

A Tracer Study on the Graduates of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture of Capiz State University-Pontevedra

***Diego M. Malones, EdD; Jon Verny D. Biaco, MSc; Analee B. Andrada, MAEd; Jinky Dogello-Calanza, MSc.; Eden A. Alam, PhD; Pedy D. Fernandez, MSc.**

College of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Agriculture, Capiz State University, Bailan, Pontevedra, Capiz, 5801, Philippines

***Corresponding Author**

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ABSTRACT

Graduate tracer studies give colleges structured insight into alumni outcomes—workplace performance, skill gaps, alignment with industry needs, and graduates' evaluations of their education. Seeking these insights, Capiz State University–Pontevedra surveyed its Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) alumni. Results show most respondents are at early career stages, predominantly male and single, with many earning under PHP 15,000 monthly. Most found employment within a year, typically in technical or rank-and-file roles related to their training.

Many alumni report strong practical farming abilities, reflecting the program's core objectives, and many also possess skills in planning, research, and organization. A sizable number can lead trainings for farmers and other stakeholders, indicating active knowledge-transfer capacity that benefits local agricultural communities. Graduates highlight communication, research, critical thinking, planning, interpersonal relations, creativity, and time management as key competencies that help them secure and sustain jobs.

Family and social networks often influenced students' choice of the BSA program. Those who continued to graduate study did so mainly for career advancement, promotion, higher income, and personal or professional growth. Alumni also emphasized that academic support, opportunities to participate in research, and attention to spiritual development were important elements of their college experience that helped prepare them for work.

Overall, the tracer study suggests the BSA curriculum effectively produces practically skilled graduates with useful transferable abilities. However, because many start in entry-level positions with modest pay, the college could strengthen industry partnerships, internships, entrepreneurship training, structured research opportunities, and career guidance to boost promotion prospects and earnings.

Keywords: Graduate tracer study, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, alumni, competencies, job placement, career advancement, curriculum enhancement, and industry needs

INTRODUCTION

The agriculture sector remains a cornerstone of rural livelihoods, food security, and local development in the Philippines—especially in regions such as Western Visayas, where many households depend on farming for income (International Labour Organization, n.d.). In this context, higher education institutions (HEIs) that offer agriculture programs carry a dual responsibility: to develop graduates who are technically competent and to produce job-ready professionals capable of contributing to the modernization, sustainability, and economic resilience of the sector (Commission on Higher Education, n.d.).

Higher education contributes to national development by equipping citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for economic growth, social transformation, and civic participation (Abu Bakar et al., 2009). When curricula align with labor-market needs, HEIs help prepare graduates for both employment and self-employment. As the economy becomes more innovation driven, demand for specialized, adaptable workers rises, increasing the obligation of HEIs to produce graduates whose competencies match evolving employer expectations.

Tracer studies are an established way to assess how well academic programs meet that obligation. By tracking graduates' employment status, job types, and the degree to which work relates to their field of study, tracer studies provide empirical evidence about employability and curriculum relevance (UNESCO, n.d.; Schomburg, 2003). This evidence supports program evaluation, quality assurance, and curriculum improvement (Hazaymeh & Dela Peña, 2017).

Capiz State University–Pontevedra (CapSU-Pontevedra) aims, through its Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) program, to develop skills in crop and animal science, farm management, research, and extension services responsive to local and national needs. Yet, like many Philippine agriculture programs, questions remain about how effectively BSA graduates enter and perform in agriculture-related jobs (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2017). Recent national tracer surveys show a persistent job–education mismatch: a notable share of agriculture graduates end up in occupations unrelated to their degrees, such as clerical work, sales, or teaching (Habito, 2020). This mismatch can reflect either limited access to agriculture opportunities or gaps in graduates' technical, soft, and entrepreneurial skills.

For CapSU-Pontevedra, a focused tracer study of BSA alumni is therefore essential. It can document where graduates work, how long they take to secure their first job, their income levels, job level and type, and whether they apply the competencies emphasized in the curriculum. Comparable studies at other state universities indicate that curriculum relevance, practical training, and exposure to real agribusiness and farm settings strongly influence graduates' ability to obtain and perform in agriculture-related roles (Bulacan Agricultural State College, 2025; Ayub & Abdurajak, 2025).

The stakes extend beyond individual employment. Employability in agriculture includes the capacity of graduates to apply their knowledge to improve productivity, sustainability, and local innovation. A program that produces graduates who are both employed and able to contribute meaningfully to local farms and agribusinesses advances broader rural development goals.

CapSU-Pontevedra has pursued program accreditation through the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) to strengthen instructional quality and ensure graduates attain required competencies (AACCUP, n.d.; Colarte, 2007). However, the BSA program has lacked comprehensive graduate-outcome data for more than two decades, creating an evidence gap that hinders assessment of whether the program meets institutional goals and local needs.

Grounded in evaluation theory and the teaching effectiveness model of Wolf and Gowin (1980), this tracer study treats intended graduate outcomes as the standard for judging program value. Evaluation here is a management tool for evidence-based decision making, not merely a reporting obligation (Leveriza, 1990; Atkin, 1990).

Specifically, the study will: profile BSA graduates by demographic characteristics and employability indicators; trace career fields, time to first job, initial income, and job level/type; assess the extent to which graduates use program-related competencies in the workplace; document further training or studies undertaken; and collect graduates' retrospective assessments of their educational experience and institutional support.

By supplying up-to-date, empirical evidence on graduate outcomes, the tracer study will identify strengths and gaps in the BSA program and provide CAPSU-Pontevedra with actionable recommendations to improve curriculum, training opportunities, and student support. Ultimately, these improvements aim to increase graduate employability, better align the program with sector needs, and strengthen the university's contribution to sustainable agricultural development in the region.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. To describe the personal characteristics of the graduates in terms of age, sex, and civil status;
2. To describe the professional skills acquired by graduates and the reasons for taking the course;
3. To determine the reasons for pursuing advanced studies;
4. To determine the employment-related data of graduates in terms of whether they are presently employed or not, with present employment information including nature of work, length of work experience, salary received, and number of years spent gaining employment in jobs related to their course after graduation; and the skills/competencies and knowledge learned in college that are most useful in finding their first job; and
5. Determine the provisions and conditions experienced by BSA graduates during their time at Capiz State University.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Graduate Tracer Studies and Agricultural Employability

Graduate tracer studies provide the empirical basis for evaluating whether higher education programs align with labor market needs. By following alumni employment status, job relevance, salaries, and time-to-employment, tracer studies reveal how well graduates perform in the workplace and which curricular elements translate into real-world competence (Cedefop, 2023; Schomburg, 2003). For Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) programs, this feedback is especially valuable because agricultural employment constantly shifts with technological change, evolving sectoral demands, and regional economic conditions. When tracer data show where graduates succeed or struggle—whether in crop production, animal science, agribusiness, extension, or research—institutions gain a clear basis for targeted curriculum updates that improve graduate readiness.

Employability in agricultural higher education is understood as a multidimensional construct. Employability is a critical issue for both government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Saunders & Zuzel, 2010). Following York (2006), employability is defined as “a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.” Saunders and Zuzel (2010) argue that the current emphasis on graduate and key skills requires curricula to integrate opportunities to develop such skills alongside subject-specific knowledge, thereby equipping graduates to navigate dynamic employment trends. Employers expect BSA graduates to master core agricultural topics while also communicating effectively, solving problems, conducting research, planning and organizing work, and adapting to new tools and contexts (Sarsale et al., 2024; Shah et al., 2014).

Employment Outcomes of BSA Graduates

Empirical evidence from tracer studies on agriculture graduates reveals generally high employment rates but notable variations in job quality, relevance, and income. Ceniza et al. (2022) found a 98.5% employment rate among BSA graduates, with 68% employed in agriculture-related roles, mostly on contractual status (73%) and locally within the Philippines (96%). Similarly, Lucas et al. (2017) reported that 76.26% of agriculture graduates from State Universities and Colleges in Central Luzon secured employment, though only 38% held regular positions, while the rest were temporary, casual, or contractual. Nilo (2023) traced BSA–Agricultural Extension graduates (2014–2018) and found that most were hired within six months of graduation, often with initial monthly incomes not exceeding Php 10,000, and 16% having passed professional examinations. Ebuenga et al. (2023) reported 97.91% employment among graduates of four agriculture-related programs at SSC Castilla Campus (2013–2017), with over half of BSA graduates becoming licensed agriculturists.

However, employment outcomes are not uniformly positive. Ayub and Abdurajak (2025) observed fluctuating employment rates for BSA and BAT programs from 2018–2020, with high unemployment in some cohorts

attributed to limited applications, exposure, and government-related job displacements. Taclaban (2022) noted that most BAT graduates from Eastern Visayas State University (2011–2020) found work in government as service workers or agricultural technicians, often in jobs not related to their degree, with contractual status and monthly incomes below ₱10,000. These patterns suggest that while many graduates find work quickly, job quality, stability, and alignment with degree remain uneven.

Competency Development and Skills Gaps

Competency development is most effective when technical training is integrated with experiential learning and soft-skill development. Work-integrated experiences—internships, field practicum, supervised farm work—allow students to apply theory, refine technical methods, and practice communication, leadership, and time management in real settings (Cedefop, 2023; Alibeigi & Zarafshani, 2006). Employer feedback consistently supports curricula that balance scientific depth with practical exposure and targeted transferable-skill training; graduates who receive this mix are more employable, adaptable, and prepared to lead or innovate in agricultural roles.

Graduates consistently report acquiring both generic and discipline-specific competencies, though gaps remain in areas valued by employers. Afrad and Akilu (2019) found that Agricultural Extension and Rural Development graduates predominantly acquired generic skills such as communication, ICT, interpersonal, teamwork, leadership, and self-management. Satisfaction was high in teaching-learning, communication, and process control, but low in curriculum updates and knowledge achievement, with major weaknesses including limited extracurricular activities and insufficient practical or laboratory resources. Ceniza et al. (2022) noted graduates were mostly satisfied with professional competencies, personal attributes, and management or leadership skills developed through the curriculum, with significant associations between perceived curriculum adequacy and competency development. However, Taclaban (2022) reported that while core value formation and human relations skills were rated highly, oral and written communication were perceived as the least developed competencies.

These findings align with broader labor market evidence. Habito (2020), citing the Philippine Graduate Tracer Survey (2009–2011), highlighted that 83% of BS Agriculture graduates work in unrelated occupations, with the biggest mismatch stemming from deficiencies in critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving—more than technical skills. This aligns with employer expectations globally: Baird and Parayitam (2019) and Gray (2024) report that employers prioritize interpersonal skills, critical thinking/problem-solving, communication, professionalism, teamwork, and adaptability—often more than technical knowledge.

Curriculum–Labor Market Alignment and Industry 4.0

Several studies point to misalignment between curricula and labor market demands, especially in the context of Industry 4.0 and digital transformation. Ceniza et al. (2022) and Afrad and Akilu (2019) recommend curriculum updates to better reflect current industry needs and enhance practical training. Seti et al. (2025), studying South Africa, found that graduate employability in agriculture is linked to gender, multilingual abilities, academic performance, and soft and hard skills, with employers emphasizing practical experience, communication, and digital proficiency; misalignment between curricula and industry needs contributes to unemployment. Aman et al. (2023), though focused on accountancy, found moderate career readiness for Industry 4.0, with students lacking strong foundations in emerging technologies—a concern echoed in agriculture. SCOPE-HE and SEAMEO VOCTECH (n.d.) noted skill mismatches in ASEAN TVET systems, growing demand for digital skills in agriculture, and limited private sector engagement. Ra, Ahmed, and Tend (2019) argue that Asia’s agricultural workforce needs “Industry 4.0” skills to meet rising food demand, calling for education and training reforms to develop “agropreneurs.”

Student Motivations, Institutional Choice, and Persistence

Students choose agriculture for a mix of intrinsic, extrinsic, and experiential reasons. Sim (2014) identified key motivational constructs: family influences (teachers, professionals, parental encouragement), self-motivation

(drive to succeed, innovation), experience (farm work, FFA, agricultural courses), use of skills (challenging activities, communication, problem-solving), and career opportunities (multiple pathways, direct employment). Sarsale et al. (2025) categorized motivations among Filipino senior high school students as intrinsic (personal interest), extrinsic (family, career prospects), and amotivation (misconceptions, societal devaluation). Maka (2024) found 44.8% chose agriculture to assist farmers and communities, 37.4% for employment, 28.8% for entrepreneurship, and 24.5% for farming; however, 25.2% were dissatisfied due to limited employment opportunities and desire for further study. Hicks et al. (2026), studying mid-career professionals in Seed Technology and Business at Iowa State University, found motivations centered on self-actualization, career advancement, and employer tuition reimbursement.

When selecting institutions and programs, students weigh multiple factors. A recent study on Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCAs) found students most frequently used university websites for program information; cost was the most influential university-related factor; career opportunities were key for major selection; parents/guardians were the most influential individuals; and student organizations were top for social interaction. Cunningham (2013) compared land-grant and community college agriculture students in Oklahoma: both groups valued campus visits, websites, academic reputation, programs, and scholarships; land-grant students emphasized prestige and facilities, while community college students prioritized cost. Parents/guardians were most influential for both; student organizations were key for social interaction. Sumanga and Sumanga (2025) found most agriculture students came from low-income families, facing financial challenges, limited internet access, difficult subjects, long travel, and insufficient campus services.

Institutional support and personal factors significantly affect persistence and completion. Ortega-Dela Cruz and Quimbo (2018) found that institutional commitment to academic excellence was the strongest factor in BSA student persistence at UPLB, but the university had not done enough to support students efficiently. Chanthra et al. (2025), studying Technical Education in Thailand, found personal characteristics, research methodology skills, advisor attributes, family status, peer relationships, and facilities were significantly related to graduation success; male students perceived personal characteristics as more influential than females. Licea Resendiz et al. (2025) showed tutoring improved agronomy students' academic performance, motivation, and personal development; 87% saw it as academic support, 88% valued tutor guidance, and 84% felt it strengthened academic commitment. Ifeanyi-obi and Maika (2020) found 98% of agriculture undergraduates in Rivers State believed academic mentoring was necessary and beneficial, but perceived current mentoring as ineffective; they recommended formal mentoring structures with rewards and orientation on advisors' roles. Saha et al. (2024), though focused on mathematics education, noted gendered patterns in academic challenges: males showed inconsistency and lack of enthusiasm; females cited difficulty applying theory, heavy loads, and limited resources; both groups acknowledged poor study practices and the need for consistent practice and conceptual understanding.

Experiential Learning, Curriculum Reform, and Support Structures

Hands-on experience is consistently linked to employability. Alera et al. (2026) found a significant positive correlation between overseas on-the-job training (OJT) and employability skills (personal qualities, work attitude, performance, professional skills) among BSA, BAS, and BSAM students, with high employment rates and degree-related jobs post-graduation. Cammayo and Gonzales (2023), in a tracer study of accountancy graduates, recommended extending the curriculum to five years, enhancing OJT with accounting firms, and adding audit courses and accounting software training to improve employability—recommendations equally applicable to agriculture programs.

Evidence supports targeted curriculum reforms to close skills gaps. Nilo (2023) recommended program enhancements to improve licensure exam performance and field-specific skills through training and seminars. Afrad and Akilu (2019) suggested more practical, hands-on training and better laboratory equipment. Seti et al. (2025) called for stronger university–employer collaborations to provide hands-on experience and align curricula with industry needs. De Castro (2026), studying Sorsogon State University graduates, found lower employment rates in Agriculture and Fisheries programs compared to Engineering/Technology; he recommended strengthening partnerships with businesses and government to create more opportunities.

Academic and personal support structures improve outcomes. Licea Resendiz et al. (2025) and Ifeanyi-obi and Maika (2020) highlight tutoring and mentoring as critical for academic success, motivation, and retention. Sumanga and Sumanga (2025) and Hicks et al. (2026) underscore the importance of financial support (scholarships, tuition reimbursement) for persistence and completion. For agricultural extension workers (AEWs), standardized training is essential: the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI, 2026) mandates the Basic Agricultural Extension Course (BAEC) for all Regional Training Centers to standardize training and enhance AEW competencies. In Western Visayas, approximately 1,510 AEWs are employed, none of whom have attended BAEC—making them a priority target for 2025 onwards.

Advanced Studies and the College Environment

Pursuing advanced studies often follows naturally from those market and professional signals. Many agriculture graduates seek master's or doctoral degrees to specialize, gain stronger research skills, or qualify for higher-level roles in research, teaching, policy, and management (Cedefop, 2023; Sarsale et al., 2024). Economic incentives—access to specialized jobs, higher pay, and improved promotion prospects—combine with intrinsic drivers like intellectual curiosity and commitment to food security to motivate further study (Dela Cruz, 2022; Tan et al., 2020). Availability of programs, mentorship, and employer encouragement shape these decisions, so institutions that align postgraduate offerings with labor-market needs strengthen both individual careers and sectoral capacity.

Finally, the broader college environment strongly shapes student outcomes. Tutoring, academic advising, mentoring, financial aid, streamlined enrollment, and fair assessment reduce barriers and bolster retention, motivation, and professional identity (Licea Resendiz et al., 2025; Ifeanyi-obi & Maika, 2020). Curricula that are current, flexible, and linked to industry—together with diverse electives and strong partnerships—help students translate classroom learning into career-ready capabilities. Taken together, the literature points to an integrated strategy: use tracer-study evidence and employer input to drive curriculum renewal, expand experiential learning, and strengthen student supports so BSA programs consistently produce technically skilled, adaptable graduates ready for sustained agricultural careers.

METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this study was to trace the career paths and employment outcomes of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) graduates from Capiz State University, Pontevedra Campus, across graduating batches from 2002 to 2022. To achieve this, the study employed a Graduate Tracer Survey (GTS) adapted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines. The GTS collected data on respondents' personal and educational backgrounds, current employment status and career trajectories, as well as their evaluations of the university's academic provisions and learning conditions. Prior to deployment, the survey instrument underwent both face and content validation by a panel of five expert jurors. Each juror rated the relevance of every item in the instrument, and an agreement ratio was computed for each item by dividing the number of favorable ratings by the total number of jurors. Items with an agreement ratio of 0.80 or higher were retained, while those below this threshold were excluded to ensure content validity and relevance.

A total of 107 alumni voluntarily participated by completing the GTS through an online Google Form, yielding a response rate of 15 percent. This low response rate is acknowledged as a limitation of the study, as it may affect the generalizability of the findings. The use of an online questionnaire may have introduced response bias, since graduates with better internet access and digital literacy were more likely to respond. Additionally, the cross-sectional design captures employment outcomes at a single point in time and does not reflect changes in career trajectories over the graduates' professional lives. These limitations are noted to provide appropriate context for interpreting the results. The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical research standards, and the confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Upon collection, responses were exported to Microsoft Excel for efficient data management, and quantitative data were summarized and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and means. Findings were then tabulated and interpreted to identify trends in employment, participation in further studies, and graduates' assessments of program quality.

RESULTS

Objective 1: To describe the personal characteristics of the graduates in terms of age, sex, and civil status

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of the Graduates

Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
32 years old and below	92	85.98
33 year old and above	13	12.15
Not indicated	1	0.93
Total	107	100.00
Sex		
Male	63	58.88
Female	44	41.12
Total	107	100.00
Civil Status		
Single	93	86.92
Married	14	13.08
Total	107	100.00

Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of the demographics of BSA graduates in terms of age, sex, and civil status. Among the 107 respondents, a significant majority—approximately 85.98%—are aged 32 years or younger. In contrast, only 12.15% of the respondents fall into the 33 years and older category. Furthermore, the data highlights a notable gender disparity, with nearly three-fifths (58.88%) of respondents identifying as male, while about two-fifths (41.12%) are female. This distribution suggests a predominantly male demographic within the participants. Regarding civil status, the findings reveal that a substantial 86.92% of respondents are single, indicating that only a small minority (13.08%) are married. This demographic profile suggests that the majority of the graduates are at an early stage in their professional journeys, characterized by youthfulness, a predominance of males, and a prevailing single status. Overall, these survey results underscore important trends: the respondents are largely in their prime years, with a significant male representation, and they predominantly remain single. This demographic insight can provide valuable context for understanding the professional and social dynamics within the BSA graduating cohort.

Objective 2: To describe the professional skills acquired by graduates and the reasons for taking the course

Table 2: Professional Skills Acquired by Graduates

Professional Skills	Frequency*	Percentage (%)
Programming	18	16.82
Organizing	35	32.71
Planning	41	38.32
Training	45	42.06
Research	37	34.58
Advocacy	22	20.56
Teaching	28	26.17
Farming	81	75.70
Others (meat processing, marketing, animal husbandman)	1	0.93

**multiple response*

The distribution of professional skills acquired by graduates of the BSA program is illustrated in Table 2. The data indicate that a substantial majority, specifically 75.70%, have developed farming skills, which aligns with the fundamental objective of the program. Additionally, approximately 42.06% of respondents reported having

the skills necessary to conduct training sessions for farmers and other stakeholders, demonstrating a commitment to knowledge transfer within the agricultural community. Moreover, a noteworthy proportion of alumni have cultivated competencies in essential areas such as planning (38.32%), research (34.58%), and organizing (32.71%). These skills are crucial for executing effective agricultural projects and facilitating scientific investigations. Other skills noted include teaching (26.17%) and advocacy (20.56%), which highlight the graduates' ability to engage with broader agricultural issues. Furthermore, skills related to programming—such as scheduling various activities organized by their respective agencies—were also identified as significant. It is important to emphasize that the results reflect the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture curriculum's success in achieving its goals. The program not only equips graduates with essential farming skills but also enhances their capabilities in research processes, project planning, and organizational competencies. These competencies are vital for conducting scientific investigations that advance agricultural knowledge and for implementing effective extension activities aimed at improving the economic conditions of farmers, who are the primary beneficiaries of the development initiatives undertaken by their agencies. In conclusion, the skill set acquired by the BSA graduates positions them to play a pivotal role in the agricultural sector, facilitating both direct farming practices and broader community engagement. Their training prepares them to address the challenges faced by farmers, ensuring that they can contribute meaningfully to the sector's development and sustainability.

Table 3: Reasons for Taking the Course

Reasons for Taking the Course	Frequency*	Percentage (%)
Prestige of the profession	30	28.04
Influence by members of the family, relatives, friends, etc.	55	51.40
Practicality of the course	38	35.51
Peer influence	40	37.38
Prospect of better compensation	7	6.54
Prospect of immediate employment	23	21.50
Strong passion for the profession	0	0.00
Affordable for the family	6	5.61
In demand course both local and abroad	20	18.69
Others (priority for DOST scholarship)	1	0.93

*multiple response

The reasons identified by graduates in taking the course, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) are presented in Table 3. The multiple response from the graduates revealed that majority (51.40 percent) pointed out that the choice of BSA as their course was influenced by the members of their family, relatives, and friends. More than one-third of the graduates of the BSA program acknowledged the practicality of the course (35.51 percent) and peer influence (37.38 percent) had contributed significantly to their decision of taking up the course. More than a quarter (28.04 percent) had chosen prestige of the course as their reason for taking up Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. Prospect for immediate employment (21.50 percent) had influenced their choice of enrolling in the program. Finally, others considered prospect of better compensation (6.54 percent), affordable for the family (5.61 percent), and priority for the DOST scholarship (0.93 percent) as their reasons for choosing BSA as their course. The decision of students to pursue agriculture as a degree is influenced by several interconnected factors, including family and peer influence, the practicality of the course, and the perceived prestige of agricultural programs. Each of these elements plays a significant role in shaping student choices and motivations. Family plays a critical role in influencing students' decisions regarding their educational paths. In the context of agricultural studies, the family's background in farming or agriculture can significantly sway a student's decision. According to research, students often look to their parents or guardians for guidance in selecting their majors. Factors such as parental encouragement or direct involvement in agricultural activities can enhance a student's interest in pursuing agriculture as a career. However, some studies indicate a notable ambiguity in perceived family influence, as many students reported that their parents and relatives did not shape their major selection significantly. This suggests that while family can be influential, its role may vary based on individual circumstances and experiences. The impact of peer groups on students' decisions cannot be overlooked. Studies indicate that social interactions with peers often contribute to shaping aspirations and educational choices. For instance, the presence of agricultural or environmentally conscious friends can foster a student's interest in

agriculture. Additionally, involvement in student organizations related to agriculture can provide social reinforcement and enhance the appeal of pursuing an agricultural degree. Peer influence, thus, operates as a dual-edged sword that can either promote or deter interest in agricultural studies, depending on the friends' attitudes towards the field. The practicality of an agriculture degree is a significant concern for students evaluating their options. Many prospective students express frustration with the perception that agricultural courses focus heavily on theory without sufficiently addressing practical skills essential for real-world applications. Disconnections between available coursework and practical agricultural needs can dissuade potential students from enrolling. Conversely, practical training opportunities, such as internships and cooperative education programs, can enhance the appeal of agriculture courses. As universities increasingly incorporate practical experiences into their curricula, students are more likely to view these programs as valuable, leading to increased enrollment in agricultural degrees. The perceived prestige associated with agricultural programs also influences student choices. Factors such as the reputation of the institution and the success of its graduates in securing desirable jobs can significantly affect enrollment decisions. Research identifies that students often consider the long-term career prospects attributed to a degree when making their choices, placing importance on the recognition and prestige of the agricultural program. In summary, students' choice of agriculture as a course is a multifaceted decision influenced by family and peer dynamics, the practical applicability of the coursework, and the stature of the program itself. An understanding of these influences can help educational institutions tailor their marketing and curriculum strategies to better attract and support students interested in agriculture. This combined perspective enhances not only the recruitment of students but also shapes a more robust educational framework that aligns with the needs of the agricultural sector.

Objective 3: To determine the reasons for pursuing advanced studies

Table 4: Reasons for Pursuing Advanced Studies

Reasons for Pursuing Advanced Studies	Frequency*	Percentage (%)
For career advancement	42	39.25
For promotion	28	26.17
For salary increase	33	30.54
For personal and professional development	57	53.27

***multiple response**

Table 4 outlines the various motivations that graduates of agriculture cited for pursuing graduate studies, highlighting four key reasons: career advancement, promotion, salary increase, and personal and professional development. Notably, over half of the respondents—53.27%—identified personal and professional development as their primary motivation for enrolling in graduate programs. This substantial figure underscores the importance that these graduates place on self-improvement and skill enhancement as they navigate their careers. In addition to personal development, more than one-third of participants (39.25%) pursued graduate studies specifically for career advancement, reflecting a desire to enhance their professional trajectories. Meanwhile, a noteworthy 26.17% of respondents indicated that their motivations stemmed from aspirations for promotion within their current roles. Additionally, around 30.54% of graduates were driven by the potential for a salary increase, illustrating that financial considerations are also a significant factor in their decision-making process. The findings clearly indicate that the majority of respondents are primarily motivated by factors related to personal and professional growth, as well as aspirations for career advancement. This alignment suggests that graduates recognize the value of advanced education not only as a means to enhance their qualifications but also as a strategic tool for achieving greater fulfillment and progress in their careers. Overall, these motivations reflect a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of graduate education among agriculture graduates, who are keen to leverage their studies to propel their careers forward while investing in their personal and professional development. Students decide to pursue graduate studies for a variety of personal and professional growth reasons, reflecting both individual aspirations and broader industry demands. This choice is often justified by several key factors, including career advancement, specialization, skill acquisition, networking opportunities, and personal development. One of the primary justifications for pursuing a graduate degree is the potential for career advancement. Many professions require advanced qualifications for higher-level positions, and a graduate degree can significantly enhance a candidate's eligibility for roles that offer increased responsibilities and higher salaries.

The importance of these degrees is often emphasized in fields such as education, healthcare, and engineering, where specific roles or licensures necessitate advanced study. Graduate studies allow students to specialize in a specific area of interest, enabling them to gain in-depth knowledge and expertise that is not available at the undergraduate level. This specialization is vital for fields that are rapidly evolving or require advanced technical skills. For instance, students in fields like data science or biotechnology may find that a graduate degree equips them with the specialized knowledge necessary to excel in these competitive industries. In addition to specialization, graduate programs often focus on equipping students with a robust set of skills that are directly applicable in professional settings. This can include research methodologies, critical thinking, advanced analytical skills, and project management abilities. The emphasis on applied learning and real-world experience in many graduate programs prepares students not only to navigate their chosen fields more effectively but also to innovate and contribute meaningfully to their organizations. Graduate school provides a unique environment for networking with peers, faculty, and industry professionals. Interactions in classes, seminars, and conferences create connections that can lead to mentorship opportunities, collaborations, and job prospects. Building a professional network is invaluable, as it can play a crucial role in career development and job placement post-graduation. In addition to career-oriented motivations, many students pursue graduate studies for personal growth. The challenges presented by rigorous academic programs can foster critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and a deeper understanding of complex issues. Graduate studies can also enhance a student's self-discipline, resilience, and perseverance, traits that are not only beneficial in academic settings but also invaluable in everyday life. In summary, the decision to attend graduate school is often driven by a combination of personal aspirations and professional requirements. Students aim to advance their careers, deepen their expertise, acquire new skills, expand their professional networks, and engage in personal development. As industries continue to evolve, the importance of graduate education to facilitate growth and adaptation in the workforce becomes increasingly clear. This multifaceted justification underscores that pursuing graduate studies is not merely a continuation of education; it is a strategic investment in one's future.

Objective 4: To determine the employment-related data of graduates in terms of whether they are presently employed or not, with present employment information including nature of work, length of work experience, salary received, and number of years spent gaining employment in jobs related to their course after graduation; and the skills/competencies and knowledge learned in college that are most useful in finding their first job

Table 5: Employment Data for Graduates

Employment Variables	Frequency*	Percentage (%)
Employment Status		
Employed	74	69.16
Not Employed	25	23.36
Self-employed	6	5.61
Not indicated	2	1.87
Total	107	100.00
Nature of Work		
Cashier	7	9.46
Branch clerk	0	0.00
Marketing	9	12.16
Training specialist	22	29.73
Technician	17	22.97
Farm manager	9	12.16
Field worker	6	8.11
Not indicated	4	5.41
Total	107	100.00
Number of Years in Gaining Employment in Jobs Related to One's Course After Graduation		
Less than 1 year	76	73.83
1 year – 3 years	10	9.34
More than 3 years	18	16.82
Total	107	100.00

Length of Work Experience		
Less than 1 year	64	59.81
1 – 3 years	25	23.36
More than 3 years	18	16.82
Total	107	100.00
Salary Received		
Less than P 10,000.00	47	43.92
P 10,001 – P 15,000	31	28.97
P 15,001- P 20,000	14	13.08
P 20,001 – P 25,000	6	5.61
More than P 25,000	0	0.00
Not indicated	10	9.34
Total	107	100.00

Table 5 outlines the employment status, nature of work, duration until employment within relevant fields, length of work experience, and salary received by the respondents after graduation. The data indicates that a significant majority of the graduates (69.16 percent) secured employment, while nearly a quarter (23.36 percent) reported being unemployed. Additionally, 5.61 percent identified as self-employed, and 1.87 percent did not disclose their employment status. This distribution suggests a relatively positive employment outlook for the graduates, despite the notable portion of individuals facing unemployment. Regarding the nature of work, approximately 29.73 percent of respondents are employed as training specialists, and nearly 22.97 percent work as technicians. Furthermore, marketing agents and farm managers each comprise 12.16 percent of the workforce, while 9.46 percent serve as cashiers, and 8.11 percent are field workers. Interestingly, only one respondent holds a position as a bank branch manager, highlighting the diversity of roles but also indicating a possible lack of higher-level managerial positions among the graduates. When evaluating the time taken to secure employment relevant to their degrees, the results reveal that close to three-fourths (75.83 percent) of respondents found employment within a year of graduation. In contrast, 17.76 percent took more than three years to secure a job, and 9.34 percent landed a position between one to three years. This trend suggests that most graduates are entering the workforce swiftly, which may be indicative of strong job market connections or relevant skill acquisition through their academic training. In terms of overall work experience, a majority of graduates (59.81 percent) report having less than a year of work experience. Approximately 23.36 percent have between one to three years of experience, while 16.82 percent have been employed for over three years. These results reflect a workforce largely composed of entry-level professionals, which may offer opportunities for skill development and career advancement in the future. Concerning the income received, more than two-fifths (43.92 percent) of respondents report a monthly salary ranging from P 10,001.00 to P 15,000.00. Additionally, 13.08 percent earn between P 15,001.00 and P 20,000.00. Conversely, only a small fraction (5.61 percent) receives a monthly income of more than P 20,000.00. Overall, these results suggest that most BSA program graduates are employed in technical roles aligned with their academic expertise, predominantly occupying rank-and-file positions. The majority have been able to secure employment within a year post-graduation, possess minimal work experience, and earn monthly salaries primarily within the lower-middle income bracket, typically below P 15,000.

Table 6: Skills/Competencies/Knowledge Learned by Graduates in College Useful in Finding the Job

Skills/Competencies/Knowledge Learned Useful in Finding the Job	Frequency*	Percentage (%)
Communication skills	54	50.47
Research skills	47	43.93
Critical thinking skills	43	40.19
Planning, coordinating, and organizing skills	50	46.73
Human relation skills	45	42.06
Leadership skills	29	27.10
Problem-solving skills	29	27.10
Creativity	47	43.93
Time management	46	42.99
Negotiating skills	32	29.91
Manual skills	33	30.84

Working independently	33	30.84
Working in a team	29	27.10
Initiative	25	23.36
Adaptability	27	25.23
Power of concentration	36	33.64

***multiple response**

Table 6 highlights the skills, competencies, and knowledge acquired during college that respondents found valuable for securing employment. Notably, over half of the respondents (50.47 percent) identified communication skills as crucial for their job search. This indicates a strong recognition of the importance of effective verbal and written communication in the professional environment. Additionally, approximately 43.93 percent of the respondents considered research skills essential, emphasizing the need for the ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize information. Similarly, critical thinking emerged as an important competency for 40.19 percent of the graduates, indicating that employers value individuals who can evaluate situations and make sound decisions. Other significant skills include planning, coordinating, and organizing skills, which were identified by 46.73 percent of respondents. This highlights the necessity for graduates to have a structured approach to their work, ensuring efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, human relations skills were recognized by 42.06 percent of the graduates, suggesting that interpersonal abilities are vital for collaboration and maintaining positive workplace relationships. Additional critical skills highlighted by the respondents include creativity and time management, each cited by 43.93 percent and 42.99 percent of respondents, respectively. This indicates that the ability to innovate and effectively manage one's time is also regarded as valuable assets in the job market.

Other competencies deemed useful for employment were leadership skills (35.51 percent), problem-solving skills (27.10 percent), and negotiating skills (29.91 percent). Additionally, manual skills and the ability to work independently each garnered support from 30.84 percent of respondents, while teamwork capabilities were recognized by 27.10 percent. Furthermore, qualities such as initiative (23.36 percent), adaptability (25.23 percent), and a strong power of concentration (33.64 percent) were acknowledged, underscoring the diverse range of skills that contribute to workplace success. Overall, the data suggests that employed graduates from the program find communication, research, critical thinking, planning, human relations, creativity, and time management skills particularly valuable in their pursuit of employment. This underscores the necessity for educational institutions to continue fostering these competencies to better prepare students for the job market.

Objective 5: Determine the provisions and conditions experienced by BSA graduates during their time at Capiz State University

Table 7: Study Provisions and Conditions Experienced by the Graduates

Study Provisions and Conditions Experienced	Frequency*	Percentage (%)
Academic advice is extended	64	59.81
Assistance given during enrolment and examinations	48	44.85
Comprehensive and extensive course content of major subjects	52	48.60
Variety of courses offered	44	41.12
Relevant and appropriate design of degree program	36	33.64
Fair grading system	49	45.79
Opportunity to choose courses and area of specialization	42	39.25
Practical emphasis of teaching and learning	37	34.58
Intensive instruction	31	28.97
Opportunity to participate in research projects	39	36.45
Research-based instruction	36	33.64
Provision of work placements and other work experience	28	26.17
Provision of adequate equipment and library holdings	30	28.04
Enough supply of teaching materials	27	25.23
Provision of spiritual growth and development	55	51.40

***multiple response**

Table 7 illustrates the various study provisions and conditions encountered by graduates. A significant number of respondents reported experiencing beneficial academic support and spiritual growth during their studies, with 59.81 percent acknowledging the importance of academic advice and 51.40 percent recognizing the role of spiritual growth and development. These factors appear to have contributed positively to their educational experience. In addition to academic and spiritual support, graduates noted other provisions that were instrumental in their studies. Specifically, assistance during enrollment and examinations was highlighted by 44.85 percent of participants, emphasizing the value of administrative support in navigating academic challenges. Furthermore, nearly half of the graduates (48.60 percent) appreciated the comprehensive and extensive course content of their major subjects, which likely enhanced their understanding and expertise in their fields. Another notable provision was the variety of courses offered, cited by 41.12 percent of the graduates, which allowed for a diverse educational experience. Additionally, a fair grading system was endorsed by 45.79 percent, indicating a desire for transparency and equity in evaluation methods. More than one-third of the graduates reported positive experiences with several other key provisions, including the relevant design of the degree program (33.64 percent) and the opportunity to choose courses and areas of specialization (39.25 percent). The data also reflect that graduates enjoyed a practical emphasis in teaching and learning (34.58 percent), which likely contributed to their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. Moreover, the opportunity to participate in research projects was recognized by 36.45 percent of graduates, showcasing the importance of hands-on experience in enhancing their learning. However, it is worth noting that a substantial proportion of graduates (33.64 percent) expressed satisfaction with research-based instruction, reinforcing the importance of integrating research into their education. Conversely, more than a quarter of graduates expressed contentment with provisions such as intensive instruction (28.97 percent), the availability of adequate equipment and library resources (28.04 percent), and opportunities for other work experiences (26.17 percent), alongside access to necessary teaching materials. Overall, the findings indicate that the employed graduates experienced a range of study provisions and conditions that significantly enriched their educational journey. The emphasis on academic support and opportunities for research participation, along with a focus on spiritual growth, appears to have equipped them with valuable skills and competencies for their professional endeavors.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that respondents were predominantly in the younger working-age bracket, a pattern consistent with tracer studies showing that BSA graduates concentrate in early adulthood as they transition from schooling to full-time work (Abella et al., 2024). Recent Philippine studies report that the majority of agriculture students and graduates fall within the 18–25 age range, with median ages around 20 years among current BSA students and most graduates clustered in the 21–30 bracket several years after completion (Ortega-Dela Cruz & Quimbo, 2018; Sumanga & Sumanga, 2025; Ebuenga et al., 2023). This age profile reflects the typical timing of degree completion and initial labor market entry for agriculture graduates. A slight male predominance emerged in the present sample; however, broader BSA literature in the Philippines shows a trend toward near parity or even female predominance in many cohorts. For example, a large survey of BSA students found 51% female and 49% male, suggesting that what was once a male-dominated field is increasingly balanced (Sumanga & Sumanga, 2025). Similarly, a tracer study of agriculture-related graduates reported 52.72% female respondents overall, with program-specific variation but a clear female majority in the aggregate (Ebuenga et al., 2023). Where male dominance does appear, it may reflect institutional or program-level enrollment patterns rather than a universal characteristic of BSA graduates. The high proportion of single respondents further supports the interpretation that most graduates remain in an early life and career stage, which helps explain rapid workforce entry and continuing professional development activities. Multiple recent studies corroborate that a large majority of BSA students and recent graduates are single—often exceeding 99% among current students and around 60% among graduates within a decade of completion—consistent with their age profile and the timing of career launch relative to family formation (Sumanga & Sumanga, 2025; Ebuenga et al., 2023). This high single-status proportion likely reflects the respondents' age distribution rather than a unique characteristic of BSA graduates alone. Overall, the demographic profile suggests a cohort that is generally young, with a sex composition that varies by institution but increasingly includes more females, and mostly single. This provides useful context for understanding their professional and social circumstances (Abella et al., 2024; Ortega-Dela Cruz & Quimbo, 2018; Sumanga & Sumanga, 2025; Ebuenga et al., 2023).

Table 2 shows that graduates report a balanced, job-relevant skill set. Strong competencies in farming, training,

planning, research, and organizing indicate the program effectively prepares students for both direct agricultural work and broader community-extension roles. This outcome aligns with literature arguing that effective agricultural education should produce graduates able to work in the field, teach others, and contribute to development initiatives (Ortega-Dela Cruz & Quimbo, 2018). Importantly, these findings document concrete graduate outcomes rather than only curricular intentions, strengthening claims about program impact. These findings are reinforced by current Philippine extension and training programs, which emphasize farmer capacity building, technology transfer, training-of-trainers, and practical support for agricultural workers (ATI, 2024; DA, 2026). In this context, the findings align well with the broader direction of agricultural development work, where technical skills must be paired with communication, planning, and coordination (Suvedi, 2024). The pattern observed is consistent with the expectation that agricultural professionals serve as bridges between research, government programs, and farming communities (Suvedi, 2024). In practical terms, this means graduates are positioned to contribute not only to farm operations but also to rural development efforts that rely on organized implementation and community participation (ATI, 2024). At the regional level, similar competency profiles are emphasized in extension education across Asia and Africa. A South Asian study found that frontline extension professionals require a diverse set of core skills spanning program planning and implementation, communication, information and communication technologies (ICTs), program evaluation, personal and professional development, diversity and gender, agribusiness and value chain development, and climate change mitigation (Suvedi, 2024). Likewise, a study in India identified twelve broad competency areas for extension professionals, ranking soft skills, entrepreneurship development skills, and communication skills highest, followed by program planning, teamwork, value chain extension, use of modern communication methods and AV aids, computer applications, monitoring and evaluation, training design, problem solving, subject matter knowledge, farmer motivation, innovativeness, and stress management (Kumara et al., 2023). These regional findings underscore the need for BSA curricula to balance technical agronomic competencies with interpersonal, managerial, and digital skills. Globally, the professionalization of extension systems has similarly highlighted functional or "soft" competencies as critical for effective performance. A global framework for extension staff identifies leadership, communication, program planning and evaluation, partnership building, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, and ICT use as essential functional competencies, particularly in digitally enabled extension services (Davis et al., 2021). International initiatives such as the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) New Extensionist Learning Kit further emphasize these competencies, positioning extension workers as facilitators of innovation, knowledge brokers, and coordinators of pluralistic advisory services (Davis et al., 2021; CABI, 2025). Together, these global and regional frameworks provide a strong conceptual basis for interpreting the BSA graduates' profile as broadly aligned with contemporary expectations for agricultural professionals. However, the findings also imply that while farming remains the clearest strength, continued attention may be needed in areas such as advanced research methods, digital extension, and newer forms of agricultural communication (Gumban & Baladjay, 2025; Davis et al., 2021; Suvedi, 2024). The literature generally supports this result by showing that effective agricultural education should produce graduates who can work in the field, teach others, and contribute to extension and development initiatives (Ortega-Dela Cruz & Quimbo, 2018; Suvedi, 2024). What makes these findings especially useful is that they demonstrate this preparation through concrete graduate outcomes rather than curriculum intentions alone (DA, 2024; Kumara et al., 2023).

Table 3 reveals that the choice of the BSA program appears shaped by both social influences and perceived utility. Family, peers, institutional reputation, and employability contributed to program selection, consistent with prior research on course choice in agriculture (Sarsale et al., 2025; Stair et al., 2016). Beyond external influences, many respondents also cited practicality and respectability as motivators, indicating an interplay between social context and personal career reasoning. This combination of motives makes the decision to pursue BSA both socially embedded and instrumentally oriented toward future employment (Cunningham, 2013; Sarsale et al., 2025). Studies on agriculture students consistently show that parents, guardians, and relatives play a major role in shaping major and career decisions, particularly when the family has ties to farming, agribusiness, or related work (Sarsale et al., 2025; Stair et al., 2016). Recent Philippine evidence confirms that extrinsic motivation—driven by family influence and perceived career prospects—is a dominant factor in students' decisions to enroll in agriculture and fisheries programs (Sarsale et al., 2025). At the same time, some research reports a weaker or more ambiguous family effect, indicating that parental influence is not always decisive for every student (Stair et al., 2016). This contrast strengthens the findings because it shows that while family influence is dominant in the sample, the literature suggests that its strength may depend on household background and local context (Sarsale et al., 2025; Stair et al., 2016). In some cases, peers may discourage students from agriculture when the

field is perceived as less attractive or less lucrative than other courses (Stair et al., 2016). Some studies note that agriculture is sometimes viewed as less profitable or less appealing than other programs, which can reduce student interest (Sarsale et al., 2025). The data therefore contribute a more optimistic view: for these graduates, agriculture was seen not as a fallback option, but as a practical degree with employable value (Cunningham, 2013; Sarsale et al., 2025). Prestige, salary, affordability, and scholarship priority were mentioned less often, but they still help complete the picture. This pattern is interesting because it suggests that while economic considerations were present, they were secondary to social encouragement and the practical value of the program (Cunningham, 2013; Sarsale et al., 2025). Regionally and internationally, similar motivational patterns are documented. In distance-learning contexts, family and friends, along with job considerations, emerge as the two most significant composite variables influencing the choice of agriculture as a study discipline (FAO AGRIS, n.d.). In the United States, studies of first-year agriculture students identify interpersonal factors (e.g., parents, teachers, peers), past experiences (e.g., farm background, FFA involvement), and career values (e.g., job security, helping others) as key predictors of major selection (Stair et al., 2016; Hodges & Karpova, 2010). Among land-grant college students, career opportunities and parental influence are consistently rated as highly influential in both university and major selection decisions (Allen et al., 2023). These convergent findings across settings reinforce the interpretation that BSA graduates' reasons for course selection reflect a broader, cross-national pattern in which socialization and perceived employability jointly shape enrollment decisions in agricultural education.

Table 4 suggests that graduates view further study as a deliberate investment in personal and professional advancement. Rather than treating graduate education as mere credentialing, respondents see advanced study as a way to deepen expertise, broaden opportunities, and support upward mobility. This framing links individual ambition with professional planning and aligns with research highlighting postgraduate education's role in career progression and skill specialization (Hicks et al., 2026; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2016). Most respondents viewed graduate education as a practical way to improve both themselves and their long-term career prospects. The pattern is coherent because it reflects two closely related goals: self-improvement and career mobility (De Guzman et al., 2025; Maka, 2024). This interpretation is supported by regional and international studies showing that graduate students often pursue advanced study for both intrinsic reasons, such as intellectual growth and self-development, and extrinsic reasons, such as improved job opportunities and higher earnings (Hicks et al., 2026; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2016). In agricultural and related fields, research also points to career opportunities, skill use, and professional growth as important motivators for choosing advanced study (Sims, 2014; De Guzman et al., 2025). For example, a study of postgraduate agriculture students in southwestern Nigeria found that the top reasons for enrollment were the desire to acquire better expertise in their field of study, the thirst for higher qualification, and the need to meet requirements for their choice of career or job (Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2016). Similarly, among young Australians in agriculture, career advancement, skill development, and the desire to contribute to the sector are prominent motivations for continuing education and training (De Guzman et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the data by showing that agriculture graduates are making decisions that are both personally meaningful and professionally strategic (Hicks et al., 2026; Maka, 2024). At the same time, some studies offer a slightly different emphasis. Rather than placing personal development first, they highlight career opportunities, specialization, networking, and employability as the dominant reasons for graduate enrollment (Sims, 2014; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2016). In South Africa, for instance, a notable proportion of agriculture students cite limited employment opportunities and the desire to obtain higher qualifications as reasons for pursuing further study, underscoring the instrumental role of postgraduate education in enhancing labor market prospects (Maka, 2024). This contrast does not weaken these findings; instead, it suggests that motivations are shaped by context. For these respondents, the desire for growth appears to be the central theme, while career-related benefits function as the practical payoff of graduate education (Sims, 2014; De Guzman et al., 2025). Regionally, in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, similar patterns emerge. Studies of youth motivations to remain in tertiary agriculture programs identify entrepreneurial skill acquisition, opportunities to learn about innovations, and self-employment prospects as key drivers, reflecting a blend of personal development and career-oriented goals (Inegbedion & Islam, 2020). Internationally, the literature on agricultural careers consistently emphasizes the interplay between self-motivation, use of skills, and perceived career opportunities as central factors in decisions to pursue advanced study and remain in the sector (Sims, 2014; De Guzman et al., 2025; Maka, 2024). Together, these regional and international perspectives provide a robust contextual basis for interpreting the BSA graduates' reasons for pursuing advanced studies as aligned with broader trends in agricultural education and career development.

Table 5 portrays employment outcomes that are generally positive but transitional. Most graduates were employed and commonly found work quickly, often in technical or rank-and-file roles with modest salaries. These patterns correspond with studies tying employability to curriculum relevance, practical exposure, and workplace readiness (Ebuenga et al., 2023; Ra et al., 2019). At the same time, limited higher-level positions and lower salary levels point to a gap between initial employment and long-term professional advancement. This gap may reflect broader labor-market constraints or areas where the program could strengthen industry alignment, career guidance, or workplace-based training (SCOPE-HE & SEAMEO VOCTECH, n.d.; Aman et al., 2023). This pattern is consistent with recent Philippine tracer studies reporting that a large majority of BSA graduates are employed, with employment rates often exceeding 97–98% (Ebuenga et al., 2023; Ra et al., 2019). For example, a study of agriculture graduates in Sorsogon found that 97.91% were employed, with most working in positions related to their degree and within the Philippines (Ebuenga et al., 2023). Similarly, a tracer study of BSA-Agricultural Extension graduates documented high employability and strong alignment between curriculum competencies and job requirements, though many graduates initially occupied entry-level or contractual roles (Ra et al., 2019). At the same time, this contrasts with broader career-readiness findings showing that graduating BSA students may still have only moderate preparedness for a rapidly changing, technology-driven workplace (Aman et al., 2023). Many graduates were able to translate their training into employment soon after finishing the program. Similar tracer studies in Philippine accountancy and business programs also describe employability as strongly linked to educational qualifications, professional preparation, and the relevance of the curriculum to actual workplace demands (Cammayo & Gonzales, 2023). Regionally, ASEAN-wide evidence reinforces these observations. An employment study of agri-food sector graduates in Southeast Asia reports high employment rates but notes that many young graduates start in technical, field-based, or support roles with limited initial pay and career mobility (SCOPE-HE & SEAMEO VOCTECH, n.d.). The study emphasizes that while vocational and undergraduate agriculture programs produce job-ready graduates, progression to supervisory or managerial positions often requires additional experience, industry exposure, and sometimes postgraduate qualifications (SCOPE-HE & SEAMEO VOCTECH, n.d.). The evidence also suggests that many are still building occupational stability and upward mobility, a point that aligns with studies showing that fresh graduates often enter the labor market in junior or support roles before moving into more advanced positions (Aman et al., 2023; Ebuenga et al., 2023). Most respondents were working in the lower-middle income range, which is common among early-career graduates in technical and support positions. This finding is both supported and complicated by online salary benchmarks: general salary guides for Philippine professionals show that entry-level pay can vary widely by industry, with higher earnings often associated with technology, finance, or specialized roles, while lower earnings are typical in first jobs or less specialized work (Payscale, 2026). In that sense, the results are plausible, but they also suggest that many graduates may be employed in fields or positions that do not yet offer strong pay progression (Payscale, 2026; SCOPE-HE & SEAMEO VOCTECH, n.d.). Recent Philippine data similarly show that many BSA graduates are employed on a contractual basis and in locally based positions, with career plans often focused on promotion within their current organization rather than immediate transitions to higher-paying sectors (Ra et al., 2019). In terms of time to first employment, regional tracer studies indicate that a significant proportion of agriculture graduates secure their first job within six months to one year after graduation, though this varies by specialization, local labor market conditions, and access to professional networks (SCOPE-HE & SEAMEO VOCTECH, n.d.; Ebuenga et al., 2023). The nature of work reported by graduates commonly includes roles as agricultural technicians, extension workers, farm managers, agribusiness operators, researchers, and educators, reflecting the diverse career pathways available to BSA holders (Ebuenga et al., 2023; Ra et al., 2019). However, the concentration in rank-and-file or entry-level positions underscores the need for continued emphasis on advanced technical skills, leadership development, and digital competencies to facilitate faster career progression and higher earnings (Aman et al., 2023; SCOPE-HE & SEAMEO VOCTECH, n.d.).

Table 6 reinforces that employability rests on a balanced combination of technical and workplace-ready skills. Respondents prioritized communication, organization, research, critical thinking, creativity, and time management—competencies consistently valued by employers across regional and international contexts (Baird & Parayitam, 2019; Karami et al., 2006). Framing graduates as active agents who understand both the intellectual and behavioral requirements of employment make the findings more compelling and suggests the program cultivates self-aware, workplace-ready professionals. The findings are not only plausible but also strongly aligned with current evidence from the job market. Employers consistently look for graduates who can express ideas clearly, work with others, and solve problems effectively; recent employer surveys likewise place communication, teamwork, and problem-solving among the most valued competencies in new hires (Karami et

al., 2006; Omondi et al., 2021). These results fit well with previous studies showing that employers value graduates who can prioritize work, gather and process information, and adapt ideas into practical solutions (Baird & Parayitam, 2019; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). At the same time, the emphasis on research skills is especially noteworthy because it suggests that graduates see the ability to investigate, analyze, and synthesize information as directly relevant to employability, not just academic performance (Baird & Parayitam, 2019; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). The data therefore suggest that graduates understand employability as more than simply possessing job-specific knowledge; they also recognize the need for judgment, flexibility, and the ability to make sound decisions under pressure (Baird & Parayitam, 2019; Karami et al., 2006). The results also suggest that interpersonal competence remains just as important as academic competence in the transition from college to employment (Baird & Parayitam, 2019; Omondi et al., 2021). Problem-solving, teamwork, negotiating skills, adaptability, and initiative received more modest percentages, yet these are all recognized in the literature as important workplace capabilities (Karami et al., 2006; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). The fact that they were mentioned less often may indicate that graduates place greater immediate value on communication, planning, and research-related skills, while seeing these other competencies as secondary or more context-dependent. Likewise, manual skills, concentration, and work experience-related abilities may be especially relevant in specific occupations rather than across all jobs (McDonald & Luke, 2024; Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). Regionally, in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, similar competency profiles are emphasized. A synthesis of employability components in agricultural curricula identifies four key dimensions: individual (career orientation, psychological capital, personal competencies), interpersonal (communication, networking, team leadership), skill-based (soft skills, technical competencies, entrepreneurial skills, experiential learning), and environmental (labor market context, institutional support) (Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). Within this framework, employers in the agricultural sector prioritize soft skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, professional attitude, and technological literacy, alongside technical knowledge (Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). In Nigeria, final-year agricultural education students similarly rated communication skills, problem-solving/critical thinking, and teamwork/collaboration as the most important employability skills for securing their first job (Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2024). Internationally, employer perceptions align closely with these findings. In Iran, agricultural employers ranked generic competencies—particularly communication skills, problem-solving ability, business and computer skills, and leadership/teamwork—higher than field-specific technical skills for graduates entering the workforce (Karami et al., 2006). In Kenya, employers identified problem-solving and analytics, visioning and creativity, and adaptability as core employability skills needed in the agriculture industry, even as students perceived themselves as more competent in listening, self-motivation, and interpersonal relations (Omondi et al., 2021). These convergent patterns across settings reinforce the interpretation that BSA graduates' perceived useful skills reflect a broader, cross-national consensus on the primacy of transferable competencies in the transition from college to employment.

Table 7 indicates that the study experience was shaped by academic guidance, curriculum quality, research exposure, and personal formation. This pattern is consistent with recent literature showing that student success in higher education is strengthened by effective teaching and learning practices, quality supervision, library access, and student support services (Nwosu et al., 2024; Saha et al., 2024). This supports findings from a systematic review indicating that teaching and learning methods, supervision, and student support services are among the most important success factors in postgraduate study (Nwosu et al., 2024). It also suggests that guidance from faculty and advisers is not merely helpful but central to helping students cope with academic demands and complete their programs successfully (Nwosu et al., 2024; Chanthra et al., 2025). The emphasis on spiritual growth and development reported adds a distinctive dimension to the findings. While much of the literature on graduate success focuses on academic and institutional factors, studies on higher education also recognize that personal characteristics, motivation, and resilience influence completion and performance (Chanthra et al., 2025). In this sense, the results extend the discussion by showing that formation-oriented or values-based support may also shape students' persistence and confidence (Chanthra et al., 2025; Saha et al., 2024). These findings align with prior research showing that student success is associated with organized administrative support, transparent assessment, and strong learning structures (Nwosu et al., 2024; Saha et al., 2024). At the same time, the relatively high rating of course variety and subject specialization suggests that flexibility and choice may have helped sustain engagement and deepen learning (Nwosu et al., 2024). The value placed on research-based instruction mirrors studies that identify research supervision and research capacity-building as key contributors to graduate success (Nwosu et al., 2024; Chanthra et al., 2025). This is important because it suggests that graduates did not merely receive theoretical instruction; they were also exposed to

inquiry-based learning that may have strengthened their analytical skills and professional readiness (Nwosu et al., 2024; Saha et al., 2024). Regionally, in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, similar support structures are emphasized. A study of agricultural education programs in Nigeria found that access to quality teaching materials, supportive faculty mentorship, and well-organized administrative systems were significant predictors of academic success among agricultural students (Saha et al., 2024). In the Philippines, tracer studies of BSA graduates highlight the importance of curriculum relevance, practical exposure through internships, and strong faculty guidance in shaping positive study experiences and employability outcomes (Ra et al., 2019; Ebuenga et al., 2023). Internationally, research on agricultural student perceptions of career success factors identifies relevant work experience, advising/mentoring, and professional networking as critical collegiate experiences that contribute to anticipated career success (Feldpausch et al., 2024). These convergent patterns across settings reinforce the interpretation that BSA graduates' perceived study provisions reflect a broader, cross-national consensus on the importance of academic guidance, curriculum quality, and experiential learning in agricultural higher education. Intensive instruction, adequate equipment and library resources, and work-experience opportunities received lower percentages, which may indicate that these provisions were available but not equally experienced by all respondents, or that graduates placed greater value on interpersonal and curricular support than on physical resources alone (Saha et al., 2024; Nwosu et al., 2024). In some contexts, disparities in access to laboratory facilities, field equipment, and industry placements have been documented, suggesting that while institutional resources are important, their impact on student success may be mediated by the quality of teaching, mentorship, and curriculum design (Saha et al., 2024; Ra et al., 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following conclusions were drawn:

Most employed graduates are single males aged 32 or younger, a demographic concentration that may reflect greater mobility, availability, and willingness to pursue early-career opportunities.

Many graduates find employment in positions such as training specialists and technicians, roles that correspond closely to their academic preparation and skill sets. Although rapid entry into the workforce is encouraging, most of these entrants' report under one year of work experience and monthly incomes below ₱10,000, indicating that early placements may be entry-level and low-paid. This pattern suggests a gap between qualification and economic returns, underscoring the need for measures—such as strengthened industry partnerships, targeted professional development, and career-advancement pathways—to improve job quality and earnings as graduates gain experience.

Graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) program place high value on a broad set of competencies that enhance employability. Communication, research, and planning–coordination–organization skills emerged as especially important for securing employment. Competencies in human resource management, creativity, and time management were also reported as meaningful contributors to job readiness.

A combination of institutional supports and curricular strengths substantially influenced the educational experiences of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSA) graduates. Academic advising, opportunities for spiritual growth, and comprehensive course content emerged as foundational elements that fostered student development. Practical supports—assistance during enrollment and examinations, a perceived fair grading system, and a diverse course offering—further enriched learning and access. Collectively, these provisions suggest that coordinated student services and a well-structured curriculum are integral to promoting academic success among BSA students; institutions should therefore sustain and strengthen these supports to enhance retention, learning outcomes, and graduate preparedness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions formulated, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. **Equity and Inclusive Workforce Development:** Implement targeted recruitment, support, and retention strategies—outreach, career services, mentorship and leadership tracks, employer partnerships, and

disaggregated monitoring—to broaden access, promote diversity, and improve equity in BSA workforce outcomes.

2. Career Pathways and Inclusive Employability: Implement a coordinated strategy—industry linkages, expanded career services and alumni mentoring, competency-based microcredentials and practical curriculum, entrepreneurship support, family-friendly flexible training and targeted outreach, employer pay incentives, and disaggregated alumni tracking—to improve employment equity, career progression, and earnings for BSA graduates.
3. Curriculum and Skills Alignment: Revise the BSA curriculum and co-curriculum—integrating targeted modules on communication, research, and planning/coordination; applied units on HR, creativity, and time management; expanded work-integrated learning; stackable microcredentials and workshops; and employer advisory/alumni feedback—with regular assessment of skill outcomes and employer satisfaction to ensure graduates possess the technical and transferable competencies demanded by industry.
4. Student Support and Holistic Student Experience: Institutionalize and enhance coordinated student services and curriculum—expanded academic advising, spiritual/personal development, updated comprehensive course content and diverse electives, practical supports, employer advisory/student/alumni feedback—and regular disaggregated monitoring of retention, learning outcomes, and graduate preparedness to improve access, student experience, and workforce readiness.

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