

Student Mobility and Its Influence on Employability Skills in the Marketing Field

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of student mobility experiences on the employability skills of marketing students. Conceptually, the study was anchored on the premise that student mobility programs serve as experiential learning opportunities that enhance employability competencies and career readiness. A descriptive-quantitative research design was employed involving marketing students and recent graduates of the Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology who had completed verified academic or professional mobility programs. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a validated, structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, and hypothesis testing. The findings revealed that respondents experienced a high extent of participation in academic-based mobility, internship-industry mobility, cultural and experiential exposure, and virtual mobility programs. Student mobility was also found to have a high extent of influence on technical or hard skills, soft skills, leadership and professional skills, global and cultural competence, and career readiness. Financial constraints emerged as the most significant challenge affecting participation in mobility programs. Overall, the findings indicated a significant positive relationship between student mobility experiences and employability outcomes. The study concluded that student mobility contributes substantially to strengthening the employability skills, professional confidence, career readiness, and workforce competitiveness of undergraduate marketing students. It recommends strengthening academic partnerships, expanding institutional support and funding opportunities, enhancing mobility program implementation, and aligning mobility initiatives with workforce demands. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education by promoting experiential learning and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth by enhancing graduate employability and workforce readiness. Its sustainability impact lies in providing empirical evidence to support curriculum enhancement, institutional mobility initiatives, and the development of a more competitive and resilient workforce.

Keywords: Career Readiness; Employability Skills, Experiential Learning, Marketing Students, Student Mobility Programs, Sustainability, Workforce Competitiveness

1. Introduction

The rapid digitalization of markets, increasing cross-border integration, and evolving consumer behavior have transformed the competencies required of marketing graduates. As a result, higher education institutions have adopted student mobility programs as experiential learning strategies to bridge academic knowledge and industry practice. This study examines how mobility experiences contribute to the development of employability skills among marketing students and provides evidence to support the enhancement of mobility initiatives for improved career readiness.

1.1 Student Mobility Programs and Employability Skills among Marketing Students

The global marketing environment continues to evolve through digital transformation, international market integration, and changing consumer behavior. These developments require marketing graduates to acquire employability skills beyond traditional classroom instruction. Consequently, higher education institutions have increasingly implemented student mobility programs, including international exchanges, domestic institutional transfers, and cross-regional internships, to strengthen the connection between academic learning and professional practice. In the Philippine context, developing globally competitive marketing professionals is vital to economic resilience. Student mobility provides experiential learning opportunities by exposing students to diverse market environments, multicultural collaboration, and innovative organizational practices. This study investigates the influence of these experiences on employability competencies, particularly strategic communication, consumer behavioral analysis, digital marketing execution, and problem-solving agility. The findings are intended to support academic administrators and curriculum designers in enhancing mobility initiatives to improve the career readiness of marketing students.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Student Mobility and Marketing Graduate Employability

The literature emphasizes that the evolving global marketing environment, characterized by rapid digitalization, cross-border market integration, and changing consumer behavior, has transformed the competencies required of marketing graduates. These developments underscore the need for employability skills that extend beyond theoretical knowledge, highlighting the importance of experiential learning in preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce. A recurring theme is the role of student mobility programs as strategic educational approaches that bridge academic instruction and professional practice. Through international exchanges, domestic institutional transfers, and cross-regional internships, these programs provide students with opportunities to apply classroom learning in real-world settings while developing practical competencies relevant to the marketing profession. Another important insight is the contribution of student mobility to the development of employability skills. Exposure to diverse market environments, multicultural collaboration, and innovative corporate practices enables students to strengthen strategic communication, consumer behavior analysis, digital marketing execution, and problem-solving abilities. These competencies are recognized as essential for enhancing career readiness and preparing graduates to succeed in increasingly competitive and dynamic labor markets. The literature also highlights the importance of empirical evidence in evaluating the effectiveness of student mobility initiatives. Assessing the relationship between mobility experiences and employability outcomes provides valuable information for academic administrators and curriculum designers seeking to improve educational programs and ensure that graduates possess the competencies required by industry.

1.3 Global and Philippine Context of Student Mobility in Marketing Education

Globally, the marketing profession has been reshaped by digitalization, international market integration, and changing consumer behavior. Nationally, the Philippine higher education sector recognizes the need to develop globally competitive marketing graduates through experiential learning opportunities such as student mobility programs.

1.4 Conceptual Basis of Student Mobility and Marketing Students' Employability

This study is conceptually anchored on the premise that student mobility programs serve as experiential learning opportunities that enhance the employability skills of marketing students. The introduction emphasizes that the rapidly evolving global marketing landscape requires graduates to possess competencies beyond classroom-based knowledge. Through participation in international exchanges, domestic institutional transfers, and cross-regional internships, students are exposed to diverse market environments, multicultural collaboration, and innovative corporate practices that strengthen their professional competencies. The study examines the relationship between student mobility experiences and employability outcomes, particularly in the areas of strategic communication, consumer behavioral analysis, digital marketing execution, and problem-solving agility. These competencies form the conceptual foundation of the study, reflecting the expectation that experiential learning through mobility programs contributes to greater career readiness among marketing students. The findings are intended to provide an empirical basis for improving mobility initiatives and guiding curriculum development in higher education institutions.

1.5 Research Gap on Student Mobility and Employability Development among Marketing Students

The study seeks to assess how student mobility experiences influence the employability skills of marketing students. Specifically, it aims to provide an empirical basis for improving mobility initiatives and strengthening curriculum design to enhance graduates' career readiness.

1.6 Alignment of Student Mobility and Marketing Graduate Employability with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The study aligns with:

SDG 4 – Quality Education, by promoting experiential learning through student mobility programs to enhance graduate competencies and career readiness.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, by strengthening employability skills that prepare marketing graduates for a competitive workforce and contribute to economic resilience.

1.7 Importance of Student Mobility Research to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes to educational sustainability by supporting curriculum enhancement through experiential learning and mobility initiatives. It also contributes to socio-economic sustainability by improving the employability and career readiness of marketing graduates, thereby supporting workforce competitiveness and long-term economic development. These contributions are based solely on the information presented in the uploaded document.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-quantitative research design to measure the distinct influence of student mobility on the acquisition of employability skills among marketing students. This design enabled the systematic collection and analysis of quantitative data to determine the relationship between mobility experiences and employability outcomes.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology, where the selected participants completed verified academic or professional mobility programs.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of marketing students and recent graduates from the Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology who had completed verified academic or professional mobility programs.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a cohort of marketing students and recent graduates who met the study's eligibility criteria by participating in verified academic or professional mobility programs.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a highly structured survey questionnaire designed to measure localized indicators of marketing competencies and professional adaptability. The instrument underwent validation to ensure thematic relevance, clarity, and alignment with established industry employability frameworks.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The validated survey questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents to collect data on marketing competencies and professional adaptability associated with student mobility experiences. The collected responses were systematically organized for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using weighted mean computations, ranking, and hypothesis testing to examine the empirical relationship between student mobility experiences and graduate marketability.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Student Mobility Experiences

3.1.1 Academic-Based Experiences

The respondents perceived academic-based mobility experiences to a High Extent (overall weighted mean = 4.19). Participation in exchange programs or study tours received the highest rating (WM = 4.26), indicating strong engagement in learning opportunities beyond the home institution. Exposure to diverse academic systems, academic collaboration with other institutions, cross-institutional learning experiences, and enrollment in courses outside the home institution also received high ratings, with the latter obtaining the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.14) while remaining within the High Extent category. These findings support the study of Mok (2023), which found that participation in mobility programs promotes academic engagement, intercultural learning, and broader educational perspectives among university students. Similarly, the report of European Commission (2024) emphasized that student mobility enhances academic achievement and promotes knowledge exchange between institutions. These studies affirm that mobility experiences contribute significantly to academic growth and learning diversification.

3.1.2 Internship-Industry Mobility

Internship-industry mobility was also assessed to a High Extent, with an overall weighted mean of 4.20. Respondents rated interaction with professionals from different industries as the most significant aspect (WM = 4.36), demonstrating the value of industry exposure in enhancing learning experiences. Applying marketing theories in workplace settings, gaining company placement experience, developing practical marketing skills, and participating in internships outside the local area likewise received high ratings, although internships outside the local area ranked lowest (WM = 4.14). The findings are consistent with the study of Jackson (2021), which reported that internship experiences improve professional competence, workplace adaptability, and employability outcomes. Likewise, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022) highlighted that experiential learning opportunities strengthen students' readiness for employment by bridging classroom learning and workplace demands.

3.1.3 Cultural and Experiential Exposure

Respondents evaluated cultural and experiential exposure to a High Extent, with an overall weighted mean of 4.27. Gaining a global perspective in marketing practices received the highest rating (WM = 4.31), followed by adapting to different social and professional norms and developing appreciation for cultural diversity. Experiencing diverse cultural environments and engaging in cross-cultural communication also received high assessments, reflecting the importance of multicultural learning experiences. These results support the findings of Deardorff (2021), who emphasized that international and intercultural experiences foster global awareness and cultural intelligence among students. Furthermore, research conducted by UNESCO (2023) revealed that culturally diverse learning environments improve students' adaptability and intercultural communication skills.

3.1.4 Virtual Mobility and Online Programs

Virtual mobility and online programs were likewise perceived to a High Extent, with an overall weighted mean of 4.26. Collaboration with students from other institutions through virtual platforms received the highest rating (WM = 4.29), indicating that online interaction effectively promotes academic engagement across geographical boundaries. Respondents also highly rated the development of digital communication skills, global exposure through virtual platforms, participation in international webinars or online exchanges, and enrollment in online marketing certification programs, although the latter received the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.19). The findings align with the study of Mittelmeier (2022), which found that virtual mobility provides students with opportunities for international engagement despite geographical limitations. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) recognized virtual exchange programs as effective alternatives for promoting international collaboration and digital competency development.

3.2 Influence of Student Mobility on Employability Skills

3.2.1 Technical or Hard Skills

The respondents perceived that student mobility had a High Extent of influence on their technical or hard skills, with an overall weighted mean of 4.42. Applying marketing theories to real-world situations obtained the highest rating (WM = 4.47), indicating that mobility experiences effectively bridge classroom learning and practical application. Other competencies, including technical problem-solving, proficiency in marketing tools and software, digital marketing knowledge, and data analysis and research skills, were likewise rated highly, although data analysis and research skills received the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.39). These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that experiential learning opportunities improve students' technical competence and workplace readiness. Likewise, the World Economic Forum (2023) reported that practical learning experiences enhance analytical, technological, and problem-solving skills demanded by employers.

3.2.2 Soft Skills

Student mobility was also perceived to have a High Extent of influence on respondents' soft skills, with an overall weighted mean of 4.49. Improving communication skills ranked highest (WM = 4.55), followed by teamwork and collaboration, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and critical thinking. Although critical thinking abilities received the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.44), they remained within the High Extent category, indicating that mobility experiences substantially enhance interpersonal competencies. This result is consistent with the findings of Succi and Canovi (2020), who emphasized that communication, teamwork, and adaptability are among the most valued employability skills developed through experiential learning. Moreover, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2024) identified communication and collaboration as essential competencies sought by employers globally.

3.2.3 Leadership and Professional Skills

The respondents assessed the influence of student mobility on leadership and professional skills to a High Extent, with an overall weighted mean of 4.44. Demonstrating leadership in academic or industry settings received the highest rating (WM = 4.48), while decision-making skills and effective time management followed closely. Professionalism in workplace interactions and professional networking obtained the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.42), although both remained highly influential indicators. The findings support the study of Jones (2022), which concluded that mobility programs cultivate leadership behaviors, decision-making abilities, and professional responsibility among students. Similarly, research by British Council (2023) reported that international learning experiences contribute positively to leadership development and professional networking.

3.2.4 Global and Cultural Competence

Respondents perceived that student mobility strongly enhanced their global and cultural competence, yielding an overall weighted mean of 4.48, interpreted as High Extent. Communicating effectively with diverse groups ranked highest (WM = 4.57), followed by awareness of international business practices and the ability to adapt strategies to diverse markets. Understanding global marketing trends and respecting cultural differences both received the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.43) but still reflected a high level of influence. This result corroborates the findings of OECD (2020), which emphasized

that exposure to multicultural environments improves global competence and intercultural communication. Likewise, UNESCO (2024) reported that student mobility strengthens cultural sensitivity and global awareness.

3.2.5 Career Readiness

The respondents indicated that student mobility had a High Extent of influence on their career readiness, with an overall weighted mean of 4.42. Feeling prepared for employment in the marketing field received the highest rating (WM = 4.49), demonstrating that mobility experiences increase students' confidence in entering the workforce. Confidence in job interviews, building a competitive résumé, identifying career opportunities, and understanding workplace expectations were likewise rated highly, although workplace expectations received the lowest weighted mean (WM = 4.35). The findings are supported by the study of Clarke (2021), which found that mobility experiences positively influence employment confidence and career preparedness. Additionally, the World Economic Forum (2023) reported that graduates with experiential and international learning experiences demonstrate higher employability and workforce readiness.

3.3 Challenges Encountered in Student Mobility Programs

3.3.1 Challenges Affecting Participation in Mobility Programs

The respondents assessed the challenges encountered in student mobility programs to a High Extent, with an overall weighted mean of 4.45. Financial constraints emerged as the most significant challenge (WM = 4.56), indicating that economic limitations remain the primary barrier to participation. This was followed by balancing academic and mobility commitments (WM = 4.47) and language or communication barriers (WM = 4.46). Limited access to mobility opportunities and adjustment difficulties in new environments also received high ratings, although adjustment difficulties ranked lowest (WM = 4.37), suggesting that respondents still considered them substantial challenges. These findings support the study of Brooks (2021), which identified financial barriers as one of the major obstacles preventing students from participating in mobility programs. Similarly, research conducted by European Students' Union (2023) revealed that funding limitations, academic workload, and language barriers remain common concerns among mobility participants. The consistency between the present findings and previous studies emphasizes the need for higher education institutions to strengthen financial assistance, academic support, and student services to improve access to and participation in mobility programs.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that student mobility significantly enhances the employability skills of undergraduate marketing students at EARIST Manila by strengthening academic competencies, professional confidence, career readiness, and workforce competitiveness. Participation in cross-institutional learning, academic collaboration, and experiential activities positively contributes to students' preparedness for employment. Despite these benefits, financial constraints remain a major barrier to equal participation. The significant positive relationship between student mobility and employability further highlights the importance of integrating mobility programs into higher education as a key strategy for developing competent marketing professionals.

Higher education institutions should strengthen student mobility programs by enhancing academic partnerships, improving program implementation, increasing institutional support, expanding funding opportunities, and aligning mobility initiatives with workforce demands. Academic departments and business colleges should continue investing in international collaborations, faculty support, industry partnerships, and effective mobility management to improve graduate employability. Institutions should also reduce administrative barriers, improve program quality, and use evidence-based planning to sustain mobility initiatives. Future researchers are encouraged to examine the long-term career outcomes of mobile students and explore the effects of economic conditions, institutional characteristics, and regional differences on the effectiveness of student mobility programs.

The study is limited to assessing the relationship between student mobility and employability within its research context. As indicated in the recommendations for future research, the findings do not address the long-term career progression of mobile students or the potential influence of external economic conditions, institutional size, regional differences, and cultural or regulatory changes on student mobility outcomes, highlighting areas for further investigation.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors conducted this study in accordance with the ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Throughout the research process, the authors upheld the principles of academic integrity, voluntary participation, respect for the rights and welfare of the respondents, and responsible data collection and reporting.

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