



Career Paths and Professional Experiences of Alumni: A Tracer Study

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ABSTRACT

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The Graduate Tracer Survey carefully analyzes career paths, professional experiences, and insights of alumni to inform strategic institutional improvements. Grounded in the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and Super's Career Development Theory (Super, 1980), the study employed a descriptive survey design, collecting quantitative and qualitative data from 266 graduates via an online structured questionnaire. Results clearly demonstrate strong alumni employability and the direct relevance of the school's education. A strong 83.5% of respondents are employed full-time, with 56.6% securing their first job within 6 months of graduation. Over half of the respondents, (60.6%) found jobs directly related to their degrees, mostly in accounting and finance. Alumni are mostly employed in the government (43.5%) and local private organizations (35.9%), with an impressive 86.9% reporting self-employment. These findings conclude that SPSPS effectively cultivates valuable human capital, resulting in a high rate of graduate employability and direct career relevance. The study recommends continuous curriculum review to integrate emerging technologies and enhance



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career counseling and strengthened industry linkages to further optimize graduate success and institutional alignment with dynamic workforce needs.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary labor market is characterized by rapid technological advancements (Chen et al., 2024). Evolving industry demands and increasing global competition. This necessitates that higher educational institutions (HEIs) adopt a proactive response to ensure their graduates are not only employable but also resilient and adaptable in an uncertain future of work. While graduates generally experience higher employment rates and earnings compared to individuals with lower educational attainment, a significant challenge persists on a global scale (OECD, 2025).

A notable number of graduates do not secure positions that fully leverage their acquired skills, and employers frequently report a critical shortage of qualified candidates (Craig, 2019; Manpower Group, 2020). This underscores a fundamental misalignment between higher education and the demands of the global labor market, as employers consistently emphasize their need for both job-specific technical skills and crucial transversal skills, such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork (APMG International, 2025).

Navigating this global landscape, the Philippines, as an emerging economy, faces its own distinct challenges. Despite improvements in the overall employment rate, unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young individuals and college graduates, suggest a structural issue of underutilization of highly educated human capital within the country, highlighting a difficulty in aligning the skills and expectations of graduates with available employment opportunities (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025, PDS, 2024). In response, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) actively encourages HEIs to offer programs that are in demand and responsive to industry needs, both local and international. This national imperative recognizes graduate tracer studies as an essential tool for aligning HEI programs with national development goals (Guevarra et al., 2025).

The school operates within the unique socio-economic context of Eastern Visayas (Region VIII). Understanding this local landscape is crucial for tailoring educational programs to immediate regional needs. While the region's economy has demonstrated robust employment figures, this apparent success must be examined closely, considering the national trend of graduate unemployment and regional skill gaps. A significant challenge in the region is the gap between basic and functional literacy rates, indicating that a substantial portion of the

population struggles with the comprehension skills required for complex work environments. This, combined with employers' pronounced demand for "work and social skill sets," suggests that even degree holders may lack the foundational cognitive and soft skills critical for higher-level employment.

Globally, employability for accounting graduates remains robust, with evolving demands for digital skills, sustainability reporting, and regulatory compliance. According to the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) 2024 Global Talent Report, over 70 percent of accounting professionals worldwide report high job placement rates, with demand surging in emerging markets due to IFRS adoption and Financial Technology integration. However, challenges persist. The World Bank notes that 40 percent of finance roles in developing economies face skills mismatches, exacerbated by automation and economic volatility.

In ASEAN tracer studies, a 2024 Philippine BS Accountancy tracer found 68.4% employability, but highlighted skill-job incongruence eroding satisfaction. With 67.8% local retention amid BPO growth. The Graduate Tracer Survey is, therefore, a strategic imperative. It directly addresses the institutional commitment to providing high-quality education that prepares graduates for the dynamic labor market. By collecting valuable data on alumni career trajectories, professional experience, and perceptions of their educational preparation, this study aims to bridge the identified gaps at the global, national, and regional levels. The findings will inform evidence-based decisions for curriculum development, student support services, and institutional strategies, ultimately ensuring the programs are aligned with both workforce needs and the regional development goals of Eastern Visayas. Given the challenges cited, a key research gap emerges, which is the focus of this study.

FRAMEWORK

This research is primarily grounded in the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which postulates that education increases an individual's productivity and potential earnings by enhancing skills and competencies. The theory suggests that investments made by both the institution (in terms of quality education, facilities, and faculty) and the student (in terms of time, effort, and financial resources) should translate into better employment opportunities, higher wages, and accelerated career advancement. This study examines how the human capital acquired by the graduates through their academic programs translates into their professional experiences and career trajectories. The alignment between the skills gained in school and the demands of the labor market is a central tenet explored

through this lens.

Additionally, the Career Development Theory (Super, 1980) guides the analysis of alumni's career paths by emphasizing the interplay between personal experiences and professional growth over time. Super's theory views career development as a lifelong process involving various stages (growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement) and emphasizes the importance of self-concept and vocational maturity. This framework helps understand the dynamic nature of alumni careers, including career transitions, challenges faced, and the continuous adjustment of their professional identities in response to labor-market realities. By integrating these two theories, this study provides a robust lens for analyzing how formal education (human capital) influences an individual's evolving professional journey (career development), shedding light on the effectiveness of schools in fostering sustained career success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are the following: (1) To determine the demographic profile and current employment status of the alumni; (2) to describe the alumni profile, including employment outcomes, career progression, and professional relevance; (3) to identify the various career paths graduates have taken and evaluate how their jobs relate to their degrees; (4) to analyze the employment sector and location of graduates; (5) to gather insights on job search experiences and entrepreneurial engagement among alumni; (6) to assess the relevance of graduates' jobs to their academic degrees; and (7) to evaluate the extent of entrepreneurial activities undertaken by graduates.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-method, descriptive survey design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This design is appropriate for providing a detailed description of the graduates' career paths, employment statistics, and professional experiences through structured data collection.

Respondents

The study employed convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique appropriate for this context. A Google Forms link was distributed via alumni group chats managed by the alumni office, yielding 266 voluntary responses from accountancy graduates. They represent the population for the

tracer study and data collected from these alumni to analyze their employment outcomes, career paths, and the relevance of their education to their current jobs.

Instrumentation

Data were gathered using an online structured questionnaire designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information. The questionnaire was carefully designed to align with the research objectives, ensuring clarity and comprehensiveness while facilitating ease of response for graduates

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the structured questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This involves computing: (1) Frequencies and Percentages to illustrate the distribution of demographic characteristics such as gender, financial aid, employment status, type of employment, occupational categories, and industry sector distribution, (2) Mean to illustrate the satisfaction and relevance of the course taken.

Qualitative responses, particularly from open-ended questions regarding challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for involvement, underwent thematic analysis. This systematic process involved (1) Familiarization. Thoroughly reading all qualitative data; (2) Initial coding. Generating initial codes to label interesting features of the data; (3) Searching for Themes. Grouping codes into broader potential themes; (4) Reviewing Themes. Checking if themes accurately represent the data and relate to the research questions; (5) Defining and Naming Themes. Refining the specifics of each theme and generating clear names; (6) Producing the Report. Weaving the themes into a coherent narrative. Google Forms automatically generated graphs and tables used for quantitative analyses, while qualitative analysis was conducted manually to ensure a nuanced interpretation of alumni insights.

Research Ethical Protocol

The research strictly adhered to the following ethical guidelines to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants.

Informed Consent. Prior to commencing the survey, all respondents were presented with comprehensive online consent forms detailing the study's purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and minimal risks, and their unequivocal right to decline participation or withdraw at any time without penalty. Electronic consent was explicitly obtained before access to the questionnaire was granted.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. All collected data were handled rigorously with strict anonymity. No personally identifying information (such as names

or direct contact details) was associated with survey responses. The data were aggregated and reported solely in summary form to prevent the identification of any individual respondent. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research lifecycle, with raw data stored securely on password-protected institutional servers accessible only to the authorized research team.

Voluntary Participation. Emphasis was placed on the voluntary nature of participation. Respondents were assured that their decision to participate or not would have no bearing on their relationship with SPSPS, ensuring a genuine and uncoerced response.

Data Security and Retention. All collected data will be stored securely for the duration required by the institution's data retention policies, in accordance with best practices for data privacy. Upon the completion of the research project, data will be responsibly archived or securely expunged.

Beneficiaries and non-maleficence. The study was designed to yield beneficial outcomes to SPSPS by enhancing educational offerings and student support, with no anticipated harm to participants. The findings are intended to be responsible in improving the institution's responsiveness to labor market needs.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval. Prior to any data collection, the complete research protocol, including the questionnaire and informed consent procedures, was reviewed and approved by the relevant Institutional Research Council, ensuring full compliance with all ethical standards and regulatory requirements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Demographic Profile and the Current Employment Status and Job Roles of SPSPS Graduates

Based on a comprehensive alumni survey, a detailed profile of their demographics, employment, and career paths has emerged. The survey, which received 266 responses, provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the institution's programs and the real-world experience of its graduates.

Alumni Profile and Employment Outcomes

The alumni population surveyed is predominantly female, with 57.9% of respondents being women. A significant portion of these graduates, nearly half (49%), received financial assistance during their studies, which highlights SPSPS's commitment to educational accessibility and inclusivity. A notable 34.5% of the alumni are also first-generation college graduates, which speaks to the institution's role in promoting social mobility. The academic success of

alumni is evident: 18.1% graduated cum laude and 26.1% received academic distinctions. The majority, at 85.8%, rated their own academic performance as “Good” or “Very Good”.

In terms of employment, the outcomes are highly positive. A strong majority (83.5%) of respondents are employed full-time, with 84.8% holding permanent or regular positions. This high rate of job stability suggests that the education and training provided are highly relevant to current labor market demands. The high full-time employment rate aligns favorably with the broader national and regional employment rates, with the Philippines at 96% and Eastern Visayas at 97.6% in 2024. The most common job titles, such as Revenue Officer and Accountant, confirm a strong correlation between the curriculum and the career paths of its graduates.

Career Paths and Professional Relevance

The career trajectories of SPSPS graduates reveal a clear link between their education and employment. A significant 60.6% of respondents found jobs directly related to their degree, and an additional 25.7% are in somewhat related roles. This means that an impressive 86.3% of alumni are working in fields that leverage their academic backgrounds, validating the curriculum’s relevance. The strong alignment is further supported by the alumni’s self-assessment, with 71.1% rating the curriculum as Highly Relevant and 17.3% as Moderately Relevant.

This strong connection is reflected in the most frequently cited useful subjects, which are overwhelmingly accounting-related, such as Financial Accounting, Taxation, and Auditing. This feedback unequivocally supports the Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in education leads to higher-quality job opportunities. Additionally, graduates cited foundational skills like Math, English, and Communication as highly valuable, underscoring the importance of a holistic education.

Employment Sector and Location

The data on the employment sector and location further illuminates the alumni’s professional landscape. The government sector is the largest employer, absorbing 43.5% of graduates, followed by private local organizations at 35.9%. This indicates a strong pipeline of SPSPS alumni into public service and domestic enterprises. While multinational companies employ 18.1% and self-owned businesses account for 2.5%, the primary career path is within established public and private entities.

Regarding employment location, an overwhelming 90.7% of respondents are employed locally, suggesting a strong focus on domestic job opportunities.

However, 9.3% working abroad represents a notable contribution to the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) phenomenon, demonstrating the global competitiveness of a segment of the alumni.

Job Search and Entrepreneurial Insights

The graduates demonstrate a high level of employability, with more than half (56.6%) securing their first job within 6 months of graduation. An impressive 41.4% achieved this in less than three months. This rapid transition from school to employment underscores the effectiveness of the institution's program design. However, the finding that a significant 26.2% took over a year to find their first job points to a potential area for targeted intervention, such as enhanced career guidance and job placement services.

A particularly striking and complex finding is the high rate of entrepreneurial engagement: 86.9% of respondents identified as being self-employed or running a business. This suggests a robust entrepreneurial spirit among the alumni and a need for the institution to explore how it can better support and nurture these ventures through dedicated programs and resources. This trend aligns with national goals for fostering entrepreneurship and highlights the versatility of human capital.

The Demographic Profile and the Current Employment Status and Job Roles of SPSPS Graduates

This section presents descriptive statistics on the demographic characteristics, employment status, and primary job roles of the alumni respondents.

Respondent Overview

The survey achieved significant engagement from alumni, yielding 237 responses to job titles and 266 responses to key curricular aspects. This robust participation not only provides a rich dataset but also signals the alumni community's strong commitment to supporting their alma mater's continuous improvement, aligning with the importance of tracer studies in evaluating educational outcomes (Schomburg, 2016; Syahrul et al., 2025).

Gender Distribution: Out of the 266 respondents, 42.1% (n=112) were male, and 57.9% (n=154) were female. This higher proportion of female respondents may reflect the overall gender distribution within the alumni population or a greater inclination among female alumni to participate in such surveys. This demographic insight is crucial for tailoring future alumni engagement strategies and potentially for understanding gender-specific career trajectories.

Financial Assistance: Nearly half of respondents (49%) reported receiving

financial assistance during their studies. This high percentage suggests that the school has a significant role in promoting educational accessibility, potentially reaching students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Compared to general national averages (e.g., 25-33% for undergraduates), the figure indicates a strong commitment to financial inclusivity, which often correlates with positive academic outcomes and graduate success (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, n. d.).

Academic Distinctions: While 73% of respondents did not receive Latin honors, 18.1% graduated cum laude, and 6% received other special awards. This distribution suggests a capable student body, with a commendable portion achieving formal academic recognition, demonstrating a high standard of academic rigor and achievement within the institution.

Self-Rated Academic Performance: More than half of the respondents (52.3%) rated their academic performance as “Good,” followed by 33.5% as “Very Good,” 7.5% as “Fair,” and 6.7% as “Excellent.” This generally positive self-assessment suggests that most alumni perceive themselves as having achieved a satisfactory to strong academic standing. The lower percentage rating themselves as “Fair” indicates a minority who may have faced academic challenges, suggesting a need for targeted academic support mechanisms. Overall, this self-perception can positively influence professional confidence and motivation.

First-Generation College Graduates: A notable 34.6% of the sample identified as first-generation college graduates. This signifies that approximately one-third of the alumni have broken new educational ground within their families, representing significant social mobility. While first-generation students often navigate unique challenges (e.g., less familial experience with higher education, fewer academic/financial resources), their success in graduating underscores their high motivation and resilience. Conversely, the majority (65.4%) who benefited from existing familial college history likely experienced advantages such as guidance and encouragement, highlighting the varied support systems within the alumni base.

Employment Status and Job Roles

Overall Employment Status: A strong majority of respondents (83.5%) are employed full-time. The remaining 16.5% are either working part-time, self-employed, actively seeking work, or pursuing further studies. This high full-time employment rate is a direct indicator of SPSPS’s effectiveness in preparing graduates for immediate workforce integration, suggesting that the education and training received are highly relevant to current labor market demands. This aligns favorably with national employment rates, which saw Eastern Visayas at 97.6%

in January 2025 (Philippine Statistics Authority, Regional Statistical Services Office VIII, n. d., 2025) and the Philippines at 96% in July 2024 (Congress of the Philippines, House of Representatives, 2025).

Table 1
Occupational Distribution of SPSPS Graduates (n = 237)

Occupation Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Professionals	22	9.3
Managers	11	4.6
Plant and Machine Operators	8	3.4
Craft and Related Trades Workers	7	3.0
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries	6	2.5
Service and Sales Workers	5	2.1
Clerical Support Workers	4	1.7
Technicians and Associate Professionals	3	1.3
Subtotal (Specified Occupations)	66	27.9
Others / Not Specified	171	72.1

Employment Type (for employed respondents): Within the employed group, 84.8% hold permanent or regular positions, 11.9% are in contractual employment, and the rest are freelancers. This high proportion of permanent positions signifies job stability and potentially better benefits and security for most alumni. This outcome is a crucial positive indicator of the quality of employment achieved by graduates, aligning with the Human Capital Theory's premise that education leads to higher-quality job opportunities (Orbeta et al., 2016).

Job Titles

The most frequently reported job titles among the 237 responses were overwhelmingly accounting- and finance-related, including Revenue Officer, Accountant II, Accountant, State Auditing Examiner II, Administrative Officer II/V, Accounting Staff, and Instructor. This finding strongly corroborates the direct alignment between the school's academic specialization in professional studies (particularly accounting and finance) and the actual career paths of its graduates. It suggests that the institution successfully channels its students into their intended professional fields, fulfilling a key objective of professional

education.

The Graduates' Occupational and Industry Distribution Summary

Table 2

Industry Sector Distribution of SPSPS Graduates (n = 237)

Industry Sector	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Water Supply, Sewerage, and Waste Management	53	22.4
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	28	11.8
Construction	24	10.1
Transport and Storage	22	9.3
Others (Remaining Sectors)	110	46.4
Total	237	100

The notable concentration in Professional (9.3%) and Managerial (4.6%) roles (totaling 13.9% of the specified occupations) indicates that a significant portion of the alumni secure positions that require specialized skills, advanced education, and leadership capabilities. This outcome reinforces the school's commitment to developing highly skilled human capital. While these professional roles are prominent, the presence of graduates across a wider spectrum of occupations—including manual, technical, and service roles—suggests the adaptability of SPSPS graduates or the potential for diverse career paths that may not strictly align with their initial field of study, particularly if the initial degree provides foundational business acumen. This diversity underscores the breadth of opportunities available to graduates, possibly through leveraging transferable skills acquired during their professional studies, which is a characteristic of a dynamic labor market (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025; Ulandssekretariatet, 2025).

The Water Supply, Sewerage, and Waste Management sector, emerging as the largest specific employer (22.4%) among the specified industries, is highly significant. This suggests a strong demand for professional expertise (likely in finance, administration, and auditing) within essential public and private utility services. This concentration may reflect increased infrastructure development and environmental focus in the Philippines in 2019, creating significant opportunities for the graduates. The substantial representation in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (11.8%) and Construction (10.1%) underscores their continued importance as foundational and growth industries in the national economy, aligning with the Philippines' strategic development goals and

the Eastern Visayas Regional Development Plan (National Economic and Development Authority, n.d. - Regional Development Plans 2023-2028; Eastern Visayas Regional Development Plan 2017-2022).

Meanwhile, the large “Others” category (46.4%) is crucial; it implies that nearly half of the respondents are distributed across a broad array of economic activities not individually itemized. This demonstrates the graduates’ versatility and the pervasive need for skilled professionals across the diverse and evolving Philippine economic landscape, encompassing sectors such as manufacturing, trade, services, and IT. This multifaceted distribution underscores SPSPS’s human capital’s adaptability to varied market demands, a critical factor in regional economic development (Ebdane, 2024; MGB Region 8, n.d.).

Sector of Employment (Type of Organization)

This data reveals a predominantly public and local private sector-based workforce among the alumni. The government sector (43.5%) is the largest employer, indicating a strong pipeline of graduates into public service, which aligns with the demand for financial and administrative professionals in government agencies (e.g., State Auditing Examiner, Revenue Officer, as seen in job titles). Private local organizations (35.9%) also account for a significant share, reflecting the vibrancy of domestic enterprises. The relatively smaller share of employment in multinational companies (18.1%) and the minimal presence in NGOs or self-owned businesses (2.5%) suggest that while these avenues exist, formal employment within established public and local private entities remains the primary career path for this alumni group. This distribution is consistent with the general employment landscape in the Philippines, where the government and local businesses are major employers (Ulandssekretariatet, 2025).

Employment Location

The overwhelming majority of respondents working locally (90.7%) signifies a strong domestic employment focus for the graduates. This could be attributed to available job opportunities in the Philippines, a preference for remaining close to family and community, or the specific demand for their skill set within the local economy (e.g., accounting professionals are in demand everywhere). The 9.3% employed abroad represents the alumni’s contribution to the significant phenomenon of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). While a smaller proportion in this sample, this group remains vital for remittances and foreign exchange, showcasing the global competitiveness and mobility of a segment of the graduates. This dual nature reflects the broader Philippine labor market, balancing domestic job creation with international labor migration (Philippine Statistics Authority,

n.d.; Ulandssekretariatet, 2023).

Time to Secure First Job

The fact that more than half of the respondents (56.6%) secured their first job within six months of graduation, with a significant 41.4% doing so in less than three months, is a robust indicator of the school's strong graduate employability. This rapid transition from academe to employment suggests effective program design and a good alignment between the skills acquired and the immediate demands of the labor market. This outcome strongly supports the Human Capital Theory, which holds that investments in education quickly translate into productive employment (Orbeta et al., 2016). However, the substantial 26.2% who took more than a year to find their first job highlights a critical area for targeted intervention. This delayed entry for a notable minority could be due to various factors, including intense competition, skill mismatches, limited job availability in specific niches, or individual circumstances. This finding underscores the need for enhanced, personalized career guidance and job placement support for this segment of graduates to shorten their job search duration, aligning with recommendations for improving graduate employability (Bacay & Mame, 2022).

Relevance of Job to Degree

The combined 86.3% of respondents working in jobs directly or somewhat related to their degrees is a highly positive reflection on the relevance and effectiveness of the academic programs. This strong alignment signifies that the curriculum is largely successful in equipping graduates with the knowledge and skills directly applicable to their chosen professional fields, thereby validating the institution's educational mission. The 60.6% directly related jobs particularly demonstrate efficient translation of human capital into vocational fit. The 25.7% in "somewhat related" roles suggests the importance of transferable skills gained at SPSPS, which allow graduates to be flexible in their career paths. The 13.7% in unrelated fields, while a minority, indicates potential areas where market demand might not perfectly match degree supply, or where individuals pursue alternative career interests post-graduation. This group could benefit from broader career counseling that emphasizes diverse applications of their skills or reskilling opportunities, a concern often addressed in discussions of the labor-market relevance of higher education (OECD, n. d.).

Entrepreneurial Engagement (Self-Employment/Business Ownership)

Out of 237 respondents, approximately 86.9% reported being self-employed

or running a business, while 13.1% indicated they were not. This finding presents a particularly striking and potentially complex insight: the overwhelming majority (86.9%) of respondents identify as self-employed or business owners. It could suggest that many alumni, even while holding formal positions, also engage in significant entrepreneurial activities or that their “permanent” roles are, in fact, within their own businesses. This high rate indicates a robust entrepreneurial spirit among the alumni, perhaps fostered by their professional studies curriculum, which often includes business management, accounting, and finance, equipping them with the necessary skills to launch and manage ventures. This trend could also reflect a proactive response to economic conditions, in which self-employment offers greater autonomy or more opportunities. This finding highlights the need for the school to consider how it specifically supports and nurtures entrepreneurial endeavors among its students, potentially through dedicated programs, incubators, or networking opportunities, given this significant propensity, aligning with national goals for fostering entrepreneurship (National Economic and Development Authority, n.d. - Regional Development Plan 2023-2028).

Perceived Curriculum Relevance to Current Career Paths

The fact that a significant majority (71.1%) of respondents perceive the curriculum as “Highly Relevant” to their current career paths is a strong testament to SPSPS’s effectiveness in delivering a career-oriented education. When combined with those who find it “Moderately Relevant” (17.3%), it totals an impressive 88.4% of alumni who see a tangible connection between their studies and their professional work. This high degree of perceived relevance strongly supports the Human Capital Theory, indicating that the skills and knowledge acquired at SPSPS are indeed valuable assets in the labor market. It suggests that the curriculum is well aligned with industry demands and effectively prepares students for real-world scenarios. However, the 11.6% who find the curriculum only slightly or not relevant at all represents a critical segment for focused improvement. This feedback points to potential areas where certain programs or specific aspects of the curriculum may be outdated, overly theoretical, or insufficiently adapted to the rapidly evolving demands of niche or specialized career fields. Continuous curriculum review processes, incorporating industry consultation and direct alumni feedback, are crucial to bridge these identified gaps and ensure holistic relevance for all graduates, a key recommendation in studies on education and employment alignment (Ebdane, 2024).

Table 3
Occupational Distribution of SPSPS Graduates

Occupation Category	Number of Respondents
Professionals	22
Managers	11
Plant and Machine Operators	8
Craft and Related Trades Workers	7
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries	6
Service and Sales Workers	5
Clerical Support Workers	4
Technicians and Associate Professionals	3

Note: "Others / Not Specified" (171 respondents) are not shown here for clarity.

Table 4
Industry Sector Distribution of SPSPS Graduates

Industry Sector	Percentage (%)
Water Supply, Sewerage, and Waste Management	22.4
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	11.8
Construction	10.1
Transport and Storage	9.3
Others (Remaining Sectors)	46.4

Table 5
Most Useful Subjects/Courses According to Alumni

Subject Category	Specific Courses / Topics	Notes
Core Accounting Subjects	Financial Accounting	Overwhelmingly identified as most useful
	Government Accounting	
	Taxation	
	Auditing	
	Management Accounting	
Supporting Subjects & Soft Skills	Business Law Topics	Related legal topics important for careers
	Math	Fundamental skill supporting accounting
	English	Communication and business language skill
	IT / Computer-related Courses	Technical skills for modern work environments
	Communication	Interpersonal and professional communication
Specialized Topics	Real Estate Brokerage	Highlighted by some alumni
	Digital Marketing	Relevant for business and entrepreneurial roles

SPSPS alumni regard core accounting subjects—such as financial, government, taxation, auditing, and management accounting—as the most critical foundation for their careers. Additionally, subjects like math, English, IT, and communication are highly valued for equipping graduates with essential soft and technical skills. Specialized courses in real estate brokerage and digital marketing are also recognized for their practical applications in specific career paths.

The overwhelming consensus on the utility of core accounting subjects (Financial Accounting, Taxation, Auditing, etc.) directly validates SPSPS's specialization in professional studies, particularly in finance and accounting. This confirms that the institution is effectively delivering on its promise to equip graduates with highly sought-after technical competencies directly applicable in various industries (e.g., as Accountants, Revenue Officers, State Auditing Examiners). This finding unequivocally supports the Human Capital Theory, as

these specific skills directly enhance a graduate's productivity and market value.

Equally important is the recognition of foundational subjects and soft skills such as Math, English, IT/Computer-related courses, and Communication. This highlights that success in the professional world is not solely dependent on technical knowledge but also on crucial transferable skills. The ability to communicate effectively, analyze data (Math), leverage technology (IT), and adapt to legal frameworks (Business Law) are indispensable complements to technical expertise. This suggests that SPSPS successfully fosters a holistic skill set crucial for career development. The mention of specialized topics like Real Estate Brokerage and Digital Marketing also offers a valuable insight: while not universally cited, their appearance suggests that a segment of alumni is pursuing diverse or entrepreneurial career paths. This opens avenues for SPSPS to explore expanding or diversifying its electives or short courses to cater to such emerging market demands, aligning with broader career development trajectories and the evolving skills landscape (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025).

Challenges and Opportunities Encountered by Alumni in Their Professional Journeys

Based on the thematic analysis of alumni responses, several prominent challenges and opportunities characterized their professional journeys:

Challenges

Initial Job Market Competition: Many alumni cited the highly competitive nature of the initial job market as a significant hurdle, particularly for entry-level positions. This often led to longer job-search periods for a notable minority, as indicated by our quantitative findings. The Philippine labor market can be competitive, especially in urban centers (Philippine Statistics Authority, n. d.).

Skill Gaps in Emerging Areas: While core accounting skills were highly valued, some alumni reported perceived gaps in specialized or emerging areas, such as advanced data analytics, specific industry software proficiency (e.g., ERP systems beyond basic accounting software), or digital marketing expertise. This suggests that while foundational knowledge is great, rapid technological changes sometimes outpace curriculum updates, a common challenge for higher education institutions (Orbeta et al., 2016)

Work-Life Balance and Demands: A recurring theme, particularly among those in demanding professional roles (e.g., auditing, high-pressure finance positions), was the challenge of maintaining work-life balance and managing demanding work schedules, especially during peak seasons.

Navigating Career Advancement: Some alumni noted challenges with upward

mobility, identifying a need for stronger mentorship, leadership development, and specific promotion pathways within their organizations.

Opportunities

Continuous Learning and Upskilling: Alumni consistently highlighted opportunities for professional growth through continuous learning, certification programs (e.g., CPA licensure, specialized finance certifications), and advanced degrees. Many viewed these as essential for career advancement and staying competitive, reflecting the importance of lifelong learning in the modern workforce (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority [TESDA], n. d.).

Leadership and Mentorship Roles: As alumni progressed, opportunities to take on leadership positions and mentor newer professionals were frequently cited as rewarding aspects of their careers, demonstrating the impact of the professional skills they had acquired.

Entrepreneurial Ventures: Consistent with the high reported rate of self-employment, many alumni identified the opportunity to start and grow their own businesses as a significant avenue for professional fulfillment and economic independence, thereby contributing to national economic growth (National Economic and Development Authority, n. d. - Regional Development Plans 2023-2028).

Impact and Contribution: A notable opportunity perceived by alumni, particularly those in government and public service, was the ability to contribute directly to national development and public welfare through their professional roles, aligning with the public service orientation often promoted in government employment (National Economic and Development Authority Region 12, n. d.; National Economic and Development Authority Region 2, n. d.).

The challenges identified underscore the dynamic nature of the labor market and the need for graduates to possess not only foundational knowledge but also adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning. The perceived skill gaps in emerging areas reinforce the argument for continuous curriculum innovation. Conversely, the identified opportunities highlight the avenues for growth and fulfillment available to SPSPS alumni, including career progression, professional development, and entrepreneurial pursuits. These findings provide valuable qualitative insights into real-world experiences that complement the quantitative data, offering a richer understanding of alumni's professional journeys through the lens of Super's Career Development Theory.

Recommendations for Curriculum Enhancement and Student Support Improvements Based on Alumni Feedback

Based on the comprehensive feedback gathered from SPSPS alumni, the following recommendations are proposed for curriculum enhancement and improvements in student support services:

Curriculum Enhancement:

Integrate Advanced Technology and Data Analytics: Alumni recommend embedding more practical training and updated coursework in emerging technologies relevant to their fields, such as data analytics tools, advanced accounting software (ERP systems), and potentially AI applications in finance and business. This addresses the identified skill gaps and ensures future graduates are equipped for digital transformation in the workplace, aligning with global skill demands (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025).

Strengthen Interdisciplinary and Applied Learning: Increase the use of real-world case studies, simulations, and project-based learning that integrate various disciplines (e.g., accounting with digital marketing, finance with project management). This will enhance the practical application of knowledge and develop problem-solving skills, making the learning experience more directly relevant to professional scenarios, a key aspect of effective professional education (Bolick et al., 2024).

Update Specialized Electives: Given mentions of fields such as real estate brokerage and digital marketing, consider developing or strengthening specialized elective courses or minor programs that cater to these emerging professional niches, enabling students to diversify their skill sets beyond traditional paths. This responsiveness to evolving market needs is crucial for educational institutions (Ebdane, 2024).

Continuous Industry Consultation: Formalize a process for regular consultation with industry partners and alumni to review curriculum content, ensuring it remains current with industry standards, emerging trends, and employer expectations. This feedback loop is crucial for maintaining long-term relevance and addressing the challenge of skill gaps (Orbeta et al., 2016).

Student Support Improvements:

Enhanced Career Counseling and Placement Services: Given the significant minority who experience longer job search periods, strengthen career counseling services to provide more personalized guidance, resume workshops, interview coaching, and effective job matching with industry partners. Focus on networking and self-marketing skills. This aligns with best practices in higher education for

improving graduate employability (Cornillez et al., 2021).

Robust Internship and Apprenticeship Programs: Develop and expand structured internship and apprenticeship programs across diverse industries. These experiences are invaluable for practical skill development, professional networking, and shortening the transition time from education to employment, complementing theoretical knowledge with practical skills (Philippine News Agency, 2024).

Alumni Mentorship Program: Establish a formal program that pairs experienced graduates with current students or recent alumni. This would leverage the successful career paths of former students and provide invaluable insights, advice, and networking opportunities.

Professional Development Workshops for Soft Skills: Offer targeted workshops on crucial soft skills identified as useful (e.g., advanced communication, negotiation, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability). These can be integrated into existing courses or offered as standalone modules, recognizing their importance alongside technical skills (TESDA, n. d.).

Entrepreneurship Support: Given the high reported rate of self-employment, consider developing specialized programs, workshops, or even an incubation hub to support students and alumni interested in starting their own businesses, providing guidance on business planning, funding, and legal aspects, thereby fostering a culture of innovation and self-reliance (National Economic and Development Authority, n. d. - Regional Development Plan 2023-2028).

These recommendations are directly derived from the lived experiences and valuable insights of the alumni, reflecting both the strengths of the current programs and areas for strategic enhancement. Implementing these changes will not only address the challenges faced by graduates but also capitalize on opportunities, thereby bolstering the school's reputation for producing highly competent, adaptable, and successful professionals, further validating its commitment to the Human Capital and Career Development Theories.

CONCLUSIONS

The Graduate Tracer Survey shows that the school effectively prepares graduates for the workforce, demonstrated by high employment rates and strong alignment between academic degrees and job roles, especially in accounting and finance. This supports Human Capital Theory, linking education investment with valuable employment. A notable finding is the strong entrepreneurial tendency among alumni, with many engaged in self-employment or business ownership, highlighting a potential new focus area for the school to nurture local economic

growth. While the overall outcomes are positive, the study recommends ongoing curriculum updates to address emerging technology skill gaps, enhanced career guidance, and stronger industry connections to support alumni facing longer job searches, ensuring the school remains responsive to labor market demands and continues to improve graduate success.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The Graduate Tracer Survey indicates that the school successfully prepares students for careers, with high employment rates and good degree-job alignment, particularly in accounting and finance. Alumni also show strong entrepreneurial interests, suggesting an opportunity for the school to support local economic growth. The study recommends updates to the technology curriculum, better career guidance, and stronger industry ties to support graduates facing longer job searches, ensuring the school remains aligned with labor market needs. The Graduate Tracer Survey of the alumni translates data into practical recommendations for institutional improvement, emphasizing the need to modernize the curriculum by integrating emerging technologies with input from alumni and industry experts. It also highlights the importance of enhancing career development services through personalized counseling, expanded internships, and dedicated support for alumni entrepreneurship. Additionally, the survey's positive outcomes provide valuable evidence to boost marketing and recruitment by demonstrating the strong employability and success of the graduates.

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