

Factors Influencing the Adoption of Organic Production Systems in Vegetable Farming



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Introduction

The growing concern of healthy food consumption, environmental conservation and sustainable use of resources prompted some farmers to embrace organic vegetable farming.

The assessment of factors influencing the use of organic vegetable production systems is important in order to understand why farmers do what they do. It is also necessary to generate information as basis in coming up with policies and initiatives to support the evolving organic vegetable industry.

The study was conducted in the Cordillera, Philippines to determine the motivations of farmers in shifting to organic production systems in growing vegetables and find out the various factors that influenced the adoption of such. It also identified the prevailing issues and concerns related to organic vegetable production.

Methods

1. Data Collection



Interview Schedule



Focus Group Discussion



Farm Reconnaissance

2. Data Analysis

Qualitative and regression analysis were employed.

Results

- The organic vegetable farmers managed their soil through compost application, green mulching, use of organic fertilizers and organic foliar spray. They handled pests and diseases with botanical remedies and non-chemical measures. In terms of cropping systems, the farmers practiced intercropping, relay cropping and crop rotation. Moreover, some farmers used rain shelters and green houses to protect their crops from heavy rains.
- Farmers were motivated to adopt organic vegetable production systems due to economic benefits, ecological integrity, health benefits, and favourable conditions.
- The influencing factors in the adoption of organic production systems which are summarized in the figure below:

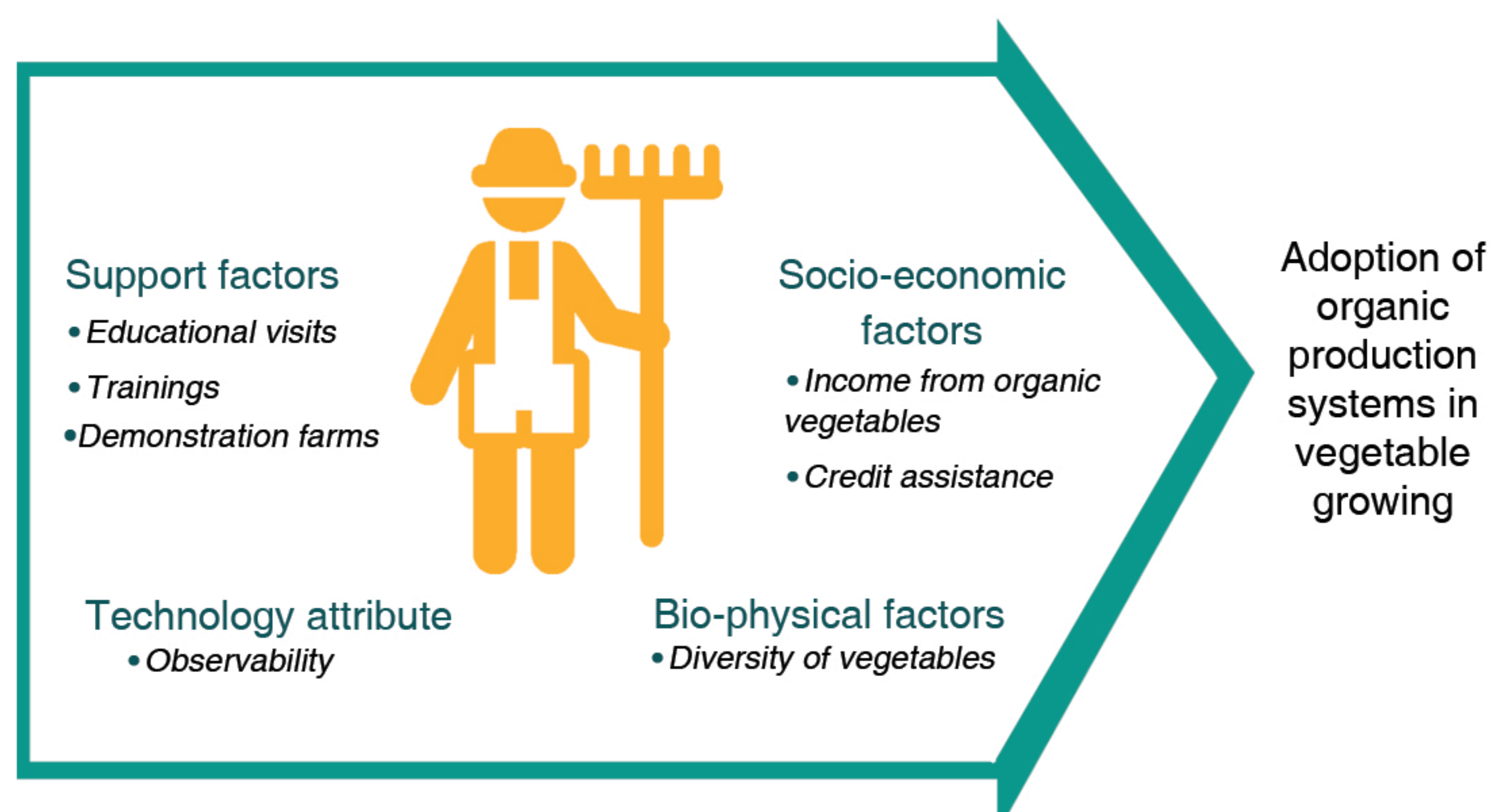


Figure 1. Determinants in the utilization of organic vegetable production systems

The major problems found out were as follows:

- Migration of pests to organically managed farms when the surrounding conventional farms are sprayed with pesticides; and,
- It takes 3-5 years to rehabilitate the soil and the yields decrease while the soil is adjusting.

Conclusions

- Farmers opted to adopt organic vegetable production systems due to motivational factors such as economic benefits, sustained ecology, health benefits, and favourable conditions.
- Other influential variables were: income from organically grown vegetables, credit assistance, diversity of vegetables grown, observability of the production systems and support services espousing organic farming.
- The major problems in shifting to organic vegetable farming were migration of pests from conventional farms and lengthy rehabilitation period of the soil.
- The study suggests enabling policies and provision of adequate support services considering the motivational and influencing factors as well as the problems