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Research Article

Marketing Practices and Business Difficulties of Organic Food Producers

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Abstract: Organic food production has expanded as consumers have become more concerned about health, food quality and environmental sustainability. However, producers may face difficulties in reaching customers, managing transport and storage, obtaining finance and maintaining stable prices. This paper examines the marketing practices, business difficulties and perceived business performance of organic food producers. It also considers whether performance differs according to selected business and producer characteristics, including certification, government support and plans for expansion. The working analysis is based on 173 producer records and uses three composite measures: marketing practices, business difficulties and business performance. The reported internal consistency values are 0.91, 0.89 and 0.83, respectively. The mean scores are 3.32 for marketing practices, 3.72 for business difficulties and 3.32 for business performance on a five-point scale. Marketing practices show a positive association with business performance (r = 0.28), while business difficulties show a weaker negative association (r = -0.16). A multiple regression model containing both measures explains approximately 11% of the variation in performance. Producers who intend to expand report higher performance scores than those who do not intend to expand or are unsure. Differences by certification and reported government support are not statistically clear in the supplied analysis. The findings point to the importance of practical marketing support and coordinated assistance with finance, storage and transport and customer access. Since the working dataset is identified as simulated, these results are illustrative and require confirmation using genuine field data.

Keywords: Organic Food Producers, Agricultural Marketing, Business Difficulties, Business Performance, Marketing Practices, Government Support, India

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INTRODUCTION

Organic food production has received growing attention because consumers are increasingly interested in food quality, personal health and environmentally responsible farming. Organic agriculture is also linked with wider concerns about sustainable production and responsible use of natural resources. As interest in organic food increases, producers need to do more than grow suitable products. They must also identify customers, communicate product value, manage distribution and receive a price that supports the continued operation of their farms.

Marketing is particularly important for small producers. Unlike large businesses, small farms may have limited funds for promotion, storage, transport, packaging and market research. They may depend on local markets, direct sales or a small number of buyers. These arrangements can help producers maintain close relationships with customers, but they can also limit the volume of sales and the geographical area they can serve. The absence of reliable market information and changes in prices may further affect business decisions.

Organic producers may face additional requirements related to certification, production methods, handling and communication with buyers. Certification can help establish trust in some markets, but the process may involve costs, documentation and time. Producers who sell mainly within their local area may experience different market conditions from those who supply larger retailers or export markets. Therefore, the benefits of certification and other support may depend on the type of buyer and the market in which a producer operates.

Previous studies have identified problems such as inadequate storage, poor price information, high transport costs, unstable demand and limited institutional support. Research has also shown that the pattern of difficulties can differ between organic and conventional producers and across countries. These issues make it useful to examine marketing practices and business difficulties together rather than treating them as separate topics.

This paper studies the relationship between marketing practices, business difficulties and perceived business performance among organic food producers. It also examines whether selected characteristics, including certification, government support and expansion plans, are associated with differences in performance. The intention is to provide a clear account of the issues reported by producers and to identify areas where practical support may be useful.

Statement of Problem

Organic food producers may operate in a market with growing consumer interest but still face difficulties in converting that interest into stable income. Limited access to buyers, weak promotional activities, transport and storage problems, price changes, labour shortages and lack of finance can affect the ability of producers to compete. These problems may be more serious for small farms that have limited resources and depend on local markets.

At the same time, the presence of marketing practices or institutional support does not automatically lead to better business results. Producers may have different levels of market access, experience, certification and government assistance. It is therefore important to examine how marketing practices and business difficulties are related to performance and whether selected producer characteristics are associated with different outcomes.

Objectives of Study

- To examine the marketing practices followed by organic food producers
- To identify the major business difficulties faced by organic food producers
- To assess the perceived business performance of organic food producers
- To examine the relationship between marketing practices, business difficulties and business performance
- To assess whether business performance differs according to selected producer and business characteristics, including certification, government support and expansion plans
- To suggest practical measures to improve marketing access and reduce business difficulties among organic food producers

Review of Literature

Growth of Organic Agriculture and Market Demand

The growth of organic agriculture is commonly associated with greater consumer interest in health, food quality and environmental sustainability. Azam *et al.* [1], Azam and Ponnam [2], and Oliveira *et al.* [3] discuss the wider development of organic food markets and the challenges that can affect producers and consumers. Increased demand can create opportunities, but producers still need suitable marketing and distribution arrangements to reach customers.

Marketing Challenges in Developing Economies

Agricultural marketing in developing economies is affected by infrastructure and market-information gaps. Azam *et al.* [1] identify problems including inadequate warehousing, limited price information, uncertain crop demand, high transport costs, price changes and insufficient government support. Azam and Ponnam [2] further report differences between organic and conventional producers. Their work suggests that conventional farmers may experience greater difficulty with warehousing and market information, while organic producers may face stronger transport and price-related problems.

These findings indicate that marketing difficulties are not limited to promotion or advertising. They also include the facilities and information required to move products from farms to customers. For small producers, weak infrastructure can increase costs and reduce the ability to negotiate favourable prices.

Evidence from Other Countries

Oliveira *et al.* [3], in their study of organic food producers and consumers in Brazil, report labour shortages and limited credit or government support as important producer concerns. The study also notes that consumers may be discouraged

Table 1: Study Constructs, Variable Roles, and Measurement Dimensions

Construct / factor	Role in the study	Measurement focus
Marketing practices	Explanatory variable	Market orientation, supply-chain positioning and promotion
Business difficulties	Explanatory variable	Infrastructure, logistics, labour and environmental or operating problems
Business performance	Outcome variable	Perceived financial returns, market development and business viability
Expansion intention and producer characteristics	Grouping variables	Expansion plans, certification, support, location and business profile

Table 2: Research Hypothesis

Code	Hypothesis
H1	Marketing practices are positively associated with perceived business performance.
H2	Business difficulties are negatively associated with perceived business performance.
H3	Marketing practices and business difficulties are significantly associated with each other.
H4	Marketing practices and business difficulties jointly explain variation in perceived business performance.
H5	Certified producers report higher business performance than non-certified producers.
H6	Producers who received government support report higher business performance than producers who did not receive support.
H7	Producers who plan to expand their businesses report higher business performance than those who do not plan to expand or are unsure.
H8	Perceived business performance differs across selected producer characteristics, including location, business type, age, experience, main market and education.
H9	Women producers report higher levels of business difficulties than men producers.
H10	Certified producers are more likely to receive government support than non-certified producers.
H11	The likelihood of receiving government support differs according to the producer's location.

H3 tests whether the two explanatory measures are associated. H4 tests their joint contribution to performance in a multiple regression model. These are different questions and should not be combined into one hypothesis

by higher prices and limited access to sales points. Vieira *et al.* [4] explain that the structure of the retail supply chain can influence how value is shared. When intermediaries and wholesalers take on important supply-chain responsibilities, small growers may have less direct control over the final market relationship.

Gajdić *et al.* [5] examine organic producers in Croatia and report the importance of small farms, direct-to-consumer sales, local fairs and specialist retail outlets. Rehber and Turhan [6] discuss the development of organic production and trade in Turkey, where export-oriented arrangements and relationships with international buyers can shape the sector. These studies show that distribution channels differ according to the level of market development and the structure of the supply chain.

Farm Size and Production Systems

The level of marketing difficulty may vary according to farm size and the production system used. Small farms may find it difficult to spread transport, storage, certification and compliance costs across a large volume of output. Azam *et al.* [1] and Gajdić *et al.* [5] indicate the value of market information, cooperation and suitable distribution arrangements for smaller producers. Producer groups and cooperative structures may help combine output, improve bargaining power and reduce some shared costs.

Summary of the Literature

The reviewed studies show that organic food producers operate within a supply chain shaped by consumer demand, infrastructure, distribution channels, farm size and institutional support. Marketing problems include limited customer access and market information, while operational difficulties include storage, transport, labour, finance and price instability. The literature also suggests that the experience of small producers may differ from that of larger or export-oriented businesses.

Research Gap

The studies reviewed provide useful evidence on agricultural marketing and organic supply chains in different countries. However, the issues are often examined through specific settings, such as farm size, distribution channels or differences between organic and conventional producers. There remains a need for a combined assessment of marketing practices, business difficulties and perceived performance among organic food producers in the study setting. This paper addresses that need by examining the two main explanatory measures together and considering selected business characteristics. The contribution is exploratory and should be confirmed with genuine field data Table 1-2.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The study considers marketing practices and business difficulties as two separate explanatory dimensions of perceived business performance. Marketing practices cover activities and arrangements used to position products, reach buyers and promote sales. Business difficulties cover problems related to infrastructure, supply chains, labour, finance and the

operating environment. Business performance is measured through producers' views of financial returns, market development and business stability.

The proposed framework is: Marketing Practices → Business Performance, Business Difficulties → Business Performance. The two explanatory measures are also examined for their relationship with each other. Expansion intention and selected producer characteristics are considered in group comparisons.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. The design is descriptive because it summarises the profile and views of the producers, and explanatory because it examines relationships between marketing practices, business difficulties and business performance. Since information is collected at one point in time, the analysis identifies associations and group differences, it does not establish cause and effect.

Population and Sample

The target group consists of active organic food producers. The working analysis contains 173 producer records. The draft describes the selection approach as targeted regional sampling. As the supplied material does not provide a complete sampling frame or a detailed account of the recruitment process, the method should be described more fully in the final field-study version, including the locations covered, eligibility criteria, contact method and response rate.

Some percentages in the supplied profile do not total 100%, which may reflect omitted response categories or missing responses. The final manuscript should include the full category list and valid percentage base for each demographic or business-profile variable Table 3.

Data Collection Instrument

The questionnaire contains demographic and business-profile questions and three sets of statements measuring marketing practices, business difficulties and business performance. The scale statements use a five-point Likert response format, where 1 represents 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 represents 'Strongly Agree'. The marketing practices scale contains 18 items, the business difficulties scale contains 20 items and the business performance scale contains 8 items.

All three reported Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.80. This indicates good internal consistency in the supplied analysis. Reliability does not, by itself, establish construct validity. A final empirical paper should also report evidence of content and construct validity where appropriate, including the procedure used to develop or adapt the items Table 4.

Data Preparation and Analysis

The item scores were combined by calculating the mean for each respondent within each scale. The resulting composite scores were used in the analysis. The procedures reported in the working draft include descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, analysis of variance and rank-based non-parametric tests. Group comparisons were used to examine whether performance or reported difficulties differed across selected producer characteristics.

The significance level was set at 0.05. The analysis also reports effect sizes and confidence intervals in several places. Since multiple comparisons were conducted, results close to the 0.05 threshold should be interpreted cautiously. The supplied material mentions a correction for multiple testing for H2 but does not identify the exact correction method. The final analysis should name the method and state which family of tests it covers.

Table 3: Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Reported distribution
Gender	Men: 124 (71.7%), women: 48 (27.7%), other: 1 (0.6%)
Age	Below 25: 5.8%, 25–35: 24.3%, 36–45: 26.6%, 46–55: 26.6%, above 55: 16.8%
Location	Rural: 55.5%, semi-urban: 24.9%, urban: 19.7%
Business type	Individual farms: 58.4%, family farms: 13.9%, FPOs: 9.2%, processing units: 8.1%, retailer-producers: 6.4%
Main products	Vegetables: 26.6%, fruits: 20.2%, other crop categories make up the balance
Farm size	Approximately 62% operate on less than five acres
Annual revenue	Approximately 44% report revenue below ₹5 lakh
Main market	Local municipal markets: 41.0%, district-level markets: 27.7%, exports: 4.0%
Certification	Certified: 37.0%, undergoing conversion: 22.0%, uncertified: 35.3%

Table 4: Reliability of the Scales

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Marketing practices	18	0.91	3.32	0.80
Business difficulties	20	0.89	3.72	0.70
Business performance	8	0.83	3.32	0.90

Ethical Considerations

For a genuine field survey, participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent. Respondents should be told the purpose of the study, the expected time required and how their information will be used. Personal identifiers should not be included in the analysis file unless they are essential, and any identifying information should be stored securely. The supplied draft does not provide details of ethics approval or consent procedures; these details must be added based on what was actually followed.

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

The working sample contains 173 producer records. Men account for 71.7% of the sample and women account for 27.7%, one respondent selected another gender category. The largest age groups are 36–45 and 46–55 years, each representing 26.6% of the sample. Producers below 25 years' account for 5.8%.

Rural producers form 55.5% of the sample, followed by semi-urban producers at 24.9% and urban producers at 19.7%. Individual farmers form the largest business group at 58.4%. Vegetables and fruits are the two most common main product categories. The sample is largely made up of small operations: approximately 62% manage less than five acres, while 44% report annual revenue below ₹5 lakhs.

The main market is local. Around 41.0% sell mainly in local municipal markets and 27.7% supply district-level markets. Only 4.0% report exports as their main market. Formal certification is reported by 37.0%, while 22.0% are undergoing conversion and 35.3% are uncertified.

Business difficulties have the highest average score (3.72). This suggests that respondents generally experience a considerable level of difficulty in operating their businesses. Marketing practices and business performance both have an average score of 3.32, indicating a moderate assessment. Within the marketing scale, item 8 has the highest reported mean (3.72), while item 15 has the lowest (2.88). The item wording is not included in the supplied results, so these items cannot be given a more specific interpretation Table 5.

The 20 difficulty items have reported means between 3.49 and 3.87. This relatively narrow range suggests that respondents report several difficulties rather than one problem standing clearly above all others. The mean difficulty score is higher than the marketing score. The supplied analysis describes this difference as statistically clear, although the exact test statistic and p-value for this comparison are not provided.

Marketing practices are positively associated with business performance (r = 0.28). Producers who report stronger marketing practices also tend to report better performance. Business difficulties have a weak negative association with performance (r = -0.16), suggesting that producers reporting more difficulties tend to report somewhat weaker performance. The association between marketing practices and difficulties is very small (r = 0.06) and is not statistically significant Table 6.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis includes marketing practices and business difficulties as explanatory variables and business performance as the outcome. Together, the two variables explain approximately 11% of the variation in reported business performance. The adjusted value is approximately 10%. This means that most of the variation in performance is related to factors outside this two-variable model.

Table 5: Overall Assessment of Marketing, Difficulties and Performance

Measure	Mean	SD	Respondents with score ≥ 3.5
Marketing practices	3.32	0.80	49%
Business difficulties	3.72	0.70	64%
Business performance	3.32	0.90	45%

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)	Interpretation
Marketing practices and business performance	0.28	Positive, small-to-moderate association
Business difficulties and business performance	-0.16	Negative, weak association
Marketing practices and business difficulties	0.06	Very weak association, not statistically significant

Table 7: Regression Coefficients, Confidence Intervals, and Statistical Significance of Predictors of Business Performance

Predictor	Unstandardised change in performance for one-point increase	Reported confidence interval	p-value
Marketing practices	+0.32	0.16 to 0.48	0.0001
Business difficulties	-0.23	-0.41 to -0.05	0.013

Table 8: Expansion Plans and Business Performance

Expansion intention	Number	Mean performance	Share with performance ≥ 3.5
Yes	121	3.41	50%
No or unsure	52	3.09	31%

Table 9: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result reported in the working analysis	Decision
H1: Marketing practices are positively associated with performance.	r = 0.28, p = 0.0002	Supported
H2: Difficulties are negatively associated with performance.	r = -0.16, unadjusted p = 0.033, adjusted p = 0.066	Partly supported / borderline after adjustment
H3: Marketing practices and difficulties are associated.	r = 0.06, p = 0.45	Not supported
H4: Marketing and difficulties jointly explain performance.	$R^2 \approx 0.11$, overall model p < 0.001	Supported
H5: Certified producers report higher performance.	3.30 versus 3.31, p = 0.95	Not supported
H6: Government-supported producers report higher performance.	No meaningful difference, reported p-values near 0.95–0.99	Not supported
H7: Producers planning expansion report higher performance.	3.41 versus 3.09, p = 0.029	Supported
H8: Performance differs by selected background factors.	Reported p-values between 0.20 and 0.90	Not supported
H9: Women report more difficulties than men.	3.90 versus 3.65, mean-test p = 0.054, rank-test p = 0.015	Partly supported / inconclusive
H10: Certification is associated with receiving government help.	p = 0.67	Not supported
H11: Government support differs by location.	p = 0.08	Not supported

When difficulties are held constant, a one-point increase in the marketing score is associated with a 0.32-point increase in business performance. When marketing is held constant, a one-point increase in the difficulties score is associated with a 0.23-point decrease in performance. The standardised coefficients reported in the working material are 0.29 for marketing and -0.18 for difficulties. Marketing therefore has the larger association in this model Table 7.

An interaction test found no evidence that the relationship between marketing and performance changes according to the level of difficulties (p = 0.95). In practical terms, the supplied model suggests that stronger marketing is associated with better performance even among producers who report a high level of difficulty.

Differences Across Producer Groups

The supplied analysis compares performance across age, education, location, business type, years in organic farming, main product, certification, main market and government support. Most comparisons do not show statistically clear differences. For example, average performance is 3.29 in urban areas, 3.40 in semi-urban areas and 3.29 in rural areas. Certified and non-certified producers report very similar performance scores (3.30 and 3.31, respectively).

Average performance is also similar among producers who received government help (3.32), those who did not receive it (3.37), and those who applied but did not receive it (3.22). The analysis reports no clear relationship between years of experience and performance. These findings should be read as a lack of clear evidence of group differences in this sample, not proof that the groups are identical.

Around 70% of respondents plan to expand their businesses in the next three years. Producers who plan to expand have a mean performance score of 3.41, compared with 3.09 among those who do not plan to expand or are unsure. The difference is 0.32 points (reported p = 0.029). A rank-based test gives a similar result (p = 0.024). The three-category comparison between yes, no and unsure is not statistically clear on its own (p = 0.099), therefore, the result should be interpreted specifically as a comparison of the 'yes' group with the combined 'no or unsure' group Table 8.

Expansion intention is not meaningfully correlated with marketing practices (r = 0.02) or business difficulties (r = 0.01), according to the supplied material. When expansion intention is added to the regression model, it

contributes approximately 0.31 points to performance (reported p = 0.026), and the explained variation increases from about 11% to about 13%.

Gender and Reported Business Difficulties

Women report a higher average difficulty score than men (3.90 compared with 3.65). The mean comparison gives p = 0.054, which is slightly above the 0.05 threshold. A rank-based test gives p = 0.015. Since the two tests do not lead to the same threshold-based decision and the number of women respondents is 48, the result is treated as suggestive rather than conclusive. Further research with a larger and more balanced sample is required.

Government Support and Support Needs

The supplied material reports that 50.3% of producers received no support. It also reports that 74 respondents (42.8%) received government help, 64 (37.0%) did not receive it and 35 (20.2%) applied but did not receive it. These categories sum to the full sample. The types of support reported include financial aid (24.9%), training (23.1%), certification support (17.3%), technical guidance (16.8%), marketing help (15.0%) and infrastructure support (12.1%).

When asked about their most important needs, producers most often selected financial help (24.9%). Better marketing was selected by 16.8%, storage and transport by 14.5%, and customer access by 13.9%. Certification support accounted for 8.7%, training for 11.0% and government policy for 5.2%. The pattern indicates that financial and market-access support are important concerns in the sample.

The figures for 'no support of any kind' (50.3%) and 'did not receive government help' (37.0%) appear to refer to different support definitions or question bases. The questionnaire and coding should be checked so the final paper can clearly distinguish government assistance from all forms of support.

The working draft initially describes four hypotheses as supported, six as not supported and one as partly supported. However, it also reports that H2 becomes borderline after adjustment for multiple testing. To avoid overstating the evidence, this paper treats H2 as partly supported or borderline rather than fully supported. H9 is also treated as partly supported because the mean-based and rank-based tests give different threshold decisions Table 9.

The original wording of H3 and H4 has been made more precise in this paper. H3 refers to the correlation between marketing practices and business difficulties, H4 refers to the joint explanatory contribution of the two variables in regression. This distinction should be retained in the final questionnaire, analysis plan and results.

DISCUSSION

Marketing Practices and Business Performance

The clearest finding in the supplied analysis is the positive relationship between marketing practices and business performance. Producers who report stronger marketing also tend to report better business results. The relationship is not large, but it is consistent across the overall marketing score and the item-level results described in the working draft. The highest-marketing group has an average performance score of 3.67, compared with 3.03 in the lowest-marketing group.

This result is in line with the literature that treats market access, distribution and customer relationships as important parts of organic food business development. Marketing should not be understood only as advertising. It also includes understanding customer needs, selecting suitable sales channels, maintaining product quality, sharing reliable product information and building relationships with buyers. These activities may be especially important for producers who mainly sell within local and district markets.

Business Difficulties and Performance

The average score for business difficulties is higher than the scores for marketing and performance. This suggests that producers experience several operating problems at the same time. The negative relationship between difficulties and performance is weak and becomes borderline after the multiple-testing adjustment reported in the working material. It is therefore reasonable to say that the pattern points towards a possible negative relationship, but the strength of the evidence is limited.

The relatively similar average ratings across the difficulty items suggest that producers may need more than one type of support. Improving transport alone, for example, may not resolve problems related to finance, storage, labour or customer access. Support programmes may be more useful when they are designed around the combined needs of producers.

Marketing and Difficulties as Separate Dimensions

The correlation between marketing practices and business difficulties is close to zero. In this sample, producers who report stronger marketing do not necessarily report fewer difficulties. The regression results also show that each measure has a separate association with performance. This suggests that marketing development and the reduction of operating difficulties should be treated as complementary areas of action.

Certification and Government Support

The analysis does not show a clear performance difference between certified and non-certified producers. This should not be interpreted as evidence that certification has no value. The sample is mainly oriented towards local and district markets, where customer relationships and direct selling may play an important role. The value of certification may be different in larger retail, institutional or export markets. The study also does not establish whether certified producers receive a price premium or have access to a wider set of buyers.

Government support is also not associated with a clear performance difference in the supplied results. One possible explanation is that the support received may not match the main needs reported by producers. Financial help, marketing assistance, storage, transport and access to customers are among the leading needs. The type, amount, timing and reach of assistance should therefore be considered before drawing conclusions about its effectiveness.

Expansion Intention

Producers who intend to expand report higher performance than those who do not intend to expand or are unsure. This may mean that producers who feel their businesses are doing better are more confident about future growth. It is also possible that a positive growth plan reflects other resources or opportunities that were not measured in this study. Because the survey is cross-sectional, the direction of the relationship cannot be established.

Gender and Business Difficulties

Women in the sample report higher average difficulty scores than men. However, the difference is not conclusive because the mean-based test is just above the selected significance threshold, while the rank-based test is below it. The result should be treated as a signal for further investigation. Future studies could examine whether women producers face different levels of access to land, finance, transport, training, market networks or decision-making support. These explanations were not directly tested in the present analysis.

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest several areas where producer organisations, government agencies, agricultural institutions and market partners may focus their efforts. These recommendations are based on the patterns in the supplied analysis and should be treated as practical directions for further testing.

- Improve practical marketing skills. Training can cover customer identification, product presentation, pricing, packaging, promotion, digital communication and negotiation with buyers
- Strengthen local and regional market connections. Producer groups can help farmers reach retailers, restaurants, institutions, community markets and other regular buyers
- Provide coordinated support rather than isolated assistance. Finance, storage, transport, technical guidance and customer access should be considered together when designing support programmes
- Improve access to market information. Producers need timely information about demand, prices, quality requirements and suitable sales channels
- Review the accessibility of government schemes. Application requirements, eligibility conditions, processing times and reasons for rejection should be communicated clearly
- Support collective arrangements. Farmer producer organisations and cooperatives may help small farms combine supply, share transport or storage facilities and improve their bargaining position
- Make certification support market-linked. Certification assistance should be connected to actual buyer requirements and potential market opportunities, rather than treated as an end in itself
- Provide focused assistance to women producers. Further assessment should identify the specific barriers they face and design support based on evidence rather than assumptions

- Support realistic business expansion. Producers considering expansion may benefit from business planning, working-capital guidance, buyer agreements and information about market demand

Limitations of the Study

- The working draft identifies the dataset as simulated. The numerical findings are therefore illustrative and cannot be presented as evidence from actual producers until the analysis is repeated using genuine survey responses
- The study uses a cross-sectional design. It identifies associations at one point in time and cannot establish cause-and-effect relationships
- The outcome measure is based on producers' reported perceptions rather than verified financial statements, sales records or profit data
- The sample contains 48 women and relatively few respondents below 25 years of age. Findings for these groups are less precise
- The supplied material describes targeted regional sampling but does not provide enough detail about the sampling frame, recruitment process, response rate or geographical coverage to assess representativeness
- Several group comparisons were conducted. Some results close to the 0.05 threshold may occur by chance, particularly if no correction for multiple testing is applied
- The two main explanatory variables account for approximately 11% of the variation in performance

Other factors, such as weather, crop type, input costs, farm productivity, local demand, debt and buyer relationships, may also influence performance but are not included in the model.

Scope for Future Research

Future research should use a genuine and clearly documented sample of organic food producers from a wider range of locations. A larger sample with adequate representation of women, younger producers, different farm sizes and different market channels would allow more reliable subgroup comparisons. Researchers could also compare organic and conventional producers using the same questionnaire and sampling approach.

Further studies may include objective business indicators such as annual sales, profit margins, price premiums, production costs, customer retention and the number of regular buyers. A follow-up survey over more than one period would help establish whether changes in marketing practices or support access are followed by changes in business performance. Future work could also examine whether certification produces different benefits in local, retail, institutional and export markets.

The measurement model should be tested more fully using appropriate validity procedures. If the research is extended to structural equation modelling, the researcher should first establish the factor structure, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the scales and then report the model fit indices and path estimates. Such analysis should only be undertaken if the measurement model and sample size support it.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines marketing practices, business difficulties and perceived business performance among organic food producers. The supplied analysis suggests that producers experience a high level of business difficulty, while their views of marketing practices and business performance are moderate. Marketing practices show a positive association with business performance, and business difficulties show a weaker negative association. When considered together, the two measures explain approximately 11% of the variation in performance.

The analysis also indicates that producers who plan to expand report higher performance scores. In contrast, clear performance differences are not found between certified and non-certified producers or between groups defined by reported government support. Women report higher difficulty scores than men, but this result is not conclusive. The most frequently reported support needs relate to finance, marketing, storage, transport and customer access.

The overall message is that organic producers may benefit from stronger marketing capabilities and support that addresses several operating needs together. However, these conclusions must remain provisional because the working draft states that the data are simulated. The paper should be treated as a structured research draft

and the complete analysis should be repeated using genuine, ethically collected survey data before the findings are submitted for publication.

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