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A systematic review of research on organic agricultural products in Iran: Trends, challenges, and policy implications

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Abstract

The concerns regarding environmental issues, health, and sustainability within the agri-food systems in Iran has triggered the need for a strategic approach which is responsive to the demands of Organic agriculture. This study seeks to conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) on the research done on organic agricultural products in Iran to shed light on the primary research themes, challenges in production and marketing, and the policies devised for those issues.

Using keywords such as “organic agriculture and Iran”, we conducted a SLR on Scopus and Web of Science resulting in 503 and 409 relative results. From the combined searches, and after duplicates were removed in Rayyan platform, these underwent primary screening based on correctness and quality, following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Using qualitative content analysis, these articles were examined employing thematic coding methods.

The results of 47 finally selected studies reveal that a substantial amount of the research is directed toward understanding consumers, such as their awareness, trust, and willingness to pay for organic products. Another major thematic area comprises production barriers such as restricted access to organic products, certification infrastructure, farmer training, and governmental support.

While interest in organic products is on the rise, particularly in metropolitan areas, structural and institutional factors stagnate the thriving potential of an organic sector in Iran. Policy analysis is scant within the literature; however, there is an unmistakable need for comprehensive policies that provide supporting subsidies, proactive education campaigns, guaranteed market demand, and regulatory oversight on certification and quality control.

To address these gaps, this review integrates the disjointed organic agriculture literature in Iran by presenting a systematic account of the major challenges and prospects. It underscores the absence of policy impact analysis at the regional level, as well as assessments of policy impact on the environment, and strategies for sustainable market growth. The recommendations urge targeted action from defined stakeholders to establish coordinated frameworks designed to nurture sustainable organic agriculture throughout the supply chain.

Keywords: policy implications, production barriers, consumer behaviour, Iran, organic agriculture, PRISMA, systematic literature review

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