

Employability of Agriculture Sector Scholar Grantee Graduates in the TESDA Provincial Training Center–Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat: Basis for an Enhancement Program

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500691>

Received: 16 May 2026; Accepted: 21 May 2026; Published: 11 June 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examined the employment outcomes and program effectiveness of TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates. Specifically, the study determined the employment profile of graduates in terms of program completed, employment rate, employment status, and length of time in acquiring the first job; assessed the perceived relevance of training to first employment; identified the skills found useful in employment; examined the difficulties encountered in job search; evaluated the level of program provisions; determined the factors facilitating employment; and proposed an intervention plan to improve employment outcomes among graduates.

A quantitative descriptive research design was utilized. The respondents of the study were 125 TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates. A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data gathering instrument. Statistical tools employed included frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Findings revealed that the majority of graduates completed the Agro-Entrepreneurship program and that a large proportion of graduates were employed, although many were engaged in contractual or non-permanent work arrangements. Most graduates secured employment within less than six months after training and perceived their training as highly relevant to their employment. Technical agricultural and entrepreneurial skills were identified as the most useful competencies in employment. Graduates, however, encountered several job-search difficulties, particularly lack of job opportunities and lack of experience. Program provisions were rated very high, especially in on-the-job training, laboratory and hands-on activities, and entrepreneurial activities. Factors facilitating employment, including technical competencies, industry partnerships, and work-related attributes, were also rated very high.

The study concluded that TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector programs effectively promote employability through competency-based and industry-aligned training. However, challenges related to job stability, skills mismatch, and labor market opportunities remain evident. It is recommended that TESDA strengthen industry partnerships, improve job placement services, enhance curriculum alignment, and expand entrepreneurship support programs to further improve employment outcomes.

Keywords: Employability, TESDA Graduates, Agriculture Sector, Technical-Vocational Education, Program Effectiveness, Employment Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) plays a significant role in workforce development by equipping individuals with industry-relevant competencies and practical skills necessary for employment and entrepreneurship. In the agriculture sector, TVET programs contribute not only to employability but also to rural

development, food security, and livelihood generation. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in the Philippines implements competency-based training programs designed to prepare learners for both local and global labor market demands.

TESDA PTC-Lambayong offers agriculture sector programs such as Organic Agriculture Production (OAP) and Agro-Entrepreneurship, which aim to enhance graduates' technical competencies, entrepreneurial capacities, and employability. These programs integrate hands-on training, industry immersion, and competency assessment to ensure that graduates acquire practical and job-ready skills.

Employment outcomes are important indicators of training effectiveness because they reflect the extent to which graduates are able to apply acquired competencies in actual work settings. High employment rates and timely labor market entry suggest that training programs are aligned with industry requirements. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023), competency-based training significantly improves employability by aligning skills development with labor market demands.

However, despite the recognized importance of TVET programs, graduates continue to face employment-related challenges such as skills mismatch, limited job opportunities, lack of work experience, and unstable employment arrangements. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) emphasized that rapidly changing labor market conditions require continuous alignment between training institutions and industry needs to maintain graduate competitiveness.

Moreover, entrepreneurship has become increasingly important in agriculture-related TVET programs because self-employment and agribusiness ventures provide alternative livelihood opportunities for graduates. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) noted that entrepreneurship-oriented TVET programs contribute significantly to employment generation, economic participation, and community development.

This study was conducted to determine the employment outcomes and program effectiveness of TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates. The findings of the study may provide valuable insights for TESDA administrators, policymakers, industry partners, and future trainees in improving curriculum relevance, strengthening employment facilitation mechanisms, and enhancing graduate employability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory by Becker and Employability Theory.

Human Capital Theory posits that investments in education and training enhance individuals' productivity, competencies, and economic value, thereby improving employment opportunities and income potential. In the context of TESDA programs, competency-based agricultural training serves as an investment that equips graduates with technical and entrepreneurial skills necessary for labor market participation.

Employability Theory emphasizes that employment success depends on the possession of relevant competencies, work-related attributes, adaptability, and industry-aligned skills. Employability is influenced not only by technical expertise but also by soft skills, industry partnerships, and experiential learning opportunities.

These theories support the assumption that competency-based training, industry immersion, entrepreneurial development, and institutional support significantly contribute to graduate employability and workforce integration.

General Objective

To determine the employment outcomes and program effectiveness of TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the employment profile of graduates in terms of:

- program completed;
 - employment rate;
 - employment status; and
 - length of time in acquiring the first job.
2. To assess the relevance of training to first employment.
 3. To identify the skills found useful in first employment.
 4. To determine the difficulties encountered in job search.
 5. To evaluate the level of program provisions in terms of:
 - laboratory and hands-on activities;
 - entrepreneurial activities;
 - community outreach;
 - skills competitions;
 - OJT or industry immersion; and
 - institutional assessment.
 6. To determine the factors facilitating employment among graduates.
 7. To propose an intervention plan to improve employment outcomes among TESDA agriculture sector graduates.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Related Literature

Technical-vocational education and training (TVET) has been recognized as an important mechanism for improving employability and supporting economic development. Competency-based training programs equip learners with practical and industry-relevant skills necessary for workforce participation. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023), TVET programs significantly improve employability by aligning training competencies with labor market needs.

Entrepreneurship-oriented training has also become increasingly important in agriculture-related TVET programs. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) emphasized that entrepreneurial competencies provide alternative employment opportunities, particularly in rural economies where self-employment and agribusiness ventures are common.

Experiential learning components such as on-the-job training, laboratory activities, and industry immersion contribute significantly to competency development. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) noted that hands-on training and workplace exposure enhance graduates' readiness for employment by strengthening practical skills and workplace adaptability.

Studies further indicate that employability is influenced not only by technical competencies but also by soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Work-related attributes, industry partnerships, and

institutional support mechanisms are critical determinants of successful workforce integration and long-term career development.

Related Studies

Several studies have explored employment outcomes among TVET graduates. OECD (2023) found that competency-based agricultural training programs improve labor market participation and reduce unemployment among rural learners. Similarly, ILO (2023) reported that graduates of industry-aligned TVET programs generally experience shorter job-search duration and improved employment rates.

Research on employability factors also revealed that industry immersion, practical exposure, and entrepreneurship training significantly enhance employment opportunities and self-employment outcomes. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) emphasized that strong school–industry partnerships contribute to successful workforce transition by improving curriculum relevance and facilitating job placement opportunities.

Studies additionally indicate that graduates frequently encounter challenges such as lack of job opportunities, lack of work experience, and skills mismatch. These challenges highlight the need for continuous curriculum enhancement, employment facilitation programs, and expanded industry collaboration.

Research Gap

Although several studies have examined employment outcomes among TVET graduates, limited studies have specifically explored the employment outcomes and program effectiveness of TESDA agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates in localized contexts such as TESDA PTC-Lambayong. Existing studies often focus broadly on technical-vocational education without examining agriculture-related competency development, employment barriers, and program provisions in detail.

Moreover, limited descriptive studies have examined the relationship between program provisions, employment facilitation factors, and labor market integration among agriculture sector graduates. The scarcity of localized employment tracer studies creates a gap in understanding how competency-based agricultural training contributes to employability, entrepreneurship, and workforce participation.

Hence, this study was conducted to address these gaps by determining the employment outcomes and program effectiveness of TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive research design. The descriptive method was employed to assess employment outcomes, training relevance, program provisions, and factors facilitating employment among TESDA agriculture sector graduates.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 125 TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates who completed either Organic Agriculture Production (OAP) or Agro-Entrepreneurship programs.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire composed of the following parts:

- Part I – Employment Profile
- Part II – Relevance of Training to Employment

- Part III – Skills Found Useful in Employment
- Part IV – Difficulties Encountered in Job Search
- Part V – Program Provisions
- Part VI – Factors Facilitating Employment

The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale for evaluative indicators.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure content validity and reliability. Necessary revisions were incorporated based on evaluators' recommendations.

Data Gathering Procedure

1. Securing permission from TESDA authorities
2. Distribution of questionnaires to respondents
3. Retrieval and consolidation of responses
4. Observance of ethical standards and confidentiality

Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools were utilized:

1. Frequency and Percentage
2. Mean and Standard Deviation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Employment Profile of TESDA PTC-Lambayong Agriculture Sector Scholar-Grantee Graduates in Terms of Program, Employment Rate, Employment Status, and Length of Time in Acquiring First Job

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Program	Organic Agriculture Production (OAP)	50	40.0
	Agro-Entrepreneurship	75	60.0
	Total	125	100.0
Employment Rate	Employed	95	76.0
	Unemployed	30	24.0
	Total	125	100.0
Employment Status	Regular	28	22.4
	Contractual	32	25.6
	Temporary	15	12.0
	Self-employed	20	16.0
	Never employed	30	24.0
	Total	125	100.0
Time to First Job	Less than 3 months	40	32.0
	3–6 months	35	28.0
	6–12 months	20	16.0
	More than 1 year	10	8.0

	Not yet employed	20	16.0
	Total	125	100.0

Table 1 presents the employment profile of TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector scholar-grantee graduates. The majority completed Agro-Entrepreneurship, indicating stronger preference for entrepreneurship-oriented programs. A high employment rate among graduates suggests that TESDA programs effectively support labor market participation and workforce integration. However, many graduates remain engaged in contractual or non-permanent employment arrangements, indicating continuing challenges in employment stability. Most graduates obtained employment within six months after graduation, suggesting relatively fast labor market entry and strong applicability of acquired competencies. According to OECD (2023), entrepreneurship-oriented TVET programs strengthen employability and livelihood opportunities, particularly in agriculture-based economies. Likewise, ILO (2023) emphasized that competency-based training significantly improves labor market participation and workforce readiness.

Table 2. Relevance of Training to First Employment

Response	f	%
Highly Relevant	45	47.4
Moderately Relevant	30	31.6
Slightly Relevant	12	12.6
Not Relevant	8	8.4
Total	95	100.0

Table 2 presents the relevance of TESDA training to the first employment of graduates. Most graduates perceived their training as highly or moderately relevant, indicating strong alignment between training competencies and job requirements. These findings suggest that TESDA agriculture sector programs effectively equip learners with industry-related competencies needed in actual employment settings. According to ILO (2023), training relevance significantly affects employability because it determines the transferability of competencies into workplace performance. However, the presence of graduates who perceived the training as slightly relevant or not relevant indicates the need for continuous curriculum enhancement and industry consultation. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) stressed that curriculum responsiveness and employer engagement are necessary to maintain training relevance amid changing labor market demands.

Table 3. Skills Found Useful in First Employment

Skills	f	%
Technical agricultural skills	70	73.7
Entrepreneurial skills	55	57.9
Communication skills	48	50.5
Problem-solving skills	42	44.2
Teamwork skills	38	40.0

Table 3 presents the skills found useful by graduates in their first employment. Technical agricultural skills were identified as the most useful competencies, followed by entrepreneurial skills and soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. The findings indicate that technical competencies remain the primary determinants of employment success in agriculture-related occupations. According to ILO (2023), sector-specific technical competencies are essential for productivity and job performance in agriculture-based industries. Entrepreneurial competencies also emerged as highly important, reflecting the role of agribusiness and self-employment in livelihood generation. OECD (2023) explained that entrepreneurship training enhances graduates' capacity to create employment opportunities independently. Meanwhile, soft skills complement

technical competencies by improving adaptability, workplace collaboration, and career progression (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

Table 4. Difficulties Encountered in Job Search

Difficulties	f	%
Lack of job opportunities	60	48.0
Lack of experience	55	44.0
Skills mismatch	35	28.0
Financial constraints	30	24.0
Lack of connections	25	20.0

Table 4 presents the difficulties encountered by graduates during job search. The most common challenge identified was lack of job opportunities, followed by lack of experience and skills mismatch. These findings suggest that employment outcomes are influenced not only by training quality but also by broader labor market conditions and structural employment constraints. According to ILO (2023), limited employment opportunities remain a major barrier to workforce integration, particularly in rural and agriculture-based economies. The lack of experience reported by graduates highlights the importance of internships, practical exposure, and industry immersion in improving employability. OECD (2023) emphasized that experiential learning significantly strengthens graduates' competitiveness in the labor market. Skills mismatch also indicates the need for continuous curriculum review and stronger alignment between training competencies and industry expectations.

Table 5. Level of Program Provisions as a Whole

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Laboratory & Hands-on Activities	4.45	0.48	Very High
Entrepreneurial Activities	4.32	0.50	Very High
Community Outreach	4.20	0.52	Very High
Skills Competitions	4.10	0.55	High
OJT / Industry Immersion	4.50	0.45	Very High
Institutional Assessment	4.28	0.49	Very High
Grand Mean	4.31	0.50	Very High

Table 5 presents the level of program provisions of TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector programs as a whole. The results reveal a grand mean of 4.31 (SD = 0.50), interpreted as "Very High," indicating strong and comprehensive program implementation. OJT or industry immersion obtained the highest rating, highlighting the strong integration of real-world workplace exposure into training delivery. According to ILO (2023), industry immersion is among the most effective components of competency-based education because it bridges theoretical learning and practical workplace application. Laboratory and hands-on activities also received very high ratings, suggesting that the program effectively promotes experiential learning and practical competency development. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) emphasized that hands-on activities are essential in agriculture-related TVET programs because competency acquisition depends heavily on direct exposure and repeated practice.

Table 6. Laboratory and Hands-on Activities

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Availability of tools	4.40	0.50	Very High
Practical exposure	4.50	0.45	Very High
Instructor supervision	4.45	0.48	Very High
Mean	4.45	0.48	Very High

Table 6 presents the level of laboratory and hands-on activities in TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector programs. The results reveal a very high overall mean, indicating that learners are provided with extensive opportunities for practical training and competency development. Practical exposure received the highest rating, suggesting that students are consistently engaged in experiential learning activities. According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022), experiential learning strengthens competency acquisition by allowing learners to apply theoretical concepts in actual work environments. The high rating for instructor supervision also indicates strong learner support and guidance during practical activities, which contributes to improved skill mastery and performance.

Table 7. Entrepreneurial Activities

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Business planning	4.30	0.50	Very High
Marketing exposure	4.25	0.52	Very High
Financial literacy	4.40	0.48	Very High
Mean	4.32	0.50	Very High

Table 7 presents the level of entrepreneurial activities integrated into TESDA agriculture sector programs. Financial literacy obtained the highest rating, followed by business planning and marketing exposure. These findings suggest that entrepreneurial competencies are strongly emphasized in the training program. OECD (2023) emphasized that entrepreneurship-oriented training strengthens self-employment potential and improves graduates' capacity to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities. The findings also imply that TESDA agriculture programs effectively support agribusiness development and entrepreneurial readiness among graduates.

Table 8. Community Outreach Programs

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Participation in outreach	4.18	0.52	Very High
Community engagement	4.22	0.50	Very High
Extension activities	4.20	0.54	Very High
Mean	4.20	0.52	Very High

Table 8 presents the level of community outreach programs. The results indicate that graduates actively participate in extension activities and community engagement initiatives. These findings suggest that TESDA agriculture programs promote social responsibility and practical application of competencies within community settings. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) explained that community-based learning strengthens experiential learning, civic engagement, and real-world competency application.

Table 9. Skills Competitions

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Participation opportunities	4.05	0.58	High
Recognition of skills	4.15	0.54	High
Motivation to compete	4.10	0.55	High
Mean	4.10	0.55	High

Table 9 presents the level of skills competitions. Although the component obtained a high rating, it was slightly lower compared to other program provisions. The findings suggest that skills competitions contribute positively to learner motivation, competency recognition, and performance improvement. According to ILO (2023), competitive activities enhance learner engagement and encourage excellence in competency-based education. However, the relatively lower ratings indicate the need to strengthen participation opportunities and institutional support for competitive activities.

Table 10. OJT / Industry Immersion

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Industry exposure	4.55	0.45	Very High
Practical experience	4.50	0.46	Very High
Skill application	4.45	0.48	Very High
Mean	4.50	0.45	Very High

Table 10 presents the level of OJT or industry immersion. The findings indicate that industry immersion is the strongest component of TESDA agriculture sector programs. Industry exposure received the highest rating, suggesting that learners are provided with meaningful workplace experiences and opportunities to apply acquired competencies. OECD (2023) emphasized that industry immersion significantly improves employability because it strengthens workplace readiness, practical exposure, and skill application. The findings imply that strong school–industry collaboration contributes positively to graduate employment outcomes.

Table 11. Institutional Assessment

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Evaluation system	4.25	0.50	Very High
Feedback mechanisms	4.30	0.48	Very High
Competency assessment	4.28	0.49	Very High
Mean	4.28	0.49	Very High

Table 11 presents the level of institutional assessment. The findings reveal very high ratings across evaluation systems, feedback mechanisms, and competency assessment. These results indicate that TESDA PTC-Lambayong maintains effective systems for monitoring learner progress and ensuring competency achievement. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) emphasized that strong assessment systems are essential in competency-based education because they ensure quality assurance and workforce readiness among graduates.

Table 12. Factors Facilitating Employment as a Whole

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Skills Needed	4.40	0.48	Very High
Work Performance Attributes	4.35	0.50	Very High
Employer Recommendations	4.30	0.49	Very High
Industry Contributions	4.38	0.47	Very High
Grand Mean	4.36	0.48	Very High

Table 12 presents the factors facilitating employment among TESDA agriculture sector graduates. Skills needed for employment obtained the highest rating, followed closely by industry contributions and work performance attributes. These findings indicate that employability is strongly influenced by a combination of technical competencies, workplace attributes, and institutional support mechanisms. According to ILO (2023), competency-based skills and workplace behaviors are major determinants of successful workforce integration. Industry contributions also emphasize the importance of school–industry partnerships in facilitating employment opportunities and workforce transition.

Table 13. Factors Facilitating the Acquisition of Employment Among TESDA Agriculture Sector Graduates

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Skills Needed for Employment	4.40	0.48	Very High
Work Performance Attributes of TESDA Graduates	4.35	0.50	Very High
Programs Recommended by Employers to Enhance Employability	4.30	0.49	Very High
Industry Contributions to Strengthen School–Industry Partnership	4.38	0.47	Very High
Grand Mean	4.36	0.48	Very High

Table 13 presents the factors facilitating employment acquisition among TESDA agriculture sector graduates. Skills needed for employment obtained the highest mean, highlighting the importance of technical competencies in workforce participation. Industry contributions ranked second, emphasizing the importance of strong partnerships between training institutions and employers. OECD (2023) stressed that school–industry collaboration significantly improves employment outcomes by ensuring curriculum responsiveness and facilitating workforce integration. Work-related attributes such as discipline, adaptability, and reliability were also highly valued, indicating the importance of soft skills in long-term employability. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) emphasized that employability is increasingly defined by a combination of technical competence and interpersonal attributes necessary for workplace productivity and career sustainability.

Table 14. Proposed Intervention Plan

Area	Issue	Intervention	Expected Outcome
Employment	Delayed hiring	Job placement linkage program	Faster employment
Skills	Skills mismatch	Skills alignment training	Better job fit
Industry	Weak partnerships	Strengthen industry tie-ups	More job opportunities
Entrepreneurship	Low startup rate	Business incubation program	Increased self-employment

Table 14 presents the proposed intervention plan aimed at improving employment outcomes among TESDA agriculture sector graduates. The intervention plan focuses on employment facilitation, skills alignment, industry linkage, and entrepreneurship development.

The proposed job placement linkage program aims to reduce delayed hiring by connecting graduates directly with employers through placement support and institutional partnerships. OECD (2023) emphasized that institutional placement services significantly improve graduate workforce transition and labor market integration.

Skills alignment training is proposed to address skills mismatch through curriculum enhancement and industry consultation. According to ILO (2023), continuous alignment between training content and labor market demands is necessary to improve employability and reduce competency gaps.

Strengthening industry tie-ups is intended to expand employment opportunities and strengthen school–industry collaboration. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) highlighted that strong partnerships between training institutions and industries improve curriculum relevance, practical exposure, and workforce integration.

Finally, the proposed business incubation program aims to increase self-employment and entrepreneurial sustainability among graduates. OECD (2023) explained that incubation programs significantly improve entrepreneurial success by providing mentorship, technical support, and livelihood assistance during the early stages of enterprise development.

Overall, the proposed intervention plan integrates employment support, curriculum responsiveness, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurship enhancement to strengthen graduate employability and long-term workforce participation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. TESDA PTC-Lambayong agriculture sector programs effectively promote employability among graduates.
2. The programs demonstrate strong alignment with labor market demands.
3. Many graduates secure employment within a short period after training.

4. Employment among graduates is often characterized by contractual and non-permanent work arrangements.
5. Technical agricultural and entrepreneurial competencies significantly contribute to employment success.
6. Program provisions, particularly industry immersion and hands-on activities, effectively support competency development.
7. Strong industry partnerships and employability-related attributes facilitate workforce integration.
8. Graduates continue to face challenges related to job opportunities, experience requirements, and skills mismatch.
9. Entrepreneurship-oriented training contributes to self-employment and livelihood generation.
10. Continuous curriculum enhancement and employment facilitation mechanisms are necessary to sustain graduate competitiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen job placement and employment facilitation programs.
2. Enhance curriculum alignment with labor market demands.
3. Expand industry partnerships and internship opportunities.
4. Increase experiential learning and hands-on training activities.
5. Strengthen entrepreneurship development and business incubation programs.
6. Provide career guidance and employment support services.
7. Enhance both technical and soft skills training components.
8. Improve industry responsiveness through regular curriculum review.
9. Coordinate with government agencies and industries to address labor market constraints.
10. Conduct future tracer studies on long-term employment outcomes and career progression.

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