

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates value addition opportunities in the Zambian poultry industry, with a specific focus on the canned chicken product. The global poultry industry is well-established within the agricultural sector and plays a key role in the manufacturing sector, a trend also evident in Zambia. However, one significant challenge faced by the poultry sector in Lusaka is the failure to identify strategic opportunities for enhancing value, which threatens the industry's productivity and growth. The aim of this study was to explore food security and value addition opportunities within the Zambian poultry industry. The study's objectives included exploring consumer perceptions of canned chicken in Zambia, determining the number of consumers willing to buy canned chicken, and identifying value addition opportunities for canned chicken. The research was guided by a pragmatist philosophy, employing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 290 respondents, achieving a response rate of 75.3%. Qualitative insights were obtained through in-depth interviews with 10 key informants, including poultry farmers, consumers, supermarket representatives, and technical experts, focusing on the Lilayi area in Lusaka South. The findings indicated that purchasing behavior for chicken was significantly influenced by factors such as price, quality, and availability. Among respondents, 41.38% expressed willingness to purchase canned chicken, while an equal percentage indicated reluctance, and 17.24% remained undecided. This underscores the need for targeted awareness campaigns to address skepticism and generate interest. Frequent chicken consumers and regular supermarket shoppers exhibited a higher level of familiarity with and interest in canned chicken products. Price sensitivity emerged as a critical determinant, with most respondents favoring a price range of K20–K39 for a 500g can. These findings offer actionable insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and marketers seeking to promote the adoption of value-added poultry products, thereby enhancing industrial growth and consumer satisfaction. The findings align with Akinmoladun et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of consumer preferences for convenience foods in sub-Saharan Africa. The study recommends that manufacturers focus on affordable pricing, potentially through smaller packaging or bundles, and implement educational campaigns highlighting convenience, nutrition, and cost-effectiveness. Future research should examine consumer perceptions of value-added products, market feasibility in rural areas, and the effectiveness of targeted marketing strategies to drive product acceptance.

KEYWORDS: Canned chicken, value addition opportunities, market potential, consumer purchasing perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the study, setting the foundation for understanding the research on value addition opportunities for canned chicken meat in Zambia. Zambia's poultry sector is a significant contributor to the country's economy, with poultry farming being one of the fastest-growing sectors, generating substantial employment, income, and food security (Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, 2017). However, despite this growth, the sector faces challenges, particularly in processing and value addition, with canned chicken meat being a notably underutilized product.

Background

The global poultry industry is a vital part of agriculture, contributing significantly to the manufacturing sector. As of 2020, the industry produced 2.93 trillion tonnes of eggs and 79.8 million metric tonnes of broiler meat (Sofi & Ahmad Rafeh, 2020). Poultry products are in high demand globally, particularly in urban areas, where factors like urbanization, improved income, and health awareness drive consumption (Jalal, Nazir, & Bumla, 2019). In Zambia, the poultry population includes 15.4 million village chickens, 6.8 million broilers, and 1.7 million layers (Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, 2017), with the sector contributing 35% of Zambia's agricultural output. The poultry sector in Zambia has experienced remarkable growth, with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

(2017) reporting significant contributions to the country's agricultural GDP. Nevertheless, the sector's potential for value addition, particularly in canned chicken meat, remains largely untapped. Canned chicken meat offers a convenient, shelf-stable protein source that could cater to both local and international markets. However, its availability in Zambia is limited, and the market presence is negligible. This study aims to investigate the value addition strategic opportunities for canned chicken meat in Zambia, addressing a critical gap in the existing literature. Value addition in the poultry sector ranges from simple processing, such as live bird markets, to sophisticated automated facilities producing ready-to-eat products. Cold storage and modern transportation technologies have facilitated the trade, storage, and consumption of poultry products (Babji, 2001; Biligili, 2001). This study aims to identify strategic opportunities for value addition in Zambia's chicken meat sector, focusing on consumption factors such as taste, price, and nutritional value, while exploring new product, packaging, and marketing innovations to boost sector profitability.

Statement of the Problem

The Zambian poultry industry faces several challenges that hinder its growth and competitiveness. This research focuses on the potential of canned chicken as a value-added product to address these challenges. The industry's reliance on basic plastic packaging and limited processing infrastructure restricts opportunities for value addition and product differentiation (Poultry Association of Zambia, 2023; Garcia, 2017). This limitation hampers the industry's ability to meet growing market demand and capitalize on emerging consumer preferences. High production costs, particularly the price of poultry feed, which accounts for 70-80 percent of total production expenses, pose a significant challenge (Poultry Association of Zambia, 2022). Additionally, the industry faces stiff competition from imported chicken, particularly from South Africa and Brazil, where government subsidies make foreign poultry products more affordable. Consumer trends indicate a shift toward poultry as a preferred protein source, driven by health considerations. However, many consumers are still unfamiliar with value-added poultry products, such as canned chicken, which could slow adoption rates (African Farming and Processing, 2014). this study seeks to provide insights that can help poultry producers adapt to changing consumer demands, improve food security, and gain a competitive edge in both domestic and international markets.

Specific Research Objectives

- I. To explore perceptions of consumers on canned chicken in Zambia.
- II. To determine the number of consumers willing to buy canned chicken in Zambia.
- III. To establish value addition opportunities for canned chicken.

Theoretical and Conceptual framework

Conceptual Framework

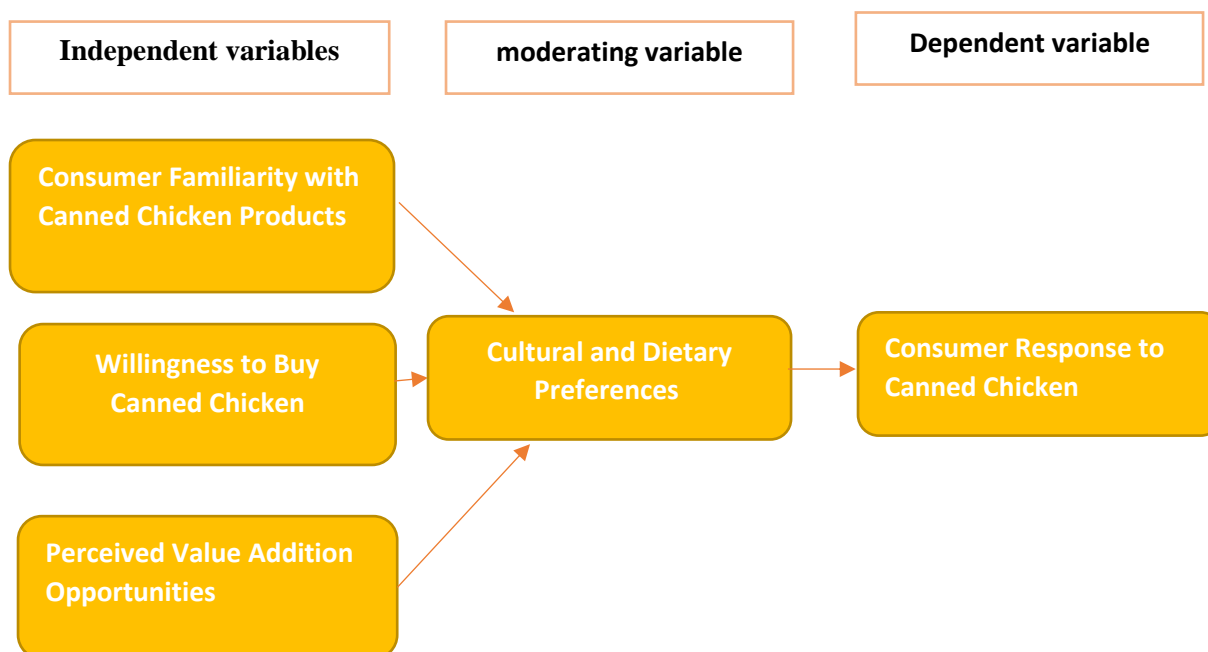


Figure 1: Study's Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Design (2025)

The framework inspires the research questions and has been premised on previous practices in poultry value addition. The conceptual framework has emerged from the research questions and will provide a contextualized structure for what exactly the

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

research will explore. The overall broiler chicken value chain encompasses all income generating activities, processes, flow of products and information from and to key actors participating in the conception, input supply, transportation, production, processing, marketing and consumption of broiler chicken meat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section delves in the research topic and related themes. It considers the key theoretical background and literature gap, literature review according to the research objectives of the study, empirical studies, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework.

Empirical Review

The Effect of Value Addition on Chicken Meat Products

The literature review explores the effect of value addition on chicken meat products, emphasizing the increasing global and regional demand for poultry due to its affordability, nutritional value, and versatility (FAO, 2021). The poultry industry in Southern Africa, particularly in Zambia, has seen significant growth, driven by population expansion, urbanization, and changing dietary patterns, which have contributed to an increased preference for processed and ready-to-eat chicken products (Lubungu & Mofya-Mukuka, 2019). Value addition in poultry involves processes such as marination, pre-cooking, freezing, packaging, and branding, which enhance product quality, shelf life, and consumer appeal (Kumar et al., 2022). However, despite the rising demand, several challenges hinder the expansion of value-added poultry products, including high feed costs, inadequate cold chain infrastructure, stringent regulatory frameworks, and limited access to modern processing technologies (Mekonnen et al., 2020). In Zambia, small and medium-scale poultry producers struggle to compete with larger firms due to financial constraints and inefficiencies in production and distribution.

Moreover, empirical studies from North America, South America, and Asia highlight key trends influencing poultry markets globally, such as convenience-driven consumption, sustainability preferences, and affordability considerations, which are also shaping the African poultry sector (Kumar et al., 2022). In response, industry stakeholders and policymakers have recognized the need for strategic interventions, including investment in processing infrastructure, capacity-building programs, and supportive policies like the National Livestock Policy to enhance competitiveness (Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 2017). The integration of technology, such as e-commerce platforms and digital marketing, is also playing a crucial role in expanding market reach and consumer engagement in the poultry sector (Chilala & Tembo, 2021). To ensure sustainable growth, Zambia's poultry industry must adopt innovative value addition strategies, address production inefficiencies, and align with evolving consumer preferences, ultimately strengthening its position in the regional and global markets.

Value Addition in Poultry: Regional and Local Insights

The demand for canned chicken grew in East Africa due to urbanization and changing dietary habits. In Kenya, sales increased by 25% as consumers sought convenient, nutritious meals (Mwangi & Kamau, 2022). Similarly, Uganda experienced a 20% annual rise in canned chicken sales, particularly among middle-income urban consumers (Kasozi & Tumusiime, 2023). Zambia exhibited similar urbanization trends, suggesting potential market opportunities. Locally, Mwape and Mwape (2019) found that urban consumers in Zambia preferred boneless chicken, while rural consumers favored whole cuts and were willing to pay more for organic options. However, Bwalya and Kalinda (2014) identified inefficiencies in Zambia's indigenous poultry value chain, including low productivity, high mortality rates, and limited market access due to reliance on live chicken sales.

This study assessed consumer perceptions of canned chicken in Zambia, focusing on convenience, sustainability, and health-conscious choices. A survey of 1,000 respondents was conducted alongside focus group discussions to explore taste preferences and adoption barriers. A value chain analysis examined key industry players, identifying gaps in production and distribution. Additionally, a market feasibility study evaluated commercial potential by analyzing regional trends, helping to position Zambia's poultry sector for growth.

Knowledge Gap

The literature review cites credible sources, the empirical data cited in the literature review, sourced from authoritative institutions such as the South Africa Poultry Association (SAPA), the Poultry Association of Zambia (PAZ), and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, lends credibility and authenticity to the study. but a significant gap exists: the lack of annual production and consumption data in Zambia's poultry industry. This absence of longitudinal data limits the ability to: Analyze year-on-year growth trends, predict future demand, assess sustainability, Develop accurate market strategies. This knowledge gap highlights the need for consistent, annual data collection to enhance future studies' robustness and reliability.

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

METHODOLOGY

The research Pragmatism philosophy guided the approach to the study. This helped shape the research methods and provided a foundation for understanding consumer behavior and value addition in the poultry sector (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The study adopted pragmatism, focusing on practical, real-world outcomes. It combined quantitative and qualitative methods to address consumer demand for value-added chicken products, providing actionable insights for the poultry industry (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). A mixed-methods approach was used, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups) explored consumer attitudes, while quantitative surveys measured demand for value-added chicken products. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The study applied both deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach tested existing theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, through surveys. The inductive approach used qualitative data to uncover new insights and patterns, enhancing the theoretical framework (Saunders et al., 2019; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An explanatory sequential research design was employed, where quantitative data was collected first, followed by qualitative data to explain the findings in more detail. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences and behavior (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The study focused on stakeholders in the Lusaka South - Lilayi area, known for its poultry farming activities. The population included poultry farmers, consumers, supermarket chains, health facilities, and representatives from relevant ministries and associations. This area was chosen for its concentration of poultry-related activities and its relevance to the study's objectives (Bryman, 2016). A sample size of 385 was calculated using Slovin's formula for a population of 7,854 poultry farmers, with a margin of error of 0.05. The researcher collected 290 responses, 75.3 percent of the target sample size, due to logistical and budgetary constraints (Saunders et al., 2019). For qualitative data, 10 participants were selected based on theoretical saturation. These included poultry farmers, supermarket employees, experts from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, and representatives from the Poultry Association of Zambia. The sample size was adequate for obtaining diverse perspectives while maintaining data depth (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). A probability stratified random sampling technique was used for the quantitative aspect. This method ensured accurate representation of the population by dividing it into strata based on relevant characteristics such as age, ensuring a diverse and representative sample (Bryman, 2016). Data collection included both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, while secondary data were sourced from relevant industry reports and academic literature. Surveys were administered to 290 participants, interviews were conducted with 10 key stakeholders, and focus group discussions were organized with consumer groups (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to consumer preferences and behavior (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS

Demographic survey

The demographic distribution reveals that the majority of respondents are aged 25-34 (41.0%) and predominantly female (53.1%), with males comprising 46.9%. Most households consist of 3-4 (35.9%) or 5-6 members (38.6%), and nearly two-thirds (64.1%) have fewer than two income earners. Monthly income levels are primarily concentrated in the higher brackets, with 43.8% earning K20, 000 or more and 30.7% earning between K10, 000 and K19, 999. In terms of poultry farming experience, a significant proportion (43.4%) have less than one year of experience, while 38.6% have 1-5 years. These findings indicate that the sample population is relatively young, moderately gender-balanced, and includes a mix of income levels, with many participants being new or moderately experienced in poultry farming.

Perceptions of consumers on canned chicken in Zambia.

The data analysis reveals that a majority of respondents consume chicken meat regularly, with 120 (41.4%) eating it daily and 100 (34.5%) weekly, indicating a strong culture of chicken consumption in Zambia. Supermarkets 170 (58.6%) and local markets (130, 44.8%) are the most common places for purchasing chicken, with price 250 (86.2%), quality 210 (72.4%), and availability 180 (62.1%) being the primary factors influencing consumer choices. Regarding canned chicken, awareness is relatively low, with 160 (55.2%) of respondents being not familiar with canned chicken products, and only 80 (27.6%) having ever purchased canned chicken.

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

Table 1. Chi-Square Test Results Summary

Test Type	Chi-Square Statistic	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value	Significance Level
Chicken Consumption Frequency vs. Purchase Location	15.23	16	0.03	0.05 (Significant)

The chi-square test results indicated a significant relationship between chicken consumption frequency and the location where consumers usually purchase chicken meat (Chi-Square Statistic = 15.23, p-value = 0.03, Degrees of Freedom = 16). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant association between how often consumers consume chicken and where they typically buy it.

Table 2. T-Test - Canned Chicken Awareness by Consumption Frequency

Group	Mean Score	Familiarity (SD)	Standard Deviation	Sample Size (n)	t-value	p-value
High-Frequency Consumers (Daily/Weekly)	2.5	1.0		220	2.12	0.04
Low-Frequency Consumers (Monthly/Rarely/Never)	3.2	1.1		70		

The t-test results indicated a significant difference in canned chicken awareness between high-frequency consumers (Daily/Weekly) and low-frequency consumers (Monthly/Rarely/Never) (t-value = 2.12, p-value = 0.04). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that high-frequency consumers are more familiar with canned chicken products than low-frequency consumers. The lower mean familiarity score for high-frequency consumers (2.5) compared to low-frequency consumers (3.2) suggests that regular consumption of chicken is associated with greater awareness of canned chicken products.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Model - Factors Influencing Canned Chicken Purchase

Predictor Variable	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	p-value
Chicken Consumption Frequency	1.75	(1.12, 2.68)	0.02
Purchase Location (Supermarket)	2.45	(1.20, 4.99)	0.01
Price Influence	3.10	(2.10, 4.60)	0.001
Quality Influence	1.80	(1.20, 2.85)	0.03

According to table 4.6, the logistic regression analysis reveals that several factors significantly influence the likelihood of purchasing canned chicken. Consumers who consume chicken more frequently (OR = 1.75, p = 0.02) and those who purchase chicken from supermarkets (OR = 2.45, p = 0.01) are more likely to buy canned chicken. Additionally, price is the most influential factor, with individuals who prioritize price being 3.10 times more likely to purchase canned chicken (p = 0.001), followed by quality considerations (OR = 1.80, p = 0.03).

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

How many consumers will be willing to buy the canned chicken in Zambia.

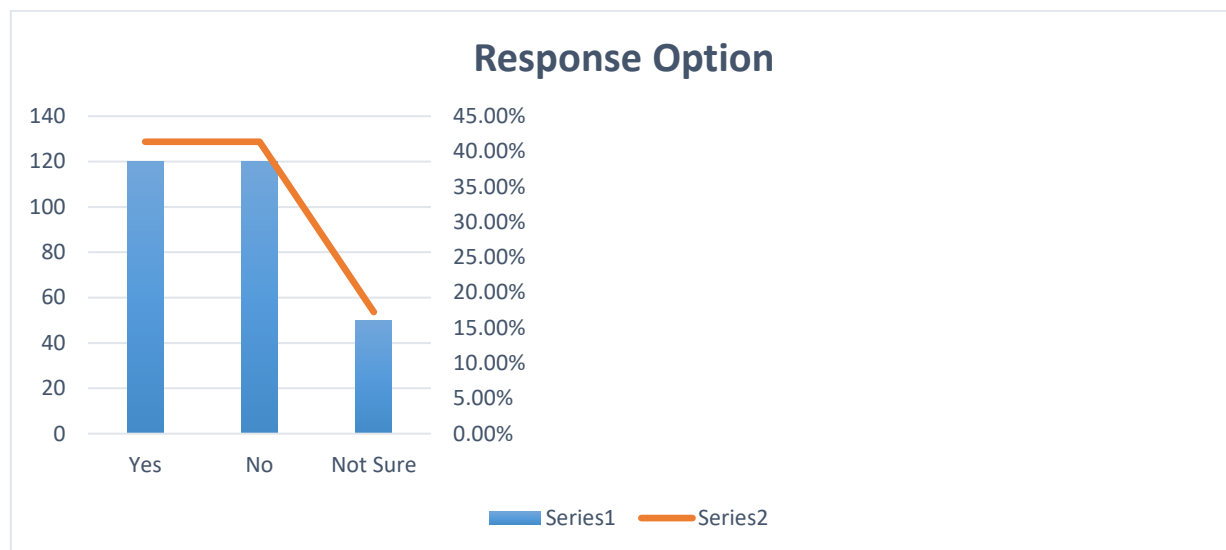


Figure 1: Frequency Distribution for Willingness to Buy Canned Chicken

The data indicates that 120 respondents (41.38%) would be willing to purchase canned chicken, with another 120 respondents (41.38%) expressing they would not, while 50 respondents (17.24%) are unsure. This shows a split opinion among consumers, which may indicate a need for more targeted marketing efforts to educate and build trust in the product. A higher proportion of respondents expressing uncertainty suggests that factors such as awareness, trust, or understanding of the benefits of canned chicken could be addressed to convert these unsure respondents into potential buyers.

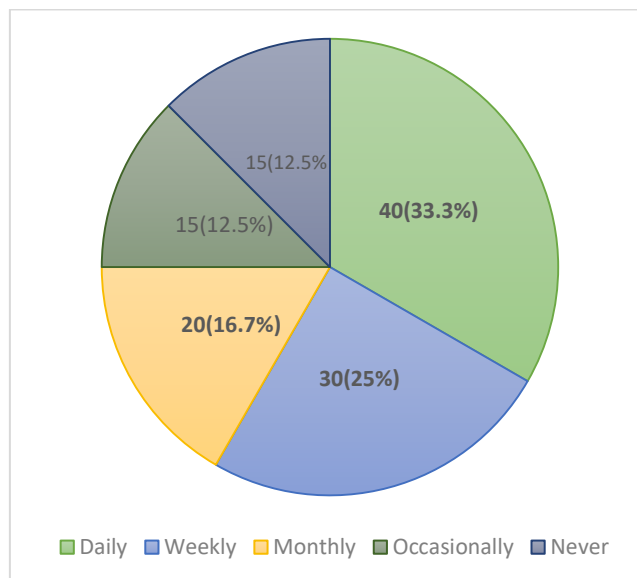


Figure 2: Frequency Distribution for How Often Respondents Would Purchase Canned Chicken (If Yes)

According to figure 4.2 Among the 120 respondents who are willing to purchase canned chicken, 40 individuals (33.33%) would buy it daily, 30 individuals (25.00%) would purchase it weekly, and 20 individuals (16.67%) would buy it monthly. Fifteen individuals (12.50%) would purchase it occasionally, and another 15 individuals (12.50%) indicated they would never purchase canned chicken. This indicates that a significant portion of potential buyers (33.33%) would be regular consumers of canned chicken, while 25.00% would buy it on a weekly basis. However, the remaining 25.00% of consumers (those who would purchase occasionally or never) highlights that factors such as price, availability, or product appeal might affect the overall frequency of purchase.

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

Table 4: Summary of Willingness to Buy Canned Chicken (Chi-Square Analysis)

Response Option	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square Statistic	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value	Significance Level
Yes	120	41.38%	5.63	2	0.049	0.05
No	120	41.38%	5.63	2	0.049	0.05
Not Sure	50	17.24%	22.56	2	0.000	0.05

The Chi-Square analysis for willingness to buy canned chicken revealed significant differences in response patterns. The "Yes" and "No" responses, each with a frequency of 120 (41.38%), have a Chi-Square value of 5.63 and a p-value of 0.049, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level. The "Not Sure" response, with a frequency of 50 (17.24%), shows a higher Chi-Square value of 22.56 and a p-value of 0.000, reflecting a highly significant deviation.

Value addition opportunities for canned chicken.

Table 5. Potential Benefits of Canned Chicken

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Extended shelf life	240	20.51
Ease of storage	220	18.80
Convenience	210	17.95
Portability	170	14.53
Off-season availability	180	15.38
Export potential	150	12.82

The survey results for the potential benefits of canned chicken highlighted that 240 respondents (20.51%) prioritize the extended shelf life of the product, making it the most valued benefit. Ease of storage follows closely with 220 respondents (18.80%), while 210 respondents (17.95%) appreciate the convenience of canned chicken. Portability, off-season availability, and export potential also received notable recognition, with 170 (14.53%), 180 (15.38%), and 150 (12.82%) respondents, respectively.

Table 6. Logistic Regression Results (Value Addition Processes)

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	Odds Ratio (e^{β})	P-Value
Constant	-1.236	0.415	0.290	0.004
Flavored Options	1.452	0.243	4.267	<0.001
Ready-to-Eat Meals	1.321	0.239	3.751	<0.001

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	Odds Ratio (e^{β})	P-Value
Mixed with Vegetables	0.985	0.289	2.678	0.001
Low-Sodium Options	0.772	0.312	2.165	0.015
Organic Options	0.642	0.319	1.898	0.044

The logistic regression analysis reveals that the preference for value addition processes in canned chicken is significantly influenced by several factors. Respondents who favor **flavored options** are 4.27 times more likely to choose this feature, indicating its strong appeal ($p < 0.001$). **Ready-to-eat meals** also show high importance, with respondents being 3.75 times more likely to prefer them ($p < 0.001$). **Mixed with vegetables** and **low-sodium options** are also significant, with odds ratios of 2.68 and 2.17, respectively, highlighting a moderate preference for these features. Lastly, **organic options** are preferred by 1.90 times more respondents, although with a slightly weaker statistical significance ($p = 0.044$).

Table 7. Thematical Analysis-Perceptions of Customers

Question	Themes
1. Overview of the Role of the Poultry Association of Zambia	Industry Support and Advocacy, Capacity Building, Member Services
2. Challenges Facing the Poultry Industry and Association's Response	Industry Challenges, Resource Access, Disease Management, Pricing and Competition
3. Potential for Canned Chicken Products in Zambia	Market Demand, Consumer Trends, Product Viability
4. Value Addition Processes Among Members and Enhancement	Value Addition, Product Diversification, Market Access
5. Association's Support for Canned Chicken Production and Promotion	Market Facilitation, Training and Education, Industry Promotion, Strategic Partnerships

Thematical Analysis-Perceptions of Customers

Overview

"The poultry industry is part of the agro-processing industry subsector of the local manufacturing sector. Our role is to advocate for growth conducive policies from government"... Zambia association of manufacturers

"I have been a poultry farmer for close to twenty years rearing broiler and layer birds on my small holding farm"... Poultry farmer.

Challenges

It has become very expensive; the vaccines and feed are expensive hence profit margins very minimal. The market is flooded such that selling is expensive; power cuts have made it extremely difficult" ... Poultry farmer.

Value addition processes

"I supply eggs and chickens to chain stores like Zambeef and choppies. It's quite effective" ... Poultry farmer.

"Smoking the chicken which is enhance through capacity building" ... Poultry farmer 02.

"For value addition, I have been packaging half chickens and chickens pieces in small clean packets to cater for those who may not afford to buy a whole chicken due to not having enough or because of the family size. This proved to be effective from me" Poultry farmer 03.

Canned chicken potential

"Canned chicken products could be an answers to export potential as well as local market demand because it is convenient, easy to keep and available all the time.".... Poultry farmer 01.

"It is not easy to introduce a new product but if the quality is good it is possible to win the market" ... Poultry farmer 02.

"I believe market potential for introducing canned chicken products in Zambia is there and very vast because chickens are consumed by almost every household and is usually all the menu of fast restaurants and consumed at various events like wedding, parties

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

and even funerals; easy to pack as a snack for school going children and working people and also the prices are cheaper.”....Poultry farmer 04.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Consumer Response Analysis

The study revealed a strong culture of chicken consumption in Zambia, with 41.4% consuming it daily and 34.5% weekly. Price (86.2%), quality (72.4%), and availability (62.1%) were key purchasing factors, aligning with Mwenda and Chisanga (2022). Supermarkets (58.6%) and local markets (44.8%) were the primary purchase points, with chi-square tests confirming a significant relationship between consumption frequency and purchase location. High-frequency consumers were more familiar with canned chicken (mean score 2.5 vs. 3.2), consistent with Ranaweera and Jayasuriya (2021). Logistic regression identified frequent consumers (OR = 1.75, $p = 0.02$), supermarket shoppers (OR = 2.45, $p = 0.01$), and those influenced by price (OR = 3.10, $p = 0.001$) as key buyers, supporting findings from Obi and Eze (2021) and Santos and Almeida (2020). Poulain and Dupont (2023) emphasized the role of technological innovations in product competitiveness. These insights suggest that awareness campaigns, supermarket partnerships, and price-quality balance could expand Zambia's canned chicken market.

Willingness to Buy Canned Chicken

Consumer willingness to buy canned chicken was evenly split, with 41.38% willing, 41.38% unwilling, and 17.24% unsure, indicating a need for awareness campaigns. Mwenda and Chisanga (2022) found similar uncertainty in Kenya due to low product familiarity. Among willing buyers, 33.33% would purchase daily, 25.00% weekly, and 16.67% monthly. Price sensitivity was evident, with 34.48% preferring K20-K39, aligning with Santos and Almeida (2020). Price (86.21%), quality (72.41%), and availability (65.52%) were key factors influencing purchases, as noted by Hansen and Berg (2020). Chi-square analysis confirmed significant links between willingness to buy and these factors ($p = 0.049$). The high "Not Sure" response (Chi-square = 22.56, $p = 0.000$) underscored the importance of consumer education, as noted by Obi and Eze (2021). Marketing should emphasize convenience, competitive pricing, and awareness to increase adoption.

Value Addition Opportunities

The study showed strong market potential for canned chicken, with 68.97% believing it could gain popularity. Key benefits included extended shelf life (20.51%), easy storage (18.80%), and convenience (17.95%), aligning with Tan and Ng (2019). Logistic regression indicated that flavored options (OR = 4.27), ready-to-eat meals (OR = 3.75), and vegetable inclusions (OR = 2.68) were highly preferred, supporting findings by Poulain and Dupont (2023). Health-conscious choices, such as low-sodium (OR = 2.17) and organic options (OR = 1.90), were also influential. Local production was favored by 62.07% of respondents, reflecting the growing preference for locally sourced goods, as noted by Obi and Eze (2021). Additionally, 79.31% perceived canned chicken as healthy, reinforcing its market potential. Targeted marketing emphasizing health benefits, local production, and value-added features could drive consumer acceptance and growth in Zambia's canned chicken market.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the market potential for canned chicken in Zambia, revealing that while chicken consumption was widespread, consumer awareness and familiarity with canned chicken remained relatively low. Price, quality, and availability were identified as the primary factors influencing purchasing decisions, with price sensitivity emerging as a major determinant of consumer hesitation. Statistical analyses, including chi-square tests and logistic regression, confirmed that frequent chicken consumers and supermarket shoppers were more likely to purchase canned chicken, underscoring the importance of targeted marketing strategies. Despite a notable proportion of consumers expressing interest in canned chicken, uncertainty regarding its value, price, and quality acted as barriers to widespread acceptance. However, the study identified significant opportunities for value-added canned chicken products, particularly flavored, ready-to-eat, and low-sodium variants, which aligned with growing consumer demand for convenience and healthier food options. Additionally, the preference for locally produced canned chicken suggested that domestic production could enhance consumer trust and affordability, making the product more competitive in the market. Addressing gaps in consumer awareness through educational campaigns, competitive pricing, and product differentiation strategies would be essential in expanding the market and fostering greater adoption of canned chicken in Zambia's evolving food industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Price Positioning and Affordability:
- ii. Awareness Campaigns:

Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

- iii. Product Differentiation:
- iv. Leverage Local Production:
- v. Strategic Distribution Channels:
- vi. Market Segmentation and Targeting:
- vii. Quality Assurance

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Consumer Perception of Value-Added Chicken Products
- ii. Market Feasibility Studies in Rural Areas
- iii. Impact of Marketing Strategies on Consumer Acceptance

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

This study had limitations, including reliance on self-reported data, which could have been influenced by biases such as social desirability and recall inaccuracies, potentially affecting responses on willingness to buy and perceptions of quality. Additionally, the sample size, while representative, was limited to a specific demographic, which restricted the generalizability of findings to all Zambian consumers, particularly those in rural areas. Despite these limitations, the study contributed to the literature by offering insights into consumer behavior, food marketing, and the poultry industry in Zambia, an emerging market for canned food. It highlighted key purchase drivers such as quality, convenience, pricing, health benefits, and local production, addressing gaps in research on food product acceptance in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, its findings on value addition—such as flavored, ready-to-eat, and health-conscious options—underscored the importance of innovation in food marketing strategies tailored to local consumer needs

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Investigating Value Addition Opportunities for Zambian Poultry Industry: Canned Chicken

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