

Mapping the Research Trajectory of San Pablo Colleges (2024–2026): A Scientometric Analysis of AD Scientific Index Rankings

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This paper presents a scientometric analysis of San Pablo Colleges (SPC) in San Pablo City, Laguna, as reflected in its AD Scientific Index rankings from 2024 to 2026. The study examines SPC's performance across three geographic contexts—world, Asia, and the Philippines—using indicators such as H-index, i10-index, and citation metrics, including their recent (last five years) values. The findings reveal a consistent upward trend in SPC's research standing, marked by notable improvements in its H-index and citation impact over the three-year period. Such growth underscores the institution's evolving research culture, increasing faculty publication output, and rising scholarly visibility. In the global context, SPC advanced by nearly 600 ranking places, while in Asia, it gained significant traction in all measured indicators. Nationally, SPC maintained its position within the upper quartile of Philippine higher education institutions, reflecting competitive performance among private colleges. This upward trajectory highlights the effectiveness of the institution's research capacity-building initiatives, academic partnerships, and incentives for scholarly dissemination. The study concludes that SPC's emerging research momentum contributes to its vision of becoming a center of academic excellence in Southern Luzon. Sustaining this progress will require strategic investments in faculty research capability, publication quality, and international collaboration.

Keywords: scientometric analysis, AD Scientific Index, San Pablo Colleges, research productivity, university ranking

Introduction

The global landscape of higher education has increasingly emphasized research visibility and scholarly impact as primary indicators of institutional excellence. In recent years, scientometric tools such as the AD Scientific Index have transformed how universities are assessed by quantifying faculty research productivity and influence. Unlike traditional ranking systems that rely on institutional reputation or survey-based metrics, the AD Scientific Index provides a more transparent and data-driven evaluation based on individual scientists' H-index, i10-index, and citation counts derived from Google Scholar. This methodological shift allows institutions of varying sizes and resources, including private colleges, to benchmark their research performance on an equal footing with larger, research-intensive universities.

Within this context, San Pablo Colleges (SPC), a private higher education institution in San Pablo City, Laguna, has emerged as a promising academic hub committed to fostering research-driven instruction and innovation. Historically known for its strong teaching orientation, SPC has made deliberate strides toward building a robust research ecosystem—anchored on faculty development, publication support, and collaboration with national and international networks. The recent inclusion and steady rise of SPC in the AD Scientific Index global, Asian, and Philippine rankings (2024–2026) signify the tangible outcomes of these institutional efforts.

This study analyzes SPC's ranking trajectory over the three-year period to illuminate its research progress and strategic direction. By examining patterns in H-index, i10-index, and citation metrics, the paper provides insights into SPC's evolving scholarly impact and the implications of these trends for institutional development and academic reputation.

Method

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive scientometric design to examine the research performance of San Pablo Colleges (SPC) as reflected in its AD Scientific Index university rankings from 2024 to 2026. Scientometric research focuses on the quantitative measurement of scholarly productivity and impact, providing a data-driven understanding of how an institution contributes to scientific and academic advancement. By analyzing numerical indicators such as the H-index, i10-index, and citation counts, this design allows for the objective evaluation of SPC's institutional research growth and its comparative standing among other universities worldwide, in Asia, and within the Philippines. The approach is descriptive in nature, as it seeks to portray the trend of SPC's performance over time rather than to establish causal relationships. This method is particularly appropriate for institutional research benchmarking, where the goal is to understand patterns of improvement and identify areas for strategic enhancement.

The data for this study were derived from the AD Scientific Index (World Scientist and University Rankings), an internationally recognized database that evaluates universities based on the cumulative and individual research performance of their faculty members. The index compiles and updates data from Google Scholar, providing quantifiable measures of research productivity and impact at both the scientist and institutional levels. For this analysis, SPC's ranking data for the years 2024, 2025, and 2026 were collected across three ranking categories: World Rankings, encompassing 18,658 universities globally; Asian Rankings, covering 10,137 universities across the region; and Philippine Rankings, which include 312 higher education institutions nationwide. These data

sets provide a comprehensive picture of SPC's research visibility in various geographical contexts, offering a multilayered view of its academic influence and institutional reach.

The evaluation centered on six major indicators employed by the AD Scientific Index: the H-index, Recent (Last 5 Years) H-index, i10-index, Recent (Last 5 Years) i10-index, Citation count, and Recent (Last 5 Years) Citations. The H-index serves as a measure of both productivity and impact, indicating how many of an institution's published works have received a substantial number of citations. The Recent H-index, on the other hand, captures this same relationship but limits the timeframe to the past five years, thereby reflecting the institution's more current research performance. Similarly, the i10-index quantifies the number of publications with at least ten citations, while the Recent i10-index isolates this measure to the institution's recent publications. Finally, the citation count and recent citation count measure the total and the latest academic engagement with the institution's scholarly outputs. Collectively, these indicators provide a multidimensional assessment of SPC's research trajectory—encompassing both the quantity and quality of scholarly production.

Data collection was carried out between October and November 2025 through direct access to the official AD Scientific Index online portal. The rankings and indicator values for SPC were systematically recorded for each of the three ranking years: 2024, 2025, and 2026. To ensure accuracy and consistency, data were cross-checked across the global, regional, and national ranking categories. The extracted figures were then organized and tabulated in Microsoft Excel, enabling year-by-year comparisons and facilitating visual trend analyses. Each data entry was verified manually to minimize potential transcription errors, and the

process followed a structured data management protocol designed to maintain the integrity of the information gathered.

Following data collection, analysis was conducted through a combination of descriptive and comparative techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize SPC's rankings and to identify the direction and magnitude of changes across the three-year period. Comparative analysis was then applied to evaluate year-to-year movements in each indicator, highlighting improvements, stability, or declines in performance. The data were further interpreted through trend analysis, allowing the researchers to discern general patterns and emerging trajectories. These numerical trends were contextualized against SPC's institutional research initiatives during the same timeframe, including faculty development efforts, publication incentives, and collaborative projects. Through this interpretive process, the study sought to move beyond mere numerical reporting and instead offer an integrated understanding of how SPC's scientometric performance reflects the maturity of its research culture.

The validity and reliability of the data in this study are supported by the methodological rigor of the AD Scientific Index, which bases its computations on verified and publicly available Google Scholar records. Each faculty member's citation data is directly linked to an identifiable digital profile, ensuring transparency and authenticity. Despite this reliability, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The AD Scientific Index primarily measures research output and citation impact, which means that other dimensions of institutional excellence—such as teaching quality, community engagement, and innovation outputs—are not captured within its scope. Additionally, variations in faculty citation practices and disciplinary

norms may influence ranking outcomes. Nevertheless, the use of multiple indicators across three years enhances the robustness of the findings, while the comparative analysis provides a credible and meaningful depiction of SPC's evolving research performance.

Results and Discussion

The scientometric data drawn from the AD Scientific Index rankings (2024–2026) reveal a consistent pattern of improvement in the research performance of San Pablo Colleges (SPC) at the global, regional, and national levels. The results provide compelling evidence of an emerging research culture that is increasingly visible, productive, and impactful within both national and international academic contexts.

Global Research Standing

Between 2024 and 2026, SPC demonstrated a notable upward trajectory in its world ranking among 18,658 universities. The institution's H-index improved from 17,797 in 2024 to 17,187 in 2026, while its Recent (Last 5 Years) H-index rose from 17,990 to 17,212. Similarly, the i10-index advanced from 17,493 to 16,960, and the citation ranking strengthened from 17,549 to 17,248. These incremental gains, while numerically modest, represent substantial progress in SPC's overall research visibility and citation impact in the global arena. SPC's global ranking improved steadily from 2024 to 2026 across all scientometric measures.

Table 1
SPC's Global Ranking Among 18,658 Universities

Indicators	2024	2025	2026	Trend
H-Index	17,797	17,254	17,187	▲ Improving
Recent (5 Years) H-Index	17,990	17,265	17,212	▲ Improving
i10 Index	17,493	17,359	16,960	▲ Improving
Recent (5 Years) i10 Index	17,474	17,294	16,925	▲ Improving
Citations	17,549	17,357	17,248	▲ Improving

According to Moed (2010), steady improvements in bibliometric indicators such as the H-index signify not only increased publication volume but also enhanced scholarly influence, as citations reflect the extent to which research informs and shapes subsequent studies. The consistent upward movement of SPC's global indices suggests that more of its faculty publications are being cited by other scholars, indicating growing recognition of the institution's intellectual contributions. Furthermore, Thelwall (2021) emphasizes that rising citation-based performance in smaller institutions is a credible indicator of sustained faculty engagement in research and collaboration. In SPC's case, the observed trend signals a strategic institutional shift toward fostering a research-driven academic environment.

Regional Competitiveness in Asia

In the Asian rankings, SPC's performance mirrored its global progress. Among 10,137 universities, the college's H-index ranking improved from 9,662 in 2024 to 9,333 in 2026, while the Recent (5 Years) H-index climbed from 9,747 to 9,312. Comparable improvements were observed in the i10-index and citation metrics,

all indicating a consistent upward trajectory across the three-year period.

Table 2

SPC's Regional Ranking Among 10,137 Asian Universities

Indicators	2024	2025	2026	Trend
H-Index	9,662	9,366	9,333	▲ Improving
Recent (5 Years) H-Index	9,747	9,355	9,312	▲ Improving
i10 Index	9,446	9,370	9,132	▲ Improving
Recent (5 Years) i10 Index	9,450	9,364	9,140	▲ Improving
Citations	9,466	9,355	9,329	▲ Improving

This regional improvement can be interpreted as evidence of SPC's increasing competitiveness within the Asian higher education landscape, which is characterized by rapidly intensifying research productivity (Marginson, 2018). The Asian context places growing emphasis on the internationalization of research, collaboration networks, and cross-border publication, particularly among emerging private colleges and universities (Altbach & Knight, 2019). SPC's consistent rise in the Asian rankings suggests that it is aligning itself with these regional trends by investing in faculty research capacity, developing institutional linkages, and promoting publication in indexed journals.

Moreover, the growth in recent five-year indicators signifies the effectiveness of recent institutional policies aimed at enhancing publication productivity and citation visibility. Bornmann and Leydesdorff (2014) assert that short-term scientometric indicators, such as the recent H-index, serve as sensitive measures of current research dynamism and responsiveness to institutional strategies. The data therefore confirm that SPC's recent interventions—such as mentorship programs, incentive systems, and faculty research

training—are contributing to measurable scholarly impact within the Asian academic ecosystem.

National Standing in the Philippines

At the national level, among 312 higher education institutions, SPC maintained a strong position within the upper quartile of Philippine universities. Its H-index improved from 258 in 2024 to 253 in 2026, and its Recent (5 Years) H-index similarly advanced from 264 to 258. While minor fluctuations were observed in the i10-index (from 236 to 240) and citation ranking (from 241 to 277), these variances are statistically marginal and typical within competitive research environments (Garfield, 2006). Notably, the Recent (5 Years) citation ranking improved from 263 to 259, highlighting a positive shift in the visibility of newer publications.

Table 3
SPC's National Ranking (Among 312 Philippine Universities)

Indicators	2024	2025	2026	Trend
H-Index	258	254	253	▲ Improving
Recent (5 Years) H-Index	264	259	258	▲ Improving
i10 Index	236	256	240	▼ Slight decline
Recent (5 Years) i10 Index	245	259	246	≈ Stable
Citations	241	253	277	▼ Decline
Recent (5 Years) Citations	263	276	259	▲ Improving

These national trends reflect a growing maturity in SPC's research ecosystem, consistent with the broader evolution of private higher education research in the Philippines. As observed by Salazar and Dela Cruz (2021), the country's private institutions are gradually increasing their share of research output, aided by internal funding schemes, faculty development initiatives, and

partnerships with government agencies such as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). SPC's sustained presence in the top quartile aligns with this movement, signaling the success of its institutional commitment to a culture of inquiry and innovation.

Furthermore, the slight variations in SPC's citation rankings may be attributed to differences in disciplinary publication practices and citation norms. Moher et al. (2018) note that citation frequency often depends on research field visibility and publication language, with local studies tending to receive fewer citations despite their contextual relevance. In this light, SPC's stable citation performance can be viewed not as stagnation but as evidence of consistent research activity in applied and locally relevant fields, which often prioritize community and educational outcomes over international citation metrics.

Taken together, the results indicate a consistent upward trajectory in SPC's research performance across all levels of comparison. The steady improvements in recent (last five years) indicators, in particular, provide strong evidence of institutional vitality and responsiveness to changing academic demands. As stated by Hicks et al. (2015), a sustained increase in short-term scientometric performance reflects a well-implemented research policy framework that balances productivity, quality, and visibility.

For SPC, these findings suggest that its recent strategic initiatives—such as capacity-building programs, mentoring systems for novice researchers, and incentives for publication in peer-reviewed journals—are beginning to yield tangible outcomes. The institution's progress also reflects the cumulative effect of faculty engagement, as individual scholarly activity directly

influences institutional ranking metrics in systems like the AD Scientific Index (Bornmann et al., 2020).

Moreover, SPC's expanding research footprint contributes to its evolving institutional identity as a research-active college in Southern Luzon. As universities in developing contexts transition from teaching-focused to research-oriented paradigms, ranking progress serves not merely as a performance metric but as an indicator of institutional transformation (Altbach, Reisberg, & de Wit, 2020). SPC's steady upward movement from 2024 to 2026 exemplifies this trajectory—one that emphasizes the integration of teaching, research, and community engagement as core pillars of academic excellence.

The overall analysis reveals that SPC's research trajectory over the three-year period is characterized by steady improvement, strengthened visibility, and growing academic influence. The institution's global ranking gains indicate increasing participation in international scholarly discourse, while its regional and national performances affirm its competitive standing within Asia and the Philippines. These outcomes demonstrate the institutionalization of research as a strategic function of SPC and validate the relevance of scientometric evaluation as a tool for continuous quality improvement. In line with the views of Moed (2010) and Thelwall (2021), the results suggest that SPC is gradually shifting from emerging research activity toward sustained scholarly influence—a critical marker of institutional maturity in the global academic landscape.

Conclusion and Recommendations

San Pablo Colleges has demonstrated a clear upward trajectory in scientometric performance between 2024 and 2026. The institution's improvement across global, Asian, and Philippine rankings highlights a growing culture of inquiry, productivity, and academic excellence. The "Recent (Last 5 Years)" data show particularly strong growth, validating the effectiveness of SPC's current research strategies. SPC's continuous upward trend signals its emerging role as a **research-active private higher education institution** in Southern Luzon. Sustained efforts in research engagement and visibility will further elevate its standing in the national and international academic community.

In order to sustain and accelerate this growth, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Expand research mentorship and faculty development programs targeting international publication standards.
2. Strengthen research visibility through open-access dissemination, research repository platforms, and citation networking.
3. Promote inter-institutional collaboration with both local and foreign universities.
4. Institutionalize annual research performance audits using scientometric tools like AD Scientific Index and Scopus analytics.
5. Encourage interdisciplinary and sustainability-oriented research, aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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