

Work readiness and Work-changing ability: exploring the employability profiles of a social psychiatric care graduate programme's alumni

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Abstract

Purpose – Work readiness and the ability to change how work is conducted are key dimensions of employability. This study focuses on alumni from the social psychiatric care (SPC) programme at University West in Trollhättan, Sweden. As their work readiness and work-changing abilities have not been studied to this point, the purpose was to explore the eventual main employability profiles in these alumni.

Design/methodology/approach – Between 8th November 2022 and 2nd January 2023, 94 SPC alumni responded to the Employee Agility and Resilience Short Swedish Version Measurement Scale, consisting of five subscales that represent different employability features. Cluster analysis was used to explore eventual employability profiles in these alumni.

Findings – Three clusters of SPC alumni with different employability profiles were identified. Cluster 1: Highly employable profile, which is represented by SPC alumni who scored high on each of the five employability features. Cluster 2: Employability with alliance-creating profile; this cluster comprise SPC alumni whose strengths lie in creating collegial relationships. Cluster 3: Employability with a strong social support profile, which comprise SPC alumni with a strong social backing at work. We discuss that SPC alumni of these employability profiles are variously equipped to (1) follow and develop how work is conducted in their fields and (2) adapt to changes at work.

Originality/value – The study presents employability profiles of SPC alumni and offers valuable insights that could enhance the prospects of these alumni becoming a recognised occupation within the realms of psychiatry, social services, institutional work and community work.

Keywords Cluster analysis, Employability profiles, Social psychiatric care alumni, Work-changing ability, Work readiness

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The work readiness dimension of employability that refers to professionals' readiness to operate in current work practices and adapt to changes at work tends to receive more attention in contemporary research (Björck, 2021; Crisp *et al.*, 2019) than work-changing ability, another vital dimension of employability that refers to professionals' ability to

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change and develop how work is conducted in a field of work or in working life in general (Björck, 2021; Trede and McEwen, 2015). Research on employability has called for studies to focus on both work readiness and work-changing ability (Crisp *et al.*, 2019) and to show that there are dimensions of employability that are essential for both recently graduated professionals and experienced professionals to possess (Akkermans *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, employability research has focused on specific employability skills or features that professionals need to be work ready and/or able to change work (Coll *et al.*, 2009; Freudenberg *et al.*, 2011; Hossain *et al.*, 2022; Jackson, 2014; Mahajan *et al.*, 2022; Rathee and Mittal, 2024), such as collaboration skills, resilience and agility. Collaboration skills refer to interpersonal skills such as being able to work and communicate well with others, and being able to collaborate has been identified as crucial for professionals in general (Braun *et al.*, 2017) and as a core competence for health care professionals (Allert *et al.*, 2022). Learning at work in general (Perusso and Wagenaar, 2023) and learning approaches such as problem-based learning, whereby people learn together in groups, have been found to foster collaboration skills (Azer, 2009). Resilience in the workplace is generally described as resistance to adversity and adaptability to work changes (Braun *et al.*, 2017). In a work context, resistance means being able to cope with work-related adversities (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). Resilience is an individual resource that is essential for coping with the demands of contemporary work and adapting to changes at work (Carson *et al.*, 2011; Field, 2019; McAllister and McKinnon, 2009). Thus, resilience has been conceptualised as a key basis for work readiness (Borg *et al.*, 2021; Ryan *et al.*, 2019). The adaptability component of resilience has been earmarked as important for retaining employment and ensuring career advancement (Billett, 2022). Research has also discussed and identified factors that can help foster resilience at work. In a discussion paper, Carson *et al.* (2011) argued that informal learning with their peers can help social workers develop resilience in terms of specific strategies for coping with their challenging working environments. McDonald *et al.* (2013) showed that work-based educational interventions provided nurses and midwives increased assertiveness, which helped them to better cope with adversity at work. Braun *et al.* (2017) proposed a model in which they discussed specific antecedents of both employee resilience and employee agility. Positive relationships with colleagues and social support at work were proposed to be two different factors fostering resilience among professionals. In their model, Braun *et al.* (2017) described resilience as professionals' ability to adapt to changes at work and bounce back from work-related setbacks. Moving on to the concept of agility, there are different definitions of what agility means in a work context (Salmen and Festing, 2022). Focusing on professionals, agility broadly refers to individuals' proactive and creative ability to modify current work approaches and invent new ones in order to respond to upcoming changes at work (Braun *et al.*, 2017; Taran, 2019). In this manner, agility is key to both recently graduated professionals' and experienced professionals' work-changing ability. Factors that can help foster professionals' agility have also been studied. In an empirical study, Alavi *et al.* (2014) illustrated that organisational learning had a positive impact on professionals' agility in the sense that it made them more knowledgeable about how to respond to changes. Braun *et al.* (2017) proposed that collaboration with people working outside one's own team, department or organisation can provide professionals with new knowledge that increases their agility. Taran (2019) showed that healthcare professionals' agility increased after participation in an intervention-based programme carried out to make professionals better at dealing with change. A common denominator between the outlined research about resilience and agility is that both informal workplace learning and formal education activities and interventions at work can help professionals develop resilience and agility. The present study builds on research that positions resilience, agility and collaboration as key features of employability and

centres on the employability of alumni of an interdisciplinary bachelor's degree programme in social psychiatric care (SPC) that emerged in 2010 at University West in Trollhättan, Sweden. The SPC degree programme includes a combination of courses that give students a total of 180 higher education credits (HEC) upon their graduation. The programme includes 90 HEC in caring science, 45 HEC in social work and 45 HEC in criminology. The degree programme was established to provide its students an interdisciplinary competence profile that representatives from psychiatric care, juvenile institutional care, social services and correctional services as well as university faculty felt would be useful in these institutional settings or related fields (Andrén *et al.*, 2019). Competences that are particularly useful for SPC alumni include the abilities to make ethical decisions (cf. Juujärvi *et al.*, 2020), show empathy towards others (cf. Moudatsou *et al.*, 2020), and build caring relationships with patients, clients, incarcerated persons and relatives (cf. Denton and Grenade, 2022; Markström *et al.*, 2023). While work readiness and work-changing ability are crucial for alumni in general, there is a specific reason why these two dimensions of employability are particularly vital for SPC alumni. The reason is that SPC alumni do not represent an established occupation in the fields where they work. Rather, they work and collaborate with established occupations such as mental health nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, and psychologists. Work readiness is particularly crucial for SPC alumni because they must be able to adapt to the working methods utilised by these established occupations. Work-changing ability is especially vital for SPC alumni because it is crucial for their potential to develop and not merely follow established work practices in fields such as psychiatric care, juvenile institutional care, social services, and correctional services. If SPC alumni lack sufficient levels of work readiness and work-changing ability, they will find it difficult to both adapt to developments in and contribute to the advancement of these fields. Furthermore, there are no prior studies about the specific competence profiles of SPC alumni, nor of their work readiness and work-changing abilities in relevant fields of work, which makes this study important. Thus, on the basis of the outlined research background and to form key bases for work readiness and work-changing ability, the purpose of the present study is to explore the eventual main employability profiles in alumni from the SPC programme.

Method

The research project was reviewed by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority, which determined that this research project does not fall under the scope of the Swedish law on ethical review of research involving humans and does not entail the processing of sensitive personal data (Dnr 2022-03455-01).

Data collection and participants

Data were collected between November 8, 2022, and January 2, 2023, through an electronic survey. As the data collection began, 10 cohorts of SPC students had graduated, including 295 individuals (272 females and 23 males). We found active contact information for 241 individuals, 39% (95) of whom responded to the survey. A statistical outlier was removed; therefore, the final study population consisted of 94 respondents (88 females and 6 males) with a mean graduating age of 27. All respondents except one have worked or are still working in psychiatric care, juvenile institutional care, social services and correctional services (see Table 1).

Table 1.
An overview of the
responding social
psychiatric care
alumni's fields of work
and work positions

Work positions								
Psychiatric care	Behavioural Specialist in Forensic Psychiatric Care	<i>Head of Care Unit in Inpatient Care</i>	Mental Health Worker	Nursing Assistant Nursing Staff	Outpatient Care Developer	<i>Team Leader</i>	Therapist at a Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinic	<i>Unit Manager for Staff in Outpatient Care</i>
Social services and Juvenile institutional care	Addiction Therapist	Administrative Secretary for Official Reports/Records	<i>Assistant Department Head</i>	Budget and Debt Advisor	Care Coordinator for Adults and Elderly People	Caring Staff/ Care Assistant in – Municipal Psychiatric Care - Community Services	Child Care Secretary	Coordinator at the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care
	Coordinator for Young Adults <i>Head of Unit</i>	Developer in Social Services Housing Secretary Housing Support Officer Housing Support Pedagogue	<i>Director within Public Services</i> Official Administrator of Rehabilitation	<i>Duty Manager</i> Pedagogue within Public Services	Family Home Secretary Rehabilitation Counsellor	Family Therapist Social Welfare Secretary for – Children and Young people - Financial Assistance	Field Secretary Support Assistant in the Field of Disability Work	Habilitation Assistant Support Pedagogue
	Treatment Assistant	Treatment Pedagogue at the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care	Youth Supervisor					
Correctional services	Correctional Officer	Inspector of the Non-Custodial Treatment	Treatment Coordinator					
Other work positions	Administrative Officer at the Border Police	Immigration Decision Officer at the Border Police	Investigator at the National Board of Forensic Medicine	School Counsellor	Social Pedagogue in Educational Settings			

Note(s): Italics represent managerial and/or leadership positions

Source(s): Authors' own work

Instruments

The electronic survey included 12 background questions and The Employee Agility and Resilience Short Swedish Version Measurement Scale (EmAR-SS). These 12 questions centred around the respondents' genders, whether they and/or one of their parents were born in Sweden, which year they had graduated and how old they were at the time, whether someone close to the respondents had needed support from psychiatric care institutions, correctional services and/or social services, and whether they as alumni have worked in or more of these three domains.

EmAR-SS. EmAR-SS comprises five subscales that originate from [Braun et al.'s \(2017\)](#) validated Employee Agility and Resilience Measurement Scale: agility, collaboration, creating positive relationships, resilience, and social support. These subscales comprise 27 items and represent specific employability features that form key bases for work readiness and/or work-changing ability. The 27 items were first translated from English into Swedish by a professional translator and then translated back into English by another professional translator (cf. [Behr, 2017](#)). Any deviations from the original text that were found were discussed among the participating researchers to determine the final Swedish version of the 27 items. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. The response operations were "disagree very strongly" (1 point), "disagree moderately" (2 points), "neither agree nor disagree" (3 points), "agree moderately" (4 points) and "agree very strongly" (5 points). The Agility Subscale measures how used to and willing the respondents are to create change at work and comprises five items. The Collaboration Subscale measures how accustomed and willing the respondents are to collaborate with people working outside their team, department and organisation and comprises five items. The Creating Positive Relationships Subscale measures the degree to which the respondents are used to and willing to create positive (productive and trusting) relationships with colleagues and comprises six items. The Resilience Subscale comprises six items. Four of these items measure the degree to which the respondents are able to adapt to changes that they encounter at work. The fifth item concerns extent to which the respondents enjoy trying new things and the sixth concerns the degree to which the respondents can bounce back from setbacks. Finally, the Social Support Subscale measures the extent to which the respondents experience social and emotional backing at work and comprises five items. In our study population, the Agility, Collaboration, Resilience and Social Support Subscales had Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.70, 0.69, 0.85 and 0.77, respectively, indicating that the subscales had acceptable internal reliability. The Creating Positive Relationships Subscale had a somewhat lower Cronbach's alpha score of 0.64.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics with measures of mean (M), median (Md) and standard deviation (SD), as well as the minimum and maximum scores on the five subscales, were used. Pearson's correlation test was employed to measure the correlations between the five subscales. Weak correlations are scores between 0.1 and 0.3, moderate correlations are scores between 0.4 and 0.6, strong correlations are scores between 0.6 and 0.9 and a score of 1 represents a perfect correlation ([Dancey and Reidy, 2007](#)). We conducted a two-step cluster analysis ([Govender and Sivakumar, 2020](#)) to identify and explore the eventual main employability profiles. The first step involved a hierarchical cluster analysis conducted through Ward's method, which is founded on squared Euclidean distances. This analysis was used to generate an agglomeration schedule and a dendrogram to determine how many clusters the data should be divided into. In the second step, we conducted a K-means analysis ([Govender and Sivakumar, 2020](#)), where our knowledge of how many clusters the data should comprise was

used as a starting point for identifying clusters of SPC alumni with different employability profiles. The K-means analysis was first performed using raw scores. However, for comparability reasons, we also performed a K-means analysis with standardised scores, yielding similar or identical results. To increase interpretability and comprehension, the results section will present the raw scores in an ANOVA table that shows the differences in cluster centres between the clusters we identified through the K-means analysis. The ANOVA table also shows how many respondents each cluster is composed of. To further pinpoint the differences in cluster centres between the identified clusters, we conducted a Bonferroni post hoc test.

Results

First, we can note that each subscale has a sample mean that is similar to its sample median (Table 2). Furthermore, all sample means are on the upper end of the scoring range for their respective subscales. The sample mean for creating positive relationships (26.80) and the sample mean for social support (21.64) represent scores which are 85–90% of their respective subscale's maximum score. The sample mean for resilience (24.77) is just below 85% of the maximum score on that subscale, whereas the sample means for collaboration (19.98) and agility (19.46) are respectively 80% and just below 80% of the maximum scores of these two subscales.

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics summarising the responses of 94 SPC alumni on the five subscales of EmAR-SS

Subscales (minimum–maximum)	M(SD)	Md
1. Agility (5–25)	19.46 (3.24)	20.00
2. Collaboration (5–25)	19.98 (2.79)	20.00
3. Creating positive relationships (6–30)	26.80 (2.18)	27.00
4. Resilience (6–30)	24.77 (3.64)	25.00
5. Social support (5–25)	21.64 (3.00)	22.00

Source(s): Authors' own work

We also identified significant positive correlations between several of the five subscales (Table 3). Significant positive correlations at a moderate level (0.3–0.6) were found between agility and collaboration, agility and resilience, collaboration and resilience, creative positive relationships and resilience, and between creating positive relationships and social support. The two strongest correlations were between creating positive relationships and resilience ($r = 0.492$) and between agility and collaboration ($r = 0.484$). A significant positive correlation at a weak level was found between collaboration and creating positive relationships ($r = 0.280$).

Table 3.
Correlations between the five subscales

	1. Agility	2. Collaboration	3. Creating positive relationships	4. Resilience	5. Social support
1. Agility	1.000				
2. Collaboration	0.484**	1.000			
3. Creating positive relationships	0.140	0.280**	1.000		
4. Resilience	0.323**	0.391**	0.492**	1.000	
5. Social support	-0.118	0.113	0.399**	0.201	1.000

Note(s): ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
Source(s): Authors' own work

The agglomeration schedule generated from the hierarchical cluster analysis suggests that the data should be divided into three or four clusters. This is because the agglomeration coefficient increased considerably from 2532.67 to 3210.07 between the three to two clusters. The dendrogram generated from the hierarchical cluster analysis illustrated three visible clusters. Thus, the results of the K-means analysis presented below, which illustrates three clusters, are founded on the three-cluster solution generated from the hierarchical cluster analysis. Alongside the results of the K-means analysis, we also outline the results of an ANOVA analysis in which we tested whether the differences in centre scores between the three identified clusters were significant. Below, we describe and explain these results using an ANOVA table (Table 4).

		Cluster 1: Highly employable profile (<i>n</i> = 25)	Cluster 2: Employability with alliance-creating profile (<i>n</i> = 29)	Cluster 3: Employability with a strong social support profile (<i>n</i> = 40)
Raw scores	Agility (5 items)	22.80*	18.48*	18.08*
	Collaboration (5 items)	22.64*	18.31*	19.52*
	Creating positive relationships (6 items)	28.64*	24.86*	27.30*
	Resilience (6 items)	28.08*	21.07*	25.38*
	Social support (5 items)	21.36*	19.17*	23.60*

Note(s): *The differences in cluster centres are significant at the 0.01 level

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 4.
ANOVA table indicating the differences in cluster centres between the three clusters

Cluster 1: Highly employable profile

Cluster 1 comprises SPC alumni with highly employable profiles – they have particularly high scores for agility, collaboration, creating positive relationships and resilience, and a high score for social support. Their agility (22.80), collaboration (22.64), creating positive relationships (28.64) and resilience (28.08) scores are all higher than 90% of the maximum scores of these subscales, whereas their social support (21.36) score is 85% of the maximum score of this subscale. Cluster 1's scores on the former four subscales are all higher than the sample means on these subscales, whereas this cluster's centre score for social support is slightly lower than the sample mean of this subscale (Table 2). In sum, SPC alumni possessing a highly employable profile do not just have particularly high levels of agility and resilience – they are also particularly willing and used to (1) collaborating with people working outside their organisation, team or department and (2) creating positive (i.e. productive and trusting) relationships with colleagues. Furthermore, SPC alumni with the employability profile characterising Cluster 1 possess high levels of social support at work.

Cluster 2: Employability with alliance-creating profile

Cluster 2 represents SPC alumni with an alliance-creating profile because their strength in terms of employability is to create positive relationships with colleagues. This is evident in the following characteristics of Cluster 2. This cluster's centre score (24.86) for

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creating positive relationships is 83% of the maximum score on this subscale. Cluster 2's scores for agility (18.48), collaboration (18.31) and resilience (21.07) are all higher than 70% but lower than 75% of the maximum scores on these subscales. Furthermore, this cluster's score on social support (19.17) is just above 75% of the maximum score on this subscale. It is worth noting that Cluster 2's centre scores on the five subscales are all lower than the sample mean of these subscales (Table 2). This, however, does not mean that Cluster 2 has low scores within these subscales. Rather, Cluster 2 represents SPC alumni with alliance-creating employability profiles whose strengths lie in their being used to and willing to create positive relationships with colleagues. SPC alumni with the employability profile identified in Cluster 2 also have an adequate amount of resilience, agility and social support at work and are reasonably used to and willing to collaborate with people who work in other organisations, teams or departments.

Cluster 3: Employability with a strong social support profile

Cluster 3 is made up of SPC alumni whose defining feature and therefore profile in terms of employability is their particularly strong social support at work. This cluster's social support score (23.60) is 94% of the maximum score on this subscale. Cluster 3's score on social support is also above the sample mean on this subscale (21.64). This cluster's creating positive relationships score is 27.30 out of 30, and the sample mean on this subscale is 26.80. Thus, Cluster 3 includes SPC alumni who are clearly used to and willing to create positive relationships with colleagues. Furthermore, Cluster 3's score for resilience (25.38) is 85% of the maximum score on this subscale, a score that is higher than the sample mean for resilience (24.77). Cluster 3's agility (18.08 out of 25) and collaboration (19.52 out of 25) scores are sufficient rather than high, and they are also lower than the sample mean for both agility (19.46) and collaboration (19.98). In sum, SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 3 have particularly strong social support at work and are clearly more used to and willing to create positive relationships with colleagues than to collaborate with people working outside their organisation, team or department. Furthermore, their levels of resilience are evidently higher than their levels of agility.

Key differences between clusters

We use both the outlined cluster centres and the results of a Bonferroni post hoc test to determine the differences between the three clusters. The results of this test are outlined in Table 5, which shows the mean differences between the clusters.

Subscales	Cluster 1 compared to cluster 2	Cluster 1 compared to cluster 3	Cluster 3 compared to cluster 2
Agility	4.32*	4.73*	-0.41
Collaboration	4.33*	3.12*	1.21
Creating positive relationships	3.38*	0.94	2.44*
Resilience	7.01*	2.71*	4.31*
Social support	2.19*	-2.24*	4.43*

Table 5.

Mean differences between the clusters

Note(s): *The mean differences are significant at the 0.05 level

Source(s): Authors' own work

SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 1 clearly have higher levels of resilience than SPC alumni with the employability profiles of Clusters 2 and 3. The mean difference (7.01) between Clusters 1 and 2 is particularly high (Table 5). However, Table 5 also shows that SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 3 are more resilient than SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 2. Another key difference is that SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 1 have much higher levels of agility than SPC alumni with the employability profiles of Clusters 2 and 3. Cluster 1's centre score for agility (22.80 out of 25) is particularly high, whereas Cluster 2's and Cluster 3's centre scores for agility are sufficient, namely, 18.48 and 18.08, respectively. Furthermore, the mean differences on the Collaboration Subscale show that SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 1 are more used to and willing to collaborate with people working outside their organisation, team or department than SPC alumni of the employability profiles of Clusters 2 and 3. Cluster 1's centre score on collaboration is 22.64 out of 25, whereas Cluster 2's and Cluster 3's centres score on this subscale is 18.31 and 19.52, respectively. Cluster 1 stands out because all its centre scores are either high or particularly high. In contrast, Clusters 2 and 3 have sufficient rather than high centre scores on more than one of the five subscales. Cluster 2 is characterised by the fact that this Cluster only has *one* high centre score, namely on the Creating Positive Relationships Subscale, and *no* centre score that is particularly high. This makes Cluster 2 especially different from Cluster 1 but also clearly different from Cluster 3, which has a particular high centre score for both the Social Support Subscale and the Creating Positive Relationships Subscale, and a high centre score on resilience. Conversely, Cluster 3 is unique because of its particularly high centre score on social support (23.60 out of 25). In comparison, Cluster 1's centre score on social support is high (21.36), whereas Cluster 2's centre score for this subscale is sufficient (19.17). Drawing on the description of the defining features and differences between these three clusters of SPC alumni, we now proceed to the discussion.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the eventual main employability profiles in alumni from the SPC programme. The analysis resulted in three clusters representing SPC alumni of different employability profiles. Cluster 1 is composed of SPC alumni with highly employable profiles, Cluster 2 is made up of SPC alumni with alliance-creating employability profiles and Cluster 3 comprises SPC alumni whose employability profiles revolve around their strong social support at work. While these clusters represent SPC alumni who are differently equipped in terms of the five examined employability features, none of the clusters constitute SPC alumni insufficiently equipped in terms of employability. This is vital for discussing these three clusters in relation to the fields of work in Sweden in which they tend to operate, namely in psychiatric care and juvenile care institutions as well as in social services and correctional services. In these fields, SPC alumni work and collaborate with established occupations like mental health nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. Furthermore, they have been educated to obtain an interdisciplinary knowledge profile that qualifies them to both follow and contribute to the development of work practices utilised by these established occupations (Andrén *et al.*, 2019). This is interesting to discuss in relation to the three clusters of SPC alumni studied here. Due to their high levels of resilience, highly employable SPC alumni (Cluster 1) can modify their existing skills to adapt well to changes at work that established occupations initiate. Adaptability to changes at work has been earmarked as a key to professionals' possibilities to stay work ready (Borg *et al.*, 2021; Ryan *et al.*, 2019) in contemporary working life, where how work is conducted and approached often changes (Tsiolis and Siouti, 2023). Due to their high levels of agility, SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 1 have a work-changing ability that makes them well-

equipped to contribute to the development of the work practices of the established occupations they work with. Furthermore, these SPC alumni are highly used to and willing to create positive relationships with colleagues and collaborate externally with professionals working outside their departments, teams or organisations. In this manner, they are well-equipped to collaborate with mental health nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other relevant occupations that they work with inside and outside their organisation. These SPC alumni's strong willingness to collaborate externally also bodes well for their ability to develop agility. This is because external collaboration skills can provide professionals with new knowledge about how they can develop their ways of working in order to respond to upcoming or anticipated changes at work (Braun *et al.*, 2017). Highly employable SPC alumni also possess social support and positive relationships at work, which have been identified as two related but separate factors that facilitate professionals' ability to maintain and develop their resilience (Braun *et al.*, 2017). From a care work perspective, their high adaptability to changes means that they are well-suited to adapt to the different needs and demands that various patients, clients, incarcerated persons and relatives may have. Their high level of agility means that these SPC alumni are well-equipped to be professionals who can help develop how care is given to patients, clients and incarcerated persons, and how communication and contact with relatives is approached and conducted. Through their collegial relationships and external collaboration, highly employable SPC alumni can gain knowledge and insights that can help increase the quality of care for patients, clients and incarcerated persons, and help foster better professional relationships with relatives.

SPC alumni with alliance-creating employability profiles (Cluster 2) have a sufficient amount of resilience and agility. This makes them adequately (rather than highly) equipped to (1) adapt to changes that the established occupations they work with have introduced and (2) contribute to the development of the work practices that these established occupations utilise. Due to their predominantly alliance-creating profiles, these SPC alumni are suited to create relationships with colleagues who work in occupations that are established in psychiatric care and juvenile care institutions, and in social services and correctional services. Furthermore, these SPC alumni are sufficiently used to and willing to collaborate with professionals working outside their teams, departments and organisations. Thus, as they are not as used to and willing to collaborate externally as SPC alumni with highly employable profiles (Cluster 1), SPC alumni with alliance-creating profiles are likely to be less involved in external collaboration, which Braun *et al.* (2017) has identified as an activity that develops agility among professionals. These SPC alumni's tendency and willingness to create positive relationships with colleagues and sufficient levels of social support at work can help them develop their resilience. From a care work perspective, SPC alumni with an alliance-creating profile are suited to creating positive relationships with colleagues, which can assist in the provision of quality care for patients, clients and incarcerated persons. Their alliance-creating profile means that these SPC alumni are likely to be well-equipped to create positive relationships with both the patients, clients, and incarcerated persons they provide care for and their relatives.

SPC alumni with a strong social support profile (Cluster 3) have high levels of resilience, which means that they are well-equipped to adapt to changes that the established occupations they work with have introduced. Their sufficient level of agility means that they are adequately equipped to contribute to developing the work practices of these established occupations. Just as SPC alumni with the employability profiles of Clusters 1 and 2, SPC alumni with a strong social support profile are used to and willing to create positive relationships with colleagues; this bodes well for their opportunities to create good collegial relationships with professionals from established occupations. In addition, these SPC alumni are sufficiently used to and willing to engage in external collaboration, which, according to

Braun *et al.* (2017), can develop agility among professionals. Due to their particularly strong social support at work, high levels of experience and willingness to create positive relationships with colleagues, SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 3 have many opportunities to maintain and further develop their high levels of resilience. In this regard, SPC alumni with a strong social support profile are similar to highly employable SPC alumni. From a care work perspective, and due to their high levels of resilience, these SPC alumni are well equipped to adapt to the various needs and demands that patients, clients and their relatives may have. As with the highly employable and the alliance-creating SPC alumni, SPC alumni with a strong social support profile have the experience and willingness to create positive relationships with colleagues; this is useful from a care work perspective. Positive collegial relationships can help provide quality care for patients, clients, and incarcerated persons, and embrace the developmental possibilities of care. The particularly strong social support at work that SPC alumni with the employability profile of Cluster 3 experience could mean that they develop commitment to their employers and stay longer at their workplaces. Therefore, SPC alumni with a strong social support profile could provide continuity in caring for patients, clients and their relatives.

A comparison of the employability profiles of these three clusters of SPC alumni reveals a key difference between the highly employable SPC alumni and the SPC alumni with the employability profiles of Clusters 2 and 3. Highly employable SPC alumni have greater levels of agility than the SPC alumni with the other two profiles; therefore, the former also have a greater ability to develop work by proactively forming new paths for how work is approached and conducted. Thus, as highly employable SPC alumni have a greater ability to develop work than the other two profiles of SPC alumni, they are better equipped than them in two specific regards. First, they are better equipped to ensure that their interdisciplinary knowledge profile is used to develop the work practices of established occupations. Secondly, they are more suited to driving the development of how care is given to patients, clients, and incarcerated persons, and how contact with relatives is conducted. Notably, SPC alumni with the latter two employability profiles do not have insufficient levels of agility. As research has shown that both formal education activities and more informal workplace learning can enhance professionals' agility (Alavi *et al.*, 2014; Taran, 2019), it is vital to highlight that SPC alumni with the employability profiles of Clusters 2 and 3 can further develop their agility from learning in both formal and informal contexts, which can also be beneficial for highly employable SPC alumni (Cluster 1) in terms of helping them maintain and further increase their already high levels of agility. After discussing the employability profiles of Clusters 1, 2 and 3, we highlight that the employability of these SPC alumni with various profiles is not dependent solely on them. Fugate *et al.* (2021) argued that professionals' levels of employability are also dependent on the working conditions in which they operate. Thus, we conclude that the three profiles of SPC alumni must have suitable working conditions to showcase their individual abilities. More specifically, the work readiness and ability of these different profiles of SPC alumni to change how work is conducted actually depends on their individual abilities and the working conditions their employers provide. A prime example of this is that it would be difficult for highly employable SPC alumni to use their high levels of agility to implement change if they work in an organisation or a team that is not open to change. Finally, we conclude that the three clusters of SPC alumni have the work readiness to adapt to, and the work-changing ability to contribute to, the development of work practices utilised by the established occupations they work with.

Strengths and limitations of the study

One strength of this study is that it focuses on a group of alumni whose employability has not been previously explored and who could potentially develop into a recognised occupation in

Sweden within the realms of psychiatry, social services, institutional and community work. Another strength is that this study draws on Braun *et al.*'s (2017) validated Employee Agility and Resilience Measurement Scale to develop the Employee Agility and Resilience Short Swedish Version Measurement Scale (EmAR-SS). This study has also shown that all three clusters of SPC alumni either have sufficient or high scores on each of the five employability features that the EmAR-SS measures. This constitutes useful knowledge about the SPC programme, which offers its students various forms of work-integrated learning (WIL) to prepare them for working life (Andrén *et al.*, 2019). Björck and Willermark (2024) describe different forms of WIL that students experience, notably: (1) the learning acquired as an integral part of the work conducted during work placements, and (2) the learning process wherein students seek to integrate their on-campus and work placement-based learning experiences. The study has also produced knowledge that SPC alumni, SPC students and employers can learn and develop from. SPC alumni and SPC students can use these employability profiles as a basis for reflecting about what employability profile they possess or want to develop. Employers can use these three employability profiles to reflect on what employability profile is evident among their employees and what employability profiles they would like to hire for specific positions and add to their teams and departments.

This study is limited in that it has a rather small scale from a statistical perspective. To address this limitation, we employed cluster analysis, a statistical method that can be used to analyse smaller sample sizes (Dalmaijer *et al.*, 2022). Another limitation involves the Cronbach's alpha score for the Creating Positive Relationship Subscale (0.64). This score is somewhat lower than the acceptable Cronbach's alpha score of about 0.70. In Braun *et al.*'s (2017) validated Employee Agility and Resilience Measurement Scale, the Creating Positive Relationships Subscale had a Cronbach alpha score of 0.88. Thus, the lower Cronbach's alpha score in our study could have been due to this study's sample size of 94 respondents and/or the fact that questions within this subscale should be further adapted to Swedish societal contexts.

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