



## Poultry Farmers' Perceptions and Practices Regarding the Use of Growth Promoters in Commercial Broiler Production in Punjab, Pakistan

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Article History: 25-290

Received: 08 Nov 2024

Revised: 08 Feb 2025

Accepted: 08 Feb 2025

Published Online: 2025

**Citation:** Ramzan MU, Basil M, Muzammal U, Ahmad U and Ali AB, 2025. Poultry farmers' perceptions and practices regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler production in Punjab, Pakistan. *Sci Soc Insights* 2: 16-24. <https://doi.org/10.65822/j.sasi/2025.10>

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### ABSTRACT

The poultry sector in Punjab, Pakistan, is a major contributor to food security, with commercial broiler production accounting for over 40% of the country's meat supply. To meet the growing demand for poultry meat and enhance production efficiency, the use of antibiotic growth promoters is a common practice, but it carries risks of antimicrobial resistance and food safety concerns. This study examined the awareness level, perceptions and adopted practices regarding the use of AGPs among Poultry farmers in Punjab. Data were collected from 345 randomly selected poultry farmers in five major districts related to poultry production. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, binary logistic regression, Pearson correlation, and Garrett's ranking. Results indicated that Poultry farmers possessed moderate to strong knowledge of AGPs, particularly regarding feed conversion efficiency (Mean = 4.35, SD = 0.74) and associated health risks if misused (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.81). However, awareness regarding withdrawal periods before slaughter is lacking. Attitudes were generally positive, emphasizing faster broiler growth (Mean = 4.42, SD = 0.71) and profitability (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.76). Antibiotics were the most frequently used growth promoters (61.4%), with 44.6% of respondents reporting daily use. Adoption was significantly influenced by education (B = 0.298, p = 0.001), farming experience (B = 0.142, p = 0.014), access to extension services (B = 1.317, p = 0.000), and knowledge scores (B = 0.482, p = 0.000). Key barriers in the adoption included high cost (Mean = 4.32, SD = 0.78), limited availability (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.81), and weak regulatory oversight (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.85). The study highlights the need for targeted training, robust extension support, and policy interventions to promote safe and sustainable use of growth promoters. Further, there is a need to make alternatives to AGPs accessible to farmers.

**Keywords:** Poultry farmers, Growth promoters, Broiler production, Antibiotics, Knowledge Attitude Practice (KAP), Punjab, Pakistan, Adoption barriers.

### INTRODUCTION

The Poultry industry plays a major role in diversifying Pakistan's agricultural economy, securing food security and alleviating poverty by creating employment opportunities. The growth of commercial poultry, specifically broiler production, is astonishing in Pakistan, driven by consumer pressure for low-cost protein-based diet. The poultry industry contributes approximately 1.4 percent of the national GDP and provides over 40 percent of the total meat supply in the country (PPA 2025). Punjab province is a major producer of commercial poultry, with the highest contribution to broiler production, due to its highly developed infrastructure and feed resources, as well as large-scale investment in the poultry value chain (Parveen et al., 2022).

To meet the growing demand for poultry meat and to enhance production efficiency, the use of growth promoters (compounds that augment daily weight gain, optimize feed utilization, and enhance overall productivity) is very common in commercial broiler production plants (El-Fateh et al., 2024; Mahmood et al., 2024). These growth

promoters are classified as antibiotic growth promoters (AGPs), probiotics, prebiotics, enzymes, and herbal extracts (Channa et al., 2022). Among these, AGPs are most commonly used growth promoters because of their ability to enhance growth rates significantly and eliminate the risk of subclinical illnesses (Al-Dobaib and Mousa, 2009). However, the extensive and careless use of these products in poultry has raised severe concerns, as they are hazardous to the health of birds and to humans who consume them (Channa et al., 2021). Residues of AGPs in poultry meat pose food safety hazards, affect international trade, and have implications for public health (Mohsin & Umair, 2020).

Poultry farmers' perceptions and practices regarding the use of growth promoters are significant for developing effective policies and interventions to promote safe and sustainable poultry production. Poultry farmers face a complex set of interrelated factors when deciding whether to use growth promoters, including knowledge levels, access to veterinary services, demand, economic drivers, and regulatory provisions (Bello et al., 2022; Umair et al., 2021). Previous studies have established that poultry farmers exhibit low awareness of the potential risks of using AGPs, and are therefore more prone to abuse or overuse. Such practices increase the risk of developing antimicrobial resistance and susceptibility to disease, resulting in farmers' loss of trust in poultry products (Ismail et al., 2020; Stanton et al., 2022).

In Pakistan, where the problem of antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic residues in meat are evident (Soomro et al., 2010; Siddique et al., 2021; Habiba et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2024; Mahmood et al., 2024), there is scanty evidence on the perceptions, awareness and adopted practices of poultry farmers regarding the use of growth promoters. The awareness of farmers about the scientific and judicious use of AGPs is important in order to gain optimal benefit while minimizing hazards. So, there is a pressing need to identify the gaps in awareness, knowledge, adopted practices and regulatory compliance regarding AGPs among poultry farmers to guide policymakers, veterinarians, and extension officers in devising policies, control measures and educational programs for safe poultry production and secure public health (Khan et al., 2022).

Hence, this study attempted to bridge this research gap by targeting the objectives: (1) to assess of the Poultry farmers' knowledge and attitudes towards growth promoters, (2) to explore the actual usage patterns and the decision parameters of growth promoters among poultry farmers, and (3) to find out the barriers, i.e. cost, accessibility, absence of regulation, and availability veterinary advice in sustainable use of growth promoters. The study has great significance to policymakers and other stakeholders in the poultry industry to promote sanity in the use of growth promoters and develop a more sustainable system of poultry production in Pakistan

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research design

A quantitative cross-sectional research design was used in this paper to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Poultry farmers regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler production in the state of Punjab, Pakistan. A cross-sectional research design is a method of collecting data from a population or its representative sample at a single point in time to achieve objectives, describe characteristics, and identify relationships between variables (Hunziker and Blankenagel, 2024).

### Target population

The study was conducted in Punjab province, which is the largest in the country in terms of poultry production. Five districts (Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Sahiwal, and Gujranwala) were chosen purposively due to the highest density of broiler farms and established poultry value chains. The population of 2500 was used to compute a sample size of 345 Poultry farmers using Yamane's (1967) formula, with a margin of error of 5. Multistage sampling (random sampling) was employed in order to encourage representativeness. The first stage used a purposive sampling approach to select five districts. At the second stage, two tehsils per district were selected randomly. And finally, 35 Poultry farmers were randomly selected from each tehsil.

### Data collection

The data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed after reviewing relevant literature and firsthand field information. The questionnaire included socio-economic traits (age, education, farm size, experience, income sources and access to extension or veterinary services), attitude to and knowledge about growth promoters (also on a five-point Likert scale), actual usage pattern and decision-making factors, and limitations to cost, availability, regulation and veterinary support. To test the validity and consistency of the instrument, Poultry farmers (n=30) who were not included in the sample were approached. Alpha values of Cronbach above 0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency. Finally, Face-to-face interviews were conducted with trained enumerators fluent in Punjabi and Urdu.

### Data analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, which was used to summarize socio-economic features, knowledge, attitudes, and practices using descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and percentages). Associations between categorical variables and the knowledge variables were analyzed using the chi-square test.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Binary logistic regression identified factors influencing the adoption of growth promoters, including education, farm size, experience, income, and access to veterinary services.

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \epsilon$$

Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess relationships between knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

$$r = \frac{\sum(X-\bar{X})(Y-\bar{Y})}{\sqrt{(\sum(X-\bar{X})^2)(\sum(Y-\bar{Y})^2)}}$$

Additionally, Garrett’s ranking technique was employed to identify and prioritize barriers affecting adoption. This methodological approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of Poultry farmers’ perceptions and behaviors, and of the socio-economic and institutional determinants influencing growth-promoter use in commercial broiler production in Punjab.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings of the study on Poultry farmers’ knowledge, attitudes, and adopted practices regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler farms in Punjab, Pakistan. The results are organized according to the study objectives, beginning with the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by their knowledge and attitudes toward growth promoters, actual usage patterns, and the factors influencing decision-making.

### Socio-economic characteristics

Table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of 345 Poultry farmers in Punjab, Pakistan, providing crucial context for understanding their perceptions and practices regarding the use of growth promoters.

**Table 1:** Socio-Economic Characteristics of Poultry farmers (n = 345)

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	20–30	45	13.0
	31–40	80	23.2
	41–50	110	31.9
	51–60	70	20.3
	>60	40	11.6
Education Level	Illiterate	55	15.9
	Primary (1–5 years)	75	21.7
	Middle (6–8 years)	65	18.8
	Secondary (9–10 years)	85	24.6
	Above Secondary (>10 years)	65	18.8
Farm Size (Broilers/Year)	<5000 birds	65	18.8
	5000–10,000 birds	125	36.2
	10,001–20,000 birds	95	27.5
	>20,000 birds	60	17.4
Farming Experience (Years)	<5	50	14.5
	5–10	95	27.5
	11–20	120	34.8
	>20	80	23.2
Primary Source of Income	Poultry farming only	165	47.8
	Poultry + other crops	110	31.9
	Poultry + livestock	40	11.6
	Poultry + off-farm income	30	8.7
Access to Poultry Services	Yes	210	60.9
	No	135	39.1

The Poultry farmers were mostly aged in the middle age category (31.9% falls under age category of 41-50 years) while, the median age was 31.9 years. Young population under the age of 30 years comprising only 13.0% of the respondents, which aligns with the observation made in the South Asian poultry systems as well (Jha et al., 2020; Allel et al., 2023). Results regarding education showed that the most (24.6 percent) of Poultry farmers had secondary level of education. While, 15.9 percent were illiterate. It is a universal fact that education is highly influential in deciding whether farmers are able to read, readily avail information and apply them in their farm (Kpomasse et al., 2021).

The farm size among respondents was highly diverse. As 36.2 percent of the respondents owned 5,000-10,000 broilers annually, which is the small to medium-scale farm. In comparison, 17.4 percent of farmers owned over 20,000 broilers, indicating large farm size. results indicated that farming experience of respondents was high. As 34.8% of

Poultry-farmer had 11-20 years of experience and 23.2% had above 20 years of experience. Higher experience impact positively on the management decisions and use of growth promoters (Liang et al., 2022). Table 1 mentioned that most Poultry farmers (47.8%) were largely reliant on poultry farming while others were also involved in crop farming or livestock rearing, which highlights the significance of poultry production as an economic activity and opportunities it creates for rural livelihoods (Jha et al., 2022). Around 70% of Poultry farmers indicated that they have access to extension or poultry advisory services, highlighting both the significance and efficiency of institutional support in disseminating knowledge and influencing farmers to adopt recommended practices regarding the application of growth promoters (R Core Team, 2024).

**Knowledge regarding growth promoters**

Table 2 presents the knowledge levels of 345 Poultry farmers in Punjab regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler production.

These findings indicate that Poultry farmers had a thorough understanding of the benefits of growth promoters, particularly regarding their influence on the escalation of the feed ratio, which received the highest mean score (Mean = 4.35, SD = 0.74). It is also evident that the perceived potential health hazards of growth promoter abuse (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.81) were known to the vast majority of respondents. It indicates widespread knowledge of both the positive and negative issues associated with growth promoters. There was also a moderate level of knowledge about the nature of the growth promoters commonly used in broilers (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.86). In comparison, knowledge level was slightly lower regarding the recommended dosages and application schedules to which they should be used (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.92). The lowest score among the knowledge is withdrawal periods preceding slaughter, the Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.97, which suggests that a high percentage of Poultry farmers may fail to comply with the safety and food-quality standards. These results indicate that a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the safe use of growth promoters, which can impact food safety standards, despite general knowledge of their advantages and hazards. These trends are also supported by past research, which highlighted that Poultry farmers in Pakistan and other South Asian countries demonstrated a basic understanding of Feed additives but lacked knowledge of dosage controls and withdrawal periods (Jha et al., 2020; Mahmoudi et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). The findings reveal the applicability of particular extension programs and training interventions to improve farmers' knowledge about dosage and scheduling of growth promoters and to promote their responsible use in commercial broiler production.

**Table 2:** Poultry farmers' Knowledge of Growth Promoters (n = 345)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Rank
Growth promoters improve feed conversion efficiency	4.35	0.74	1
Growth promoters can have health risks if misused	4.18	0.81	2
Types of growth promoters commonly used in broilers	4.02	0.86	3
Recommended dosages and application schedules	3.88	0.92	4
Withdrawal periods before slaughter	3.71	0.97	5

**Attitude regarding growth promoters**

Table 3 presents the attitudes of Poultry farmers in Punjab regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler production. The findings indicate that Poultry farmers generally hold a positive perception of growth promoters, recognizing their role in enhancing broiler growth and farm profitability.

**Table 3:** Poultry farmers' Attitude of Growth Promoters (n = 345)

Attitude Statements	Mean	SD	Rank
Growth promoters are essential for the faster growth of broilers	4.42	0.71	1
Using growth promoters increases farm profitability	4.31	0.76	2
Overuse of growth promoters can harm bird health	4.18	0.79	3
Withdrawal periods before slaughter are important for food safety	4.05	0.84	4
Growth promoters should be used only under veterinary guidance	3.92	0.88	5
Natural feed additives can replace chemical growth promoters	3.78	0.91	6
Poultry farmers need more training on safe use of growth promoters	3.65	0.95	7

The highest mean score was found in the statement that Growth promoters are necessary to guarantee the quicker growth of broilers (Mean = 4.42, SD = 0.71), and it is possible to conclude that most of the Poultry farmers were convinced of the effectiveness of the productivity of growth promoters. Similarly, the perception that growth promoters strengthen the farm's profitability (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.76) ranked second among the key factors motivating Poultry farmers to use it. The findings do not contradict those of Chowdhury et al. (2021) and Nmeragini et al. (2020) because, in those studies, the application of feed additives by Poultry farmers is usually driven by their motive to grow and gain financial benefits. Despite the positive background, the Poultry farmers were aware of the risks posed by growth promoters. A statement such as, Overuse of growth promoters can harm the health of birds had a mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.79), and Withdrawal periods before slaughter are important for food safety (4.05 SD = 0.84) indicated that many Poultry farmers are aware of the importance of responsible use to

avoid adverse effects and consumer safety. These results can be related to previous studies that have investigated the health and regulatory features of growth promoters in poultry (Delabougliise et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2024).

The statements that pointed toward the need of veterinary guidance (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.88) and the potential of the natural feed additives replacing the use of conventional growth promoters (Mean = 3.78, SD = 0.91) were rather moderately agreed upon, which means that even though Poultry farmers might be ready to implement alternative measures, using conventional growth promoters remains a widespread practice. Finally, the statement that Poultry farmers need more training on safe use of growth promoters should have the lowest mean of 3.65 and SD = 0.95, which seems to align with the lack of formal education and extension support as mentioned by Pourakbari et al. (2022), who claimed that formal training is necessary to ensure safe and efficient practices in poultry. These results showed a positive but cautious attitude, a safety-first approach toward financial gain. The passive attitude of farmers towards education/training demands a more active role for extension agents in offering veterinary support for the safer and sustainable use of growth promoters.

**Poultry farmers’ Practices Regarding Growth Promoters**

Table 4 presents the usage patterns, sources of purchase, and factors influencing the adoption of growth promoters among commercial broiler Poultry farmers in Punjab, Pakistan.

**Table 4:** Usage Patterns and Decision-Making Factors of Growth Promoters by Poultry farmers (n = 345)

Variables	Categories	f	%
Types of Growth Promoters Used	Antibiotics	212	61.4
	Vitamins & minerals	183	53.0
	Probiotics	145	42.0
	Hormones	67	19.4
	Herbal/natural supplements	88	25.5
Frequency of Use	Daily	154	44.6
	Weekly	126	36.5
	Occasional (as needed)	65	18.8
Sources of Purchase	Local feed suppliers	199	57.7
	Veterinary clinics	123	35.7
	Online/market orders	23	6.7
Factors Influencing Adoption	Profitability/economic gain	298	86.4
	Peer/fellow farmer recommendation	201	58.3
	Veterinarian advice	167	48.4
	Availability of products	154	44.6
	Knowledge of improved growth	129	37.4

The results in table 4 indicate that antibiotics were the most used growth promoters mentioned by 61.4% of respondents. This is followed by vitamins and minerals (indicated by 53% of respondents), and lastly probiotics (used by 42% of farmers). Further, Hormonal growth promoters and herbal or natural supplements are less common among farmers as mentioned by 19.4% and 25.5% of respondents, respectively. These findings can be compared with studies conducted in other developing countries, where antibiotics remain the most commonly used growth-promoting agents due to their ability to improve feed efficiency and weight gain (Islam et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2022). Regarding usage frequency, 44.6% of respondents stated that growth promoters were fed daily, 36.5% use these products weekly, and 18.8% indicated that they use them occasionally. This tendency highlights the over usage of growth-promoting inputs in commercial poultry farms. A study by Grace et al. (2024) also found a high dosage of antibiotics among small- and medium-scale Poultry farmers.

These products were mostly obtained from local feed suppliers (57.7%), veterinary clinics (35.7%), and from local or online markets (6.7%). This means that poultry farmers were highly dependent on easily accessible suppliers. Further, the findings revealed a high role of factors such as economic profitability (86.4%), recommendations from peers/fellow farmers (58.3%), veterinarian advice (48.4%), product availability (44.6%), and perceived knowledge of better growth (37.4%) in the adoption of growth promoters. The above findings indicate that economic incentives and financial gains, in addition to social networks, are driving factors in Poultry farmers' decision to adopt growth promoters. These results are consistent with the prior research on the importance of peer recommendations and expert guidance in the adoption of farm technologies (Tilli et al., 2022; Sugiharto et al., 2022). The findings indicate the need to place particular emphasis on awareness-raising efforts on the rational use of growth promoters, particularly antibiotics and hormones, to promote safe, sustainable, and cost-efficient broiler production in Punjab.

**Barriers towards growth promoter use**

Table 5 presents the perceived barriers to the use of growth promoters among commercial broiler Poultry farmers in Punjab, Pakistan.

The first-ranked barrier among respondents to adopting growth promoters was the cost of growth promoters (Mean = 4.32, SD = 0.78), indicating that financial constraints are the main obstacle to the use of such inputs. Limited availability in local markets (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.81) was documented as another serious impediment. Another

reason that poultry farmers gave the lack of proper control and labeling (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.85), referring to the problem of unclear knowledge about the quality of the product/products and the compliance with the requirements of food safety, which is consistent with the research of Gomes et al. (2022) and Rafiq et al. (2022) of regulation gaps in poultry production in the developing countries. The insufficiency of trust in veterinary advice (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.87) and the ignorance of how to apply them (Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.94) also proved to be an obstacle. Udoye et al. (2024) also found that the extension services and training programs for farmers need improvement. In addition, the issue of meat residues (Mean = 3.79, SD = 0.90) and a potential risk of antibiotic resistance (Mean = 3.54, SD = 0.97) was also noted. The studies by Vasileios et al. (2019) and Islam et al. (2024) also reported similar results. The lowest in the ranking was peer influence and reliance on traditional practices (Mean = 3.41, SD = 0.99), which implied that social factors do not pose a major challenge. These findings underscore the need to implement a comprehensive policy to ensure the availability of quality growth promoters at affordable rates and to educate farmers on the rational use of such products.

**Table 5:** Barriers towards growth promoter use (n = 345)

Barriers to Growth Promoter Use	Mean	SD	Rank
High cost of growth promoters	4.32	0.78	1
Limited availability in local markets	4.15	0.81	2
Lack of clear regulation and labeling	4.08	0.85	3
Limited trust in veterinary advice	3.92	0.87	4
Concerns about residues in meat	3.79	0.90	5
Limited knowledge of proper usage	3.65	0.94	6
Risk of antibiotic resistance	3.54	0.97	7
Peer/farmer influence and traditional practices	3.41	0.99	8

**Inferential analysis**

**Chi-square test**

The results of the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) analysis (Table 6) provide insights into the associations between key socio-economic characteristics of Poultry farmers and their knowledge levels regarding growth promoters in commercial broiler production in Punjab, Pakistan.

**Table 6:** Chi-Square Test ( $\chi^2$ ) Results Showing Associations Between Socio-Economic Variables and Knowledge Categories of Poultry farmers Regarding Growth Promoters (n = 345)

Variable	df	Chi-square Value ( $\chi^2$ )	p-value	Significance
Education Level vs. Knowledge Categories	4	16.78	0.002	Significant (p < 0.05)
Farming Experience vs. Knowledge Categories	3	9.42	0.024	Significant (p < 0.05)
Farm Size vs. Knowledge Categories	3	4.87	0.183	Not Significant
Income Source vs. Knowledge Categories	3	6.21	0.102	Marginally Significant (p < 0.10)
Access to Poultry Services vs. Knowledge Categories	2	13.65	0.001	Highly Significant (p < 0.01)

Note:

- Knowledge categories were classified as Low, Medium, and High based on the total knowledge scores from Table 2.
- p < 0.05 indicates a statistically significant association.
- p < 0.01 indicates a highly significant association.

It was found that educational level showed a very significant association with knowledge categories ( $\chi^2 = 16.87$ , p = 0.001). This means greater the formal education a Poultry farmer attains, the more they are likely to learn about the growth promoters and their benefits, as well as potential risks they pose. This finding aligns with previous literature indicating that education will enhance Poultry farmers' ability to access, interpret, and apply technical information in livestock management (Jalil et al., 2023; Udoye et al., 2024).

It was also noted that there was a significant correlation between farming experience and knowledge ( $\chi^2 = 9.42$ , p = 0.024), indicating that more experienced Poultry farmers gain more practical knowledge as they progress in the farming activity, thereby increasing their awareness and understanding of the application of growth promoters. In this regard, access to extension or veterinary services received the highest priority ( $\chi^2 = 14.68$ , p = 0.000), which proves the significance of the institutional support in the transmission of the relevant information and the effects of that knowledge on the Poultry farmers (Zhang et al., 2021; Tagar et al., 2023). Alternatively, farm size ( $\chi^2 = 4.18$ , p = 0.123) and poultry as the main source of income ( $\chi^2 = 6.05$ , p = 0.069) did not show statistically significant correlations with the level of knowledge. So, scale of production and the origin of incomes have an insignificant influence on the knowledge of Poultry farmers regarding growth promoters. The overall results show that the significant predictors of knowledge among Poultry farmers include formal educational attainment, farming experience, and access to advisory services.

**Binary logistic regression**

The binary logistic regression analysis (Table 7) identified key socio-economic and institutional factors influencing the adoption of growth promoters among Poultry farmers in Punjab, Pakistan. The model demonstrated a good fit, with a Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> of 0.471, indicating that approximately 47.1% of the variation in adoption behavior was explained by the variables included, and an overall classification accuracy of 79.8%.

**Table 7:** Binary Logistic Regression Results for Factors Influencing Adoption of Growth Promoters among Poultry farmers (n = 345)

Variable	B (Coefficient)	S.E.	Wald	Odds Ratio (Exp(B))	p-value
Education Level (Years)	0.298	0.092	10.49	1.35	0.001 **
Farming Experience (Years)	0.142	0.058	5.98	1.15	0.014 *
Farm Size (Acres)	0.081	0.054	2.25	1.08	0.134
Access to Extension/Veterinary Services (I = Yes)	1.317	0.312	17.84	3.73	0.000 **
Income Level (PKR/Year)	0.198	0.089	4.95	1.22	0.026 *
Knowledge Score (0–20)	0.482	0.078	38.19	1.62	0.000 **
Constant	-3.985	0.942	17.90	—	0.000 **

Model Summary:

- -2 Log Likelihood: 301.42
- Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>: 0.471
- Overall Classification Accuracy: 79.8%

Notes:

- p < 0.05 = Significant\*, p < 0.01 = Highly Significant\*\*

According to table 7, the most effective factor was knowledge with a very strong positive relationship (B = 0.482, p = 0.000) with odds ratio of 1.62. This implies that increase in the knowledge score by one point, the probability of adoption of growth promoters was increased by 62 percent. The given outcome can also be compared to the available literature which emphasizes the idea that informed Poultry farmers are better positioned to successfully apply the proposed management practices (Tagar et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2022). The effect of the access to the extension or veterinary services was also of the highly significant effect (B = 1.317, p = 0.000; odds ratio = 3.73). Poultry farmers who regularly visit extension agents or veterinary professionals are nearly 4 times more likely to adopt growth promoters. This points to the importance of institutional support and advisory services in the adoption of modern poultry management practices, as noted in the studies by Criscuolo et al. (2021) and Umair et al. (2021).

Education level was a significant predictor (B = 0.298, p = 0.001; odds ratio = 1.35), and one year of formal education increased the probability of adoption by 35 percent. The educated Poultry farmers are more competent in understanding technical knowledge and accepting newness (Sartelli et al., 2020; Habiba et al., 2023). Similarly, the adoption is positively influenced by farming experience (B = 0.142, p = 0.014; odds ratio = 1.15) and income level (B = 0.198, p = 0.026; odds ratio = 1.22), which shows that there is accumulated practical knowledge and financial resources in the decisions (Islam et al., 2024). The size of the farm, in turn, did not significantly contribute to adoption (B = 0.081, p = 0.134), indicating that the size of poultry production does not have a significant impact compared to knowledge, access to services, and socio-economic factors. This is consistent with the discovery that awareness, training, and resource availability contribute significantly to the adoption of growth-promoting technologies, rather than the size of the farm (Jalil et al., 2023). Overall, these results indicate the need for campaigns to improve farmers' knowledge, empower extension networks, and facilitate resource-constrained Poultry farmers in promoting the rational use of growth promoters.

**Pearson correlation analysis**

Table 8 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) scores of Poultry farmers regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler production in Punjab, Pakistan.

**Table 8:** Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice Scores of Poultry farmers Regarding Growth Promoters (n = 345)

Variables	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Knowledge	1.000	0.638 **	0.592 **
Attitude	0.638 **	1.000	0.671 **
Practice	0.592 **	0.671 **	1.000

Note: p < 0.01 = Highly significant correlation

The results reveal that the three variables are statistically significantly related, with a p-value of 0.01. There were high correlation scores in the attitude scores with knowledge scores (r = 0.638, p < 0.01), and Poultry farmers who had more in-depth knowledge about growth promoters, e.g., their benefits, risks, and proper application were more likely to develop more positive attitudes towards their application. In the same spirit, knowledge and practice scores were positively correlated (r = 0.592, p < 0.01), meaning that Poultry farmers who possessed higher knowledge would be more inclined to adopt the proposed practices in reference to the administration of growth promoters in their flocks.

There was also the highest correlation between the attitude and practice scores ( $r = 0.671$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), further demonstrating that positive perceptions and beliefs about growth promoters have a significant influence on actual farm activity. These findings align with previous research indicating that knowledge is a significant factor in shaping attitudes, and that a mix of the two leads to Poultry farmers making decisions and applying agricultural technologies (Percie ; Sugiharto et al., 2022; Grace et al., 2024). The results help to justify the applicability of launching special education campaigns and training for farmers, ,and strengthening extension services

### Conclusion

This study provides detailed insights into the perceptions and practices of Poultry farmers regarding the use of growth promoters in commercial broiler farming in Punjab, Pakistan. The findings indicate that although farmers possess moderate to high knowledge levels regarding growth promoters for enhancing growth and profitability, a gap exists in knowledge of the appropriate doses, withdrawal periods, and antibiotic residues in meat, posing risks to public health. Farmers' attitude towards growth promoters was very positive, driven primarily by economic interests, but there was little interest in food safety and animal health. Price, inaccessibility, inefficient regulatory control, and distrust of veterinarian recommendations were other barriers that hindered the adoption of growth promoters. As per the chi-square test, socio-economic factors, in particular knowledge level, formal education, farming experience, and access to extension services, were significant for knowledge categories; logistic regression and Pearson correlation analyses confirmed the validity of these hypotheses. The paper highlights the need for certain educational programs, strengthened extension services, and effective regulatory mechanisms to ensure responsible, sustainable use of growth promoters. Further, effective alternatives to antibiotic growth promoters should be made accessible to farmers at affordable prices to overcome the risk of antimicrobial resistance and ensure safe, healthy chickens as a protein source for the public.

### Declarations

### Funding

This study didn't receive any funding from any public, commercial, or non-profit agencies.

### Conflicts of Interest

Authors have no conflicts of interest.

### Data Availability

Data will be available from the corresponding author upon request.

### Ethics Statement

The study involving human participants was approved by the Institute of Agricultural Extension, Education, and Rural Development at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. The studies were conducted in accordance with local laws and institutional norms. The participants provided written informed consent to participate in this study.

### Authors' Contribution

Muhammad Usama Ramzan; Conceptualization, Data Collection, Data Curation, Original Draft Writing, Muhammad Basil; Methodology, Data Original draft, Uzair Muzammal; Writing, Review and Editing, Data Analysis, Usman Ahmad; Formal Data Analysis, Review Writing, Abdul Basit Ali; Writing, Review and Editing

### Generative AI Statements

The authors confirm that no generative artificial intelligence-based tools were employed for content generation or interpretation. All intellectual content, interpretations, and conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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