



Length-weight relationship and condition factor for cyprinid fish species found in lower Zhob river, northern Balochistan, Pakistan

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Abstract

This research study was conducted with the aim to evaluate the length-weight relationship (LWR) parameters and condition factor (K) for three native fish species, namely, *Labeo rohita*, *Cyprinion watsoni* and *Garra gotyla*. A total of 756 specimens including 251 *L. rohita*, 255 *C. watsoni*, and 250 *G. gotyla* were caught by scoop net in the months of February, March, and September, October 2019 from the lower Zhob River, in northern Balochistan. The estimated total length and total weight for these specimens were ranged from 7 to 18.9 cm and 5 to 79 g; 6.8 to 18.9 cm and 2 to 73 g; 7.5 to 17.6 cm and 5 to 68 g respectively. Based on the results, the values of b varied between 1.25 for *Garra gotyla*, to 3.19 for *Cyprinion watsoni*. All length-weight relationships were significant ($P < 0.001$), with r greater than 0.97. The condition factor (K value) were found to be between 0.035 ± 0.034 for *G. gotyla* to 0.33 ± 0.11 for *C. watsoni*, whereas the r^2 values ranged from 0.976 (*L. rohita*) to 0.955 (*G. gotyla*). $r^2 > 0.98$ indicated highly significant correlation between length-weight, total length, and standard length for the three fish species. All linear regressions were highly significant ($P < 0.05$). The overall value of the exponent of LWR ($b = 1.25$) suggested negative allometric growth. Furthermore, the first reference for separate male, female and combined (mixed) sex of length-weight relationships for *L. rohita*, *C. watsoni*, *G. gotyla* were furnished. The results of the present study will contribute to the proper management, growth of collected fish species and might be used to fill a space in the current knowledge in this area.

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Introduction

Length-weight relationships (LWRs) of fish species are essential parameters for fisheries management and conservation programs, as well as for exploitation prevention of young individuals and the consequent reduction in the spawning stock (Le Cren, 1951; Froese, 2006; Vicentin *et al.*, 2012). In fisheries biology, LWRs are normally used to convert length measures into weight and to determine the growth characteristics related to those variables (Galli and Norbis, 2016). On the other hand, LWRs are utilized for estimating fishes' condition factor, these values are used for comparing the "condition", "fatness" or "well-being" of fish (Le Cren, 1951; Froese, 2006). The condition factor (K) could reflect the physiology of a fish, which is influenced by both intrinsic (gonadal development, organic reserves, presence or absence of food in the gut) and extrinsic (food availability, environmental variability) factors (Nikolsky, 1969). Condition factor is used as an indirect morphological indicator for fish farmers and ichthyologists to estimate fish growth. It is an index of feeding intensity and growth (Fagade, 1979) which reveals information on the biological state of fish in relation to its well-being (Abowei, 2010; Omar *et al.*, 2015; Stavrescu-Bedivan *et al.*, 2016). In terms of nutrition it shows a proper accumulation of fat due to proper feeding. Moreover, it also reveals the appropriateness of a specific water body for fish growth (Le Cren, 1951).

Morphometric information has an eminent role in fishery biology involving various trends with the life history of fishes (Ferdaushy and Alam, 2015). Statistical relationships among morphometric measurement of fishes are also vital for both taxonomists (Simon *et al.*, 2010) and fishery biologists (Mustafa and Brooks, 2008). Length-weight relationships in fisheries management are dominant and widely employed techniques that are used to estimate the biomass (Adarsh and James, 2016). The relationship between length and weight of fish is a known tool in fisheries sciences to calculate mean weight of the fish stock from known length of the group by establishing precise mathematical

equation between length and weight (Le Cren, 1951; Gupta and Banerjee, 2015).

LWR studies are often used to indicate the prosperity of a fish (Safran, 1992), aquatic habitat (Pauly, 1993) and ecosystem modeling (Kulbicki *et al.*, 2005). It is a valuable technique that provides evidence on the spatial distribution of different fish species and reproductive history (Kara and Bayhan, 2008). Moreover, it is also a pivotal prerequisite to find some aspects of fish population dynamics like age structure and growth pattern i.e., allometric or isometric (Le Cren, 1951; Quist *et al.*, 2012).

Zhob River is the main basin in the north-western Balochistan and the second largest river of the province with a water shedding a distance of about 400 km (<https://en.wikipedia.org>.List of rivers of Pakistan, 2017). From Kunder Mountains, lies between Muslim Bagh and Kan-Mehtarzai, the meltwater forms the Zhob River which flows through east-northly and drains into the Gomal River near Khajuri Kach (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan) after passing 4 km of Zhob city. The Zhob town is located on the east banks of Zhob River. There is still a scarcity of biometric data on fish species living in this water basin. Hence, the aim of this study was to calculate the length-weight relationship, and Fulton's condition factor for the fish species collected in order to expand the biological knowledge especially the growth pattern and physical or health conditions of fishes at Zhob river basin. These are the first estimated parameters of length-weight relationships for the fish species inhabiting the Zhob River.

Materials and methods

Study sites

A total of 756 specimens belong to the fish family Cyprinidae (Labeo rohita, Cyprinion watsoni, Garra gotyla) were captured by drag net on monthly base (February, April, August, September) 2019 from lower Zhob River at Badanzai dame (gps-coordinates: 32°03'60.00" N 69°50'59.99" E), Deragai village basin (31°41'8373" N , 69°39'4416" E) and Viyala tributary (31°25'02.5"N 69°27'56.6"E) during 2019

(Figs.1,2A,B,C). The dam is located across Zhob River at about 27 km South of Zhob Town, while Deragai basin and Viyala tributary lies nearly 14 km North West of the town (District Zhob) in Balochistan

province. Total catch comprise 251 individuals of *Labeo rohita*, 255 *Cyprinion watsoni* and 250 *Garra gotyla*.



Fig. 1. Map of district Zhob showing sampling points (red) of study area.

Measurement and identification of specimens

Total length (cm) and wet body weight (g) was measured, on arrival to laboratory, to the nearest 0.1cm and 0.01g, by using wooden measuring tray with centimeter scale and electronic weight balance for each fish sample was noted respectively. Measurement of each fish species was done from the tip of snout to the end of caudal fin then fishes were immediately preserved in 4% formaldehyde solution for about one week, and after that stored in 70% ethanol for long time preservation. Each specimen was identified to species level in the field as well as in laboratory by using the keys of (Talwar and Jhingran, 1991).

Length-weight relationship (LWR)

Length-weight relationship (LWR) was calculated separately for male, female and combined (mixed) sexes of each fish species. The LWR was measured by using cubic law suggested by

Le Cren (1951) as follows: $W = aL^b$

Where, W is the wet weight in grams, L is the total body length in centimeters; a is the intercept and b is the exponent or regression slope.

In order to confirmed that whether length and weight were linearly related with each other, the slope of the regression line (b) was subjected to t-test at 5% significant level ($p < 0.05$).

$$\log W = \log a + b \log L$$

The values of an exponent b of the length-weight relationship was tested for departure from its ideal value, that is $b=3$, when growth is isometric. Where b is an exponent or allometric growth coefficient usually has value between 2.5 to 4.0. Therefore, Hence, LWRs (logarithmic) was used to check whether the growth was positive or negative allometric (Kumolu Johnson and Ndimele, 2010).

Condition factor (K)

Fulton's condition factor (K) of three fish species were calculated using the formula with the help of following formula suggested by Offem *et al.* (2009) as follows:

$$K = 100 \times W / (TL)^3$$

Where W is the total body weight and L is the total body length.

Parabolic Cube law

Parabolic Cube law equation [Weight (W) = a × Total Length (TL) b] is mostly used to depict the LWR (Le Cren, 1951). Linear regression [Log W = a + b Log TL] of this cube law equation was adopted to estimate LWRs.

Where: a = intercept of the regression, b = slope or regression coefficient Moreover, for LWRs, outliers were detected by plotting a straight line graph of log (a) against (b), and regression analyses were redone

after excluding outliers. Multiple regression analysis was also performed for total length, weight and condition factor.

Statistical analysis

Data were treated statistically by using MS-Excel and MINITAB for Windows-7. In all the tests, the significance level considered was $p=0.05$. The statistical significance of the slope (b), the intercept (a) and the correlation coefficient (r) using Student's *t*-test (Sokal and Rohlf, 1995) were analyzed. In order to check whether fish growth was statistically different from isometric growth ($b=3$), a Student *t*-test was performed.

Results and discussion

A total of 756 specimens including 339 male and 417 female belonging to three fish species (*Labeo rohita*, *Cyprinion watsoni* and *Garra gotyla*) representing the single family Cyprinidae were used for calculation of the length-weight relationships (Table 1).

Table 1. Fish species count captured from different water basin on lower Zhob River.

Fish species	Family	Subfamily	No. of specimens collected				Collection site
			Male	Female	Total	Average	
<i>Labeo rohita</i> (Hamilton, 1822)	Cyprinidae	Labeoninae	113	138	251	33.20	Badanzai dame
<i>Cyprinion watsoni</i> (Day, 1872)	Cyprinidae	Cyprininae	109	146	255	33.73	Viyala village tributary
<i>Garra gotyla</i> (Gray, 1830)	Cyprinidae	Labeoninae	117	133	250	33.06	Deragai village basin
Grand Total			339 (44.84)	417 (55.2)	756		

Table 2. Average length and weight for *Labeo rohita*.

Length groups	Mean length			Length groups	Mean weight		
	Mixed	Male	Female		Mixed	Male	Female
7-8 cm	0.90	0.9	0.9	7-8 cm	0.88	0.86	0.89
9-10 cm	1.00	1	1	9-10 cm	1.13	1.13	1.13
11-12 cm	1.08	1.08	1.08	11-12 cm	1.43	1.42	1.43
13-14 cm	1.15	1.15	1.15	13-14 cm	1.53	1.52	1.53
15-16 cm	1.20	1.2	1.2	15-16 cm	1.64	1.64	1.64
17-18 cm	1.25	1.25	1.25	17-18 cm	1.8	1.81	1.8

Bayesian length-weight: $a=0.00955$ (0.00597 - 0.01527), $b=3.01$ (2.88 - 3.14).

All the estimated regression coefficients were highly significant ($p<0.0001$), and ranged from 0.95 for *G. gotyla* to 0.96 for *C. watsoni* and 0.97 for *Labeo rohita*. All the b values were within the expected range from 1.3 to 3.2 (Froese, 2006). Parameter b ranged from 1.244 (*G. gotyla*) to 3.205 (*L. rohita*), r^2

values ranged from 0.976 (*L. rohita*) to 0.955 (*G. gotyla*) (Tables 5 and fig. 3, 4 & 5), whereas the average K values variegated between 0.035 ± 0.034 for *G. gotyla* to 0.20 ± 0.081 and 0.33 ± 0.11 for *L. rohita*, and *C. watsoni* respectively (Table 5).

Table 3. Average length and weight for *Cyprinion watsoni*.

Length Groups	Mean Length			Length Groups	Mean Weight		
	Mixed	Male	Female		Mixed	Male	Female
6-8.9 cm	0.92	0.92	0.92	6-8.9 cm	0.68	0.78	0.69
8.9-9.9 cm	0.89	0.97	0.97	8.9-9.9 cm	0.91	0.85	0.92
10-10.9 cm	1.02	1.02	1.02	10-10.9 cm	1.06	1.11	1.09
11-11.9 cm	1.06	1.06	1.06	11-11.9 cm	1.22	1.28	1.24
12-12.7 cm	1.09	1.09	1.09	12-12.7 cm	1.29	1.56	1.3
13-15.8 cm	1.16	1.17	1.16	13-15.8 cm	1.48	1.62	1.47
16-16.9 cm	1.22	1.21	1.22	16-16.9 cm	1.65	1.79	1.66
17-18.9 cm	1.25	1.25	1.25	17-18.9 cm	1.8	1.78	1.81

Bayesian length-weight: a=0.00955 (0.00597 - 0.01527), b=3.01(2.88 - 3.14).

Table 4. Average length and weight for *Garra gotyla*.

Length Groups	Mean Length			Length Groups	Mean Weight		
	Mixed	Male	Female		Mixed	Male	Female
7-8 cm	0.91	0.91	0.9	7-8 cm	0.71	0.71	0.71
9-10 cm	1.00	0.99	1	9-10 cm	0.97	0.95	0.98
11-12 cm	1.08	1.08	1.08	11-12 cm	1.21	1.2	1.22
13-14 cm	1.14	1.14	1.15	13-14 cm	1.43	1.4	1.44
15-16 cm	1.19	1.2	1.19	15-16 cm	1.58	1.58	1.57
17-18 cm	1.23	1.23	1.23	17-18 cm	1.77	1.77	1.77

Bayesian length-weight: a=0.00891 (0.00742 -b=3.02 (2.97 -3.07).

The species *Labeo-rohita* and *Garra gotyla* grew more quickly in length than in weight (i.e. negative allometry $b < 3$), while *Cyprinion watsoni* grew more rapidly in weight than in length (positive allometry $b > 3$) (Table 2 & 3).

Bayesian length-weight was found for *Labeo rohita*: a=0.00955 (0.00597 -0.01527), b=3.01 (2.88 - 3.14),

for *Cyprinion watsoni*: a=0.00955 (0.00597 - 0.01527), b=3.01(2.88 - 3.14), and for *Garra gotyla* the Bayesian length-weight was found to be: a=0.00891 (0.00742 -b=3.02 (2.97-3.07). The length-length relations between total length, fork length, and standard length for the six fish species were highly significant ($r^2 > 0.98$). All linear regressions were found highly significant ($P < 0.05$).

Table 5. Estimated parameters of length-weight relationships and condition factor for fishes collected from lower River Zhob, northern Balochistan, Pakistan. s (sex); n=number of individuals included in the analysis; a=intercept; b=slope; r=correlation coefficient; r²=coefficient of determination).

Parameters	Fish species								
	<i>Labeo rohita</i>			<i>Cyprinion watsoni</i>			<i>Garra gotyla</i>		
Sex	Male	female	mixed	male	female	mixed	male	female	mixed
Number (n)	113	138	251	109	146	255	117	133	250
Mean length	3.721±1.51	3.668±1.49	3.691±1.5	3.3905±1.9202	3.3800±1.6950	3.10±1.1194	3.443±1.4059	3.4603±1.4126	3.45±0.22
Mean weight	20.818±8.49	20.207±8.24	20±8.366	19.2599±6.8093	20.374±7.20331	201±7.0367	20.19561±8.2	20.19021±8.24	20±8
Exponential	0.9509	0.9536	0.9524	0.1055	0.1136	0.10917	0.9339	0.94808	0.9345
Condition factor (K)	0.21±0.07	0.211±0.083	0.2001±0.081	0.0791±0.208	0.0341±0.168	0.333±0.105	0.092±0.048	0.0804±0.032	0.0841±0.034
Coefficient correlation (r)	0.9767	0.9754	0.9754	0.9689	0.9659	0.09623	0.9565	0.9545	0.9554
Intercept (a)	0.0503	0.0354	0.0486	2.2490	2.1747	2.215	0.0683	0.0533	0.68
Slop (b)	1.3367	1.3375	1.3373	3.2058	3.1778	3.198	1.2442	1.2583	1.2521
Mini-Maximum length	5-18.8	7-18.9	7-18.9	6.8-18.7	7-18.9	6.8-18.9	7.5-17.6	7.6-17.3	7.5-17.6
Mini-Maximum weight	5-77	5-79	5-79	2-70	2-73	2-73	5-68	5-68	5-68

Fish in better condition usually bear high (K) value than those in deprived condition. Applicability of (K) factor arises from the assumption that a heavier fish

of a specific length contains better energy reserves and accordingly is in a better condition (Bolger and Connolly, 1989).

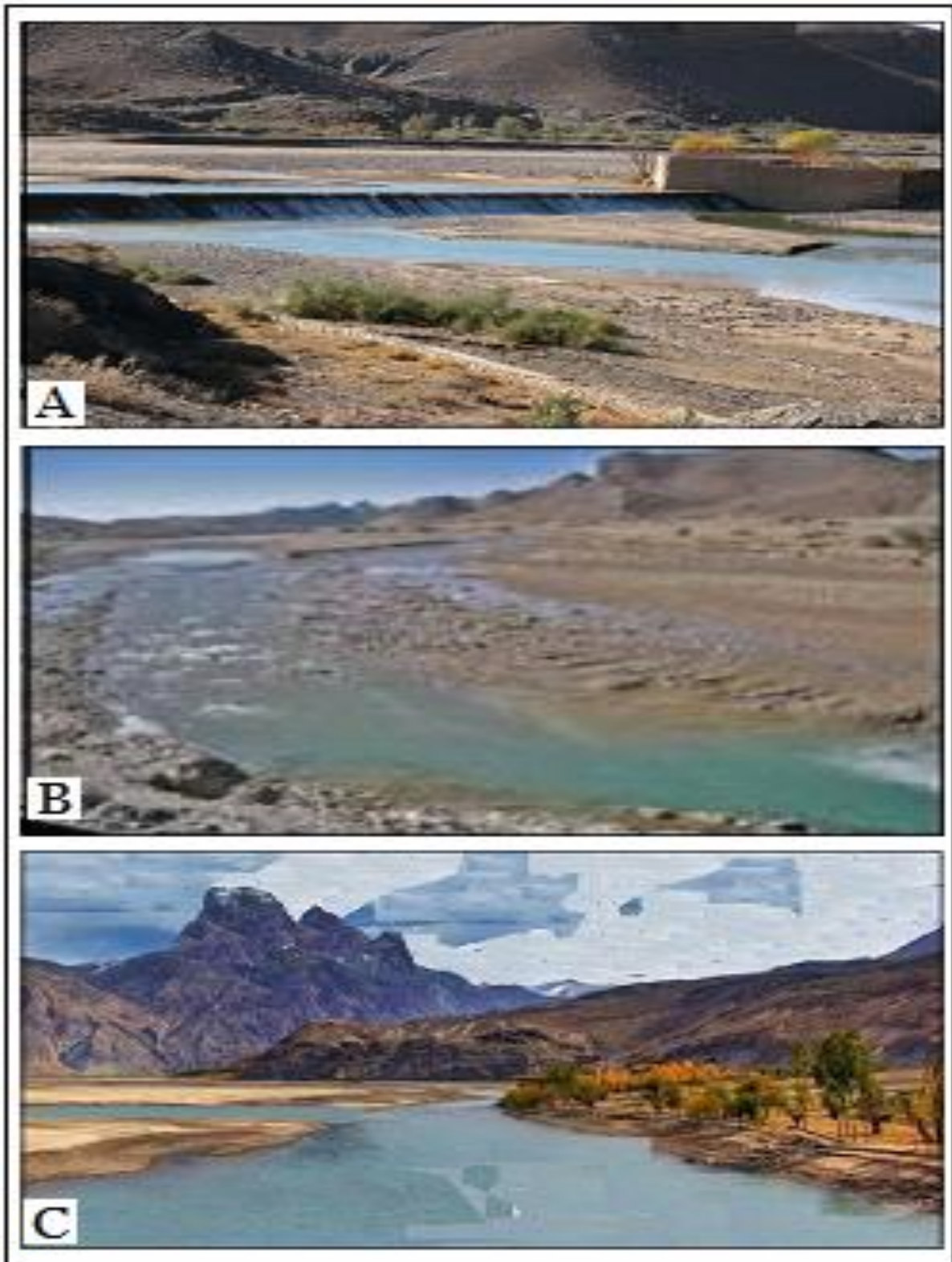


Fig. 2. A-C. Map of aquatic fauna sampling locations: Badanzai Dam, Deragai village basin, Viyala tributary. (PAK: Balochistan Water Resources Development: Environmental Impact Assessment. Sector Project No. 48098-002, March 2019).

The log-transformed length fitted over weight provides linear growth show the three dimensional growth structures of most fish species (Lagler *et al.*, 1977; Bagenal and Tesch, 1978; Nehemia *et al.*, 2012; Mozsar *et al.*, 2015). When the growth is isometric, this implies that fish did not gain weight faster than

the cube of their total length. However, when the weight increases faster than the cube of their total lengths (i.e. value of $b > 3$), this describes that fish gain width or height more than its length. Conversely, when the value of 'b' is less than 3, this represents long body shape as in large specimens (Froese, 2006).

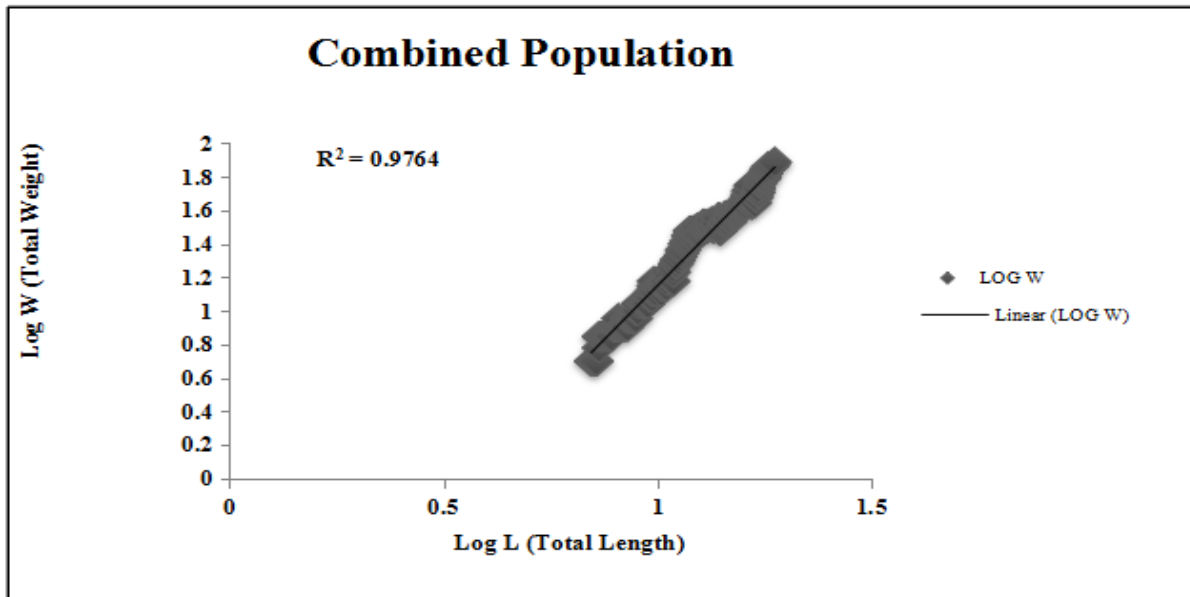


Fig. 3. Show R^2 value, total length (TL) & total weight (TW) parameters for *L. rohita*.

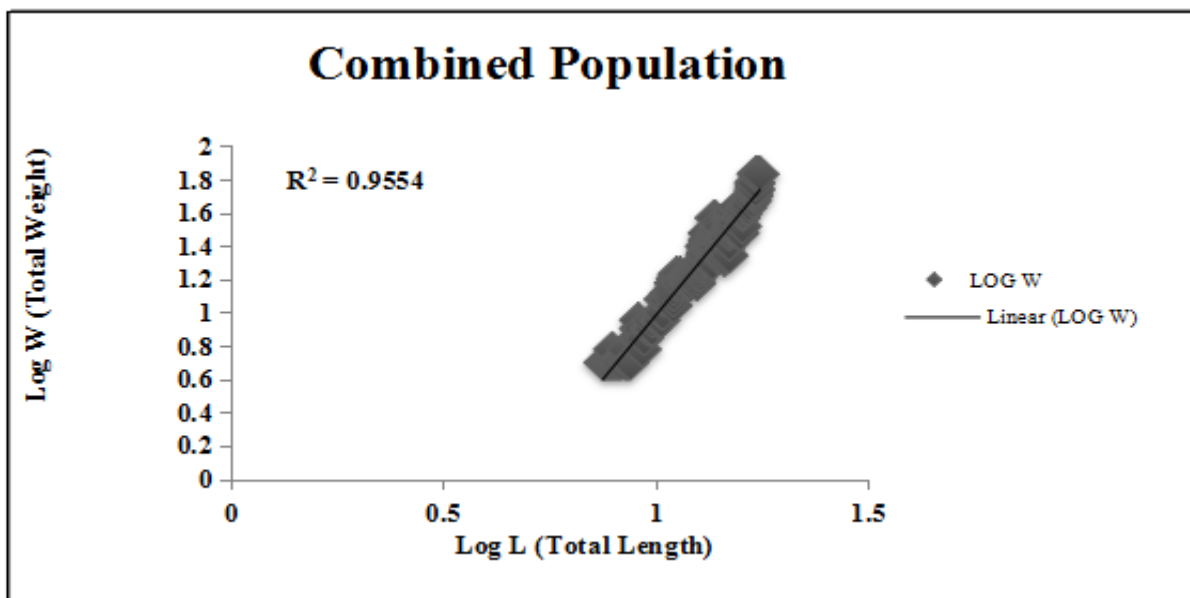


Fig. 4. Show R^2 value, TL & TW parameters for *C. watsoni*.

In the present study, a total number of 756 specimens of three freshwater fish species with a total weight and total length ranging from 7 to 18.9cm and 5 to 79g; 6.8 to 18.9cm and 2 to 73g; 7.5 to 17.6cm and 5 to 68g respectively were used for the assessment of

LWRs and condition factor (Figs. 6 to 11). It can be observed from the results that total length and weight for *L. rohita*, *C. watsoni*, *G. gtyla*, and their mean values were highest in group 1 fishes and lowest in group 2 and 3 (Table 2,3,4 and 5, Figs. 2,3 and 4).

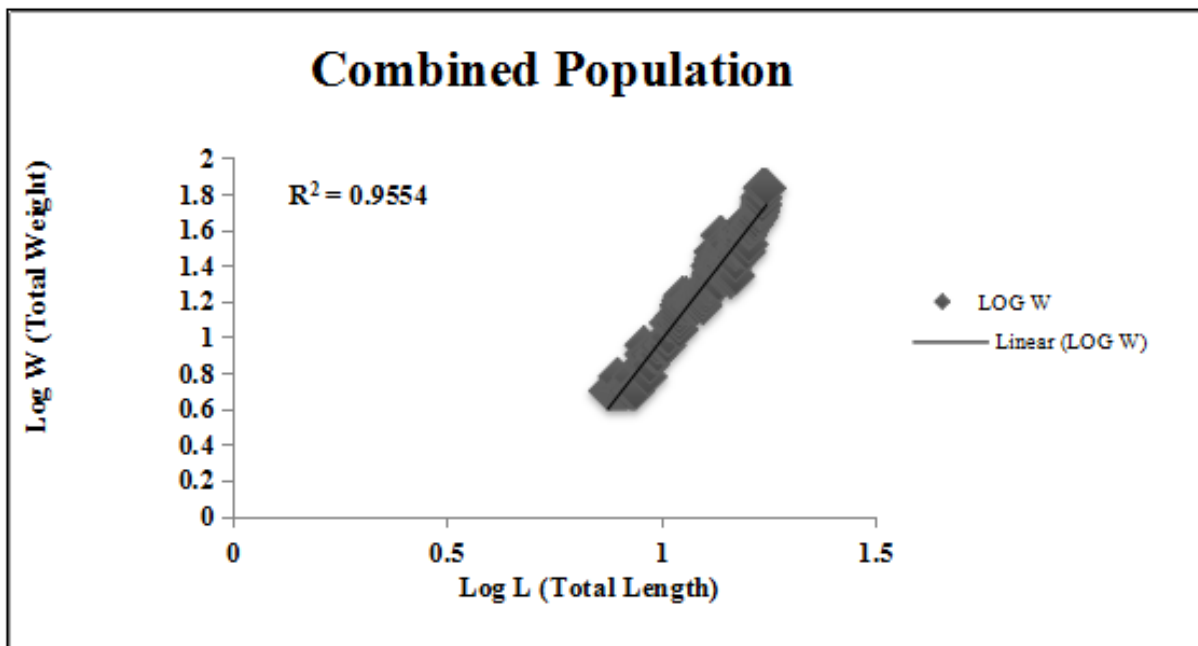


Fig. 5. Show R^2 value, TL & TW parameters for *G. gotyla*.

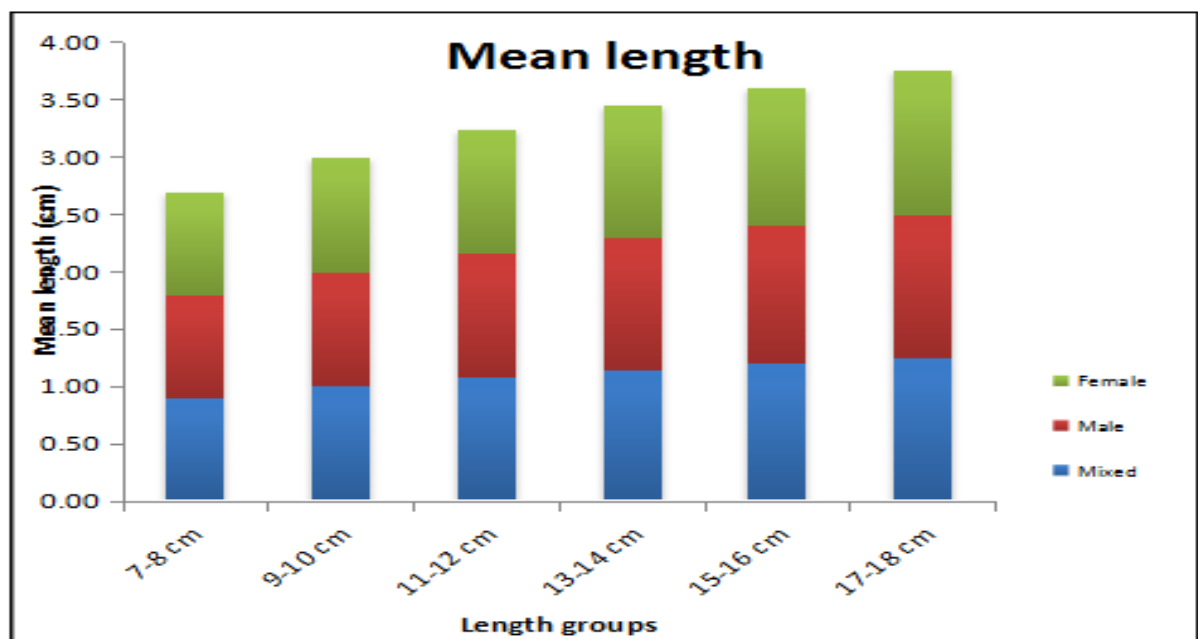


Fig. 6. Indicates mean length (cm) and length groups of *Labeo rohita*.

These results are in general agreement with the study of Naeem *et al.* (2012) who worked on the fish species, *Mystus blakeeri* and reported the highest weight of fish.

In the present study parametric quantity b extended from 1.337 (*L. rohita*) to 3.288 (*C. watsoni*), these results are partially in agreement with findings of Mala-Maria *et al.* (2017) where they estimated parameter b ranged from 1.339 (*Leucaspis*

delineatus) to 3.277 (*Gobio gobio*). In our study r^2 values ranged from 0.976 (*L. rohita*) to 0.955 (*G. gotyla*) as shown in Figs. 4 to 6.

These results are partially in line with Mala-Maria *et al.* (2017) where they estimated the r^2 values ranged from 0.723 (*Pseudorasbora parva*) to 0.935 (*Alburnus alburnus*). According to Pauly and Gayanilo (1997), b values may range from 2.5 to 3.5 suggesting that the result of the present study is valid.

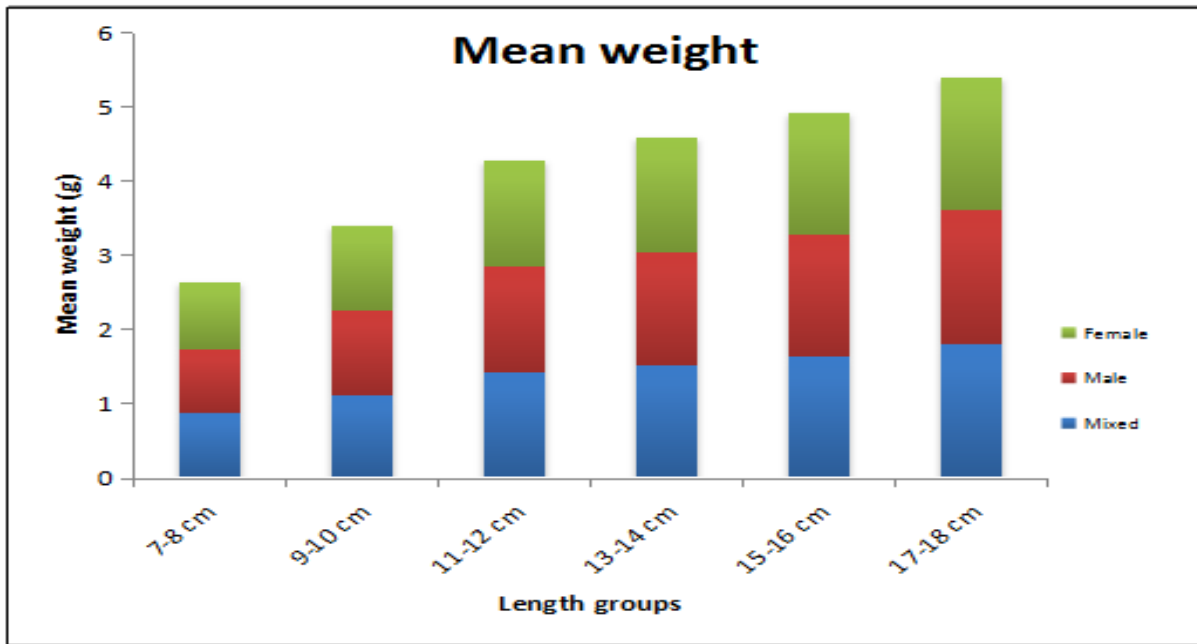


Fig. 7. Indicates mean weight (gm) and length groups of *Labeo rohita*.

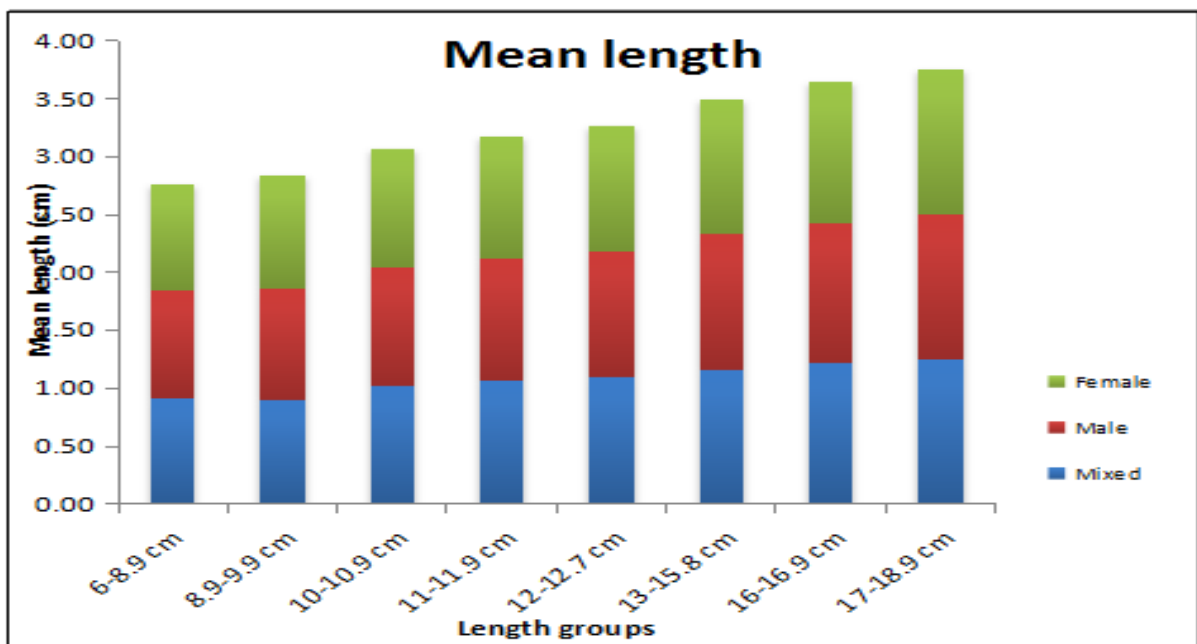


Fig. 8. Indicates mean length (cm) and length groups of *Cyprinion watsoni*

As far as the the average K values is concerned, it was found in the present study between 0.035 ± 0.034 for *G. gotyla* to 0.33 ± 0.11 for *L. C. watsoni* (Table 5).

Shakir *et al.* (2010) has also stated that properly fed fish would bear value of condition factor equal to or greater than 1.0, whereas a value of less than 1.0 is attributed to undernourished fish.

However, the value of this factor may fluctuate due to

different size of fish, feeding intensity (Le Cren, 1951; Thakur, 1975) state of sexual maturity, age and sex of fish (Gomiero, 2005) and environmental conditions (Thakur, 1975; Blackwell *et al.*, 2000; Gomiero, 2005).

Hence the present study provides a baseline information on LWR and Fulton’s condition factor (K) for three fish species from lower Zhob River. It will be useful for researchers and fishery managers.

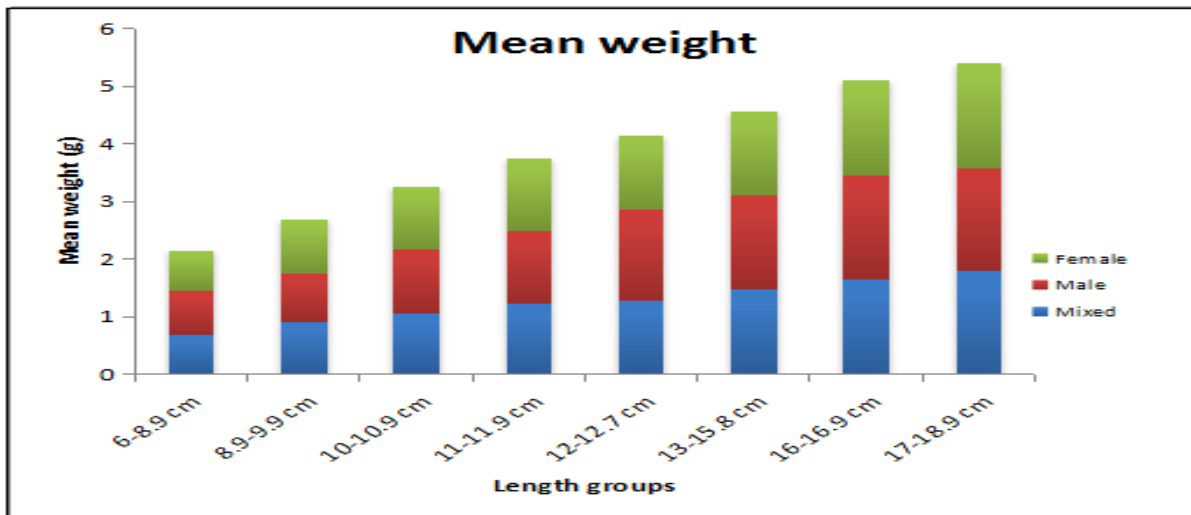


Fig. 9. Indicates mean weight (gm) and length groups of *Cyprinion watsoni*.

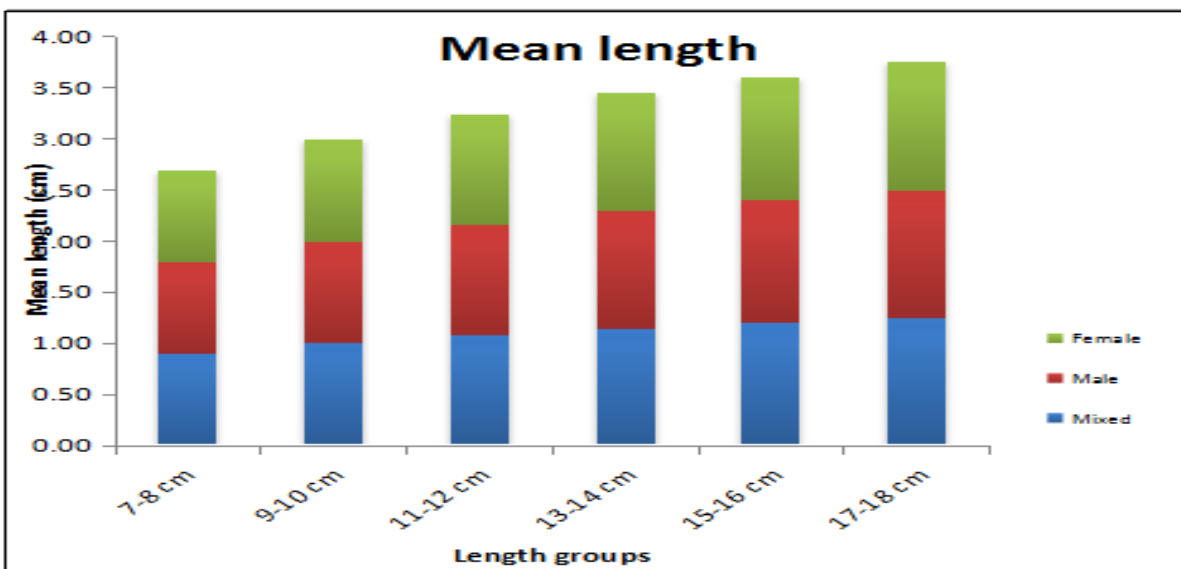


Fig. 10. Indicates mean length (cm) and length groups of *Garra gotyla*.

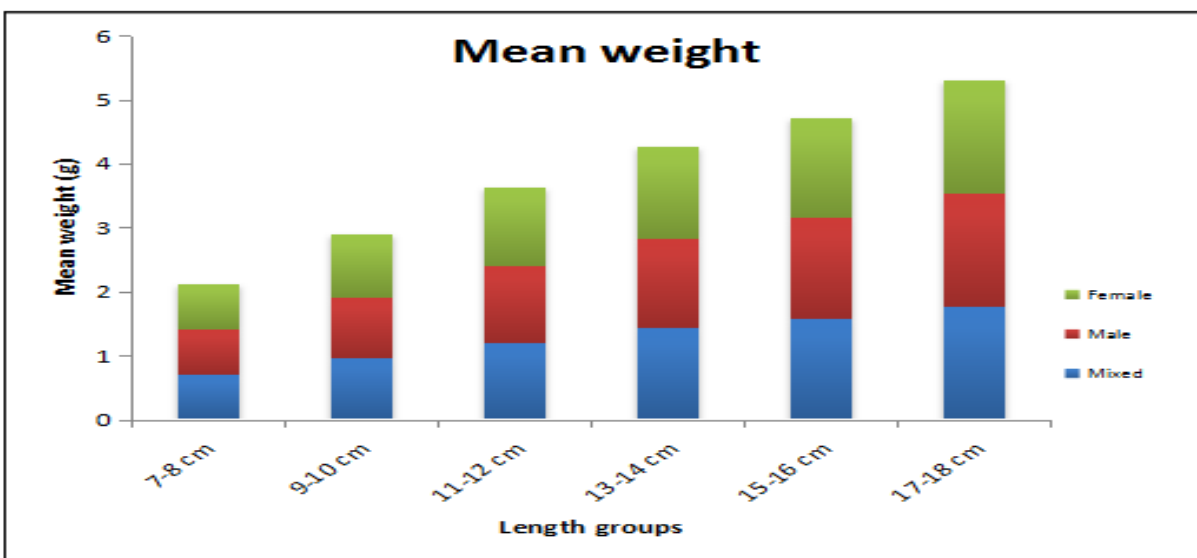


Fig. 11. Indicates mean weight (gm) and length groups of *Garra gotyla*.

Conclusion

Results indicated that the species *Labeo rohita* and *Garra gotyla* grew more quickly in length than in weight (i.e. negative allometry $b < 3$), while *Cyprinion watsoni* grew more rapidly in weight than in length (positive allometry $b > 3$), hence, showing a definite effect of diet composition on the fish diet.

The present work provides baseline information on the length weight relationships regarding these three cyprinid (Carp) fish species of the genus *Labeo*, *Cyprinion* and *Garra* from this regions of Pakistan and will able to understand their growth, welfare and stock assessments for the betterment of fisheries management.

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