

Employers' Feedback on the Expectations and Performance of BSBA Marketing Management Graduates of Mariano Marcos State University: A Gap Analysis



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ABSTRACT: Getting the employers' feedback is very crucial in evaluating the quality of graduates Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) produce and the graduates' employability. This study determines the expectations and graduates' performance in terms of business/management competencies, marketing skills and personal qualities/attitudes as perceived by employers. The gap analysis between the expectations and performance of graduates will help the HEIs align their academic programs with the need of the industry. Through a descriptive research design and survey questionnaires administered to ninety-five (95) managers, supervisors and senior-level staff, the study assesses the alignment of the program with industry needs. The findings reveal that while graduates excel in certain competencies such as ethical standards, customer service, and people skills, and qualities such as initiative and risk orientation mindset, there are areas for improvement, including communication, stakeholder management and conflict resolution, positive values and work ethics, analytical skills, adaptability, marketplace understanding, database skills, organization and planning, motivational skills, environment and global awareness, reliability, self-discipline, optimism, proactiveness, and productivity. Recommendations are provided to enhance the BSBA Marketing Management curriculum, implement competency development programs, and collaboration and feedback mechanisms between the employers and academic institution to better prepare graduates for employment.

KEYWORDS: BSBA Marketing Management, business/management competencies, marketing skills, personal qualities/attitudes, employers

I. INTRODUCTION

Employers seek graduates who possess the required knowledge and competencies and demonstrate essential personal qualities and attitudes that are crucial for success in the workplace. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a vital role in equipping graduates with the competencies needed to succeed in the dynamic job market. Graduates who possess the needed competencies can meet industry expectations and are highly employable. It is therefore vital to continuously evaluate whether academic programs are aligned with the evolving needs of industries and organizations.

The program outcomes of the BSBA Marketing Management program of the Mariano Marcos State University are for graduates to be able to apply the concepts along marketing management and use them in various business situations both in local and international context, demonstrate critical and analytical skills to analyze, innovate, and manage a strategic business direction, communicate well and express ideas through various modalities and diverse context and demonstrate positive values and work ethics that promote a sense of responsibility and accountability in their chosen profession. To ensure that the program produces graduates with competencies required to find gainful employment, employers' feedback is continuously conducted. Employers' feedback is vital in shaping academic programs. Their feedback serves as a valuable yardstick to measure the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum (Sannadan, et al., 2016). It sheds light on how well graduates perform and adapt to real-world workplace demands. As Omar et al. (2008) highlight, employer feedback can also be used as a tool to assess students' competency in various key areas.

Employer feedback provides a valuable assessment of employee performance, offering insights into how well they translate their skills and knowledge into practical experience. When graduates join the real world of employment, the outcome of their performance is a very good predictor of their ability (Felicen, 2017). According to the graduates in the study by Ramirez et al., their knowledge, academically gained skills, and competencies significantly influenced how well they performed at work.

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Businesses frequently express concern about the lack of essential skills in graduates, hindering their professional development and career progression. This highlights the critical need for collaboration between educational institutions, authorities, and employers (Ranasinghe & Herath, 2011). By working together, they can identify and address these skill gaps, ensuring university graduates possess the competencies essential to thrive in the job market. Understanding the key characteristics desired by employers is fundamental to improving graduates' employability.

Ting and Ying (2012) found that both academics and practitioners shared similar views regarding the importance of various competencies in business graduates. These included skills in writing, oral communication, research, and knowledge acquisition, as well as attributes like honesty, diligence, resourcefulness, the ability to enhance values, teamwork, innovation, and computer proficiency. In another study by MdSaad, Robani, Jano, and Majid (2013), employers were observed to prioritize problem-solving, tool handling expertise, and presentation skills in graduates. According to MdSaad et al. (2013), individuals possessing these qualities were considered valuable assets to businesses, showcasing the ability to think critically, act logically, and analyze situations for effective decision-making and issue resolution.

This study focuses on evaluating the expectations and performance of graduates of the BSBA Marketing Management program in terms of business/management competencies, marketing skills, and personal qualities/attitudes as perceived by employers. By assessing the gap between the expectations of employers and the performance of graduates, this study aims to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations to enhance the BSBA Marketing Management program.

Through a descriptive research design and the use of survey questionnaires administered to managers, supervisors and senior-level staff familiar with the performance of BSBA Marketing Management graduates, this study provides valuable insights into the alignment of the program with industry needs. By analyzing the competencies expected by employers and the actual performance of graduates, this study sheds light on the strengths and areas for development within the program.

The gap analysis serves as a feedback mechanism for educational institutions to assess the effectiveness of their curriculum and teaching methods in developing competencies, qualities and attitudes. The gap between expectations and performance would highlight the importance of providing support to help students develop and enhance their competencies and qualities, graduates are falling short of. By addressing the performance gap, institutions can better prepare graduates for the challenges of the workforce.

The findings of this study will not only benefit the academic institution in refining the academic program but also provide students with a roadmap for enhancing their skills and competencies to meet the demands of the job market.

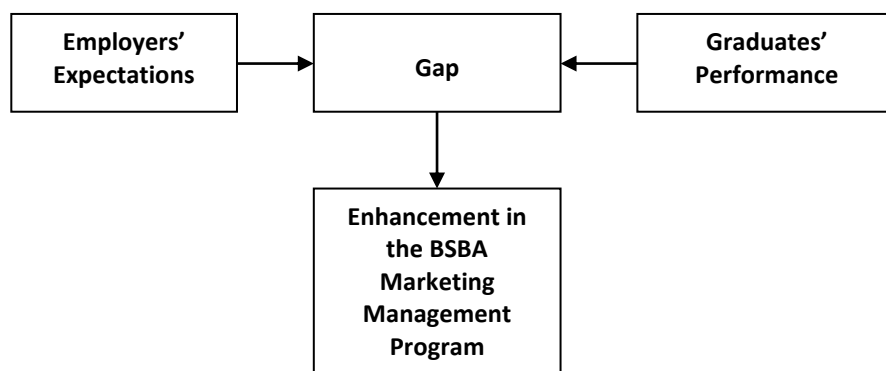


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used the descriptive research design. The research utilized survey questionnaire which was administered online. Purposive sampling was used, and the respondents were 95 managers or immediate supervisors or staff at senior level who have knowledge of the performance of the BSBA Marketing Management graduates.

The indicators on business/management were the program outcomes common to business and management disciplines. Indicators 1-9 were adopted from CHED Memo No. 17 series of 2017. Indicators 10-13 were adopted from the approved curriculum map for the BSBA Marketing Management Program of Mariano Marcos State University.

Mean was used to determine the level of competency expectations and extent of performance of the BSBA Marketing Management graduates on business/management, marketing and personal qualities/attitudes as assessed by their employers.

The following range of mean values were used to analyze and interpret the competency expectations and performance of graduates:

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4.51-5.00	Very High (VH)
3.51-4.50	High (H)
2.51-3.50	Moderate (M)
1.51-2.50	Low (L)
1.00-1.50	Very low (VL)

The gap analysis was done by getting the gap score, this is computed by getting the difference between the expected competencies and the performance of the graduates (expectations – Performance). The gap analysis results were used as basis for identifying recommendations in enhancing the BSBA Marketing Management program. The following scale adopted from Noel-Levits (2008) was used to interpret the gap score.

Gap Score	Interpretation
1.00 and above	Performance does not meet the expectations (PDE)
0.51 – 0.99	Performance slightly meet the expectations (PSE)
0.50 – 0	Performance meets the expectations to the optimum (PE)
Negative gap Score	Performance exceeds the expectations (PEE)

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following are the results of the study.

Table 1. Level of Expectations, Performance of Graduates and Gap Analysis on Business/Management Competencies

Indicators	Expectation	DI	Performance	DI	Gap Score	DI
1. Perform the basic functions of management such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling	4.40	H	4.26	H	0.14	PE
2. Apply the basic concepts that underlie each of the functional areas of business (marketing, finance, human resource management, production and operations management, information technology, and strategic management) and employ these concepts in various business situations.	4.41	H	4.31	H	0.10	PE
3. Select the proper decision-making tools to critically, analytically and creatively solve problems and drive results.	4.47	H	4.27	H	0.20	PE
4. Express oneself clearly and communicate effectively with stakeholders both in oral and written forms.	4.54	VH	4.37	H	0.17	PE
5. Apply information and communication technology (ICT) skills as required by the business environment.	4.44	H	4.31	H	0.13	PE
6. Work effectively with other stakeholders and manage conflict in the workplace.	4.53	VH	4.34	H	0.19	PE
7. Plan and implement business related activities.	4.32	H	4.16	H	0.16	PE
8. Demonstrate corporate citizenship and social responsibility.	4.38	H	4.30	H	0.08	PE

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9. Exercise high personal moral and ethical standards.	4.64	VH	4.54	VH	0.10	PE
10. Apply the concepts along marketing management and use them in various business situations both in local and international context.	3.98	H	4.04	H	-0.06	PEE
11. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills to analyze, innovate, and manage a strategic business direction	4.26	H	4.20	H	0.06	PE
12. Communicate well and express ideas through various modalities and diverse context	4.45	H	4.27	H	0.18	PE
13. Demonstrate positive values and work ethics that promote a sense of responsibility and accountability in their chosen profession	4.56	VH	4.47	H	0.09	PE
OVERALL	4.41	H	4.30	H	0.12	PE

Legend:

Range of values	Descriptive Interpretation	Gap Score	Descriptive Interpretation (Source: Noel-Levitz)
4.51-5.00	Very High (VH)	1.00 and above	Performance does not meet the expectations (PDE)
3.51-4.50	High (H)	0.51 – 0.99	Performance slightly meet the expectations (PSE)
2.51-3.50	Moderate (M)	0 – 0.50	Performance meets the expectations to the optimum (PE)
1.51-2.50	Low (L)	Negative gap Score	Performance exceeds the expectations (PEE)
1.00-1.50	Very low (VL)		

Table 1 shows the level of expectations, performance of graduates and gap analysis on business/management competencies.

On employers' expectations, the overall mean score is 4.41, which is described as "High" indicates that employers expect high level of competencies on business/management for BSBA Marketing Management graduates.

Specifically, competencies rated as "Very High" (VH) include "Exercise high personal moral and ethical standards" (4.64), "Demonstrate positive values and work ethics that promote a sense of responsibility and accountability in their chosen profession" (4.56) "Express oneself clearly and communicate effectively with stakeholders both in oral and written forms" (4.54), and "Work effectively with other stakeholders and manage conflict in the workplace" (4.53). This means that graduates are expected to excel in ethical conduct, positive values, communication, stakeholder management and conflict resolution in organizations. Graduates are expected to demonstrate high personal moral and ethical standards, which is essential for maintaining trust and integrity in any organization. Additionally, graduates are highly expected to uphold positive values and work ethics in their professional roles. It highlights the need for marketing graduates to exhibit integrity, responsibility, and accountability in their work. Moreover, BSBA Marketing Management graduates are expected to possess strong communication skills to effectively interact with various stakeholders. Enhancing communication skills leads to better collaboration, negotiation, and relationships in the workplace. Lastly, the ability to work effectively with different stakeholders is vital for business success. Graduates are expected to develop skills in managing relationships, resolve conflicts, and foster positive interactions with diverse groups. This means that the program should focus on the competencies that are required by the industry.

On the performance of graduates, the overall mean is 4.30, also described as "High". The high performance of graduates suggests that the academic program is effectively equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills required by employers on business/management. Specifically, the competency with a "Very High" (VH) performance rating is "Exercise high personal moral and ethical standards" (4.54). Graduates are upholding ethical values in their professional conduct.

The table shows the discrepancies between the expectations of employers (VH) with the performance of graduates (H). These are "Express oneself clearly and communicate effectively with stakeholders both in oral and written forms," "Work effectively with other stakeholders and manage conflict in the workplace" and "Demonstrate positive values and work ethics that promote a sense of responsibility and accountability in their chosen profession". Developing skills to work effectively with stakeholders and manage conflicts is vital for fostering positive relationships, collaboration, and teamwork in the workplace. The ability to demonstrate positive values and work ethics that promote responsibility and accountability can have wide-ranging implications for graduates in business/management, impacting their professional reputation, career growth, organizational

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culture, client relationships, risk management, and personal satisfaction. This implies that the BSBA Marketing management program shall target competencies development to meet the employers' standards.

The overall gap score between the expectations and the performance of graduates in business/management competencies is 0.12, indicating that the graduates' performance meets the expectations to the optimum. This implies that the program is aligned with the industry's needs.

While graduates are generally performing at a high level, there is still room for improvement to fully meet the employers' expectations. Addressing these gaps is important for enhancing the students' readiness to meet industry expectations. The highest gap, 0.20 is indicator "Select the proper decision-making tools to critically, analytically and creatively solve problems and drive results." Improving critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and creative problem-solving skills can empower graduates to navigate uncertainties, identify opportunities, and implement strategic solutions in dynamic business contexts.

On the other hand, the lowest gap score is in the area of applying concepts along marketing management, with a gap score of -0.06. A negative gap score indicates that the performance exceeds the expectations in this competency. This implies that graduates are performing even better than expected in applying marketing management concepts in various business situations, both locally and internationally. This could be attributed to the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching methods, and practical experiences provided to the students.

Table 2. Level of Expectations, Performance of Graduates and Gap Analysis on Marketing Skills

Indicators	Expectation	DI	Performance	DI	Gap Score	DI
1. Influencing and Negotiation	4.37	H	4.21	H	0.16	PE
2. Innovativeness/Creativity	4.44	H	4.21	H	0.23	PE
3. Analytical skills	4.55	VH	4.39	H	0.16	PE
4. Business and commercial acumen	4.48	H	4.29	H	0.19	PE
5. Adaptability and flexibility	4.64	VH	4.47	H	0.17	PE
6. Marketplace and customer understanding	4.71	VH	4.41	H	0.30	PE
7. Analysis and database skills	4.56	VH	4.29	H	0.27	PE
8. Marketing communications	4.55	VH	4.3	H	0.25	PE
9. Customer service	4.68	VH	4.53	VH	0.15	PE
10. Logistics expertise	4.32	H	4.11	H	0.21	PE
11. Entrepreneurial competency	4.28	H	4.03	H	0.25	PE
12. Organization and planning	4.53	VH	4.35	H	0.18	PE
13. Writing ability	4.49	H	4.3	H	0.19	PE
14. Motivational skills	4.51	VH	4.29	H	0.22	PE
15. Networking	4.49	H	4.39	H	0.10	PE
16. People skills	4.68	VH	4.51	VH	0.17	PE
17. Content management	4.39	H	4.3	H	0.09	PE
18. Public speaking	4.36	H	4.21	H	0.15	PE
19. Research	4.21	H	4.16	H	0.05	PE
20. Environmental and Global Awareness	4.51	VH	4.29	H	0.22	PE
OVERALL	4.49	H	4.30	H	0.19	PE

Legend:

Range of values	Descriptive Interpretation	Gap Score	Descriptive Interpretation (Source: Noel-Levitz)
4.51-5.00	Very High (VH)	1.00 and above	Performance does not meet the expectations (PDE)
3.51-4.50	High (H)	0.51 – 0.99	Performance slightly meet the expectations (PSE)
2.51-3.50	Moderate (M)	0 – 0.50	Performance meets the expectations to the optimum (PE)
1.51-2.50	Low (L)	Negative gap Score	Performance exceeds the expectations (PEE)
1.00-1.50	Very low (VL)		

Table 2 shows the Level of expectations, performance of graduates and the gap analysis on marketing competencies.

Employers' expectations regarding marketing competencies are "High" as shown by the overall mean of 4.49. With employers expecting a high level of performance, graduates entering the labor market need to be well-prepared and demonstrate proficiency in marketing.

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Ten (10) out of twenty (20) competencies were rated as "Very High" with a mean range of 4.51-4.71. This signifies a strong importance of these skills and attributes in the industry. The table shows that employers expect graduates to: demonstrate proficiency in analyzing complex information and deriving actionable insights to drive marketing strategies effectively; adapt quickly to changes, embrace new technologies and trends, and pivot strategies as needed to stay competitive in the market; able to understand market dynamics, consumer behavior, and trends; skilled in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to drive marketing initiatives, measure performance, and optimize campaigns; excel in crafting compelling marketing content, engaging with stakeholders, and maintaining consistent brand messaging across various channels; demonstrate a customer-centric approach, problem-solving skills, and the ability to address customer needs to enhance brand loyalty and satisfaction; well-organized, detail-oriented, and adept at strategic planning; demonstrate strong organizational skills, time management, and the ability to prioritize tasks to execute marketing campaigns efficiently and achieve objectives; possess motivational skills to inspire and lead teams, drive innovation, and achieve marketing goals, demonstrate leadership qualities, the ability to motivate others, and a positive attitude to foster a productive work environment; demonstrate strong people skills, emotional intelligence, and the capacity to build relationships to succeed in team-based marketing environments; and lastly, demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, cultural sensitivity, and an understanding of international markets to navigate the global business landscape effectively. This implies that the BSBA Marketing management program must be aligned with the employers' expectations.

On the other hand, the overall mean of 4.30 under graduates' performance indicates that graduates are performing well in these skills. Graduates are achieving very high performance in customer service and people skills. This implies that graduates excel in addressing customer needs, resolving issues promptly, and providing exceptional service and in communication, collaboration, and relationship-building. Strong interpersonal skills enable graduates to communicate effectively with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders, fostering teamwork and productivity. It indicates that the curriculum aligns well with industry expectations and prepares graduates to meet the demands of the job market.

While this suggests a generally positive performance level, there are still areas where graduates may fall short of the high expectations set by employers. The curriculum and teaching processes must focus on enhancing students' skills and competencies to consistently meet or exceed the high standards set by employers.

The table shows room for improvements along analytical skills, adaptability and flexibility, marketplace and customer understanding, analysis and database skills, marketing communications, organization and planning, motivational skills and environmental and global awareness. This highlights the need for targeted skill development, continuous learning, and alignment of the BSBA marketing management program with industry standards.

As shown by the overall gap score of 0.19 described as performance meets the expectations to the optimum, this suggests that graduates are equipped with marketing skills needed by the industry. The highest gap score (0.30) is "Marketplace and customer understanding". This implies that the BSBA Marketing Management program focus on enhancing knowledge and skills in areas such as market research, consumer behavior, and customer segmentation.

Table 3. Level of Expectations, Performance of Graduates and Gap Analysis on Personal Qualities/Attitudes

Indicators	Expectation	DI	Performance	DI	Gap Score	DI
1. Flexibility and adaptability	4.37	H	4.21	H	0.16	PE
2. Empathy, Prudence, and Temperance	4.44	H	4.21	H	0.23	PE
3. Reliability	4.55	VH	4.39	H	0.16	PE
4. Integrity	4.48	H	4.29	H	0.19	PE
5. Self-discipline	4.64	VH	4.47	H	0.17	PE
6. Optimism towards work	4.71	VH	4.41	H	0.3	PE
7. Pro-activeness	4.56	VH	4.29	H	0.27	PE
8. Productivity	4.55	VH	4.30	H	0.25	PE
9. Initiative	4.68	VH	4.53	VH	0.15	PE
10. Accountability	4.32	H	4.11	H	0.21	PE
11. Leadership	4.28	H	4.03	H	0.25	PE
12. Professionalism	4.53	VH	4.35	H	0.18	PE
13. Civic Responsibility	4.49	H	4.30	H	0.19	PE

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14. Risk Orientation Mindset	4.68	VH	4.51	VH	0.17	PE
15. Resilience	4.39	H	4.30	H	0.09	PE
MEAN	4.51	VH	4.31	H	0.20	PE

Legend:

Range of values	Descriptive Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Very High (VH)
3.51-4.50	High (H)
2.51-3.50	Moderate (M)
1.51-2.50	Low (L)

Gap Score

1.00 and above
0.51 – 0.99
0 – 0.50
Negative gap Score

Descriptive Interpretation (Source: Noel-Levitz)

Performance does not meet the expectations (PDE)
Performance slightly meet the expectations (PSE)
Performance meets the expectations to the optimum (PE)
Performance exceeds the expectations (PEE)

Table 3 shows the level of expectations, performance of graduates and the gap analysis on personal qualities/attitudes.

On the employers' expectations, the overall mean of 4.51 described as "Very High" indicates that graduates are expected to demonstrate a very high level of personal qualities and attitudes. This suggests that there should be a strong emphasis on personal qualities and attitudes in the educational curriculum.

Eight (8) out of fifteen (15) qualities are rated as "Very High". These qualities are reliability, self-discipline, optimism towards work, pro-activeness, productivity, initiative, professionalism, risk orientation mindset. This means that graduates are expected to demonstrate dependability, trustworthiness, and accountability in their work and interactions; exhibit strong self-control, motivation, and the ability to stay focused on tasks and goals; demonstrate positive attitude, resilience, and a proactive mindset towards challenges; take initiative, anticipate needs, and drive positive change within their roles and organizations; manage their time, resources, and tasks to achieve high levels of output and effectiveness; demonstrate a proactive approach, creativity, and a willingness to take on new responsibilities and challenges; uphold ethical standards, exhibit a strong work ethic, and maintain a professional demeanor in all interactions; and embrace calculated risks, innovation, and strategic decision-making to drive growth and success.

The overall performance of graduates in personal qualities and attitudes, as indicated by the mean performance score of 4.31 is "High". This shows that graduates are demonstrating positive qualities/attitudes. Specifically, the very high-performance scores are initiative and risk orientation mindset. This signifies that graduates excel in demonstrating a proactive approach, creativity, and a drive to act in various situations as well as exhibiting a willingness to take calculated risks, think strategically, and embrace uncertainty. The high performance of graduates indicates that the academic program aligns with the industry requirements.

The table shows discrepancies in the employers' expectations and performance of graduates. These qualities are reliability, self-discipline, optimism towards work, pro-activeness, productivity, and professionalism. The gap between very high expectations and high level of performance highlights specific areas where the curriculum may be falling short in adequately preparing students for the demands of the workforce. This can serve as a valuable indicator for educators to identify areas that require enhancement or revision.

The overall gap score is 0.20, indicating that graduates' performance is meeting employers' expectations to the optimum. While the overall performance of graduates in personal qualities and attitudes is high, there is still room for improvement to align more closely with the very high expectations set by the employers.

The highest gap score, 0.27 is proactiveness which means that the program focuses on developing proactive skills in students to better meet the demands of the workforce. Employers often value employees who can anticipate needs, identify opportunities, and drive positive change within their roles and organizations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study highlighted the expectations of employers as to competencies graduates of BSBA Marketing Management should possess. Graduates must excel in demonstrating business/management competencies, marketing skills, and personal attitude/qualities which are needed by the industry. Particularly the competencies such as communication, stakeholder management and conflict resolution, positive values and work ethics, analytical skills, adaptability, marketplace understanding, database skills, organization and planning, motivational skills, environment and global awareness, reliability, self-discipline, optimism, proactiveness, and productivity to meet employers' expectations.

Generally, the BSBA Marketing Management program is aligned to the needs of the industry. Graduates are performing well in various skills and competencies.

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The gap analysis indicated that while graduates generally perform well, there is still room for improvement to fully meet industry expectations. These skills are analytical skills, adaptability and flexibility, marketplace and customer understanding, analysis and database skills, marketing communications, organization and planning, motivational skills and environmental and global awareness, communication, stakeholders' relationship and conflict management and positive work values and ethics, reliability, self-discipline, optimism towards work, pro-activeness, productivity, and professionalism. Addressing these gaps is important for enhancing the students' readiness to meet industry expectations.

The following are the recommendations:

1. The curriculum and instruction could be revised to focus on developing the identified skills and competencies that are essential for meeting or exceeding the high standards set by employers. This may involve incorporating more practical, hands-on experiences, case studies, and real-world projects to enhance skills needed by the labor market.
2. Implement skill development programs to address specific areas of improvement identified by employers. These programs can include workshops, seminars, and training sessions to enhance the needed skills and competencies among students.
3. Ensure that the BSBA Marketing Management program is aligned with industry standards and practices. Collaborate with industry partners to understand current trends and requirements and integrate relevant skills and knowledge into the curriculum to better prepare graduates for the workforce.
4. Establish feedback mechanisms between employers and the academic institution to gather insights on the performance of graduates in the workplace. Use this feedback to continuously improve the curriculum, teaching methods, and student outcomes to better meet the expectations of employers.

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