

Impact of Marketing Strategy on Production of Organic Rice in Oriental Mindoro

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Abstract –*The growth in the production of organic rice creates a more complex challenge for marketing which involves strategy. The objectives of this study are to determine the factors that affects the marketing strategy of organic rice producers by means of SWOT (strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. Understanding the existing marketing strategies of organic producers will help the stake holders, authorities, and producers to identify the gaps and be able to come up with an applicable strategy. It provides an awareness on the current status, conditions and future of the organic rice agriculture. Qualitative research design has been applied to gain in-depth understanding on the internal and external environment of organic production which affects the performance of the certified organic rice farmers in the province of Oriental Mindoro. Primary data was collected through surveys and personal interview with the key person and owner of the organic farm and review of related documents, publications and previous studies has been utilized to distinguish and search the current issues and concerns involves with the internal and external environment of organic agriculture. Respondents composed of two organizations of the pioneer certified organic farmers with OCCP (Organic Certification Center of the Philippines) certification. Weighted SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and treats) analysis is used to analyze the impact and importance of the factors that affects the marketing of organic rice. Results shown that external factors extremely influence the marketing of organic rice. While internal factors have a significant impact on the production of organic rice. Moreover, the strength and opportunities factors of organic rice production were significantly governing the weakness and threats. The implication of the strategic evaluation is disseminated into the internal and external situation wherein recommended program and project be implemented to strengthen the market of organic rice in the province.*

Keywords – *Organic production, producers, marketing strategy, (SWOT) analysis*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organic farming has become a trend toward a healthier lifestyle. The government formalized the adoption of this farming system when Congress passed Republic Act No. 10068 or the Organic Act of 2010. This act promotes farming practices that improves the potency of the soil, increases farm efficiency, promotes, and enhances agro-ecosystem health, uphold ecological balance and protects the health of the people. This organic agriculture system is a sustainable alternative to be perform by the farmers [1].

Organic production is being practiced and strongly growing in different countries in North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. Asia is the major exporter of organic product in the world and the domestic market of organic is growing strongly. According to the data surveyed by

Ifoam 2018, producers of organic rice worldwide were over 209 million, 80% of the producers are in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the Pacific Island context, regional and national agencies recognized the value of organic agriculture as a development tool advances to tourism and hospitality. The Pacific Organic Standard (POS) applied a value-added product using “Pasifika” mark in their branding and marketing through a certified organic value chain [2]. Thailand was the first Biofach of organic production in Southeast Asia sponsored by Thai Ministry of Commerce. Thai government launched a large-scale project, which depend on support programs to organic rice production through a combination of direct subsidies, based on organic land acreage, input subsidy and free government certification [3]. In Vietnam diversification of distribution system for organic products was able to set up more than seven provinces

with the training provided by the Vietnam organic producers. Organic production and organic market increase in Vietnam due to consumer demand for safe food[4]. In addition, the Indonesian domestic market in 2018 increase its demand for organic food, due to the online trading system undertaken by some distributors. Certified organic product is progressively evolving the national and international through the central government program[5]. Finally, India was able established and promote organic farming in the country through The third party certification program facilitated by National Centre of Organic Farm a government department. Most of the tribal region in Northeast India practices the traditional forms of agriculture. These are organically managed but not certified [6].

Most of the organic producers all over the world comprise with different programs and strategies which includes value added product, branding and marketing, distribution system, trading system, value chain and certification system through the strong support of the government.

Organic agriculture surfaced in the Philippines through the Philippines Executive Order 481 (2005) aims to promote environmentally, economically, and socially production system. Concrete government efforts and advocacy of the civil society take the initiative to promote and stressed the need for alternative methods to conventional farming [7]. Among the constraints in the adoption of organic farming are declined in the yield, limited supports on inputs, and marketing problems such as lack of market information, marketing strategies and pricing scheme [8]. Since, the concern regarding the negative effect of increasing use of chemicals in farming becomes the motivating factors of most of the organic farmers, consumers demand was unanticipated. Difficulties in marketing of organic rice led some other organic producers to switch back to conventional farming.

Organic farming in Oriental Mindoro is not a new concept, some farmers practiced the system of organic farming as traditional way of farming since time immemorial in the southern part of Oriental Mindoro. The development and practice of organic farming already exist even before the enactment of RA 10068, the organic law. The certification of organic farm was pioneered by the private farms, located at the municipality of Bongabong followed by another private farms located at the municipality of Naujan. They are the first area cultivate purely organic rice and other agricultural commodities certified by the third-

party certification from Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP). In addition, different farmers associations and cooperatives apply the principle of organic farming through the assistance of provincial government and non-government organizations by conducting trainings and providing subsidy.

Several farmers transformed from conventional to organic farming system with different reasons, some farmers realize the important impact of non-chemical farming to the environment and to the health of their family, and most of the farmers decided to shift to organic production due to encouraging premium gains on organic rice. According to the number of farmers, yield in organic farming is quite good, sales is better because of the premium price, but profitability is not stable. Most of the farmers do not have the idea of what marketing strategy to be applied to established agricultural trade. Farmers measure their success conferring to the sales data, without considering the internal and external factors that significantly driven by various impact on the achievement of viable strategy.

Marketing strategy has two interrelated components, the target market, and the marketing mix. It is based on the market-emerging opportunities, industry-blocking threats, competitor's strategies, strength and weaknesses as well as company's strength and weakness, firm competitive position, personal preference of the key owner and executives and societal expectations [9]. To achieve success and sustainable business, one of the most essential parts agricultural activities is to manage and analyze its internal and external environment. SWOT analysis is the tool to understand factors that can be valuable in achieving the goal of the organic farmers. SWOT is the acronym stands for Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, it is widely applied tool in assessing, analyzing and developing strategy formulation of internal and external environments in order to achieve a systematic approach and support for strategic decision situations[10].

Organic rice is sold mostly by the farmer's themselves waiting for orders from customers, supplying to organic trading post, SME (Small Medium Enterprise) exhibition/booth held when there are government activities, while some of the farmers sell their produced rice directly to the consumers, other farmers entrusted their paddy/rice through traders who brought the rice to the supermarkets. To increase the sales of the organic produce, it is necessary to improve the management of organic rice by formulating the right marketing strategy. In view of this consequence,

this study aimed to investigate the factors that greatly affect the marketing of organic rice by analyzing the strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the internal and external environment of organic agriculture.

This paper provides a deeper understanding of marketing strategy as well as the factors that greatly affects the marketing of organic rice enable to formulate a specific, measurable and attainable programs and projects. This is beneficial to the association, cooperative as well as individual organic producers. Through this study government, non-government organization may be able to plan projects suitable for the organic farmers. Although this study is limited on to a few certified organic farmers, the marketing strategy method could be substantial benchmark in the life blood of the organic agriculture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As the preference on the road to healthier lifestyle continues to grow, the concern in organic products in the Philippines is also expeditiously gaining ground. In the term of President Benigno Aquino III, the government has mandated the Department of Agriculture to allot at least PHP1 billion (US\$23.70 million) to totally promote the organic agriculture programs in the country [11].

The Act create a consciousness on the benefits of chemical-free agricultural produce particularly to the health-conscious people. This organic farming practice continuously develops the soil fertility increases farm throughput, reduces pollution, and prevents destruction of the environmental resources, saves on imported farm inputs, and protects the health of farmers, consumers within the society [12]. Still, concrete limitations to the successful practice of organic farming in the country remains. Amidst all the great advantages, local farmer has not yet fully embraced organic agriculture.

La Liga Policy Institute recommends that to completely go into organic, farmers should raise awareness of the consumer which is marketing [13]. The defined market includes the health-conscious persons 30% of the market is composed of patients, and the balikbayans. These people are more aware on the benefits of consuming organic rice, most of them belongs to the AB market [14].

There are various studies in analyzing the marketing strategy such as, identifying the marketing strategies practice by organic farmers in India. Success of organic production is based on the know-how,

innovation, education, interest, social commitment, farming method and marketing strategy [15].

In Sri Makmur Farmer Group in Sragen District Indonesia, marketing strategy is applied by employing SWOT analysis, weighting priority strategy is done with the preparation of hierarchy based on internal and external environmental analysis. Results formulated seven alternative strategic priorities. The most significant priority is to the information technology, followed quality and certification of organic rice, packaging of the product, collaboration with the government in marketing, reorganize the distribution channels, and determine the distribution target market[16].

Analysis of marketing strategy of HSO rice in the district of Bekasi in Indonesia was investigated with the method of SWOT analysis. Case study methods were applied by means of interview and literature review. A result of SWOT analysis revealed that the marketing strength was dominant as well as opportunities. Product and distribution strategy were excellent. Internal strength can be achieving in an optimal opportunity by an aggressive strategy [17].

An assessment of organic production and Marketing Challenges in Bali, Indonesia were examined within the two projects, the conversion of conventional production to organic production of rice and the marketing of organic rice. Conclusions revealed that the conversion to organic rice production was successful due to lower production cost and sustainable increases in productivity. On the other hand, progress on the marketing side encounters many challenges and difficulty which involves with the market, price of the product and distribution [18].

Price, packaging and after sales service contribute a significant positive impact on marketing strategy on business performance of Small Medium Enterprise (Smes) in Ibadan, Nigeria. Among the marketing mix strategy, promotion has no positive significant effect on business performance. Production of quality product, competitive prices, attractive packaging and after sales service are the main focus of the development of marketing strategy of Small Medium Enterprises (Smes) [19].

In a recent perspective of an organization development internal capability and external position is interactively important source of achieving competitive advantage and formulating marketing strategy. Marketing capability incorporates market environment or outside of an organization (External factors: opportunities and threats) with its inside (Internal

factors: strengths and weaknesses). Marketing capability is an important source of competitive advantage and itself is outcome of internal capabilities and external position interaction [20]. Businesses with a customer-focused marketing strategy incline to incorporate customer preferences in the development of the product by giving importance on the customer's demands. To reassure a long-term success in business, a competitor-focused marketing strategy challenge to analyze competitors' external market, use competitor intellect, monitor product and marketing processes. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses, help the organization to keep pace with or stay ahead of the rest of the field. [21].

Hence, the perspective and foundation of this study revolved around the factors that affects the marketing of organic agriculture and how SWOT analysis affects the strategy of organic farmers in the province of Oriental Mindoro.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to explore how organic agriculture enable to expedite the impact of marketing strategies in the production of organic rice, to create a viable strategy. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the farmer's' underlying capacity that contribute to the solution of issues and strategic main concern by identifying the (SWOT) strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats on organic rice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Qualitative approach in determining the internal and external environment of organic production was demonstrated in this study as appropriate in exploring the current status of the organic rice performance. To analyze the impact and importance of the factors that affects the marketing of organic rice in the organic agricultural farms of certified organic rice producers in the Province of Oriental Mindoro. Weighted SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats) analysis is used.

Data Collection

This study engaged in qualitative method of data collection such as interview with the key person and owner of the organic farm and review of related documents to distinguish and search the current issues and concerns involves with internal and external environment of organic agriculture.

Table 1. List of Organic Farm Owner and Key Informants interviewed for the Study

Unit of Analysis	Years in Farming	Location	Ha	Key Informants
Farm A	10	Bongabong	15	Owner
Farm B	7	Naujan	2	President

Table 1 shows the criteria for selection of organic agricultural farm and the different key persons interviewed for each farm. Respondents composed of pioneer certified organic farmers who cultivate pure organic rice that has been certified by OCCP (Organic Certification Center of the Philippines). Both organic farmers have the same issues and concerned with regards to organic enterprise. This research study was conducted on Organic producers who produces organic rice that is located in the municipalities Bongabong and Naujan in the province of Oriental Mindoro. Aside from the interviews, documents such as reports, manual, posters, list of trainings and other project documents were also reviewed.

Data Analysis

In exploring the impact and importance of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and treats, SWOT analysis were applied to formulate marketing strategy. A simple SWOT analysis can be very subjective, the "weighted SWOT" is use by adding "weighting criteria" thereby decreasing bias thru analysis [22]. Weighted SWOT analysis is used to assess the current strategy of the organic rice farmers in the province of Oriental Mindoro. Weighing the strength explains the impact of organic rice agriculture in reaching their strategic objectives, weighting weaknesses is a way to know what objectives that has not been achieved, weighing the opportunities is a potential way to grow effectively and weighing the threats to know the impact of the hidden problems, concerns and other things that keep the organic agriculture from growing.

Scale:		Rating:	
4	Very important	4	High impact
3	Moderate important	3	Moderate impact
2	Less important	2	Less impact
1	Unimportant	1	No impact

Ethical Consideration

Research integrity recognizes and understands the ethical consideration of this study. An informed consent form was prearranged to inform the

participants of the purpose, benefits, possible risks, and other aspects of the survey. This study used coding to remove personal identifiers, allowing the participants to maintain their right to protection and privacy. Data gathered was properly process with the method of SWOT analysis and citing the supporting journals and articles from peer-reviewed authors allowing the data to dictate the findings without personal opinions and biases. The findings and the details of the research is validated and disseminated to the respondents to uphold authenticity, accuracy and proper actions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the interviews and document reviews were analyzed and presented in the following;

Internal Factors

Product strategy of organic rice in Oriental Mindoro is always designated with quality rice, no impurities, aromatic, and contains antioxidants and lots of health benefits. There are different types of organic rice the red rice, black rice, brown rice and the dinorado (fragrant) rice. In marketing organic rice, market segmentation is considered by the farmers as the most important factors for product strategy. The organic

producers market their produce in the urban and rural markets. Small scale farmers have difficulties in identifying and developing national and international market for their produce. Organic market in Oriental Mindoro is composed of the health conscious people like doctors, nurses, patients with different illnesses, cancer patients and professionals from different walks of life, some farmers delivered their produce to the restaurant, hotels and resorts. Generally, organic rice is distributed in the supermarket, trading centers and trade fairs. Organic rice is still belonging to the middle and upper market. While pricing strategy of organic rice is based on the current price in the market. Pricing strategies compromise to attract customers by providing special price for the bulk purchases of rice. Customers avail special discount and free shipping in the nearby areas. On the other hand, distribution strategy of organic rice is quite simple after harvesting, farmers process the paddy with their milling machineries and sell their produce directly to the consumers. Traders distribute the rice directly to the supermarkets, wholesalers, and retailers. Furthermore, Promotions strategy of the organic rice producers involves with word of mouth promotions.

Table 2. SWOT Factor Weighted Analysis

		Scale	Share	Weight	Rating	Scored
Strengths	High Quality products	4	21.05263	0.105263	4	0.421053
	Beneficial to the health of people and environment	4	21.05263	0.105263	4	0.421053
	Word of mouth promotion	4	21.05263	0.105263	3	0.315789
	Cost effective production	4	21.05263	0.105263	3	0.315789
	Channel of distribution	3	15.78947	0.078947	3	0.236842
	Total		19	100	0.5	
Weakness	Lack of establish market	4	26.66667	0.133333	3	0.4
	Lack of market advertisement	4	26.66667	0.133333	3	0.4
	Higher Price/Expensive	4	26.66667	0.133333	3	0.4
	No strong linkage within the value chain	3	20	0.1	3	0.3
	Total		15	100	0.5	
Opportunities	Growing health conscious population/Increasing demand/Growing purchasing power of the consumers	4	25	0.125	4	0.5
	Government policy and support	4	26.66667	0.133333	4	0.533333
	Sustainable use of resources	4	26.66667	0.133333	4	0.533333
	Reducing dependence on imports	4	25	0.125	4	0.5
	Total		16	103.3333	0.516667	
Threats	Higher certification cost	4	28.57143	0.142857	4	0.571429
	Lower price of other rice varieties	3	21.42857	0.107143	3	0.321429
	Mindset of farmers	3	21.42857	0.107143	3	0.321429
	Weather conditions	4	28.57143	0.142857	4	0.571429
	Total		14	100	0.5	

Source: Primary Data 2019

External Factors

The initiative of the government, non-government, and organic rice producers towards the development of market for organic rice is a significant endeavor in the progress of organic rice agriculture. The rapid economic growth increasing income, urbanization, increasing awareness on the health benefits of organic rice and changing lifestyle have been the key drivers in the advancement of organic products. The scheme in marketing of organic rice is relatively different from conventional rice marketing system. Organic market are positions in a niche segment where specific buyers in the middle class are targeted. Selection and development of strategies are important, it requires diverse skills and exceptional decision making. According to the organic rice producers, the common problems they encounter are lack of consumer’s awareness on the benefits of the product, climate change, flood and typhoons. Moreover, high price of organic rice hinders the consumers to buy organic rice, another concerns are expensive certification cost and quality assurance cost.

Table 2 shown the computation of a SWOT analysis by applying the calculation of scale, share, weights, ratings and scores. The criteria of importance done by the organic producers is measured by scales, where 4 is equivalent to very important, 3 is moderately important, 2 is less important and 1 is unimportant.

Share value of the scale was measured by dividing the scale by the total scale multiplied by 100, the share element divided by 2 multiplied by 100% is the weight. The rating was attained from the impact of the assessment completed by the organic producers. The criteria ranging from high impact to no impact (1-4) where 4 correspond to high impact, 3 moderate impact, 2 is less impact and 1 is no impact, while the scores were obtained from the weight multiplied by the rating [23].

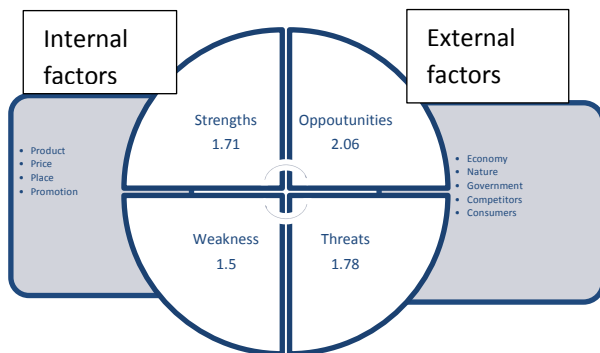


Figure 1: Impact of SWOT Factors

Figure 1 Indicate the results of the impact of SWOT factors on the production of organic rice, it shows that the magnitudes on the factors of strengths at 1.71 and the factors of weaknesses got 1.50 scores. On the other hand, the factors for opportunities is 2.06 and the factors for threats has a 1.78 score. From the result of the computation the difference between strength –weaknesses (SW) resulted to 0.20 and the difference of between opportunities –threats (O-T) is 0.28. This indicates that the external factors particularly economy and consumers (growing population/purchasing power and increased in demand), nature (sustainable use of resources) and competitors (dependence on import) has the extreme significant impact on organic rice production. Moreover, threats on economy (higher certification cost), competitors (lower price of other rice variety), consumers (mindset of the farmers) and nature (weather condition) has a lowermost impact on the organic rice production. The opportunities of organic rice production are governing the threats.

The internal factors product, price, place and promotion consist of high-quality products, health benefits of people and environment, word of mouth promotion and cost-effective production has the utmost positive significant impact on organic rice production. While the threats involve with lack of establishing the market, lack of market advertisement, higher price/expensive and no strong linkage within the value chain has the lowest impact on the organic rice production. The impact of the strength is dominant over the weaknesses. This exemplifies that the marketing strategy of the organic rice producers has a great strength in the optimum target market and extensive opportunities in the competitiveness of the organic rice production.

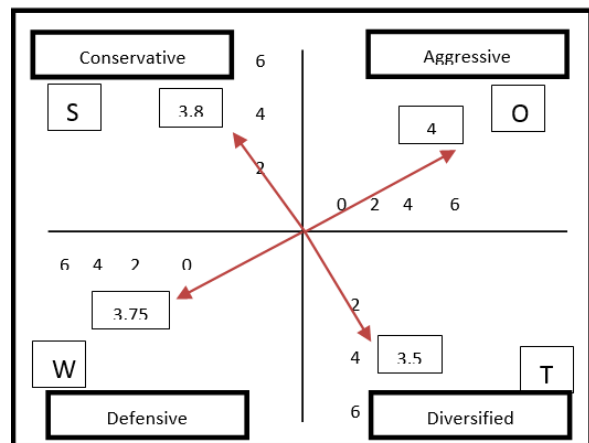


Figure 2: Importance of SWOT Factors

Figure 2 Shown the illustration of the relative importance of SWOT factors on the organic rice production. The figure is divided into four cells. The first cell corresponds to conservative strategy which specifies that the organic enterprise is resistance to change due to its significant strength. Cell 2 is the aggressive strategy denotes that the organic enterprise is aggressive to fight and take opportunities. Cell 3 is the defensive strategy signifies the ability of the organic enterprise to justify and control the situation and lastly, cell 4 is the diversified strategy is the ability of the organic enterprise to use variety of mechanisms. It proves that the opportunities on organic production has a strong significant importance over the strengths, weakness, and threat. The organic production has an aggressive position and eagerness to fight the

weaknesses and threats. The figure further explain that the strength of organic producers is dominant accompanied by strong opportunities.

Table 3 shown the matches of strengths and weaknesses, to opportunities and threats, to the organic agriculture resources and capabilities. Each factor is aligned with the combination of strategies to create a strategic plan. Strength-Opportunities (SO) strategy is an attacking strategy. It leverages the strength to maximize the opportunities. Weakness-Opportunities (WO) strategy involve with building strength for attacking strategy, Strength-Threats (ST) strategy is a defensive strategy, it leverages strength to minimize threats and Weakness-Threats (WT) strategy is to counter weaknesses and threats.

Table 3. SWOT Matrix Analysis

	<p>Strengths High Quality products Beneficial to the health of people and environment Word of mouth promotion Cost effective production Channel of distribution</p>	<p>Weaknesses Lack of establish market Lack of market advertisement Higher Price/Expensive No strong linkage within the value chain</p>
<p>Opportunities Growing health conscious population/Increasing demand/ Growing purchasing power of the consumers Government policy and support Sustainable use of resources Reducing dependence on imports</p>	<p>SO strategies High quality and benefits of the product has a strong influence to the growing health conscious population as well as the growing purchasing power that can lead to increasing demand. Cost effective production and sustainable use of resources can be succeeded with the strong government policy and support. Promotions and channel of distribution can reduced the dependence on imports.</p>	<p>WO strategies Market can be established by taking advantage with the growing health conscious population and growing purchasing power. Market advertisement with the support of the government should be highlighted on the quality and benefits of organic rice. Higher price can be adjusted with the sustainable use of resources and most importantly with the coordination to the local government policy and support. Strong linkages within the value chain can be achieved with sustainable use of resources and continuous associations with government and private entity.</p>
<p>Treats Higher Certification Cost Lower price of other rice varieties Mindset of farmers Weather conditions</p>	<p>ST strategies High quality and benefits to the health of people and environment leads to increase in consumption. Word of mouth promotion is an effective strategy in which consumers of organic rice testify and recommend the beneficial health they experience against the price of the product. Cost effective production can influence the mindset of the farmers and channel of distribution which may leads to higher profits.</p>	<p>WT strategies Establish market by continuous linkages with the local government, private, supermarkets, hotels, restaurant and academe. Market advertisement can be strengthen by going into social media Higher Price/Expensive rice can be coordinated through the support of local government by decreasing the certification cost and quality assurance cost.</p>

S-O (Strength–Opportunity) Strategy

To maximize the potential of the strength, take advantage of the opportunities by compelling on the strong promotion and on the high quality and benefits of the organic rice, enable to increase the demand of the consumers. The prospective of cost-effective production, sustainable use of resources and simplified channel of distribution reduced dependence on import by exploiting the support of the government.

S-T (Strength-Threat) Strategy

To avoid threats developing the strength through the word of mouth promotion combined with other promotional activities with a strong emphasize the high quality and benefits of the organic rice which substantiate the price of the organic rice. Strong coordination and cooperation with the government to influence the higher certification cost and the mindset of the farmers.

W-O (Weakness-Opportunities) Strategy

To diminish the things arising from the weaknesses in the organic rice production, exploit the growing health conscious population, increasing demand and growing purchasing power of the consumers to obtain establish market. Increase the cooperation and coordination with the government in marketing the organic rice.

W-T (Weakness-Threats) Strategy

Minimize losses from the weakness as well as how to avoid the threats by creative market advertisement that will be enable to establish market and linkages within the value chain.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, marketing strategy of organic rice producers will be more focused on establishing an aggressive coordination with the external environment and strengthening the internal environment of organic rice production. The researchers arrive with the following recommendations:

1. Strength-opportunities strategy commend that the government should come up with a policy to formulate a team from the local government unit to certify the organic produce with minimal cost or free of charge enable to lessen the certification cost and quality assurance cost and to better facilitate the lower price of organic rice.

2. Strength –threats strategy can be achieved through the development of information technology that facilitates the interaction, communication, and delivery of information to consumers by using the social media such as face book, twitter and blog. Therefore, informing the quality and health benefits of organic rice through massive consumer awareness.
3. Weakness – opportunities strategy can be realized by positioning the organic rice in the market as valuable food, with maintained certified quality product combined with a lot of health benefits, consider the personal values and societal expectations to establish the market. Expand the market position not only to the niche market but also to the government institution like DSWD (feeding program) and other private and non-government institutions.
4. Weakness-threats strategy can be conquered by increasing the capacity of the organic farmers through a well-developed establish market, creative advertisement, competitive or lower price of organic rice, strong linkage within the value chain, and mindset of the farmers with the strong support of the local government, non-government organization, academe and consumers.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

This study is limited on the internal and external environment of marketing strategy from the point of view of the organic farmers. Further research can be undertaken to assess the consumer’s perspective with inclusive growth of the organic market.

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