indicated that the prices are commensurate with their income and within their reach. The study proved Also, (66%) of the respondents are always looking for specific weights, and it is noted in Iraqi markets that it is easy to obtain large weights of local poultry, while only small weights and sizes of imported chicken meat are widespread due to the ease of marketing them as whole pieces. It is also noted that the preference for producing medium-sized chickens in poultry is ignored in the production system in Iraq, which is a matter that needs to be reconsidered.

Also, the respondents' preference for local chicken became clear when the respondents were asked about the reasons for preference, which are: (the distinctive smell - the taste - the color of the meat), as the respondents stated (75.3%) that they always prefer, while (22%) of them answered sometimes, and the percentage of those who

preferred sometimes was About (2.7%) of the respondents.

The preference of poultry meat consumers for local products of the commodity is due to a number of reasons, the most important of which are the quality of local poultry products and confidence in the product, in addition to the high rate of health specifications in the local product, as stated in studies (Valceschini: 2006, Kralik et al.: 2018), in addition to consumer concerns about the freshness of meat. Poultry, the health of live chickens (Ali: 2021), and ensuring slaughter operations in accordance with the teachings of Islamic law (Halal).

The results of this study differed from studies conducted in Iraq regarding the preference for the method of displaying purchased chicken meat (Thulfiqar et al.: 2020), as the results of those studies showed that (58.8%) of the respondents preferred frozen chicken meat instead of wet markets. The results also showed that internal factors influence to a greater extent than external factors, mainly the sensory features of meat that are sensed after preparation or the post-purchase stage, as they were more prevalent than the perceptual features that can be sensed in the market or pre-purchase stage. Post-purchase consumer behavior means the process of customers evaluating their satisfaction with the product after completing the purchase process, which greatly affects their decision to purchase this product again.

CONCLUSION

The most important conclusions and recommendations of this study are that the study proved that the characteristics Social and

economic factors had a clear impact on consumers' preference to buy chicken meat, as the consumption of chicken meat and the demand for it is essential in the food system in Iraq. Low prices and ease of preparation are among the factors that make poultry meat the preferred choice for consumers. It is also noted from this study that the preference The consumer depends on the type and quality of chicken meat produced locally or imported in Iraq, and therefore requires improving the poultry production system that was developed in Iraq based on scientifically updated data. Based on the previous results of the study, it is clear that respondents have a high level of preference for local poultry compared to imported poultry. These results can also enhance local poultry production by encouraging and supporting producers of broiler poultry farms to expand their investments and adopt modern and recommended production technologies. Accordingly, the research recommends conducting further study to examine consumer behavior and preference for agricultural foods to build an integrated system for sustainable food production based on the needs and requirements of consumers in Iraq, as well as intensifying the role of control over the import of poultry and its products and working to improve local productivity in the poultry industry that competes with the imported one, as the researcher recommends. By introducing producers to safety controls and standards in accordance with international recommendations through agricultural extension programs directed to them, and working to develop local production and bring it to export and competition in regional and global markets.

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الملخص العربي

دراسة ارشادية لرغبات مستهلكي الدجاج المحلي والمستورد في مدينة الكوت

بالعراق

على هاشم عبد الرزاق و محمد على مكي جاسم الروبي

كلية الزراعة - جامعة واسط - العراق

المستخلص

تشكل لحوم الدواجن مصدراً كاملاً للبروتين والحديد والمعادن، وهي أيضاً أرخص من اللحوم الحمراء في السنوات الأخيرة، كان سوق لحوم الدواجن في العراق يتطور بشكل كبير ومع هذا الإنتاج الكبير والوصول غير المحدود إلى لحوم الدواجن الطازجة بالإضافة إلى الرعاية الصحية المتزايدة، يبحث المستهلك عن المنتجات التي تتميز بنوعية جيدة جداً، هدفت الدراسة الى مقارنة رغبات المستهلكين للدجاج المحلي والمستورد في مدينة الكوت والمعايير التي يستخدمها المستهلكون عند شرائها بناءً على المسوحات التي نفذت على 150 مبحوث. وتنتمي هذه الدراسة إلى الدراسات الوصفية التي تصف رغبات المستهلكين من الدجاج المحلي والمستورد في مدينة الكوت، وقد اشارت النتائج أن معظم الأشخاص الذين شملهم الاستطلاع يستهلكون لحوم الدجاج المحلي بنسبة (72,7%) ومن يفضل المستهلكون الذبيحة الكاملة كانت نسبتهم (91%)، ويستترشد المستهلكون أولاً وقبل كل شيء بنضارة اللحوم ثم سعرها حيث ان (80%) من المبحوثين اختاروا الدجاج لسعره المناسب و (66,35%) منهم اختاروا وزناً معيناً يناسبهم لشراء ذبيحة الدجاج. كما ان (94,4%) من المبحوثين اختاروا الدجاج المجمد حسب الطعم والرائحة، كما اشارت النتائج ان نصف المبحوثين تقريباً قد فضلوا شراء الدجاج الحي في حين بلغت نسبة من يفضلون شراء الدجاج المجمد (41,3%) على ان يكون محلي المنشأ عند شراء لحوم دواجن عالية الجودة، ويتوقع المبحوثون أولاً سلامة صحية أعلى، ثم أعلى قيمة غذائية واستساغة أفضل عند شراء لحوم الدواجن فيما اشار (64,9%) من المبحوثين الى اهمية تاريخ الصلاحية المثبت على الذبيحة الدجاج المجمد. وان أهم التوصيات شملت العمل على تحسين الإنتاجية المحلية في صناعة الدواجن التي تنافس المستورد. وكذلك تعريف المنتجين بضوابط ومعايير السلامة وفقاً للتوصيات الدولية من خلال برامج الإرشاد الزراعي الموجهة إليهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الدجاج المحلي, الدجاج المستورد, مدينة الكوت, رغبات المستهلكين