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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rebranding Siquijor Produce to Organic Farming: Opportunities and Challenges

Dr. Albert Pagente
NROTC Coordinator, Siquijor State
Corresponding Author: Dr. Albert Pagente, **Email:** pagenteacp@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT
This study investigates how branding and marketing influence organic certification readiness and market access among registered partner-farmers of the Department of Agriculture in Siquijor Province, Philippines. Anchored on the Pagente Organic Farming Model (2025), the research highlights the role of integrated practices—pest management, fertilizer use, record-keeping, and product presentation—in enhancing farmer participation in sustainable organic agriculture. Employing a descriptive-comparative quantitative design, the study surveyed the entire population of DA-registered partner-farmers in Siquijor using a structured and validated questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.864). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, weighted means, and path analysis to identify key predictors of organic labelling readiness. Results showed strong adoption of organic practices in pest control (M = 4.96), fertilizer use (M = 4.81), and record-keeping (M = 4.51), while branding and marketing scored lower (M = 3.87), suggesting critical gaps in market-oriented competencies. Path analysis identified branding and marketing ($\beta = 0.34$, $p = 0.01$) and pest control ($\beta = 0.33$, $p = 0.01$) as the most significant predictors of certification readiness. Despite farmers' strong ecological practices, limited access to certification, market platforms, and branding tools remains a barrier to full organic integration. The study recommends targeted interventions such as branding workshops, cooperative marketing hubs, simplified certification pathways, low-cost organic fertilizer promotion, and improved market access through digital and local channels. Funded solely by the author, the research calls for future studies to explore the long-term socio-economic and technological impacts of these strategies in Siquijor and similar emerging organic farming communities.

| KEYWORDS

Organic farming; Certification readiness; Branding and marketing; Market access; Sustainable agriculture; Path analysis; Participatory Guarantee System (PGS); Siquijor Province; Department of Agriculture (Philippines)

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Organic farming has seen a global resurgence due to rising consumer awareness of food safety, environmental sustainability, and health-related concerns. According to Latip et al. (2024), the growing demand for organic products is driven largely by perceptions of naturalness, environmental responsibility, and chemical-free production. In the Philippines, organic agriculture is increasingly viewed as a pathway to sustainable rural development, especially among smallholder farmers (Kristanti et al., 2023). As organic products enter more competitive markets, branding and marketing have become essential tools not just for differentiation, but also for gaining consumer trust and ensuring higher returns. Hukker et al. (2024) highlight that packaging elements like logos and labels directly influence consumer recognition and willingness to purchase, while Fitriani et al. (2024) report that packaging innovations can increase market competitiveness for organic producers.

Despite this momentum, significant issues persist. Many smallholder farmers are unable to access organic certification due to financial, technical, or bureaucratic barriers (H et al., 2024). Certification processes require compliance with standards not just in production, but also in record-keeping, traceability, and branding—areas where farmers often lack training or institutional support (Verma & Kandikonda, 2023). Additionally, the absence of clear branding strategies means that even certified organic products may be indistinguishable in the marketplace, reducing their ability to command price premiums (Latip et al., 2024). These systemic issues highlight a need for more context-sensitive approaches to certification and market integration.

On the ground, organic farmers face several interconnected problems. Many reports limited knowledge of marketing strategies and weak access to consumer networks (Setiawan et al., 2024). Others lack the tools or training to properly document farm practices, apply eco-friendly pest control, or produce organic fertilizers (Supriana et al., 2024; Ramasamy et al., 2024). Branding and packaging—while critical—are often underdeveloped due to lack of capacity or financial constraints (Kristanti et al., 2023). As a result, farmers continue to rely on middlemen, missing out on direct-to-consumer sales channels that could improve income and reduce dependency (Raghuraja & Devaraja, 2022).

To address these challenges, this study applies the Pagente Organic Farming Model (2025)—a localized framework that integrates pest management, fertilizer use, record keeping, and branding and marketing into a pathway for organic certification. Unlike generalized certification models, this framework contextualizes organic farming requirements within the realities of farmers in Siquijor, Philippines. By focusing on branding and marketing as critical but often neglected components, the study aims to identify how targeted support in these areas can improve certification readiness, strengthen market access, and enhance farmer income. In doing so, it contributes to both academic understanding and practical strategies for sustainable, inclusive organic farming.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Pagente Organic Farming Model (2025)

The Pagente Organic Farming Model (2025) is proposed as a localized framework to analyze the challenges and opportunities faced by farmers in achieving organic certification. It integrates four key practice domains—pest management, fertilizers, record keeping and tracing, and branding and marketing—into a pathway that links farmer practices to accreditation and, ultimately, to the ability to label produce as organic. While the model aligns with existing organic certification standards, its novelty lies in contextualizing these requirements within the specific realities of farmers in Siquijor, Philippines.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

1.3.1 Pest Management

Pest management is a critical dimension of organic farming**,** relying on natural and ecological strategies instead of synthetic chemicals. (1) The use of botanical solutions like neem, chili, garlic, and ginger has proven effective in reducing pest populations. For instance, pest control effectiveness reached 95% on mustard crops using ginger, garlic, and chili sprays (Abadier et al., 2024), while similar mixtures reduced infestations on okra and mustard (Norida et al., 2023). Garlic extract was particularly effective against *Spodoptera litura* in chili (Firmansyah et al., 2023), and chili extract alone cut aphid populations by over 95% on lablab crops (Tamilselvi et al., 2022). (2) These methods help avoid the use of synthetic chemical pesticides, as supported by studies highlighting the effectiveness of neem, herbal sprays, and biopesticides in organic systems (Pathan et al., 2023; Tamilselvi et al., 2022). (3) Regular pest monitoring is also key, with IPM strategies emphasizing early detection and tracking pest counts, such as in efforts to control black thrips in India (Anusha et al., 2024). (4) Crop rotation, though not always the central method, contributes to pest suppression by enhancing biodiversity and disrupting pest cycles (El-Shafie, 2022). (5) Pest-resistant or traditional seed varieties also play a role, often as part of IPM plans that include trap crops like marigold (Anusha et al., 2024). (6) Encouraging natural enemies—such as spiders, beetles, birds, and frogs—helps maintain pest balance. For example, neem-nochi-adhatoda sprays had minimal impact on beneficial insects (Ganesan et al., 2025), while biocontrol agents like *Chrysoperla carnea* and *Coccinella septempunctata* were effective in chili (Pathan et al., 2023). (7) Physical pest control through yellow sticky traps and pheromone traps has also proven effective for controlling aphids, whiteflies, and improving yields (Matra & Bantewad, 2025; Mero et al., 2023). (8) Awareness of organic rules that prohibit harmful chemical inputs has been shown to influence farmer practices, particularly when reinforced by extension services (Supriana et al., 2024). (9) Training plays a crucial role in adoption, with farmer participation in organic pest control often driven by guidance on timing and use of biopesticides (Anusha et al., 2024; Supriana et al., 2024). (10) Overall, natural pest control methods alone have shown to be sufficient, with reported control rates as high as 95% (Abadier et al., 2024), 90%+ pest mortality from tobacco and neem (Kristalisasi et al., 2022), and 85% reduction in pest incidence in IPM-managed fields (Anusha et al., 2024). These findings affirm that organic pest control is not only viable but highly effective when supported by ecological practices, farmer knowledge, and systematic application.

1.3.2 Fertilizer

The use of fertilizer in organic farming emphasizes natural, sustainable methods to enhance soil fertility and crop productivity. (1) A common practice is the use of compost and farmyard manure, which significantly improves soil organic matter, microbial activity, and overall crop yield, as supported by Ramasamy et al. (2024), Kariithi et al. (2023), and Strenner et al. (2023). (2) In contrast, synthetic fertilizers such as urea or ammonium sulfate are strictly avoided, as they are explicitly prohibited by organic farming standards (Varma et al., 2024; Bhargavi & Usha Rani, 2024; Javier & Sison, 2023). (3) Compost preparation using crop residues, animal waste, or even household waste is also widely practiced and recognized as central to nutrient cycling in organic systems (Hakeem et al., 2023; Purnomo et al., 2022). (4) Another method includes the application of fermented plant or animal-based liquid fertilizers, which offer concentrated nutrients and improve soil health (Hakeem et al., 2023). (5) Mulching with dried leaves, rice straw, or grasses is commonly used to retain soil moisture and suppress weeds (Javier & Sison, 2023; Mohan et al., 2024). (6) Green manure and cover crops play a significant role in enhancing soil fertility and nutrient cycling (Khan et al., 2024; Ramasamy et al., 2024). (7) Some studies also highlight the use of soil testing or plant growth observations to determine optimal fertilizer application times, using tools like field spectroscopy (Strenner et al., 2023). (8) While direct studies on training are limited, there is a clear indication of a need for farmer support in learning to produce and apply organic fertilizers effectively (Begum et al., 2023; Kumar, 2025). (9) Overall, organic standards universally prohibit the use of synthetic fertilizers, reinforcing the reliance on natural inputs (Varma et al., 2024; Raj et al., 2024). (10) Importantly, organic fertilizers such as compost and vermicompost have been shown to improve both yield and soil microbial health, often achieving results comparable to synthetic inputs over time (Manzoor et al., 2024; Kariithi et al., 2023; Behera et al., 2022).

1.3.3 Record Keeping and Tracing

Systematic record keeping and traceability are core to organic farming, ensuring compliance, certification readiness, and consumer trust. Farmers are encouraged to (1) keep a notebook or simple record of what they plant each season, alongside (4) noting the dates of planting and harvesting. These practices align with certification requirements that demand full traceability of production steps (Singh et al., 2024). Maintaining (2) fertilizer records and (3) documentation of pest control methods is equally important, especially as tools like isotopic analysis now allow verification of organic input use (Fabroni et al., 2023). Keeping (5) receipts or proof of purchases for seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs also reinforces transparency, particularly in

community-based systems that emphasize shared documentation (Carneiro et al., 2024). Farmers must also be able to (6) show buyers or inspectors how crops are grown and (7) provide documented proof for organic certification (Verma & Kandikonda, 2023; Kunsook et al., 2024). Training plays a crucial role here—farmers who are (8) willing to attend training improve their understanding and ability to (9) explain their farming practices to others, enhancing both transparency and traceability (Deepthi et al., 2023). In short, record-keeping is not a bureaucratic burden—it's a foundational practice that supports certification, builds consumer trust, and fosters shared knowledge within organic farming communities.

1.3.4 Branding and Marketing

Branding and marketing play a crucial role in the success of organic farming by enhancing product identity, building consumer trust, and increasing farm income. First, (1) farm products with a unique name, logo, or packaging help drive consumer recognition and purchase intent, with innovations like vacuum cooling boosting brand awareness and competitiveness (Fitriani et al., 2024; Hukker et al., 2024; Nagy & Temesi, 2024). Second, (2) informing buyers that products are grown without harmful chemicals through clear labels and packaging builds consumer trust and confidence (Fitriani et al., 2024; H et al., 2024). Third, (3) participating in local markets or trade fairs allows farmers to expand market reach and improve profits by eliminating middlemen (Raghuraja & Devaraja, 2022; Kristanti et al., 2023). Fourth, (4) selling produce directly to consumers—both locally and internationally—increases profit margins and price premiums (Chaudhary, 2022; Raghuraja & Devaraja, 2022). Fifth, (5) using simple packaging or labeling to show products are safe and natural strengthens perceived product authenticity and meets consumer expectations (Kristanti et al., 2023; Nagy & Temesi, 2024). Sixth, (6) believing certified organic labeling will help get better prices is supported by evidence that certified labels improve consumer trust and access to higher-value markets (Kristanti et al., 2023; Latip et al., 2024). Seventh, (7) knowing that only DA-accredited certification allows use of the "organic" label reflects how label credibility shapes consumer decisions and legal compliance (H et al., 2024). Eighth, (8) interest in joining a group or cooperative for organic branding shows how collective efforts can boost branding power and market access (Chaudhary, 2022; Fitriani et al., 2024). Ninth, (9) willingness to learn about marketing strategies for organic products—including digital tools—strengthens farmers' branding skills and competitiveness (Setiawan et al., 2024; Kristanti et al., 2023). Finally, (10) viewing branding and marketing as important for farm income is backed by findings that strategic packaging and direct sales lead to greater independence and earnings (Fitriani et al., 2024; Raghuraja & Devaraja, 2022).

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-comparative quantitative research design. It aimed to describe current organic farming practices among DAR partner farmers in Siquijor and compare how opportunities and challenges vary across key domains of the Pagente Organic Farming Model (2025): pest management, fertilizer use, record keeping and tracing, and branding and marketing.

2.2 Population and Respondents

This study covered the entire population of registered partner-farmers of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Siquijor Province who are engaged in or show interest in organic farming. Since the number of target individuals was manageable, no sampling technique was applied. All eligible partner-farmers were included to ensure complete representation and eliminate sampling bias.

2.3 Research Instrument

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire based on the domains of the Pagente Organic Farming Model (2025). Items were constructed and validated based on literature and expert consultation, and measured using a Likert scale format. The instrument assessed farmer knowledge, practices, challenges, and perceptions related to pest control, organic fertilizers, documentation, and branding/marketing.

To assess the reliability of the survey instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 10 farmers who were not part of the main study population. Despite the small pilot size, the instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.864, which exceeds the accepted threshold of 0.70. This indicates that the instrument was reliable for data collection.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Researchers coordinated with DAR officials and local farmer groups to facilitate community entry and schedule visits. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before administering the questionnaire. Trained enumerators assisted non-literate respondents. Data were collected through field visits over a defined data collection period.

2.5 Ethical Consideration

This study strictly adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents after clearly explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the assurance of confidentiality. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. No personally identifiable information was collected or disclosed at any stage of the research. All expenses related to data collection were fully shouldered by the researcher.

2.6 Statistical Treatment

Data were encoded and processed using statistical software to ensure accuracy and reliability. Various statistical tools were employed for data analysis. Weighted mean was used to determine the central tendency of responses across different practice areas. Path analysis was applied to explore potential causal or structural relationships between the key domains of the Pagente Organic Farming Model. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine farming characteristics. Additionally, comparative analysis through path analysis was conducted to identify which factors had the highest and lowest impact on organic labeling. To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was computed using responses from a pilot group to assess internal consistency.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Pest Control

Statements		
Pest Management	Mean	Description
Use natural methods (like neem, chili, garlic, or soap sprays) to control pests on my crops.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Avoid using synthetic chemical pesticides on my farm.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Regularly check my plants for early signs of pests and diseases.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Practice crop rotation to reduce pest infestation.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Use pest-resistant or traditional varieties of seeds.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Encourage natural enemies of pests (like birds, frogs, and beneficial insects) to stay in my farm.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Use traps or barriers (like yellow sticky traps or nets) to manage pests.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Aware of the organic rules that prohibit harmful chemical sprays.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Receive advice or training on organic pest management practices.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Believe natural pest control methods are enough to protect my crops	4.96	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	4.96	Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral; 3.41 – 4.20 Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

The data reveals a remarkably high and consistent level of adherence to organic pest management practices among respondents, with every item rated at a near-maximum mean score of 4.96 on a 1–5 scale. This suggests strong implementation of natural pest control methods, avoidance of synthetic inputs, regular monitoring, and preventive strategies such as crop rotation and pest-resistant seeds. These findings align with broader patterns observed in other regions. For instance, in Punjab, India, farmers demonstrated widespread use of organic pest control methods, including neem-based biopesticides and traditional botanical solutions (Walia et al., 2025). Similarly, although adoption levels in Uttar Pradesh varied, many farmers engaged in practices like neem leaf extract application and summer ploughing, even if more technical inputs like biopesticides were less common (Vyas & Bharti, 2025). Beyond practices, farmer motivation appears to be a critical factor. Studies from the U.S. and Sicily highlight how beliefs about soil health, social norms, and access to information significantly influence organic pest

management adoption (Bloom et al., 2024; Spina & Caracciolo, 2023). Furthermore, training and advisory services have been shown to increase adherence to organic standards, as seen in Tamil Nadu, where access to localized guidance improved both adoption and effectiveness (Habanyati et al., 2024). However, the uniformity of responses in the current study may also reflect elements of social desirability bias. Research from Nepal revealed discrepancies between self-reported use of organic practices and actual technical adoption, suggesting that some farmers may report what they perceive as favorable or expected by surveyors (Sharma et al., 2022). Taken together, these findings point to a highly motivated and informed farming population with strong alignment toward organic principles, while also highlighting the need to account for potential biases in self-reported data.

3.2 Fertilizers

Fertilizers	Mean	Verbal Description
Use compost or farmyard manure as fertilizer.	4.98	Strongly Agree
Avoid using synthetic fertilizers such as urea or ammonium sulfate.	4.98	Strongly Agree
Prepare organic compost from crop residues, animal waste, or household waste.	4.96	Strongly Agree
Apply fermented plant or animal-based liquid fertilizers (e.g., "concoctions").	4.35	Strongly Agree
Practice mulching (using dried leaves, rice straw, or grasses) to improve soil fertility.	4.37	Strongly Agree
Use green manure or cover crops to enrich the soil.	4.87	Strongly Agree
Test my soil or observe plant growth to decide when to fertilize.	4.92	Strongly Agree
Receive training or support on making organic fertilizers.	5.0	Strongly Agree
Understand that organic standards prohibit synthetic fertilizers.	5.0	Strongly Agree
Believe organic fertilizers improve both yield and soil health.	4.98	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	4.81	Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral; 3.41 – 4.20 Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

The results reveal both strengths and gaps in organic fertilization practices among respondents. The lowest ratings were observed for applying fermented liquid fertilizers (4.35) and mulching (4.37)—practices that, while beneficial, are often more specialized and labor-intensive. These low scores suggest persistent barriers such as limited technical knowledge, time constraints, and resource shortages. Similar challenges have been reported in Kenya, Malaysia, and Ethiopia, where farmers cited a lack of expertise and the convenience of synthetic fertilizers as reasons for low adoption of these methods (Magogo et al., 2024; Sulaiman & Misnan, 2022; Kudama et al., 2021). In contrast, the highest ratings (5.0) were recorded for receiving training on organic fertilizers and understanding that organic standards prohibit synthetic fertilizers, emphasizing the central role of institutional support and education. Other top-rated practices include the belief that organic fertilizers improve yield and soil health (4.98), regular use of compost or farmyard manure (4.98), and avoidance of synthetic fertilizers (4.98)—all reflecting strong alignment with sustainable farming principles. The practice of preparing compost from farm residues and waste (4.96) and applying green manure (4.87) also scored highly, showing that farmers are actively engaging with core organic practices. These findings are consistent with regional trends: in Ethiopia, the integration of ECONAT organic liquid fertilizers and structured training improved both yield and farmer satisfaction (Tilahun et al., 2025); in Uganda and Ghana, widespread adoption of composting, cultural weed control, and mulching was closely tied to access to training and credit (Kyarisiima et al., 2024; Adiyah et al., 2021). Participatory trainings in Indonesia and China further demonstrate how technical knowledge boosts the uptake of organic methods, particularly when combined with subsidies and outreach (Zulham et al., 2023; Amelia et al., 2025; Yi et al., 2023). Overall, while the findings confirm strong commitment to organic farming where support systems exist, they also highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance the adoption of underutilized but valuable practices.

3.3 Record Keeping and Tracing

Record Keeping and Tracing	Mean	Verbal Description
Keep a notebook or simple record of what was plant each season.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Keep a record of the fertilizers applied to crops.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Record the methods used for pest control.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Note the dates planted and harvested my crops.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Keep receipts or proof when buying seeds, fertilizers, or farm inputs.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Can show buyers or inspectors how crops are grown.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Believe keeping records is important for gaining organic certification.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Willing to attend training on farm record-keeping.	4.51	Strongly Agree

Explain the steps of my farming practices to others.	4.51	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	4.51	Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral; 3.41 – 4.20 Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

The survey results clearly show that respondents—despite not being formally certified—demonstrate a strong commitment to the principles of organic farming, particularly in maintaining detailed records and ensuring transparency. With a consistent mean score of 4.51 across all indicators, farmers strongly agree on the importance of documenting planting schedules, fertilizer and pest control applications, receipts, and farm inputs. This aligns with findings by Desai et al. (2024), who reported that nearly 90% of farmers in Gujarat held high perceptions of organic farming, especially around sustainability and health, even if they were not yet certified. Similarly, Bruce et al. (2022) found that tenant and transitioning farmers in the U.S. Midwest showed strong conservation values and sustainable practices despite facing structural barriers to certification.

This proactive mindset toward record-keeping and openness mirrors the criteria outlined in the SOFaM (Sustainable Organic Farming Maturity) model developed by Kunsook et al. (2024), which assesses readiness for organic certification based on compliance with documentation and transparency. Furthermore, Ataseven et al. (2024) emphasize that trust, transparency, and traceability are central to organic certification, principles that many non-certified farmers already uphold. Notably, Kononets et al. (2023) found that some non-certified farmers demonstrate even greater transparency than certified ones, challenging assumptions about certification as the only marker of organic integrity. The current results reflect a similar reality: farmers are not just willing but actively preparing to align with organic standards, suggesting that many are organically inclined in practice if not in formal designation.

3.4 Branding and Marketing

Branding and Marketing	Mean	Verbal Description
Sell my farm products with a unique name, logo, or packaging.	3.87	Agree
Inform buyers that my products are grown without harmful chemicals.	3.87	Agree
Participate in local markets or trade fairs to sell my produce.	3.87	Agree
Sell my produce directly to consumers (not only to middlemen).	3.87	Agree
Use simple packaging or labeling to show my produce is safe and natural.	3.87	Agree
Believe certified organic labeling will help me get better prices.	3.87	Agree
Know that only DA-accredited certification allows me to use the “organic” label	3.87	Agree
Interested in joining a group or cooperative for organic branding.	3.87	Agree
Willing to learn about marketing strategies for organic products.	3.87	Agree
Believe branding and marketing are important for farm income.	3.87	Agree
Composite Mean	3.87	Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral; 3.41 – 4.20 Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

The results of the study reveal a strong and consistent agreement among respondents on the significance of branding and marketing in organic farming, with all assessed indicators receiving a mean score of 3.87, corresponding to the interpretation of "Agree." Farmers reported active engagement in branding initiatives, such as the use of distinct names, logos, and packaging, along with efforts to educate consumers about chemical-free practices and participation in local markets and direct selling. Moreover, they demonstrated a clear understanding of organic certification processes and a willingness to enhance their marketing skills. This uniformity of responses—reflected in the composite mean—underscores a shared recognition of branding and marketing as indispensable for increasing farm income and promoting organic products. These findings align with a growing body of research highlighting the transformative impact of marketing and branding in the organic agriculture sector. For example, a training program for the Sejati Farmers Group in Indonesia significantly enhanced farmers’ knowledge of branding and digital marketing by 25% and led to a 15% rise in organic fertilizer sales within just three months (Wanita et al., 2024). Similarly, Setiawan et al. (2024) found that online training boosted Indonesian farmers' confidence and skills in social media and e-commerce marketing. Branding’s influence extends beyond individual farms; in Taiwan, Wang and Shen (2024) showed that branding elements such as product quality, sustainability, and brand loyalty shaped consumer trust and market differentiation in organic agro-tourism. Kumar and Banu (2025) reported that Indian farmers and retailers effectively used certification labels, customized packaging, direct sales, and digital platforms to attract organic produce consumers. Moreover, Muthmainnah and Amirah (2025) observed that structured marketing assistance, including branding and pre-order systems, helped overcome

digital literacy barriers and improve farmers' competitiveness in West Java. Desai et al. (2024) further confirmed that farmers in Gujarat, India, were well-versed in certification processes and acknowledged branding's role in advancing sustainable agriculture. Direct marketing strategies, such as organic bazaars and farmer-producer organizations, were also linked to increased farmer income and improved market access in Karnataka (Raghuraja & Devaraja, 2022). Additionally, training in strategic planning—such as SWOT analysis—enabled farmers in Boyolali Regency to build long-term branding approaches for organic vegetables (Suswadi & Cahyono, 2023). Together, this body of evidence supports the conclusion that branding and marketing are not only widely practiced but are also pivotal to the economic viability and growth of organic farming.

3.5 Summary of Result

Summary of Result	Mean	Verbal Description
Pest Control	4.96	Strongly Agree
Fertilizers	4.81	Strongly Agree
Record Keeping and Tracing	4.51	Strongly Agree
Branding and Marketing	3.87	Agree
Composite Mean	4.54	Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral; 3.41 – 4.20 Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

The results show a strong consensus among respondents on the critical role of pest control (mean = 4.96), fertilizers (mean = 4.81), and record keeping and traceability (mean = 4.51) in agricultural practices, with each scoring within the "Strongly Agree" range. These findings align with recent research emphasizing pest control and organic fertilizers as foundational components in sustainable farming systems, particularly in the absence of synthetic inputs (Jiayi, 2024; El-Shafie, 2022; Raj et al., 2024; Ramasamy et al., 2024). Similarly, record keeping and traceability are recognized for their essential function in optimizing resource use and ensuring compliance with organic certification standards (Calderón-López et al., 2025; Panda et al., 2024; Thomas et al., 2024). However, branding and marketing received the lowest mean (3.87), indicating general agreement but a weaker consensus compared to other areas. This lower rating is consistent with studies showing that while marketing is acknowledged as important, it often receives less emphasis in organic farming due to challenges such as certification complexity, limited market access, and lack of training (Panchenko, 2024; Kirnosova, 2024; Janakanandhini et al., 2024; Ramasamy et al., 2024; PP et al., 2024). These results highlight the need for targeted efforts to build farmers' capacity in marketing and branding to bridge this gap and improve the commercial viability of organic products.

3.6 Path Analysis

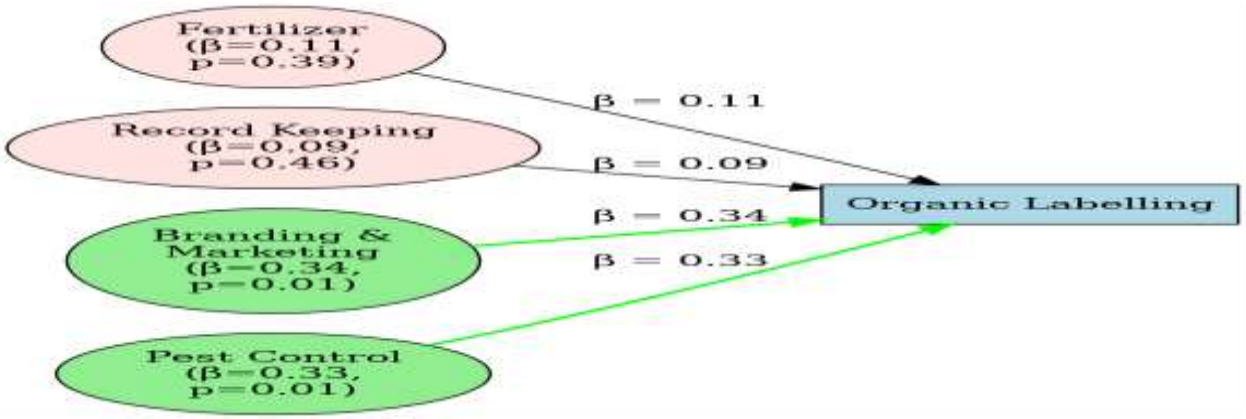

Figure 1 Path Analysis of Organic Labelling

This diagram illustrates how four independent variables—Fertilizer, Record Keeping, Branding & Marketing, and Pest Control—influence the likelihood of Organic Labelling. It uses standardized regression coefficients (β) to show the relative strength of each predictor, and p-values to indicate whether those effects are statistically significant. The outcome variable, Organic Labelling, is shown on the right, while the predictors are on the left. Two variables—Branding & Marketing (β = 0.34, p = 0.01) and Pest Control (β = 0.33, p = 0.01)—stand out as significant, moderate predictors, highlighted in green to reflect both their statistical importance and effect size. In contrast, Fertilizer (β = 0.11, p = 0.39) and Record Keeping (β = 0.09, p = 0.46) have weak, non-significant effects, marked in misty rose to indicate their limited impact. Overall, the diagram emphasizes that strategic branding and effective pest control are the strongest drivers of Organic Labelling outcomes.

4.0 Conclusion

While the model shows that organic farming practices in Siquijor are strong in core areas like pest management, fertilizer use, and record keeping, it also exposes critical weaknesses that could stall progress toward full organic labeling. The most pressing gaps lie in branding, marketing, and certification—areas where farmers struggle with limited market access, lack of formal certification, and underdeveloped promotional strategies. These weaknesses are not just logistical but structural, pointing to a need for more targeted interventions such as market linkage programs, cooperative branding efforts, and easier pathways to accreditation. The model is helpful in mapping out where farmers are strong and where they need support, offering a practical direction for action. However, unless these weaker areas are directly addressed, farmers risk remaining compliant but invisible—ecologically sound yet economically sidelined. Bridging these gaps is essential to make organic farming not just a practice, but a sustainable livelihood.

5.0 Recommendation

Siquijor's organic farmers have the skills to grow high-quality produce—but they need stronger tools to brand, market, and sell what they grow. These five initiatives aim to equip them with practical support, from hands-on branding workshops to online selling platforms and simplified certification pathways.

5.1 **Train Farmers on Branding and Marketing**
Goal: Strengthen skills in branding, packaging, and consumer engagement.
Actions:
5.1.1 Monthly hands-on workshops covering logos, packaging, social media, storytelling, etc.
5.1.2 Use local case studies and bring in **successful organic farmers from regions like Benguet, Bukidnon, or Negros** as resource persons.
5.1.3 Include activities like live demos of product labeling and mock online promotions.

5.2 **Build Cooperative Marketing Hubs**
Goal: Empower farmers to market as a group and negotiate better.
Actions:
5.2.1 Form cooperatives or marketing clusters.
5.2.2 Create a **unified brand** (e.g., "Organic Siquijor") for pooled products.
5.2.3 Manage shared packaging, branding, logistics, and digital marketing through these hubs.

5.3 **Simplify Access to Organic Certification**
Goal: Help more farmers get certified.
Actions:
5.3.1 Partner with DA or NGOs to offer technical assistance.
5.3.2 Subsidize certification costs via grants or co-op funds.
5.3.3 Promote **Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)** as a localized, peer-reviewed, low-cost alternative.

5.4 **Promote Use of Low-Cost Organic Fertilizers**
Goal: Increase adoption of high-benefit, low-cost practices.
Actions:
5.4.1 Establish demo farms to showcase techniques like **fermented plant-based fertilizers** and mulching.
5.4.2 Provide **step-by-step videos and manuals** in Cebuano or local dialects.
5.4.3 Train and designate **"fertilizer champions"** from the community to guide others.

5.5 **Develop Online and Local Market Access Channels**
Goal: Give farmers direct access to consumers and reduce middlemen.
Actions:
5.5.1 Organize **weekly organic markets** and booths in existing fairs.
5.5.2 Set up kiosks in public markets labeled **"Organic Zone".**
5.5.3 Create an **online platform** (e.g., website or app) where:
5.5.3.1 Farmers can upload products, prices, and availability.
5.5.3.2 Consumers can **browse, place orders, and schedule pickups or deliveries.**
5.5.3.3 LGUs or co-ops can help manage transactions and logistics.

5.6 Matrix Plan

Recommendation	Goal	Key Activities	Lead Agencies	Timeline	Expected Outcomes
1. Branding & Marketing Training	Improve farmers' marketing and branding capacity	- Monthly workshops - Bring in local organic farmers from other regions - Live demos of packaging and promotion	DA, TESDA, NGOs	Q1–Q4 2026	Farmers develop strong, appealing brands
2. Cooperative Marketing Hub	Enable group branding, pricing, and promotions	- Form co-ops - Launch "Organic Siquijor" label - Share marketing tools & logistics	DA, LGUs, Farmer Groups	Q1–Q2 2026	Stronger collective market presence
3. Certification Support	Increase certified farms through affordable, simplified options	- Provide document prep help - Subsidize fees - Promote PGS	DA, NGOs, PGS Networks	Q1–Q3 2026	More farms certified or recognized locally
4. Organic Fertilizer Promotion	Encourage use of low-cost, high-impact organic inputs	- Set up demo plots - Local language guides - Peer learning with fertilizer champions	ATI, LGUs, Local Trainers	Q2–Q4 2026	More sustainable and productive practices
5. Digital and Local Market Access	Connect farmers directly with buyers	- Start farmers' markets and kiosks - Build an **online ordering platform** for products - Train farmers to use it	LGUs, DTI, Local IT Groups	Q2–Q4 2026	Expanded market access and better income

6. Declaration

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6.2 Future Direction - Future research should focus on measuring the long-term economic impact of branding, certification, and digital market access initiatives on farmers' livelihoods in Siquijor. Studies could explore how cooperative marketing hubs influence pricing power, whether online platforms truly reduce reliance on middlemen, and how localized certification models like PGS (Participatory Guarantee System**).** affect consumer trust. In addition, further investigation is needed into the socio-cultural factors that shape farmers' willingness to adopt new practices, including peer-to-peer learning and community-based leadership. By combining economic, social, and technological perspectives, future research can provide evidence-based guidance for scaling these interventions not only within Siquijor but also in other emerging organic farming communities across the Philippines.

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Rebranding Siquijor Produce to Organic Farming: Opportunities and Challenges

5 – Strongly Agree; 4 – Agree; 3 – Neutral; 2 – Disagree; 1 – Strongly Disagree

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
Pest Management	5	4	3	2	1
I use natural methods (like neem, chili, garlic, or soap sprays) to control pests on my crops.					
I avoid using synthetic chemical pesticides on my farm.					
I regularly check my plants for early signs of pests and diseases.					
I practice crop rotation to reduce pest infestation.					
I use pest-resistant or traditional varieties of seeds.					
I encourage natural enemies of pests (like birds, frogs, and beneficial insects) to stay in					

my farm.					
I use traps or barriers (like yellow sticky traps or nets) to manage pests.					
I am aware of the organic rules that prohibit harmful chemical sprays.					
I receive advice or training on organic pest management practices.					
I believe natural pest control methods are enough to protect my crops					
Fertilizers	5	4	3	2	1
I use compost or farmyard manure as fertilizer.					
I avoid using synthetic fertilizers such as urea or ammonium sulfate.					
I prepare organic compost from crop residues, animal waste, or household waste.					
I apply fermented plant or animal-based liquid fertilizers (e.g., "concoctions").					
I practice mulching (using dried leaves, rice straw, or grasses) to improve soil fertility.					
I use green manure or cover crops to enrich the soil.					
I test my soil or observe plant growth to decide when to fertilize.					
I receive training or support on making organic fertilizers.					
I understand that organic standards prohibit synthetic fertilizers.					
I believe organic fertilizers improve both yield and soil health.					
Record Keeping and Tracing	5	4	3	2	1
I keep a notebook or simple record of what I plant each season.					
I keep a record of the fertilizers I apply to my crops.					
I record the methods I use for pest control.					
I note the dates when I plant and harvest my crops. I keep receipts or proof when I buy seeds, fertilizers, or farm inputs.					
I can show buyers or inspectors how my crops are grown.					
I believe keeping records is important for gaining organic certification.					
I am willing to attend training on farm record-keeping.					
I can explain the steps of my farming practices to others.					
Branding and Marketing	5	4	3	2	1
I sell my farm products with a unique name, logo, or packaging.					
I inform buyers that my products are grown without harmful chemicals.					
I participate in local markets or trade fairs to sell my produce.					
I sell my produce directly to consumers (not only to middlemen).					
I use simple packaging or labeling to show my produce is safe and natural.					
I believe certified organic labeling will help me get better prices.					
I know that only DA-accredited certification allows me to use the "organic" label					
I am interested in joining a group or cooperative for organic branding.					
I am willing to learn about marketing strategies for organic products.					
I believe branding and marketing are important for farm income.					

Pag-usab sa Brand sa mga Produkto sa Siquijor ngadto sa Organic Farming: mga Oportunidad ug Hagit
(Rebranding Siquijor Produce to Organic Farming: Opportunities and Challenges)

Scale:
5 – Kusog nga Uyon
4 – Uyon
3 – Wala'y Komento
2 – Dili Uyon
1 – Kusog nga Dili Uyon

Pagdumala sa mga Peste (Pest Management)	KU	U	WK	DU	KDU
Gamit ko ang natural nga paagi (sama sa neem, sili, ahos, o sabong) aron makontrol ang peste sa akong tanom.					
Likayan nako ang paggamit og kemikal nga pesticide sa akong uma.					
Kanunay nako gitan-aw ang tanom aron masayran dayon kung adunay peste o sakit.					
Gipraktis nako ang crop rotation aron malikayan ang daghang peste.					

Gagamit ko og mga binhi nga lig-on batok sa peste o mga tradisyonal nga binhi.					
Ginasuportahan nako ang pagpabilin sa mga natural nga kaaway sa peste (sama sa langgam, baki, ug mga maayo nga insekto) sa akong uma.					
Gamit ko og mga traps o babag (sama sa yellow sticky traps o nets) para kontrolon ang peste.					
Nakadawat ko og tambag o training bahin sa organic nga paagi sa pagdumala sa peste.					
Mutuo ko nga igo ra ang natural nga paagi aron mapanalipdan ang akong tanom gikan sa peste.					
Abono (Fertilizers)	KU	U	WK	DU	KDU
Gamit ko og compost o abono gikan sa uma o hayop.					
Likayan nako ang paggamit og kemikal nga abono sama sa urea o ammonium sulfate.					
Gahimo ko og compost gikan sa sagbot, hugaw sa hayop, o basura sa balay.					
Gagamit ko og tanom o hayop nga fermented liquid fertilizer (sama sa "concoctions").					
Gapraktis ko og mulching gamit ang uga nga dahon, dayami, o sagbot aron mapauswag ang yuta.					
Gagamit ko og green manure o cover crops aron mapalambo ang yuta.					
Ginasusi nako ang yuta o tan-aw sa pagtubo sa tanom aron masayran kung kanus-a mag-abono.					
Nakadawat ko og training o suporta sa paghimo og organic nga abono.					
Nakasabot ko nga bawal ang synthetic fertilizer sa organic nga farming.					
Mutuo ko nga ang organic nga abono makatabang sa ani ug kahimsog sa yuta.					
Pagrekord ug Pagsubay (Record Keeping and Tracing)	KU	U	WK	DU	KDU
Nagrekord ko sa akong mga tanom matag season gamit ang notebook o simpleng talaan.					
Nagrekord ko sa mga abono nga akong gigamit.					
Ginatalaan nako ang mga paagi nga akong gigamit para sa pagpugong sa peste.					
Ginasulat nako kung kanus-a ko nagtano ug nag-ani sa akong tanom.					
Nagtipig ko og resibo o ebidensya kung mopalit ko og binhi, abono, o gamit sa uma.					
Makapakita ko sa mamalitay o inspector kung giunsa pagpadako ang akong produkto.					
Mutuo ko nga importante ang pagrekord para makakuha og organic certification.					
Andam ko motambong og training bahin sa farm record-keeping.					
Makapasabot ko sa uban kung giunsa nako pagpadagan ang akong pagpanguma.					
Branding ug Pagbaligya (Branding and Marketing)	KU	U	WK	DU	KDU
Gibaligya nako ang akong produkto gamit ang pangalan, logo, o espesyal nga packaging.					
Ginasultihan nako ang mamalitay nga walay delikadong kemikal ang akong tanom.					
Mupartisipar ko sa mga merkado o trade fairs para ibaligya ang akong produkto.					
Gibaligya nako diretso sa konsumedor (dili lang sa middleman).					
Gagamit ko og yano nga packaging o label aron makita nga luwas ug natural ang akong produkto.					
Mutuo ko nga ang certified organic nga label makatabang og makuha og mas taas nga presyo.					
Nakahibalo ko nga ang paggamit sa "organic" label kay pwede ra kung naay DA-accredited certification.					
Interesado ko nga moapil og grupo o kooperatiba alang sa organic branding.					
Andam ko makat-on og mga paagi sa pagbaligya sa organic nga produkto.					
Mutuo ko nga ang branding ug marketing importante para sa kita sa uma.					