

**RELIABILITY OF THE ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FROM THE  
PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE IN COLOMBIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The organic market has been one of the fastest growing segments in the world since 1990. Meanwhile, organic certification has become an important instrument in the market of credence goods (e.g. organic produce), which are characterized by information asymmetry between producers and consumers. Therefore, its reliability can not be taken for granted, since some typical features of the organic sector create favorable conditions for opportunistic behavior. In this context, the objective of the present research is to identify the variables influencing the reliability of organic certification from the producer perspective in Colombia and the relation of this with its credibility, good reputation and satisfaction. In order to identify the mentioned variables, a survey was conducted among 71 certified organic producers in Colombia. Then, factor and regression analysis were carried out with the purpose of extracting the independent, dependent and target variables and the relationship between them. These results were contrasted with the model proposed and tested in previous studies in Brazil and Costa Rica, to finally, be able to make some comparisons between the three countries. The model to assess the reliability of organic certification in Colombia consists of nine independent variables ("family control", "buyer control", "CB's good reputation", "auditor strictness", "organic motivation", "CB strictness", "association control", "risk propensity" and "market access necessity"); two dependent variables ("perceived reliability" and "reliability at the farmer level"); and three target variables ("credibility", "satisfaction" and "good reputation"). The independent variables with the strongest influence on the dependent ones are "CB's good reputation" on "perceived reliability" and "association control" on "reliability at the farmer level". In turn, "perceived reliability" is the dependent variable with the highest influence on the target ones, specifically on "credibility of organic certification". On the other hand, when comparing the models to assess the reliability of organic certification in Brazil, Costa Rica and Colombia, it was possible to conclude that the "auditor expertise and strictness" is a key aspect influencing the "reliability of organic certification" from its three perspectives (perceived reliability, reliability of the certification process and at the farmer level).*

*Concerning the dependent variables, it is clear that the “overall or perceived reliability” is the most important one when evaluating relations with the independent variables.*