Employment Trends and Sectoral Integration of Public Administration Graduates: A Tracer Study (2018–2023)

Libh Anthony L. Limama., Glenne B. Lagura., Romalie F. Galleto

Faculty, Institute of Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Good Governance, Davao del Norte State College, Panabo City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study examined the employment trends and sectoral integration of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) from 2018 to 2024. Employing a quantitative-descriptive research design, the study surveyed 121 graduates, of whom 103 were employed. Descriptive statistical analysis was utilized to assess employment rates, job-role alignment, and sectoral distribution. Findings indicate that 89.32% of employed graduates secured jobs aligned with their academic background, predominantly in government institutions and industry-specific administrative roles. However, a growing contractual and job-order employment trend among recent cohorts suggests workforce instability. The study validated Human Capital Theory, Credentialism Theory, and Job-Market Signaling Theory, highlighting the influence of academic preparation, civil service eligibility, and professional networking on employment outcomes. Results underscore the need for curriculum enhancements, stronger internship-government linkages, and policy interventions to improve BPA graduates' workforce integration. These findings contribute to higher education policy-making and public administration workforce development, ensuring alignment between academic training and labor market demands.

Keywords: public administration, employment trends, sectoral integration, labor market alignment, higher education, tracer study, governance workforce, descriptive statistics, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The transition of Public Administration graduates from academic institutions to the labor market remains a persistent challenge, influenced by structural employment mismatches, curriculum-industry gaps, and labor market saturation (Mangahas et al., 2021). The increasing complexity of governance structures and administrative functions requires graduates to develop specialized competencies beyond the generalist approach traditionally emphasized in Public Administration programs (Pillay, 2020). However, empirical findings suggest that many Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates encounter difficulties securing employment aligned with their academic training, leading to underemployment and occupational mismatches (Chetty & Pather, 2021).

The employment trends and sectoral integration of Public Administration graduates serve as crucial indicators of the effectiveness of higher education programs in equipping students with competencies aligned with labor market demands. As governance structures evolve globally, the relevance of Public Administration education in addressing public sector workforce needs becomes increasingly significant (Hagelskamp et al., 2024). In analyzing employment patterns, job alignment, and labor market integration, this study contributes to the broader discourse on graduate employability, higher education responsiveness, and workforce development. Understanding the employment outcomes of Public Administration graduates provides empirical evidence on the extent to which academic training translates into professional success. Previous studies suggest that the alignment between academic programs and job market expectations is critical to career outcomes (Mangahas et al., 2021). Furthermore, assessing employment trends can offer insights into the structural barriers that hinder BPA graduates' transition into governance-related careers, including labor market saturation, qualification mismatches, and bureaucratic hiring processes (Chetty & Pather, 2021). The implications of such studies

extend beyond academia, informing curriculum development, policy-making, and institutional strategies for enhancing graduate employability. Through the investigation of the employment trends of BPA graduates, this study not only evaluates the effectiveness of the Public Administration program at Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) but also provides recommendations for improving its relevance in an increasingly competitive job market.

Globally, research on graduate employability has underscored the importance of curriculum-industry alignment and the development of transferable skills to enhance labor market outcomes (Teichler, 2018). Studies have found that public administration graduates in various countries face challenges securing employment due to rigid bureaucratic hiring processes and evolving demands for digital governance competencies (Pillay, 2020). Schomburg (2016) highlights that tracer studies play a pivotal role in assessing the impact of higher education programs on employment trajectories, allowing institutions to tailor curricula to meet market needs. A survey by Angaw et al. (2024) in Ethiopia revealed that despite strong academic foundations, public administration graduates often struggle with job placement due to a lack of specialized competencies required in modern governance. Similarly, European research suggests that digitalization and policy reforms reshape the public administration job market, necessitating updated academic training to prepare graduates for contemporary challenges (Hagelskamp et al., 2024). These international findings emphasize the need for Public Administration programs to integrate practical governance training, Information Communication Technology proficiency, and competency-based education to improve employment prospects. The implications of these studies justify the necessity of the present research in assessing how BPA graduates in the Philippines navigate employment pathways and how academic institutions can enhance their workforce preparedness.

In the Philippines, several studies have examined the employment outcomes of Public Administration graduates, highlighting key trends and challenges. Research by Mangahas, et al. (2021) found that many BPA graduates enter roles outside governance, often in private-sector administrative positions, customer service, or business process outsourcing (BPO). This sectoral misalignment raises concerns about whether the Public Administration curriculum adequately prepares students for public service careers. Furthermore, Chetty and Pather (2021) noted that while Philippine universities produce many Public Administration graduates, only a fraction secure government positions due to civil service eligibility requirements, limited entry-level positions, and competitive recruitment processes. Higher education institutions must strengthen career development programs, internship placements, and government partnerships to facilitate smoother employment transitions. Tracer studies conducted in the Philippines have also identified a growing demand for e-governance competencies and data-driven decision-making skills among governance professionals (Pillay, 2020). This underscores the need to assess whether BPA graduates possess the digital competencies to thrive in the evolving public sector landscape. Hence, in examining employment trends and sectoral integration, the present study seeks to bridge these knowledge gaps and provide data-driven recommendations to enhance Public Administration education and workforce integration in the country.

Locally, the study holds significant implications for Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) and the broader workforce landscape in the region. Public Administration graduates from DNSC are expected to serve as future governance leaders, contributing to local government units (LGUs), civil service agencies, and community development initiatives. However, preliminary findings suggest that many BPA graduates struggle to secure governance-related positions, raising concerns about potential competency gaps and employment barriers. Local tracer studies have highlighted disparities in employment patterns, with some graduates opting for contractual and job-order positions rather than securing permanent government roles. This reflects broader trends in government hiring practices, where stringent requirements and political influences may impact job accessibility (Maringe & Sing, 2020). Additionally, regional governance institutions increasingly require digital literacy, policy analysis, and financial management skills, raising questions about the adequacy of BPA training in these areas. Thus, by conducting this study, DNSC aims to evaluate its Public Administration program's effectiveness in preparing graduates for local and national governance roles. The findings will provide empirical evidence to inform curriculum reforms, strengthen career placement initiatives, and foster stronger collaboration between academic institutions and government agencies.

This study is primarily anchored in the human capital theory (HCT) developed by Becker (1994). It posits that individuals' knowledge, skills, and competencies—acquired through education, training, and experience—are critical determinants of their employment opportunities and economic productivity. The theory suggests that investment in human capital (education, skills development, and training) increases individuals' employability and earnings potential in the labor market. In the context of this study, HCT explains the relationship between the education received in the Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) program and the graduates' employment outcomes. The premise is that the competencies acquired through higher education should enhance graduates' ability to secure jobs aligned with their field of study. However, suppose employment trends reveal mismatches between job roles and competencies. In that case, the theory suggests that the educational investment is insufficient (curriculum gaps) or the labor market does not adequately absorb these skills (employment barriers). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes sectoral integration, implying that graduates with specialized skills aligned with labor market demands are more likely to secure stable, well-paying jobs in governance-related fields. Conversely, those with generalist or misaligned skills may struggle with underemployment or be forced to shift to alternative career paths in unrelated sectors. This aligns with previous empirical studies showing that graduates with digital governance competencies, financial management skills, and policy analysis expertise are more competitive in securing government positions (Chetty & Pather, 2021; Schomburg, 2016).

This was also supported by the Credentialism Theory by Randall Collins (1979), who argues that formal educational qualifications serve as gatekeeping mechanisms for employment, often taking precedence over actual skills and competencies. Employers tend to prioritize degree credentials and certification requirements as indicators of competence, even when these may not fully reflect an individual's job readiness. In the context of this study, Credentialism Theory provides insight into why some BPA graduates struggle to secure government jobs despite possessing relevant competencies. Civil Service Eligibility (CSE) is a fundamental requirement for permanent government positions in the Philippine public sector, often outweighing work experience or practical skills. This aligns with findings from previous studies that show that many BPA graduates remain in contractual or job-order positions due to credential-based hiring policies (Mangahas, Santos, & Villanueva, 2021).

Lastly, the Job-Market Signaling Theory, developed by Spence (1973), suggests that job seekers signal their competencies and productivity potential to employers through educational qualifications, internships, work experience, and soft skills. Employers, in turn, use these signals to assess candidates' suitability for job roles. This theory is relevant to the study because it explains why certain BPA graduates secure jobs faster than others. Graduates engaging in internships, leadership roles, research projects, and government-related programs send stronger employment signals, increasing their likelihood of securing governance-related positions. Conversely, those who rely solely on their academic degree may struggle to stand out in a competitive job market.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded on theories and empirical studies that examine employment trends and sectoral integration within the labor market, particularly concerning Public Administration graduates. The framework illustrates the relationship between employment trends (measured by employment rates and status of employment) and the sectoral integration of graduates into different sectors of the economy.

Employment trends encompass the labor market outcomes of graduates, particularly in employment rates (the percentage of graduates who secure employment after completing their degree) and employment status (e.g., full-time, part-time, contractual, or permanent positions). These trends are critical indicators of the demand for Public Administration graduates in both public and private sectors. According to Borjas (2016), employment rates are influenced by labor market dynamics, including economic cycles, industry demands, and the alignment of graduates' skills with employers' expectations. Additionally, employment status is shaped by institutional labor policies and workforce needs (Brown & Hesketh, 2004).

Sectoral integration refers to the extent to which Public Administration graduates find employment in sectors relevant to their field of study, such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and private sector firms involved in governance, policy-making, and administrative functions. According to Teichler (2009), sectoral integration is influenced by multiple factors, including academic preparation, professional competencies, and labor market conditions. His work on higher education and employment linkages highlights that graduates often face challenges in aligning their qualifications with sector-specific demands, leading to varying degrees of integration into relevant industries. Below is an illustration of the connection between employment trends and sectoral integration.
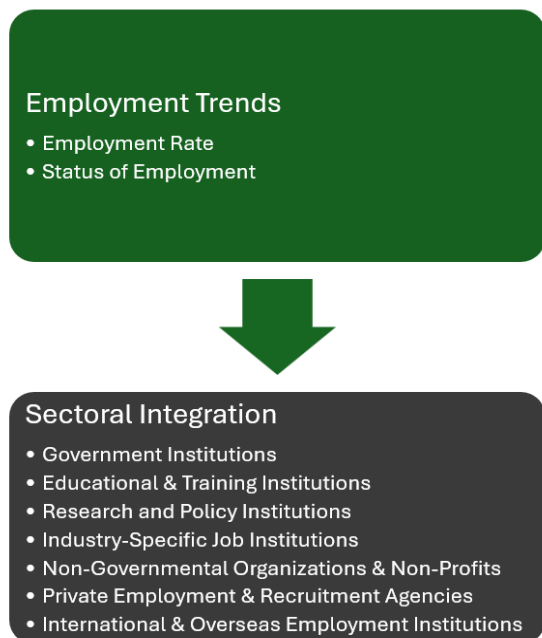

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study Becker (1994); Collins (1979); and Spence (1973)

Despite the growing body of literature on graduate employability, job-role alignment, and workforce integration, research specifically focusing on Public Administration graduates remains limited, particularly within the context of the Philippines. Existing studies have primarily examined general employment trends among college graduates (Mangahas, et al., 2021; Chetty & Pather, 2021), yet there remains a lack of empirical data that explores sectoral integration and job-role alignment specific to Public Administration graduates. This study aims to address these gaps by providing a contextualized analysis of how Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) navigate the labor market, the extent to which their competencies align with their job roles, and the challenges they face in securing governance-related employment. Thus, addressing the research gaps in Public Administration graduate employability is critical for improving curriculum alignment, labor market preparedness, and governance workforce efficiency. Also, DNSC and other academic institutions can develop strategic interventions to strengthen employability rates, workforce integration, and governance capacity-building efforts for future public administrators.

Research objectives

This study addressed the following objectives: 1) analyze employment trends among BPA graduates, including employment rates and employment status; 2) identify the industries and sectors employing BPA graduates and their relevance to the program.

Significance of the study

This study on employment trends and sectoral integration of Public Administration graduates holds significant global, national, and local contributions, particularly in higher education, workforce development, and governance. The findings provide empirical evidence for improving Public Administration curricula,

strengthening employment facilitation mechanisms, and addressing labor market challenges faced by graduates. Through a thorough examination of employment trends and sectoral integration, this study contributes to academic literature and the practical enhancement of graduate employability in governance-related sectors.

The study contributes to higher education research, employability discourse, and workforce development literature at the global level by providing empirical data on Public Administration graduate outcomes within a developing country context. While numerous studies have explored graduate employability trends (Teichler, 2018; Chetty & Pather, 2021), limited research has specifically examined sectoral integration and competency alignment among Public Administration graduates. This study helps bridge this gap by offering a localized, discipline-specific analysis that can inform international discussions on governance education, labor market alignment, and public sector employment policies.

Moreover, the study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). SDG 4 emphasizes the importance of equitable and quality education, including higher education that prepares graduates for relevant careers. This study assesses whether the Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) program equips students with competencies that match labor market needs, contributing to discussions on curriculum responsiveness and lifelong learning strategies. Additionally, SDG 8 underscores the need to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all. This study provides insights into employment barriers, workforce integration challenges, and job-role mismatches, which can inform policy improvements to enhance graduate employability and sustainability.

This study directly benefits higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) and other universities offering Public Administration programs. The findings will provide empirical evidence on graduate employment trends, job-role alignment, and sectoral integration, allowing institutions to refine their curricula, strengthen career placement initiatives, and enhance student training programs.

The study is highly relevant to government agencies, civil service institutions, and local government units (LGUs) that employ Public Administration graduates. In analyzing sectoral integration patterns, employment barriers, and competency gaps. BPA graduates and job seekers are among the primary beneficiaries of this study. The study will also help graduates understand the importance of certifications (such as Civil Service Eligibility), industry networking, and skill development programs in improving their employability. Beyond government employment, this study also benefits the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international agencies that hire Public Administration graduates. Future researchers interested in higher education outcomes, labor market dynamics, and governance workforce integration will benefit from this study as a reference for tracer studies, employment trend analyses, and sectoral alignment research.

METHODOLOGY

This section provides a comprehensive discussion of the research methodology employed in the study and the systematic approach taken to examine employment trends, job-role alignment, and sectoral distribution among Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates. It outlines the research design, respondent selection, study locale, data collection instruments, procedures, and analytical methods used to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive research design, an approach suited for systematically analyzing employment trends, job-role alignment, and sectoral distribution of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates. Quantitative research ensures objectivity and reliability in measuring graduate outcomes, while descriptive provides detailed insights into employment patterns and alignment with the labor market (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design aligns with Schomburg's (2016) framework for tracer studies, which emphasizes the systematic examination of graduate outcomes.

The target population for this study consists of graduates of the Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) program from Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) covering the 2018 to 2024 graduating batches. The total number of BPA graduates within this period is 300, comprising individuals who have pursued employment across different sectors, including government, private enterprises, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These graduates share common attributes, including a background in public administration, exposure to governance-related competencies, and varying employment experience in administrative and leadership roles.

Of the 300 BPA graduates, only 121 respondents participated in the study through the Google Form survey, representing 40.33% of the population. The decision to use 121 as non-response factors justifies the baseline sample, as several graduates were either unreachable or unwilling to participate in the study. According to Fowler (2014), a 30-50% response rate is considered acceptable in survey-based research, particularly in tracer studies where maintaining alumni contact is challenging. The exclusion of non-respondents is a recognized limitation in graduate employment research. However, it does not significantly compromise the sample's representativeness, given that the obtained responses provide substantial insights into employment trends and job-role alignment.

Furthermore, only 103 of the 121 respondents were employed, while 18 reported being unemployed. Given that the study's focus is on employment trends and sectoral integration, only the 103 employed respondents were considered in the final analysis, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the experiences of graduates who have transitioned into the workforce. The exclusion of unemployed respondents aligns with the methodological approach used in similar employability studies, which emphasize the experiences of graduates in active employment sectors (Schomburg, 2016).

The 103 employed respondents were distributed across different graduating batches, reflecting variations in workforce absorption across cohorts. Specifically, 19 respondents were from the 2018 batch, followed by 18 from 2019, 9 from 2020, 10 from 2021, 19 from 2022, 9 from 2023, and 19 from 2024. This distribution demonstrates a balanced representation across multiple years, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of employment trends and sectoral integration. Notably, a higher proportion of responses came from recent graduates (2022–2024), which aligns with standard trends in tracer studies, where newer graduates are generally more reachable and more likely to engage in institutional follow-ups (Pillay, 2020).

Moreover, including graduates from earlier cohorts (2018–2021) enables a comparative assessment of employment trajectories over time, providing insights into long-term job-role alignment, career progression, and sectoral integration trends. This variation in responses enhances the study's ability to examine how employment patterns evolve across different graduation periods, whether job stability improves with experience, and whether earlier graduates have successfully transitioned into permanent roles or leadership positions.

Overall, the study sample offers valuable empirical data on the employment pathways of BPA graduates, shedding light on their job-role alignment and workforce integration within the governance and administrative sectors. The methodology ensures that findings are grounded in both short-term and long-term employment experiences, providing a holistic perspective on the employability and career outcomes of DNSC's Public Administration program graduates.

This study was conducted at Davao del Norte State College (DNSC), a premier higher education institution in Panabo City, Davao del Norte, Philippines. Geographically, Panabo City is a first-class component city in the Davao Region, strategically situated between Davao City and Tagum City. It serves as a vital educational and economic hub, providing access to higher education, government services, and employment opportunities within the region. DNSC is recognized for its commitment to public service education, governance training, and community development, making it an ideal setting for examining the employment trajectories of Public Administration graduates.

The selection of DNSC as the study locale is justified by its role in producing graduates trained in governance and public administration, many of whom are expected to integrate into local, national, and international

employment sectors. However, the state of the dependent variable—sectoral integration—necessitates an in-depth investigation into whether BPA graduates are successfully transitioning into governance-related careers or facing employment mismatches. Given the growing demand for competent public administrators in local government units (LGUs), civil service agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it is critical to assess whether DNSC's Public Administration program effectively equips graduates with the skills required for sectoral employment.

Furthermore, Davao del Norte presents a unique employment landscape where governance-related job opportunities are highly competitive, requiring civil service eligibility, specialized competencies, and strong professional networks. Despite DNSC's emphasis on public service education, there is limited empirical data on the actual employment outcomes of its BPA graduates. This study is, therefore, essential in identifying employment trends, assessing job-role alignment, and evaluating the extent to which DNSC graduates integrate into governance-oriented sectors. The findings will provide evidence-based recommendations for improving curriculum alignment, strengthening career placement initiatives, and enhancing institutional support systems to ensure BPA graduates transition effectively into public administration careers.

Materials and Instrument

This study utilized a structured survey questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument to examine the employment trends and sectoral integration of Public Administration graduates from 2018 to 2024. The questionnaire was systematically designed to capture essential demographic, academic, and employment-related data. It included key personal identifiers such as the respondent's full name, email address, gender, barangay, city or municipality, province, and contact number. Additionally, academic background was documented by identifying the year of graduation.

In assessing the employment trends, the questionnaire gathered information on the respondent's current employment status, specifying whether they were employed or unemployed. For those employed, the instrument further inquired about their employment status, including classifications such as permanent, contractual, casual, job order, or self-employed. Moreover, details regarding the date of initial employment, present job position, company name, and company address were also collected to provide insights into job placement and sectoral distribution.

The questionnaire was designed to ensure data collection clarity, precision, and comprehensiveness. It utilized nominal close-ended scales to facilitate quantitative analysis and measure categorical and ranked responses. Nominal scales were used for categorical variables such as employment sector and job classification, ensuring distinct groupings without inherent ranking (Babbie, 2020). Close-ended scales enhance data reliability and comparability, making it possible to analyze patterns systematically and minimize subjective interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design enabled a systematic and objective analysis of employment trends, job-role alignment, and sectoral integration among BPA graduates, following best practices in survey research (Fowler, 2014). Before full implementation, the instrument underwent pre-testing to validate its reliability and effectiveness. The data obtained through this instrument served as a critical foundation for analyzing workforce participation, employment trajectories, and the alignment of Public Administration graduates with various sectors.

The questionnaire underwent validity and reliability testing. A panel of three education and public administration experts validated the content, yielding an average validation rating of 4.7/5, indicating high content validity. Reliability was assessed through a pilot test involving 10 respondents, producing a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.87, which reflects high internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

The study design incorporated descriptive statistics research elements to address the study objectives. Descriptive methods were employed to provide an overview of employment trends and job-role alignment, while inferential techniques were utilized to evaluate the significance of relationships between variables. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA)

graduates. The research followed a cross-sectional time dimension, wherein data were analyzed simultaneously to reflect graduates' employment outcomes over a specified five-year period.

The data collection procedure began with securing formal approval from the DNSC Research Ethics Committee and the Alumni Office to ensure ethical compliance and institutional support. Questionnaires were then disseminated using a combination of online and in-person methods. Online surveys were distributed through institutional alumni networks, social media platforms, and email lists to maximize reach, while in-person distribution was conducted during alumni gatherings to ensure inclusivity.

Data collection spanned three months, from November 2024 to January 2025. Researchers carefully logged responses and anonymized all data upon receipt to maintain confidentiality. Challenges, such as respondent availability, were addressed through proactive follow-ups and flexible scheduling, ensuring a high response rate and the reliability of the collected data.

Descriptive statistical treatments were employed in this study to ensure rigorous and systematic data analysis. These methods were carefully selected to align with each research objective, ensuring the accuracy and validity of the findings regarding the employment trends, job-role alignment, and sectoral integration of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates. The statistical treatments applied are as follows:

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency were employed to analyze the employment trends among BPA graduates, including employment rates, types of employment, and industry alignment. Frequencies and percentages were utilized to determine the employment rate per graduation batch and classify graduates based on employment type (permanent, contractual, job-order, self-employed), providing a comprehensive overview of workforce absorption trends across different cohorts. Additionally, frequency and percentage distribution analysis was utilized to identify the industries and sectors employing BPA graduates. This statistical approach categorized graduates based on their employment sector, including government agencies, private enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations.

Furthermore, cross-tabulation analysis was conducted to examine employment distribution patterns across different graduation years, job types, and sectors, offering insights into the workforce adaptability and career mobility of BPA graduates. The study adapted and modified the United Nations Statistics Division (2008) ISIC and utilized to ensure a methodologically sound and globally comparable approach in classifying the industries and sectors employing BPA graduates, reinforcing the study's academic rigor and relevance in public administration.

In analyzing the distribution of graduates across these sectors, the study provided insights into the predominant career trajectories and workforce integration patterns of BPA alumni. Furthermore, a sectoral employment comparison analysis was conducted to determine whether BPA graduates were primarily absorbed into governance-related careers and private-sector roles or transitioned into non-related jobs. This analysis was instrumental in assessing the alignment between academic training in public administration and its relevance to the program, highlighting the extent to which BPA graduates contribute to governance, administrative, and corporate sectors. The findings from this analysis offer valuable implications for curriculum development, career placement initiatives, and public administration workforce planning.

The study strictly adhered to ethical research principles, protecting participants' rights, data confidentiality, and research integrity. Before data collection, ethical clearance and approval were secured from the Davao del Norte State College (DNSC) Research Ethics Committee, reinforcing compliance with institutional and professional research standards. This approval process ensured that the study met the ethical safeguards, risk assessments, and informed consent protocols required for social science research.

To uphold participant autonomy, all respondents were provided with a comprehensive informed consent statement, clearly outlining the voluntary nature of their participation, the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. This aligns with respect for persons in research ethics, as emphasized in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of

Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Furthermore, respondents were assured that their identities and responses would remain confidential, preventing personal or professional risk.

The study also implemented robust data protection measures to safeguard participants' information against unauthorized access, breaches, or misuse. All collected data were securely stored in encrypted digital files and accessible only to authorized researchers. These measures are consistent with best practices in data privacy and confidentiality protection, as Babbie (2020) outlined. Additionally, a data privacy statement was incorporated into the research protocol, explicitly informing participants about how their data would be collected, stored, used, and protected in compliance with ethical guidelines and data protection regulations, such as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) in the Philippines.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section analyzes employment trends among BPA graduates, focusing on employment rates and employment status. Furthermore, the study examines the industries and sectors where BPA graduates are employed, assessing their relevance to the program. The discussion contextualizes these trends within relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, offering insights and implications.

Employment trends among BPA graduates

Table 1 presents the employment rates among Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from 2018 to 2024. The table summarizes key metrics, including the total number of graduates, respondents, employed graduates, unemployed graduates, and the corresponding employment rate. Over the seven years, 300 students graduated from the program, and 121 responded to employment status inquiries. Among the respondents, 103 graduates secured employment, while 18 remained unemployed, yielding an overall employment rate of 85.1%. Notably, the employment rate fluctuated, peaking at 100% for the 2020 and 2021 cohorts and declining to 63.3% in 2024.

Table 1. Employment Rates among BPA Graduates

Year Graduated	Total Graduates	Graduates Responded	Employed Graduates	Unemployed Graduates	Employment Rate (%)
2018	40	20	19	1	95.0
2019	54	19	18	1	94.7
2020	18	9	9	0	100.0
2021	24	10	10	0	100.0
2022	45	20	19	1	95.0
2023	64	13	9	4	69.2
2024	55	30	19	11	63.3
Total	300	121	**103**	18	**85.1**

The findings indicate that BPA graduates have a relatively high employment rate, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in preparing students for workforce integration. The highest employment rates (100%) in 2020 and 2021 may be attributed to the smaller sample sizes and unique labor market conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, when public administration expertise became increasingly vital for governance and crisis management. The employment rates in 2023 (69.2%) and 2024 (63.3%) highlight the evolving dynamics of the job market, presenting opportunities for recent graduates to develop resilience, adaptability, and enhanced professional skills. These figures suggest that while graduates may encounter a more competitive landscape and shifting labor market demands, they also have the potential to leverage diverse career pathways, gain valuable experience, and refine their expertise, ultimately strengthening their long-term employability.

These results align with existing literature on graduate employability in public administration. Theoretically, human capital theory (Becker, 1964) posits that education enhances an individual's productivity and employability. The high employment rates observed in earlier cohorts suggest that BPA graduates possess relevant skills aligned with labor market needs. Signaling theory (Spence, 1973) provides valuable insight into

the employment trends of 2023 and 2024, suggesting that employers increasingly recognize the importance of advanced qualifications, relevant experience, and specialized competencies in today's dynamic job market. This shift presents an opportunity for graduates to further enhance their professional profiles by pursuing continuous learning, skills development, and experiential training. Empirical studies on public administration graduates (e.g., Kim & Park, 2020) emphasize that employability is shaped by both institutional preparation and external labor market factors. These findings underscore the importance of continuously refining academic curricula to align with evolving industry expectations, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped to thrive in an increasingly competitive professional environment.

The findings highlight the opportunity for continuous enhancement of the BPA curriculum to further align with evolving employer expectations and industry demands. The employment trends among recent graduates emphasize the value of integrating experiential learning opportunities, strengthening industry partnerships, and expanding career development programs to further enrich job readiness. Moreover, policymakers and academic institutions can proactively implement targeted initiatives such as internship placements, networking opportunities, and specialized training programs to facilitate a seamless transition from academia to the workforce. Future research can build on these insights by exploring key factors influencing employment outcomes, including government hiring trends, regional economic growth, and sector-specific opportunities, ultimately fostering a more robust and responsive educational framework for public administration graduates.

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage distribution of the employment status of BPA graduates from 2018 to 2024, highlighting the various types of employment they have secured. The most significant proportion of graduates, 49%, are in regular or permanent positions, suggesting substantial job security within their respective fields, particularly in government institutions and long-term private sector roles. Meanwhile, 16% of graduates are employed under a contract of service, indicating a significant reliance on temporary employment arrangements, often seen in government agencies and project-based roles. Other notable employment types include job-order positions (15%), casual employment (8%), and a smaller proportion engaged in government internship programs (2%), elected positions (3%), co-terminus roles (1%), and self-employment (6%). The data present a comprehensive overview of how BPA graduates are integrated into the workforce, showcasing stability and employment flexibility.

The high percentage of BPA graduates in permanent employment (49%) demonstrates the program's alignment with career pathways that offer long-term stability, particularly in government offices and administrative roles. This finding suggests that the competencies and skills imparted in the BPA curriculum effectively prepare graduates for professional careers that require administrative expertise, governance knowledge, and public service aptitude. On the other hand, the 16% of graduates in contract-of-service roles and 15% in job-order positions indicate a prevalent trend in the labor market where public and private institutions increasingly rely on non-regular employment arrangements. These roles, although providing valuable experience, often lack long-term security and benefits, which could be a concern for BPA graduates seeking career stability. The presence of casual (8%) and government internship programs (2%) employees reflects a transitional employment phase for many graduates before obtaining more stable positions.
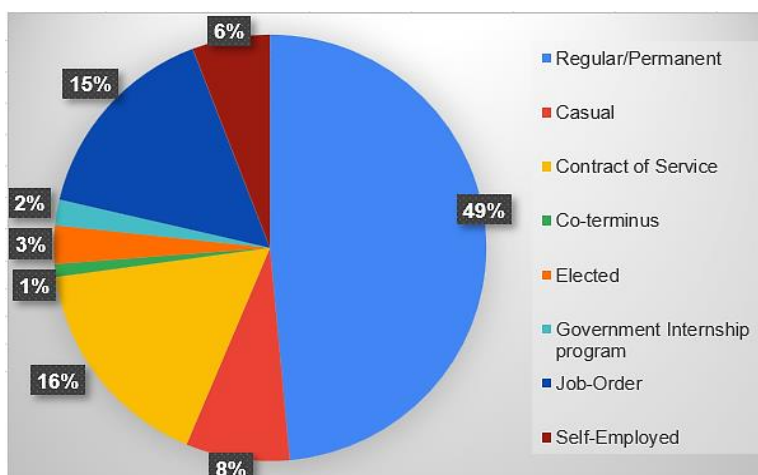

Figure 2. The Percentage Distribution of the Status of Employment of 2018-2024 BPA Graduates

The presence of self-employed graduates (6%) is a fascinating insight, as it suggests that some BPA graduates venture into entrepreneurship or independent professional services rather than traditional employment pathways. This indicates the versatility of the BPA degree, which equips graduates with skills applicable to government service and entrepreneurial endeavors. Meanwhile, although relatively low, the presence of co-terminus (1%) and elected (3%) graduates highlights opportunities for BPA graduates to expand their influence in governance and policy-making roles. While many graduates may initially prefer stable career options, the BPA program can further encourage leadership development and civic engagement, equipping students with the skills and confidence to pursue politically influential and tenure-linked positions.

The findings suggest that the Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) program provides graduates with a strong foundation for governance, administration, and public service careers, leading to a relatively high permanent employment rate. The significant presence of graduates in non-regular employment (contract-of-service, job-order, and casual positions) highlights the strong demand for BPA graduates across various sectors, showcasing their adaptability and relevance in the workforce. While many start in temporary roles, these positions are valuable stepping stones for career growth, providing hands-on experience and opportunities to build professional networks. To further enhance the BPA program's impact, strengthening career placement services, expanding networking opportunities, and integrating targeted professional development initiatives can better equip graduates for long-term career stability and advancement.

Table 2 provides a comprehensive breakdown of the employment status of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates across different graduating cohorts, categorizing them into various employment classifications such as regular/permanent, casual, contract of service, co-terminus, elected positions, government internship programs, job-order, and self-employment. The data highlight that a substantial number of BPA graduates (50) have secured regular or permanent employment, indicating a strong career alignment with the public sector and administrative roles. However, recent cohorts, particularly in 2023 and 2024, display a growing trend toward contractual employment, casual work, and job-order positions, reflecting evolving employment structures in public and private institutions.

Table 2. Status of Employment of Employed BPA Graduates

Year Graduated	Regular/ Permanent	Casual	Contract of Service	Co-terminus	Elected	Government Internship program	Job-Order	Self-Employed
2018	12	2	1				2	2
2019	14		1		1		1	1
2020	1		2	1			4	1
2021	7		1				1	1
2022	6	2	6		1		4	
2023	6		2				1	
2024	4	4	4		1	2	3	1
Total	**50**	**8**	**17**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**16**	**6**

A closer examination reveals that earlier graduates (2018-2019) have a significantly higher proportion of regular/permanent positions. In contrast, graduates from 2020 are more likely to start in temporary roles such as contract-of-service or job-order employment. This shift suggests that while the BPA curriculum equips graduates with relevant competencies, many enter the workforce through non-regular employment arrangements before transitioning to stable roles. The increasing reliance on temporary employment among newer graduates aligns with broader employment policies in the Philippine bureaucracy, where tenure-based promotions and additional credentials often play a role in securing permanent appointments.

The distribution of employment types suggests that while the BPA program effectively prepares graduates for careers in governance, public administration, and related fields, the job market increasingly favors experience-based hiring and contractual placements as entry points. The high number of contract-of-service (17) and job-order (16) positions underscores the transitional nature of employment for recent graduates. Casual employment (8) and self-employment (6) also shape early career experiences, with some graduates opting for entrepreneurial ventures or independent professional work.

The presence of elected officials (3 graduates) and those engaged in government internship programs (2 graduates) demonstrates the program's contribution to fostering political engagement and leadership in governance. These roles provide valuable experiential learning and networking opportunities, reinforcing the applicability of public administration education in policymaking and community leadership. Meanwhile, the limited number of co-terminus positions (1 graduate) reflects the selective nature of political appointments, suggesting that BPA graduates may benefit from enhanced political management and legislative governance training to increase their competitiveness for such roles.

The findings in Table 2 highlight the strong career potential of the BPA program, demonstrating that graduates successfully secure employment in governance, administration, and public service. Higher education institutions can expand career development initiatives to enhance this positive trajectory further, ensuring that graduates transition smoothly from entry-level roles to long-term, stable positions.

Industries and Sectors Employing BPA Graduates

Table 3 comprehensively summarizes the types of institutions employing BPA graduates from 2018 to 2024. The data categorizes employment into government institutions, educational and training institutions, research and policy institutions, industry-specific job institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profits, private employment and recruitment agencies, and international and overseas employment institutions.

Table 3. Types of Institutions Employing BPA Graduates

Batch	Government Institutions	Educational & Training Institutions	Research & Policy Institutions	Industry-Specific Job Institutions	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) & Non-Profits	Private Employment & Recruitment Agencies	International & Overseas Employment Institutions	Total
2018	5	8	1	5				19
2019	7	3		6		1	1	18
2020	8			1				9
2021	1	2		6			1	10
2022	10	1		8				19
2023	1	1		7				9
2024	6	1		10	2			19
Overall	38	16	1	43	2	1	2	103

The highest concentration of graduates (43 out of 103) is employed in industry-specific job institutions, followed by government institutions (38 graduates). Meanwhile, educational and training institutions employ 16 graduates. At the same time, smaller numbers are found in research and policy institutions (1), NGOs & non-profits (2), private employment & recruitment agencies (1), and international/overseas employment institutions (2). The data suggest that BPA graduates find diverse career opportunities across various sectors, with a strong presence in public administration and private industry roles.

The significant number of BPA graduates employed in industry-specific job institutions (43 graduates, 41.7%) highlights the versatility and adaptability of the BPA degree beyond government roles. This finding suggests that BPA graduates possess transferable administrative, managerial, and organizational skills applicable to various industries, including finance, healthcare, business services, and corporate administration. Moreover, the second-highest concentration of graduates (38, or 36.8%) in government institutions reinforces the strong alignment of the BPA curriculum with public sector careers, particularly in local government units (LGUs), national agencies, and public service roles.

Additionally, BPA graduates in educational and training institutions (16 graduates, or 15.5%) underscores the relevance of public administration expertise in academic and administrative roles within higher education. While smaller in number, the inclusion of BPA graduates in NGOs, private employment agencies, and international organizations indicates that some graduates are pursuing careers in policy research, advocacy, human resource management, and global employment opportunities. This diversity in career placement reflects public administration skills' broad applicability in domestic and international job markets.

The employment distribution of BPA graduates emphasizes the program's effectiveness in preparing students for public and private sector careers. The strong presence in government institutions validates the BPA program's core mission of equipping students with the competencies required for public service. Furthermore, the substantial employment in industry-specific job institutions signals an evolving career landscape where administrative and governance expertise is increasingly valued in private enterprises, corporate firms, and other non-government sectors.

Figure 3 illustrates the percentage distribution of job relevance among employed Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from the 2018-2024 batches, showcasing how much their current employment aligns with their academic background. The data reveal that a significant majority (89%) of BPA graduates have successfully secured jobs that directly correspond to their expertise in public administration, governance, and institutional management, affirming the strong industry alignment and real-world applicability of the BPA curriculum. This high job relevance rate suggests that the program effectively equips students with the necessary competencies in policy implementation, public sector management, and administrative leadership, making them valuable assets in government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private administrative sectors, and other allied industries.

Conversely, a minority (11%) of BPA graduates are employed in roles that are not directly related to public administration, which various external factors, including labor market conditions, economic shifts, personal career choices, and the evolving nature of employment opportunities may influence. Some graduates may have opted for roles in customer service, business process outsourcing (BPO), private enterprise management, or entrepreneurship, leveraging their transferable skills in communication, leadership, and organizational management. While this percentage is relatively small, it highlights the adaptability and versatility of BPA graduates, demonstrating that their training enables them to succeed in diverse professional environments.
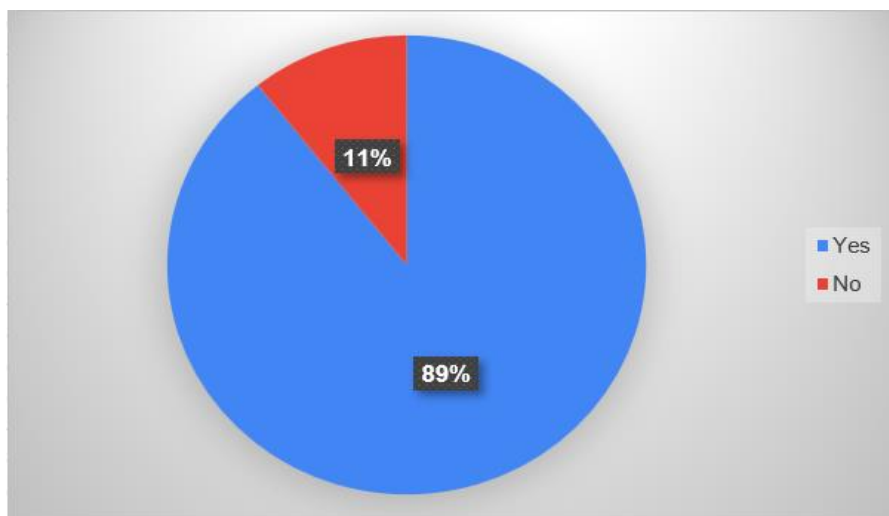

Figure 3. Overall Percentage of Job Relevance of Employed BPA Graduates Batch 2018-2024

The high rate of job relevance among BPA graduates validates the effectiveness of the BPA curriculum in preparing students for careers in public service, governance, and institutional management. It also reinforces the BPA program's position as a strategic educational pathway for producing future public administration, policymaking, and administrative governance leaders.

Table 4. presents a detailed breakdown of the job relevance of employed Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from 2018 to 2024. It categorizes graduates based on whether their current employment aligns with their academic background in public administration. The "Yes" column represents graduates whose jobs are relevant to their BPA degree, while the "No" column represents those employed in positions not directly related to public administration. The data show that 92 out of 103 graduates (89.32%) have jobs aligned with their degree, while 11 graduates (10.68%) are employed in unrelated fields. The highest job relevance percentage is recorded in 2018 (94.74%) and 2019 (94.44%), while the lowest is in 2023 (77.78%), reflecting slight variations in employment trends across batches.

The high job relevance rate (89.32%) indicates that the BPA program effectively prepares graduates for governance, administration, and public service careers. The consistently high percentages across multiple years demonstrate the strong alignment between the BPA curriculum and labor market demands, particularly in government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private sector administrative roles. The slight decline in job relevance in recent batches (2023-2024) may indicate evolving labor market trends, increased competition, or graduates exploring opportunities beyond traditional public administration roles. However, even with these variations, the overall results affirm that BPA graduates successfully secure relevant employment in their field at a high rate.

Table 4. Job Relevance of Employed BPA Graduates Batch 2018-2024

Batch	Yes	(Yes) Percentage	No	(No) Percentage	Total
2018	18	94.74	1	5.26	19
2019	17	94.44	1	5.56	18
2020	8	88.89	1	11.11	9
2021	9	90.00	1	10.00	10
2022	17	89.47	2	10.53	19
2023	7	77.78	2	22.22	9
2024	16	84.21	3	15.79	19
Overall	**92**		**11**		**103**
Percentage	**89.32**		**10.68**		**100**

The minor increase in non-relevant employment (10.68%) suggests that while most BPA graduates remain within their field, some opt for careers in unrelated industries such as business process outsourcing (BPO), customer service, or private sector roles. This may be influenced by personal career choices, industry trends, or temporary employment before transitioning into public administration roles. The lower job relevance rates in 2023 and 2024 indicate that newer graduates require additional time and experience before securing positions aligned with their BPA education.

The findings reinforce the value of the BPA program in producing job-ready graduates who successfully integrate into governance, administrative, and public service roles. The high job relevance rate aligns with Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which posits that education enhances employability and career alignment. The results also support Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973), suggesting that obtaining a BPA degree is a strong credential employers recognize as a marker of public administration expertise.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This section synthesizes the key findings of the study, highlighting the employment trends, challenges, and sectoral integration of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from Davao del Norte State College. The conclusions drawn emphasize the alignment of the BPA program with public sector career pathways while addressing gaps in employment stability and sectoral mismatches. Furthermore, the recommendations provided are directed towards higher education institutions, government agencies, BPA graduates, and policymakers, ensuring a more responsive curriculum, improved workforce integration, and policy enhancements that foster long-term career growth. The study's insights contribute to the broader discourse on public administration education, employability, and governance reforms, ultimately aiming to strengthen the professional trajectory of BPA graduates in the evolving labor market.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed significant insights into the employment trends and sectoral integration of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from Davao del Norte State College. The results indicated that a substantial percentage of graduates successfully transitioned into the workforce, with 89.32% securing jobs relevant to their field of study. Most found employment in government institutions and industry-specific administrative roles, reflecting the strong alignment between the BPA program and public sector careers. However, some graduates encountered employment mismatches, entering private-sector roles or experiencing

contractual employment conditions. The data also highlighted a growing trend of contractual and job-order employment among recent cohorts, suggesting that while BPA graduates are employable, their long-term job security and career progression may require additional policy support and institutional interventions.

The findings reinforce key theoretical underpinnings in public administration and workforce development. The human capital theory (Becker, 1994) is validated by the high employment rate of BPA graduates, demonstrating that education and specialized competencies enhance employability. Moreover, the Credentialism Theory (Collins, 1979) is reflected in the hiring dynamics of the public sector, where civil service eligibility and formal qualifications play a critical role in determining career opportunities. Additionally, the Job-Market Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973) explains why graduates who engage in internships, leadership roles, and professional development initiatives have a competitive advantage in securing employment. Overall, the study affirms that the Bachelor of Public Administration program at DNSC has effectively equipped graduates with relevant skills for governance and administrative careers.

Recommendation

Based on this study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the employability and sectoral integration of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates, ensuring alignment with workforce demands at global, national, and local levels.

For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and curriculum development, there is a need to enhance digital governance and data analytics training. Given the increasing demand for digital competencies in governance, HEIs, particularly Davao del Norte State College (DNSC), should integrate e-governance, data-driven decision-making, and financial management systems into the BPA curriculum. Expanding coursework on digital public administration and providing hands-on training in data analytics, digital records management, and ICT applications will better prepare graduates for modern governance roles. Additionally, to address job-role mismatches and employment barriers, HEIs should expand internship opportunities, government partnerships, and apprenticeship programs that allow students to gain real-world governance experience. Establishing formal Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with government agencies and NGOs can facilitate job placements and expose students to civil service environments. Furthermore, the BPA curriculum should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging sectoral demands, including crisis management, environmental governance, and regulatory compliance. Integrating competency-based education will enhance graduates' job readiness and adaptability across various governance sectors.

For government agencies, civil service institutions, and local government units (LGUs), it is recommended that there should be an expansion of permanent positions and a reduction in contractual work. Many BPA graduates remain in contractual or job-order positions, limiting their career stability. Government agencies should create more entry-level permanent roles, providing clearer pathways for tenure and long-term career progression in the civil service. Furthermore, public sector agencies should offer upskilling programs, executive training, and scholarship opportunities for BPA graduates. These initiatives will allow graduates to specialize in key governance areas such as fiscal management, urban planning, and legislative processes, improving their career trajectory and governance contributions.

BPA graduates and job seekers are highly encouraged to pursue professional certifications in public administration subfields, such as policy analysis, project management, and procurement procedures. Additionally, participation in leadership training programs, civic engagement activities, and government-affiliated initiatives can strengthen their employability. Graduates should also actively engage with professional organizations in public administration to expand their networks, gain industry insights, and access job opportunities. Networking within government and policy research institutions can enhance their visibility in the job market.

Policymakers and workforce development programs need to improve public sector hiring practices by reviewing existing frameworks to simplify recruitment processes, increase merit-based hiring, and reduce bureaucratic delays that hinder BPA graduates from securing governance-related jobs. Additionally, a national employment monitoring body should be established to track employment trends, sectoral absorption rates, and

job-role alignment for public administration graduates and other courses. The data gathered will inform policy recommendations and educational strategies to align academic programs with workforce needs continuously. Lastly, workforce policies should align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). This alignment can be achieved by creating inclusive employment pathways for graduates and ensuring equal access to government roles, workforce training, and career advancement opportunities.

Points for Practitioners

This section provides key points of the study's findings into actionable recommendations for policymakers, academic institutions, and public administration practitioners, ensuring stronger workforce integration and improved employment outcomes for BPA graduates, to wit:

- Strengthening Employment Stability for BPA Graduates While a majority of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates secure employment in governance-related roles, the prevalence of contractual and job-order positions highlights the need for expanded permanent job opportunities. Government agencies should consider policy reforms that facilitate clearer pathways for tenure, including increased entry-level permanent positions and competency-based hiring mechanisms.
- Enhancing Curriculum to Address Emerging Workforce Demands The evolving labor market underscores the importance of integrating digital governance, data analytics, and financial management training into the BPA curriculum. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should strengthen competency-based education by incorporating real-world simulations, case studies, and technical training in governance-related software to equip graduates with skills aligned with modern administrative functions.
- Bridging Academia and Employment Through Internship and Placement Programs Strengthening partnerships between universities and government agencies can enhance employability by providing structured internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs. Formalized agreements with civil service institutions, local government units (LGUs), and policy research organizations can improve graduates' readiness for public sector employment and reduce the time spent in contractual positions.
- Optimizing Public Sector Hiring Processes for BPA Graduates Credential-based hiring remains a key determinant of employment for BPA graduates, particularly in government positions. Simplifying recruitment procedures, increasing merit-based hiring, and offering targeted capacity-building initiatives can improve workforce absorption and ensure that qualified candidates transition into permanent public service roles more efficiently.
- Encouraging Professional Development and Certification Among Graduates To enhance employability, BPA graduates should actively seek professional certifications in public administration subfields, such as procurement management, project evaluation, and legislative governance. Additionally, participation in leadership training, civic engagement activities, and policy research initiatives can strengthen employment credentials and expand career opportunities.

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