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Effect of egg weight on hatchability, fertility and subsequent body weight of Kadaknath chicken

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Abstract

An experiment was conducted on 1740 number of Kadaknath eggs to determine the effect of selection of eggs on the basis of egg weight (Small ≤ 40 gm and Large > 40 gm) and hatch on hatchability, fertility and subsequent body weight. Chicks from these two groups were weighed from day old to twenty week of age. Egg weight of Kadaknath was found to be $40.72\text{gm} \pm 0.10$ while chick to egg weight percent came to 60.66%. Fertility and hatchability on total egg basis and fertile egg basis were observed 78%, 60.66% and 76.17%, respectively. Results indicated that there is significant effect of egg size and hatch on hatchability and fertility percentage. The large-sized eggs produced chicks with higher ($p < 0.05$) hatch-weight than small-sized eggs and this difference was also seen in the subsequent body weight. Effect of hatch was also found significant on hatchability, fertility and body weight in the present study. It can be concluded that environment affects fertility, hatchability and body weight and making selection for heavy weight egg before incubation may produce chicks with higher body weight which persist upto 20week of age.

Keywords: Kadaknath chickens, fertility, hatchability, egg size, body weight

1. Introduction

Indigenous chickens continue to be the mainstay of self sustaining low input backyard or free range system of production in rural, tribal and semi-urban areas of the country. Indigenous chickens possess unique attributes such as hardiness, ability to adapt to harsh environment, broodiness, aggressiveness to protect their young ones, etc. They are nutritionally, economically, and culturally very important to rural households (King'ori *et al.*, 2007; Mtileni *et al.*, 2010) [15]. Nowadays, Kadaknath is attracting interest of the poultry farmers because of their delicious meat which fetches higher prices as compared to broiler meat. Though Kadaknath farming has started running on commercial level, there exists very few information on the effect of size of egg and hatch on hatchability, fertility and body weight of chickens. King'ori (2011) [13] suggested that chick weight, fertility and hatchability are interrelated heritable traits that vary among breeds, variety or individuals in a breed or variety there fore it becomes very important to understand the effect of egg weight on these traits in Kadaknath chickens. In the layer production cycle, egg size is highly variable trait, the bird will start with small egg progressing to medium size and eventually to desirable large size egg in a couple of weeks. However other factors like the hen's age, body weight, and yolk weight along with feed intake such as fat levels, protein, and enzymes also alters weight of egg (Iqbal *et al.*, 2016). Different researchers showed that there is positive correlation between pre-incubation egg weight, length of storage periods, hatchling weight and growth performance in different species of poultry (Farooq *et al.* 2001, Petek *et al.* 2003) [5, 20]. There is lack of information on the effect of egg weight on subsequent performance of Kadaknath chickens. Therefore, the present study was designed to study the effect of egg weight and hatch on fertility, hatchability and body weight of Kadaknath chicken.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Experiment location and selection of birds

Experiment was conducted at poultry unit of College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Anjora, Durg, Chhattisgarh, India taking 1740 number of eggs from Kadaknath birds. Sex ratio of 1:10 was kept for these birds. Vaccination, feeding and all other management practices were kept uniform during the research.

2.2 Collection and storage of eggs

A total 1740 eggs were collected twice a day at 10 a.m. and 4pm from four different hatches. Misshaped, cracked, dirty, elongated and very small eggs were rejected and only oval shape good quality eggs were selected for hatching. To determine the effect of egg size and hatch on hatchability, fertility and body weight individual egg was weighted and grouped into two categories small (< 40 gm) and large (>40gm). All the eggs were then fumigated with formalin and potassium permanganate in the ratio 1:2 for 15 min and were set into the incubator at dry bulb temperature of 37 °C and wet bulb temperature of 28.3 °C with broad ends pointing upwards. After the end of incubation period fertile and unfertile eggs were identified by breaking the unhatched eggs. The hatchability percentage was calculated by dividing the number of hatched eggs by the total number of eggs set and then multiplied with 100, whereas fertility percentage was calculated by dividing number of egg hatched by total number of fertile eggs.

$$\text{Hatchability on total egg basis} = \frac{\text{No of chicks hatched}}{\text{No of egg set}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Hatchability on fertile egg basis} = \frac{\text{No of chicks hatched}}{\text{No of fertile egg}} \times 100$$

2.3 Body weight

Wing band was put on to hatched chicks and body weight in gram (g) was taken using electronic balance from day old to 20 week of age at weekly interval.

2.4 Statistical analysis

The mean, standard deviation (SD) and standard error (SE) coefficient of variation (CV) for egg weight and body weight was calculated by using the standard statistical formulae (Snedecor and Cochran, 1989) [34]. Statistical analysis was performed in two stages effect of egg size on day old chick and subsequent body weight of Kadaknath chickens were analyzed by one way ANOVA through Microsoft Office Excell, Chi-square test was used to determine the effects of egg weights on chick to egg weight ratio, hatchability and fertility and effect of hatch on body weight was estimated by using SPSS version 25 statistical analysis programme. The statistical model was:

$$Y_{ij} = \mu + H_i + e_{ij}$$

Where,

Y_{ij} = Body weight of n^{th} chick in i^{th} hatch

μ = Over all mean.

H_i = Effect of i^{th} hatch

e_{ij} = Random error (0, σ^2e).

Duncan test for multiple comparisons was used to test the significance of differences between treatment means at 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Effect of hatch

3.1.1 Egg weight

The mean and standard error in all hatches and pooled for egg weight, chick to egg weight percent, hatchability and fertility

is given in Table 1a. The average egg weight in Kadaknath observed was 40.72g ranging from 39.54g to 41.87g. The mean and standard error in all hatches and pooled for egg weight is given Table 1a. The observed values for egg weight was comparable with the values observed by Parmar *et al* (2006), Ekka (2018), Verma *et al* (2018) and Kumar *et al* (2022) [17, 4, 37, 14] whereas slightly higher than the value observed by Haunshi *et al* (2011) [7] lower than the Jha *et al* (2021) [9] in Kadaknath. Effect of egg hatch on egg weight was found to be significant. Variation in egg weight could be attribute to difference in general management and feeding management.

3.1.2 Chick to egg weight percent

The percentage chick weight of egg weight in Kadaknath obtained in this work is lower as compare to percentage obtained in Rhode Island red and Barred Plymouth Rock (Jull *et al*, 1925, Upp C. W., 1928) [10, 36], Broad Breasted Turkey (Payne *et al.*, 1957) [19] and in commercial broiler breed (Pinchasov Y., 1991) [21].

3.1.3 Fertility and Hatchability

Fertility and hatchability are two major parameters that influence day-old chicks Javid *et al* (2016). Fertility ranges from 70.75% to 83.31% in four different hatches with the pooled value 78%. Fertility recorded in the present study is comparable to values observed in Kadaknath by Ekka (2018) [4], Jena *et al* (2018) [8] and in Aseel by Verma *et al* (2018) [37] whereas higher values for fertility was presented by Biswas *et al* (2010) [2], Haunshi *et al.* (2012) [6] in Kadaknath and Ramaphala and Mbajjorgu (2013) [24] in COBB 500 broiler chicken and Premavilli *et al* (2020) [22] in Aseel hen. Singh *et al* (2018) [32] recorded lower fertility percentage than the Kadaknath in indigeneous Uttara chicken in Pantanagar.

Hatchability percent was calculated on total egg basis and fertile egg basis values ranges between 39.78% to 73.69% and 55.47% to 88.48%, respectively and their mean value came to 60.66% and 76.17%, respectively. Hatchability on total egg basis and fertile egg basis in this study was similar to values observed by Haunshi *et al* (2012) [6], Ekka (2018) [4], Jena *et al* (2018) [8] and higher values were observed by Biswas *et al* (2010) [2], Sharma *et al* (2012) [29].

Effect of hatch was found significant in both the parameters. Significant difference in fertility and hatchability is indicative that these parameters are highly affected by the surrounding environment.

3.1.4 Body weight

The mean and standard error in four hatches and pooled for body weight irrespective of sex at different age is given in Table 1b which is much lower than the weight reported by Thakur *et al* (2006) [17], Chaterjee *et al* (2007), Sharma *et al* (2012) [29], Singh *et al* (2014) [31], Shanmathy *et al* (2018), Ekka (2018) [4], Ranbijuli *et al* (2020) [25], Dubey *et al.* (2021), this might be due to variation in management practices, climate and environmental factors. Body weight from day old to 20 weeks of age was significantly affected by the weight of the egg which is indicative of the fact that the trait body weight is highly influenced by the environmental conditions. Significant hatch effect was also reported by Singh *et al* (2001), Rahman *et al* (2003) and Tomar *et al* (2015) [33, 23, 35] in White Leghorn chicken and in Dahlem red layers by Shivaprasad *et al* (2017) [30].

3.6 Effect of egg size

3.6.1 Fertility and Hatchability

Fertility and hatchability traits were found on higher side for large size egg ($p>0.05$) (Table 2a). Graph 1 clearly shows the difference in fertility and hatchability due to egg size. Similar results were also obtained by Ng'ambi *et al* (2013) in Venda chickens, Iqbal *et al* (2016) and Olutunmogum *et al* (2018) [16] in broiler breeder and Premavalli *et al* (2020) [22] in Aseel, where there was significant effect of egg weight on hatchability and fertility. The present result was in contrary to the finding of Rashid *et al* (2013) [26] in Rhode Island Red x Fayoumi chicken and Rammaphala and Mbajjorgu (2013) [24] in COBB 500 broiler chicken.

3.6.2 Body weight

There is a linear relationship between age and body weight as shown in the Graph 1. It can also be noticed in the graph that differences in the weight due to egg weight remains constant throughout the period of research. The slope of the line obtained for large size egg was $y = 38.72x - 93.70$ with coefficient of determination (R^2) being 0.977 and for small size egg was $y = 33.39x - 87.37$ with coefficient of determination (R^2) being 0.969 indicating a significant

relationship. Similar trend in Kadaknath was also observed by Ranabijuli *et al* (2020) [25].

Effect of egg size on hatch weight and subsequent body weight is significant in first 4 week in Hatch 1 and 2 while in hatch 3, 4 and pooled data egg size effect can be seen upto 20 week of age presented in Table 2a and 2b. Not much work done on the effect of egg size on body weight at different age in Kadaknath but few works are there on other breeds. In the present research result showed that the size of the egg largely determines the chick size at hatch as well as at later stage of life (20week). Chick weight is the most widely used indicator for day-old chick quality assessment (Decuypere *et al.*, 2002) [3]. It is known that a positive correlation exists between chick weight and egg weight in broiler chicken and different domestic birds (Pinchasov 1991, Abiola *et al.*, 2008, Shanawany 1987) [21, 1, 28], which is accordance with the present research. The current finding was also supported by Patra *et al* (2016) [18], Iqbal *et al* (2017), Senbeta (2017) [27] and Olutunmogum *et al* (2018) [16]. Willams suggested that large size eggs contained more butrients than small eggs and hence, developing embryos from large eggs tended to have more nutrients for their growth requirements.

Table 1a: Effect of hatch on egg weight, chick to egg weight percentage, hatchability and fertility

Variable	Hatch 1	Hatch 2	Hatch 3	Hatch 4	pvalue	Pooled
Egg weight (g)	41.87 ± 0.16 ^a	41.00 ± 0.19 ^b	40.86 ± 0.24 ^b	39.54 ± 0.17 ^c	0.001**	40.72 ± 0.10
Chick to egg wt.%	60.97	63.27	60.84	60.19	NS	60.66 ^{NS}
Hatchability (TEB, %)	59.13	39.78	73.69	70.03	0.001**	60.66
Hatchability (FEB, %)	76.94	55.47	88.42	83.88	0.001**	76.17
Fertility (%)	74.63	70.75	83.31	83.31	0.001**	78.00

Mean in the same row with different superscript a,b,c are significant ($P<0.01$ **, $P<0.05$ *)

Table 1b: Effect of hatch on body weight

Age	Hatch 1	Hatch 2	Hatch 3	Hatch 4	F Value
DOC	25.63 ^b ± 0.13	25.97 ^a ± 0.29	25.03 ^b ± 0.20	23.98 ^c ± 0.15	17.00**
Week 1	31.6 ^b ± 0.24	31.13 ^b ± 0.35	41.91 ^a ± 0.43	40.76 ^a ± 0.39	189.08**
Week 2	40.93 ^c ± 0.39	40.43 ^c ± 0.59	54.43 ^b ± 0.71	58.52 ^a ± 0.78	152.47**
Week 3	48.65 ^c ± 0.52	48.10 ^c ± 0.80	70.82 ^b ± 1.06	76.57 ^a ± 1.04	197.61**
Week 4	56.86 ^c ± 0.67	59.47 ^c ± 1.14	89.46 ^b ± 1.40	97.00 ^a ± 1.33	221.96**
Week 5	67.71 ^c ± 0.93	76.75 ^b ± 1.79	121.66 ^a ± 1.77	122.45 ^a ± 1.56	239.05**
Week 6	86.35 ^c ± 1.45	97.15 ^b ± 2.55	154.58 ^a ± 2.34	148.62 ^a ± 2.20	186.98**
Week 7	109.16 ^d ± 2.05	118.78 ^c ± 3.59	192.49 ^a ± 2.97	174.81 ^b ± 2.54	166.19**
Week 8	133.64 ^c ± 2.84	144.68 ^c ± 4.76	228.51 ^a ± 3.57	206.49 ^b ± 2.94	145.00**
Week 9	162.47 ^c ± 3.7	171.60 ^c ± 5.97	266.86 ^a ± 3.95	247.75 ^b ± 3.41	136.39**
Week 10	192.19 ^b ± 4.55	202.04 ^b ± 7.03	305.37 ^a ± 4.49	291.61 ^a ± 3.91	125.42**
Week 11	236.27 ^b ± 5.83	233.20 ^b ± 7.96	342.66 ^a ± 5.34	335.08 ^a ± 4.42	93.50**
Week 12	281.87 ^b ± 6.94	269.44 ^b ± 8.87	383.48 ^a ± 5.90	379.11 ^a ± 4.95	73.98**
Week 13	346.95 ^b ± 8.84	315.60 ^c ± 10.50	432.81 ^a ± 6.40	423.09 ^a ± 5.49	47.56**
Week 14	403.31 ^b ± 9.49	366.06 ^c ± 12.29	480.91 ^a ± 6.86	465.72 ^a ± 6.06	34.24**
Week 15	455.00 ^b ± 10.43	412.84 ^c ± 13.33	525.53 ^a ± 7.33	510.39 ^a ± 6.60	26.18**
Week 16	501.29 ^b ± 11.32	466.97 ^c ± 15.45	567.37 ^a ± 7.66	560.55 ^a ± 7.24	18.65**
Week 17	547.31 ^b ± 12.30	514.61 ^c ± 16.51	610.05 ^a ± 7.96	608.00 ^a ± 7.76	15.68**
Week 18	594.38 ^b ± 13.72	561.60 ^b ± 17.87	649.53 ^a ± 8.29	653.53 ^a ± 8.15	12.36**
Week 19	641.88 ^b ± 14.21	607.80 ^b ± 18.69	688.82 ^a ± 8.78	697.7 ^a ± 8.49	9.93**
Week 20	680.19 ^b ± 15.04	654.87 ^b ± 20.09	727.912 ^a ± 9.15	749.63 ^a ± 9.19	10.27**

Mean ± SE in the same row with different superscript a,b,c,d are significant ($P<0.01$ **, $P<0.05$ *)

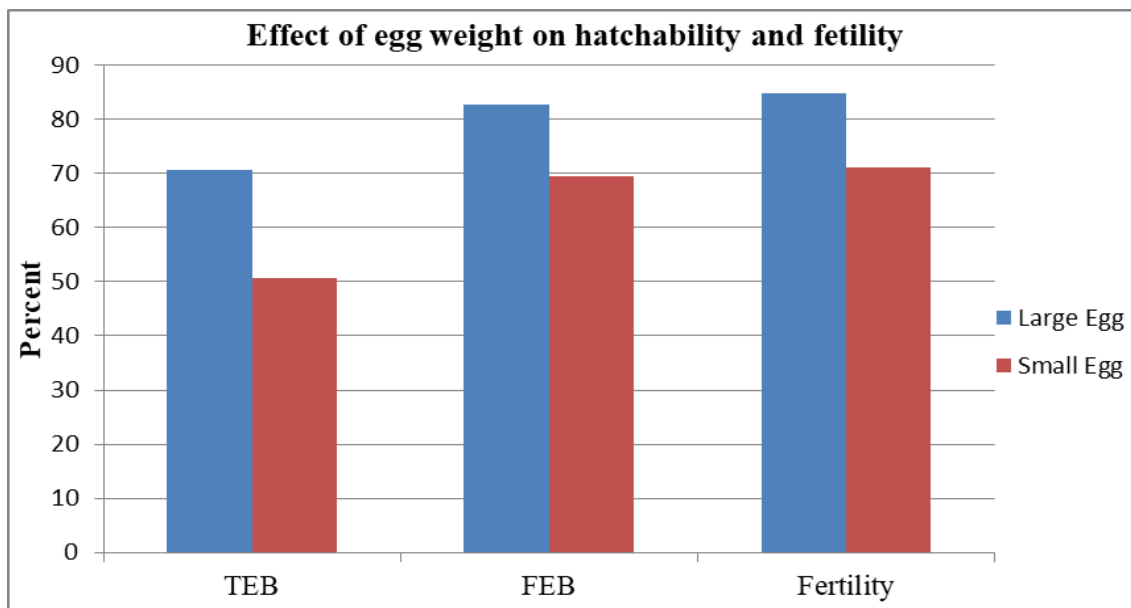
Table 2a: Effect of egg weight on hatchability and fertility

Variable	Large egg	Small egg	Significant level
Hatchability (TEB, %)	70.59	50.65	0.001**
Hatchability (FEB, %)	82.81	69.54	0.001**
Fertility (%)	84.84	71.16	0.001**

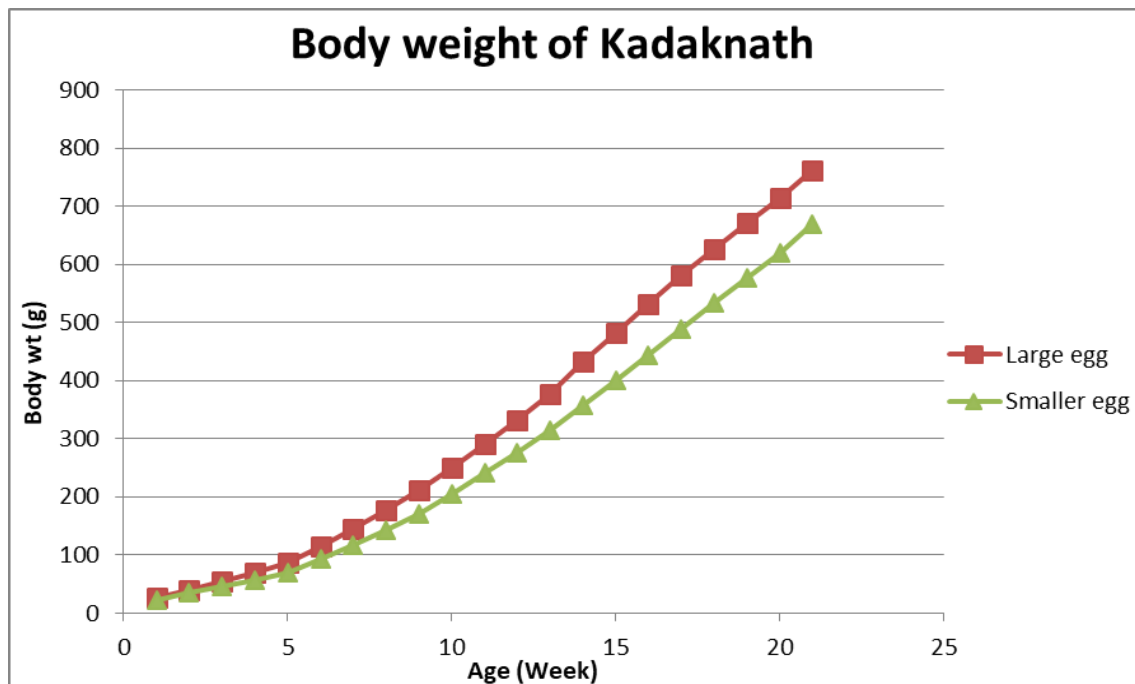
Table 2b: Effect of Egg size on body weight

Week	Body weight (g)	
	Large egg	Small egg
DOC	26.76 ± 0.10 (679)	22.15 ± 0.09 (475)
Week 1	39.80 ± 0.35 (675)	36.13 ± 0.27 (474)
Week 2	54.83 ± 0.63 (672)	45.19 ± 0.35 (473)
Week 3	69.99 ± 0.93 (669)	56.61 ± 0.53 (473)
Week 4	87.32 ± 1.26 (663)	70.04 ± 0.75 (469)
Week 5	113.93 ± 1.74 (620)	93.37 ± 1.20 (458)
Week 6	145.48 ± 2.21 (587)	116.71 ± 1.52 (451)
Week 7	177.80 ± 2.68 (578)	142.88 ± 1.97 (448)
Week 8	211.61 ± 3.15 (567)	170.21 ± 2.31 (440)
Week 9	250.71 ± 3.67 (555)	205.21 ± 2.67 (434)
Week 10	290.07 ± 4.23 (544)	241.75 ± 3.08 (423)
Week 11	332.41 ± 4.82 (524)	275.97 ± 3.41 (405)
Week 12	377.3 ± 5.19 (507)	314.80 ± 3.84 (404)
Week 13	431.93 ± 5.53 (507)	357.85 ± 4.34 (392)
Week 14	482.08 ± 5.76 (504)	400.49 ± 4.83 (388)
Week 15	531.22 ± 6.00 (496)	442.33 ± 5.34 (386)
Week 16	580.77 ± 6.36 (475)	487.52 ± 5.76 (375)
Week 17	626.20 ± 6.64 (471)	532.89 ± 6.31 (371)
Week 18	670.49 ± 6.99 (470)	577.37 ± 6.67 (372)
Week 19	715.06 ± 7.28 (469)	620.62 ± 7.19 (372)
Week 20	762.13 ± 7.93 (463)	669.45 ± 7.75 (369)

Note: 1. Figure in the parenthesis below each mean value indicates the number of observation
 2. Mean ± SE in the same row with different superscript (*) are significant ($P \leq 0.01^{**}$, $P \leq 0.05^*$)



Graph 1: Effect of egg weight on hatchability and fertility



Graph 2: Body weight of Kadaknath chicken

4. Conclusion

In the present research it can be concluded that the hatch and egg weight affects hatchability, fertility and body weight. Large size egg produce chicks with heavier chicks and selecting larger eggs can improve the quality of the chicks and getting heavier body weight at early age.

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