



FROM FARM TO TABLE: ROLE OF POULTRY FARMING IN PROMOTING GASTRONOMY TOURISM TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism in Tanzania remains heavily dependent on wildlife attractions, while alternative niches such as gastronomy tourism receive limited attention. This paper examines poultry farming as a potential driver of gastronomy tourism through a farm-to-table lens. The objectives are to assess the cultural and economic significance of poultry in Tanzania's food systems and tourism value chains; analyze how poultry-based cuisines contribute to cultural tourism; identify opportunities for integrating women and youth farmers into gastronomy initiatives and propose a conceptual farm-to-table framework. The study employs a desk-based scoping review of peer-reviewed literature, national policies, and international reports (2000–2025), drawing on poultry value-chain analyses and gastronomy tourism research from Tanzania, Africa, and beyond. Findings reveal no prior research directly linking poultry farming with gastronomy tourism, underscoring the novelty of this inquiry. Poultry contributes significantly to household protein supply, with women and youth comprising over 80% of smallholder keepers. Iconic dishes such as mchemsho wa kuku, shawarma, changamoto, and kuku choma represent valuable branding assets. Key challenges include high feed costs, biosecurity risks, and weak institutional coordination. Policy recommendations emphasize farmer-hospitality linkages, regional poultry cuisine branding, and targeted capacity building aligned with Tanzania's Tourism Master Plan.

Keywords: Poultry farming; Gastronomy tourism; Cultural tourism; Farm-to-table; Tanzania.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a key contributor to global economies, supporting GDP, employment, and cultural exchange. In Tanzania, however, the industry is dominated by wildlife-based attractions such as the Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Manyara and Mikumi national parks. While these sites position the country as a premier safari destination, overreliance on wildlife creates vulnerability to external shocks, including pandemics and climate change. This problem underscores the need to diversify into alternative niches, particularly cultural and gastronomy tourism.

Globally, gastronomy tourism has grown as travelers increasingly seek authentic, sustainable, and culturally immersive experiences (Yong et al., 2022). Countries such as Italy and Thailand have successfully leveraged food traditions to brand destinations and strengthen local economies. In Africa, however, gastronomy tourism remains underdeveloped despite its rich culinary traditions (Okech & Timothy, 2023). Tanzania, with its coastal Swahili cuisines, indigenous farming practices, and multicultural influences, holds significant potential to integrate food into its tourism portfolio.

Poultry farming is especially important in this context. As one of the most widespread forms of livestock production, poultry contributes to food security, income generation, and cultural practices. Indigenous chickens (kienyeji) feature prominently in household diets and ceremonies, while broilers and layers serve commercial markets (Ngongolo et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2022). Signature dishes such as nyama kuku wa kienyeji and Mchemsho wa kuku, Changamoto, and Shawarma embody Tanzanian identity, yet poultry has rarely been studied as part of cultural tourism.

The growing farm-to-table movement, which traces its origins to the 1970s organic and local food movements, has been critically examined by (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005) and philosophically advanced

by(Petrini, 2003) through the Slow Food movement. Both emphasize direct linkages between producers and consumers to ensure sustainability, freshness, and cultural authenticity. While widely applied in Western gastronomy tourism, farm-to-table strategies remain underexplored in Africa. Applying this approach to poultry farming in Tanzania could diversify tourism offerings, strengthen farmer-hospitality linkages, and empower women and youth, who dominate poultry production (FAO, 2010; Galiè et al., 2015).

The scope of this paper is to conceptually explore how poultry farming can promote gastronomy tourism in Tanzania. Specifically, the objectives are: (i) to examine the cultural and economic significance of poultry farming in Tanzania's food systems and tourism value chains, (ii) to analyze how poultry-based cuisines contribute to cultural and gastronomy tourism, (iii) to identify opportunities for integrating poultry farmers, including women and youth, into gastronomy tourism initiatives, (iv) to propose a conceptual farm-to-table framework linking poultry farming with gastronomy tourism, and (v) to highlight challenges and policy implications for poultry-based gastronomy tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Cultural and Economic Significance of Poultry Farming in Tanzania's Food Systems and Tourism Value Chains*

Poultry farming occupies a vital place in Tanzania's socio-economic and cultural landscape, serving as both a livelihood strategy and a medium of cultural expression. As one of the most accessible livestock enterprises, it provides income, nutrition, and resilience to rural households especially among women and youth, who dominate smallholder production (Bukachi et al., 2023; Johansson, 2021). The poultry sector thus contributes to gender-inclusive growth, aligning with national priorities on food security and empowerment.

Economically, poultry represents a low-cost yet high-return enterprise. Indigenous chickens (kuku wa kienyeji), prized for their flavor and adaptability, are central to household "livestock banking," providing ready income for education, healthcare, and emergencies (Ngongolo et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2022; Zziwa et al., 2024) further show that value addition and resource recovery such as converting feathers, droppings, and eggshells into usable products enhance profitability and sustainability, consistent with circular economy principles(Amicarelli et al., 2024).

Culturally, poultry is deeply embedded in African social life. Chickens symbolize generosity, respect, and belonging, often prepared for honored guests or community rituals (Mtileni et al., 2012). Tanzanian dishes such as nyama kuku wa kienyeji and supu ya kuku are not merely food items but expressions of heritage and identity that embody local values. This duality poultry as both sustenance and symbol positions it as a key component of Tanzania's cultural economy.

At the policy level, the integration of poultry into tourism and food systems requires coherent governance frameworks.(Ivy Akanganyira, 2023) emphasizes the role of cross-sectoral food policies in fostering sustainable linkages, while (Kamugisha, 2024) highlight agritourism and transition pathways as mechanisms to diversify rural economies. Collectively, these insights underscore poultry's potential as a cultural and economic bridge within Tanzania's evolving tourism value chains.

2.2. *Poultry-Based Cuisines and Their Contribution to Cultural and Gastronomy Tourism*

Food is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of cultural tourism, shaping visitor perceptions and destination identity (Anton Martin et al., 2021; Sthapit et al., 2020). In Tanzania, poultry-based dishes embody this connection between culture and consumption. Traditional recipes mchemsho wa kuku, supu ya kuku, and nyama kuku wa kienyeji reflect regional diversity and indigenous production systems. Meanwhile, urban variations like shawarma, changamoto, and chipsi mayai with chicken toppings illustrate the adaptability of poultry to modern tastes and cross-cultural influences.

(Kikoti & Rwiza, 2025) argue that, due to poultry's affordability and cultural symbolism, have strong potential for gastronomy tourism branding. This observation mirrors international trends, where iconic dishes such as sushi in Japan and pasta in Italy serve as culinary ambassadors (Everett & Aitchison,

2008). Yet, as (Okech & Timothy, 2023) note, African heritage food including poultry-based cuisines remain underutilized in tourism marketing, despite their authenticity and storytelling power.

Theoretically, gastronomy tourism draws on concepts of authenticity and localism (Petrini, 2003), positioning food as a cultural experience rather than mere consumption. Visitors seek genuine engagement with local traditions tasting, cooking, and understanding their origins (Recuero-Virto & Valilla Arróspide, 2024; Yong et al., 2022). Tanzanian poultry dishes, when framed through stories of breed, preparation, and regional identity, fulfill this demand for immersive, place-based experiences.

Empirical evidence from global and regional contexts reinforces this potential. (Amicarelli et al., 2024) and (Gündüz et al., 2024) show that food festivals and culinary events enhance destination branding and cultural diplomacy. In Tanzania, the UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism (TRAVELINDEX, 2025) highlighted poultry dishes as part of the country’s emerging culinary heritage. This recognition marks a shift toward acknowledging gastronomy as an integral element of Tanzania’s tourism diversification strategy.

2.3. *Opportunities for Integrating Poultry Farmers, Including Women and Youth, into Gastronomy Tourism Initiatives*

The inclusive nature of poultry farming presents significant opportunities for integrating women and youth into tourism value chains. Poultry production is labor-flexible, low-investment, and culturally accepted, making it a natural entry point for inclusive growth (Bukachi et al., 2023; Geza et al., 2021).

Emerging opportunities include: Culinary workshops and homestays led by women, enabling tourists to experience indigenous food preparation and hospitality (Okech & Timothy, 2023), Farm-to-fork linkages connecting poultry producers to restaurants and lodges, facilitated by youth through digital marketing and logistics (Ringo & P. Lekule, 2020), Poultry-themed food festivals and heritage trails showcasing local dishes and empowering smallholders through market exposure (Agrihouse Foundation, 2025), training and certification programs combining poultry husbandry with food safety and culinary skills to ensure quality and consistency (Rana et al., 2024).

Furthermore, cooperative financing, indigenous breed branding, and digital storytelling can improve visibility and bargaining power in the tourism market (Gajić et al., 2024). Aligning these initiatives with Tanzania’s national strategies on tourism diversification and gender empowerment ensures that poultry-based gastronomy tourism contributes directly to inclusive development.

2.4. *Conceptual Farm-to-Table Framework Linking Poultry Farming with Gastronomy Tourism*

Drawing on **value chain theory** (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001) and **farm-to-table principles** (Gajić et al., 2024), the literature supports a conceptual framework connecting poultry production with gastronomy tourism. The framework outlines five interlinked stages: **Production**- Indigenous chickens, eggs, and by-products form the primary resources, **Processing**- Grading, cold-chain management, and by-product reuse ensure food safety and quality, **Culinary Branding**- Narratives of breed origin, recipe heritage, and farmer identity add authenticity and cultural value, **Hospitality Integration**- Poultry products are incorporated into restaurant menus, street foods, and homestay experiences, and **Tourist Experience**- Food festivals, cooking classes, and farm visits transform poultry into participatory cultural encounters.

This framework advances existing agrotourism models by embedding **gender inclusion, circular economy, and environmental sustainability** (Amicarelli et al., 2024; Zziwa et al., 2024). It highlights the **feedback loop** where tourism demand drives innovation and reinvestment in poultry systems, while community narratives enhance tourist satisfaction and destination branding.

2.5. *Challenges and Policy Implications for Poultry-Based Gastronomy Tourism*

Despite strong potential, several challenges hinder poultry’s integration into gastronomy tourism. **Food safety and biosecurity risks**, including Avian Influenza and sanitation issues, limit access to high-value hospitality markets (Sindiyo et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2022). **Weak organizational structures**

and limited finance restrict processing capacity and certification systems (Birhanu et al., 2022). Imported poultry also exerts downward pressure on local markets, eroding competitiveness (Madari, 2019).

Gendered constraints persist particularly **time poverty, care burdens, and unequal asset control** which reduce women's ability to scale participation in tourism-linked enterprises (Bukachi et al., 2023; Mursalim & Amiruddin, 2017). Addressing these issues demands targeted institutional support, including access to finance, childcare, and training.

Policy implications point to the need for an **integrated cross-sectoral strategy** that links agriculture, trade, and tourism. Priority actions include: Establishing food safety and hygiene certification aligned with tourism standards., promoting hospitality procurement from certified smallholder poultry producers, strengthening cooperatives and microfinance mechanisms for women and youth, embedding poultry gastronomy explicitly within Tanzania's **Tourism Master Plan** and **Livestock Development Strategy**. Through these measures, Tanzania can leverage poultry farming not only as a livelihood activity but also as a pillar of **cultural, inclusive, and sustainable tourism**.

3. Research Methods

This study employed a conceptual analysis combined with a desk-based scoping review. Conceptual analysis is particularly useful when empirical evidence is limited but theoretical exploration is required, as it enables researchers to synthesize insights across diverse sources and propose testable frameworks (Jabareen, 2009). The methodology was informed by the PRISMA 2020 framework, which ensures transparency in identifying, screening, and selecting relevant literature.

3.1. Search Strategy

A structured search was conducted across multidisciplinary databases, including *ScienceDirect*, *SpringerLink*, *Taylor & Francis Online*, *PubMed Central (PMC)*, *Frontiers*, *Google Scholar*, and institutional repositories (e.g., FAO, University libraries). Search terms combined key concepts related to "poultry farming," "gastronomy tourism," "farm-to-table," "agritourism," "gender inclusion," and "youth participation." Boolean operators (AND, OR) were used to refine search results.

3.2. Eligibility Criteria

Studies were considered eligible if they:

- a. Examined poultry production, value chains, or farmer livelihoods in Africa and comparable developing regions.
- b. Discussed gastronomy tourism, farm-to-table models, or agrotourism frameworks.
- c. Addressed issues of gender, youth, sustainability, or circular economy in agri-food or tourism systems.
- d. Were published between 2000 and 2025 in peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes, or reputable institutional reports.

Exclusion criteria included studies not directly linking poultry/agriculture to gastronomy tourism, purely technical studies on poultry genetics or veterinary science without tourism relevance, and duplicates across databases.

3.3. Selection Process

The initial database search identified 143 records. After removing duplicates, 118 articles remained for screening. Titles and abstracts were reviewed for relevance, leaving 58 for full-text assessment. Following eligibility checks, 42 studies were included in the final synthesis. Manual snowballing of references added several foundational works e.g., (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001; Petrini, 2003).

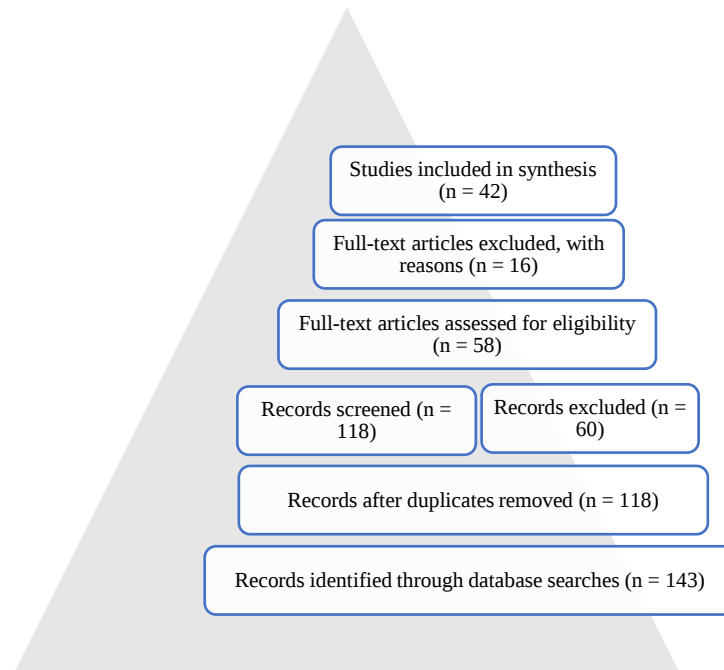
3.4. Data Extraction and Analysis

Each study was coded according to thematic areas: (i) poultry production and value chains, (ii) gastronomy tourism and cultural heritage, (iii) gender and youth inclusion, and (iv) sustainability and circular economy. A conceptual farm-to-table framework was developed drawing on value chain

theory(Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001) and farm-to-table principles(Gajić et al., 2024).

3.5. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The PRISMA diagram below illustrates the literature identification and screening process:



4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1. Opportunities

Poultry integration into gastronomy tourism presents multiple opportunities that extend across economic, cultural, and social dimensions. First, poultry provides an affordable and widely available source of protein for tourists, with chicken meals accessible to both international visitors and domestic travelers (Yong et al., 2022). Compared to other meats, poultry is cost-effective, easier to produce at scale, and adaptable to diverse culinary styles. This affordability ensures that tourists from different income groups can enjoy authentic Tanzanian flavors without facing prohibitive costs, thereby strengthening the inclusivity of tourism.

Second, poultry-based cuisines serve as powerful cultural ambassadors. Indigenous dishes such as nyama kuku wa kienyeji, supu ya kuku, and mchemsho wa kuku are deeply rooted in Tanzanian food traditions and embody the essence of household and community celebrations. Alongside these, modern and street foods such as shawarma with chips, changamoto (chicken prepared with abundant onions), and chipsi mayai with chicken toppings highlight the adaptability of poultry to contemporary lifestyles and youth preferences. Together, these dishes represent both heritage and innovation, providing diverse pathways for destination branding (Baby & Kim, 2025; Wondirad & Verheye, 2023). Positioning these foods in gastronomy tourism initiatives can diversify Tanzania’s brand beyond wildlife safaris and coastal attractions, offering visitors a holistic cultural experience.

Third, poultry farming fosters inclusive growth. Women and youth dominate smallholder poultry production, yet their contributions are often undervalued, and they face barriers to accessing markets (FAO, 2010; Galiè et al., 2015; Musyoka et al., 2025). By systematically linking these producers to hotels, restaurants, and food festivals, poultry-based gastronomy tourism can enhance food security, create employment, empower marginalized groups, and improve rural livelihoods.

4.2. Challenges

Despite its potential, poultry-based gastronomy tourism in Tanzania faces a number of persistent challenges that must be addressed before its benefits can be fully realized. One of the most pressing

issues is the high cost of poultry feed. Rising global grain prices, combined with inefficiencies in domestic supply chains, significantly increase production costs for smallholder farmers (Chang'a et al., 2024; Musyoka et al., 2025). These high costs reduce profitability, limit scalability, and create inconsistencies in meeting the steady demand of the hospitality sector. For tourism operators who require reliable and affordable supplies, this unpredictability undermines confidence in poultry as a dependable resource.

A second major challenge is the prevalence of biosecurity risks. Poultry farming is highly vulnerable to outbreaks of diseases such as Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease, which threaten both animal and human health. These diseases can wipe out entire flocks, devastate smallholder livelihoods, and damage Tanzania's reputation as a safe food tourism destination (Williams et al., 2022). Limited veterinary services, inadequate monitoring systems, and poor disease prevention practices among smallholder farmers exacerbate these risks. For international tourists, concerns about food safety can quickly erode trust and deter participation in gastronomy tourism experiences.

The third challenge lies in institutional and policy gaps. Coordination between agriculture and tourism ministries remains weak, resulting in fragmented strategies that fail to integrate poultry into broader tourism planning (Ally et al., 2024). While agricultural policies prioritize food security, tourism frameworks rarely recognize gastronomy as a growth area. This lack of synergy leads to missed opportunities for branding, value-chain efficiency, and farmer empowerment. Unless these policy barriers are resolved, poultry-based gastronomy tourism will remain an underutilized niche rather than a mainstream tourism driver.

Table 1. Opportunities and Challenges of Poultry-based Gastronomy Tourism in Tanzania

Opportunities	Challenges
Affordable protein for tourists (Yong et al., 2022)	High feed costs reducing profitability (Chang'a et al., 2024; Musyoka et al., 2025)
Destination branding via indigenous and modern dishes (<i>kienyeji chicken, supu ya kuku, mchemsho wa kuku, shawarma, changamoto, chipsi mayai</i>) (Baby & Kim, 2025; Wondirad & Verheye, 2023)	Biosecurity risks such as Avian Influenza (Williams et al., 2022)
Inclusive growth for women and youth (FAO, 2010; Galiè et al., 2015; Musyoka et al., 2025)	Weak policy coordination between agriculture and tourism (Ally et al., 2024)

Source: Adapted from literature cited in this study.

4.3. Policy Implications

To fully harness the potential of poultry-based gastronomy tourism, several policy interventions are required. First, strengthening farmer-tourism linkages is critical. Structured partnerships and contract farming arrangements between poultry farmers and hotels, restaurants, and cultural festivals would ensure consistent demand, stable markets, and reliable supply. Evidence from other agrotourism settings shows that such value-chain integration enhances inclusivity and efficiency (Anderson, 2018; Dzingirai et al., 2024).

Second, policies must promote sustainable poultry production systems. This includes incentivizing improved feed efficiency, encouraging the use of locally available feed ingredients, and adopting environmentally friendly husbandry practices. Protecting indigenous poultry breeds is equally vital, as these breeds are not only central to Tanzanian cultural identity but also more resilient to local environments (FAO, 2010; Wilson et al., 2022).

Third, financial and technical support should target women and youth, who dominate smallholder poultry production but face systemic barriers to market participation. Tailored measures such as affordable credit schemes, extension services, and biosecurity training would help reduce risks and strengthen their role in gastronomy value chains (FAO, 2014; Galiè et al., 2015; Musyoka et al., 2025).

Fourth, national branding strategies should highlight poultry cuisines alongside other cultural assets.

Just as Zanzibar’s spices form part of its global identity, Tanzanian poultry dishes such as nyama kuku wa kienyeji and mchemsho wa kuku could be positioned as iconic foods for international promotion (Baby & Kim, 2025; Wondirad & Verheye, 2023).

Finally, achieving long-term sustainability requires cross-sectoral coordination. Weak institutional linkages between agriculture and tourism remain a barrier (Ally et al., 2024). Establishing joint frameworks would harmonize production, marketing, and tourism planning, embedding gastronomy tourism within Tanzania’s broader development agenda.

4.4. Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a farm-to-table conceptual framework to illustrate how poultry farming can be integrated into gastronomy tourism and cultural tourism in Tanzania. The framework is based on a value chain approach that connects production with consumption, highlighting socio-economic and cultural outcomes.

4.4.1. Framework Components

- a. Poultry Farming (Input Stage): Indigenous chickens (kienyeji) and modern breeds; activities include feeding, breeding, veterinary care, and sustainable practices.
- b. Processing (Transformation Stage): Cleaning, slaughter, packaging, and preparation to ensure safety and value addition.
- c. Gastronomy Products (Culinary Stage): Signature dishes such as nyama kuku wa kienyeji, supu ya kuku, BBQ chicken, Changamoto, and shawarma.
- d. Tourism Experiences (Consumption Stage): Restaurants, lodges, food markets, rural homestays, and culinary festivals.
- e. Socio-economic and Cultural Outcomes (Impact Stage): Job creation, improved farmer incomes, preservation of indigenous cuisines, empowerment of women and youth, and sustainable practices.

4.4.2. Conceptual Framework Flow

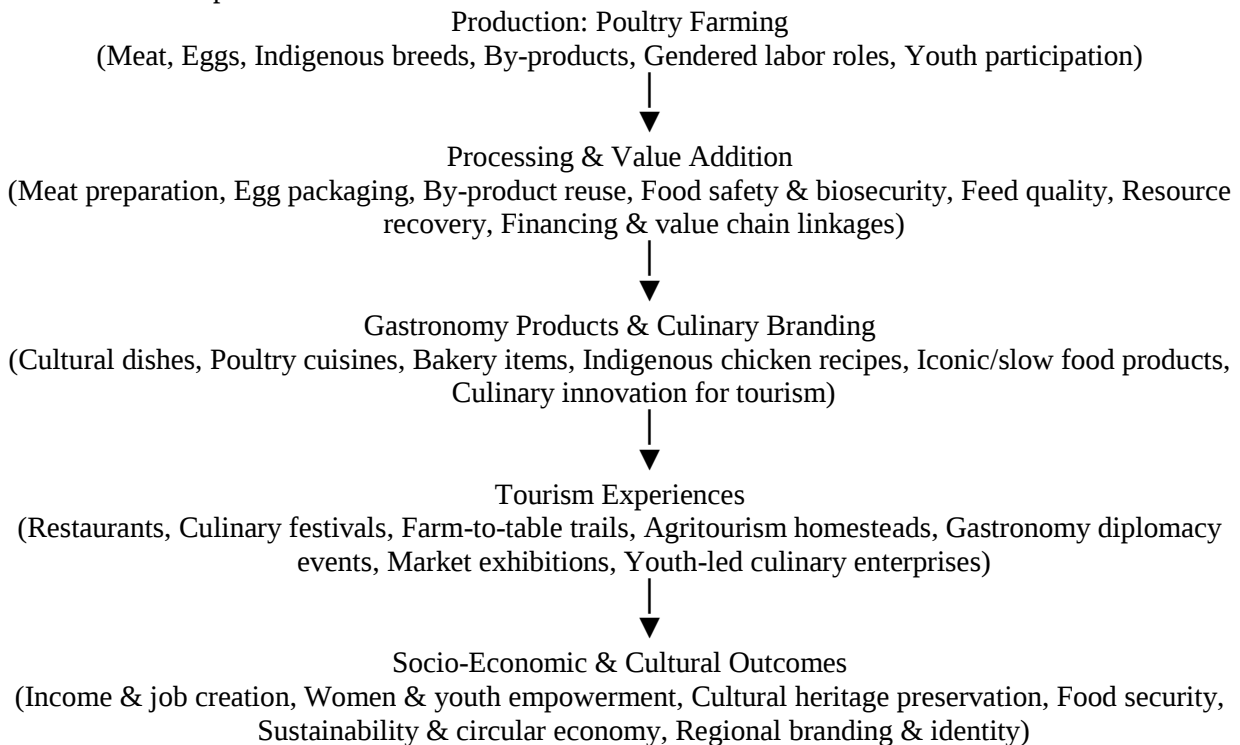


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for linking poultry farming and gastronomy tourism in Tanzania (adapted from literature).

4.4.3. Feedback Loops

The framework incorporates dynamic feedback loops:

- a. Tourism demand → Production innovation: Rising demand for authentic poultry-based gastronomy products stimulates improved farming practices, breed conservation, and culinary creativity (Petrini, 2003; Yong et al., 2022).
- b. Hospitality standards → Farmer adaptation: Farmers adopt food safety, animal health, and biosecurity practices to meet hospitality sector requirements (Sindiyo et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2022).
- c. Policy & market linkages → System enablers: Policies on agritourism, circular economy strategies, and market platforms enhance integration (Amicarelli et al., 2024; Anderson, 2018; FAO, 2010).
- d. Gender & youth inclusion → Social sustainability: Participation of women and youth in poultry-gastronomy linkages reinforces equitable livelihoods and intergenerational cultural continuity (Bukachi et al., 2023; Geza et al., 2021).
- e. Cultural identity → Tourism competitiveness: Gastronomy products rooted in heritage strengthen regional branding and enrich tourism offerings (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Okech & Timothy, 2023).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that poultry farming has strong potential to serve as a driver of gastronomy and cultural tourism in Tanzania. The central principle inferred is that a farm-to-table approach linking poultry farmers with hospitality enterprises can diversify tourism offerings, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance socio-economic outcomes. Poultry dishes such as *nyama kuku wa kienyeji*, *supu ya kuku*, *mchemsho wa kuku*, *changamoto* (chicken with onions), *shawarma with chips*, and *chipsi mayai* illustrate how both traditional and contemporary cuisines can strengthen Tanzania's tourism brand.

Nevertheless, several challenges limit this potential. High feed costs constrain productivity, disease outbreaks pose food safety risks, and weak policy coordination between agriculture and tourism hinders effective integration. These exceptions highlight the need for structural reforms and coordinated strategies to unlock the sector's contribution to tourism.

Theoretically, the paper contributes to understanding the agriculture-tourism nexus by framing poultry as both an economic resource and a cultural asset, and by applying the value chain framework to gastronomy tourism. Practically, the findings emphasize the role of poultry in inclusive growth, particularly through women and youth participation, and the importance of branding poultry-based cuisines for domestic and international markets.

Key recommendations are to: (i) establish contracts between farmers and hotels/restaurants, (ii) promote sustainable poultry practices and indigenous breeds, (iii) extend financial and technical support to women and youth, (iv) integrate poultry cuisines into tourism marketing campaigns, and (v) institutionalize cross-sectoral coordination. Overall, poultry-based gastronomy tourism is a strategic opportunity to diversify Tanzania's tourism economy, empower rural communities, and preserve culinary heritage

Acknowledgements

The author sincerely acknowledges Dr. Mato J. Magobe for his invaluable guidance and insightful feedback on the development of the research methodology. His mentorship greatly enhanced the rigor, structure, and clarity of this study.

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