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## Effectiveness of Newspaper Advertisements for Job Vacancies: Undergraduates Views

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### Abstract

*Newspaper advertising as a method of employee recruitment plays a significant and important role in Sri Lanka. Epically newspaper advertisement for job vacancies is rated as highly preferable recruitment method in the western community. However, many companies in Sri Lanka use newspaper advertisement for the job vacancies without its effectiveness. There is no any empirical and theoretical knowledge for the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancies in Sri Lanka. Based on this research gap, researchers selected 450 undergraduates from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura as a sample. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the data and it consisted of three parts including small size, medium size and large size job vacancy advertisements. Univariate analysis was hired to analysis the primary data. The main findings of the study were; identification of organization/industry, salient features of the job, features required by the job holder, creativity, main condition of employment, conciseness & attractiveness are the significant factors that should be considered by the company when publishing a advertisement on newspaper. Therefore, size of the advertisement should be considered by the company if they need to recruit appropriate applicants for the job vacancies.*

*Key word: newspaper advertisement, job vacancy, effectiveness, size of the advertisement*

### Introduction

Among the functions of human resource management, recruitment is a major function (Arachchige and Kottawatta, online). It is the point that finds the appropriate applicants to offer the job by companies. There are different methods that can be used to recruit appropriate job applicants (Arachchige and Kottawatta, online). Among the recruitment methods, advertising is the most commonly used recruiting method (Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003). Recruiting ads should influence a variety of market segments (Evans, 1978). This is common in the Sri Lankan context also. Advertising method includes print, radio, and TV advertising, participating in job fair and internship (Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003). However, in Sri Lanka, radio and TV are not the most trendy advertising method for job vacancies. Newspaper advertisement for job vacancies is widely used method in the local context. Therefore, searching job vacancies through newspaper advertisement becomes a habit of all kinds of job seekers in the labor market.

Advertisement on newspaper is an art and good strategy to attract target customers. In the most areas, there is usually one newspaper carrying the largest help wanted

advertising section. Sunday editions of newspapers are usually the best, and there is normally one other day during the week that carries a volume of recruiting advertising. In Sri Lanka “Sunday observer” is a very popular news paper for employment opportunities (Opatha, 2009). However, there are different strategies are used by companies to recruit appropriate applicants through newspaper advertisements. Open advertisement and closed advertisement (Opatha, 2009; Kumara, 2006) are two examples for these strategies. In addition to that, classification is another way of offering job vacancies by the companies to the job seekers (Kottawatta, 2007). Different sizes of advertisements, colorfulness of advertisements and picture based advertisements are common in Sri Lanka as strategies to recruit job applicants. The content information on the newspaper advertisement is divergent from advertisement to advertisement. However, there are no empirical evidences about the effectiveness of content information of newspaper advertisement for job vacancies. Therefore this study is aimed to discuss the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement on its size and content information. The research questions are:

- Does size of the advertisement affect to the effectiveness of the advertisement for the job vacancy?
- Does the content information affect to the effectiveness of the advertisement for the job vacancy?

### **Problem of the Study**

As a popular recruitment method, newspaper advertisement become widely used recruitment method in Sri Lanka. However, according to American Management Association in 1986, of all the recruitment methods studies, advertising varied the most and the largest effect on overall costs. Through the most employers perceive newspaper advertising to be an effective recruitment method, several studies have found it to be worst in new hire performance and turnover (Breugh, 1981; Breugh and Mann, 1984; Gannon, 1971; Decker and Cornelius iii, 1979; Schwab, 1982). However, all these research findings were related to the foreign contexts. In other way, it is common that Sri Lankan companies use newspaper advertisement for job vacancies widely. Therefore, there is a need to find the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement considering its content information and sizes. This is the study problem of this research considered by the researchers.

### **Method**

The survey method is characterized by a questionnaire was selected as the method of data collection in this study. This study was purely based on primary data. The non-contrived field-setting environment was used to collect the primary data. Therefore, the survey method was found to be more suitable to collect required original data because of its comparative advantages position in terms of time and cost. To obtain the objective of the research, researchers selected undergraduates from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. It consists of first year, second year, third year and final year management undergraduates. The selected sample of the study is limited to 450 undergraduates from the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Applied Sciences. All responders were selected randomly. The research is purely based on primary data. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of three separate parts including small size advertisement,

medium size advertisement and large size advertisement. Eight question statements were asked from each part and the samples of advertisement were attached to the questionnaire. Small size advertisement consisted of company name, job categories, experience required, and address of the company. Medium size advertisement consisted of the information like age limit, job categories, wage and other benefits, and company address. And large size advertisement consisted of the information of company name, about the position (profile of the position), required skills, experiences needed and address of the company. The variable in the research model were measured by the use of questionnaire with five point scales. The five point scales for the variables were ranged from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” with the point of 1 to 5 respectively for positive statements and 1 to 5 in reverse order respectively for negative statements. SPSS 16 version was hired to analyses the variables and univariate analysis were used to analysis the primary data. The decision rules used to this study are given in summary form as below.

Mean value > 03: Less effective

Mean value = 03: Moderately effective

Mean value < 03: Highly effective

### **Literature Review**

Advertising is a crucial part of the recruitment process. It is intended to reach out into the labour market with an attractive offer of employment aimed at producing an adequate response in terms of 1) enquiries/requests for details, and 2) numbers of suitable applications submitted (Carrell, 1995). The main sources of job advertising outside the organization are: local newspapers, national newspapers, technical/professional journals, via other agencies, posters at the factory gates (Cole, 1988). According to Milkovich and Boudreau in 2003, advertising methods include print, radio and TV advertising, participation in job fair, and internship. However, this is not common in the Sri Lankan practices. Generally speaking, manual and clerical vacancies are filled by local advertising, whereas managerial and professional vacancies are filled by advertising in the national press and in the specialist journals (Dessler, 1978; Opatha, 2009).

The effectiveness of advertisement for a job vacancy can be changed by 1) the number of enquiries it stimulates, 2) the number of applications submitted and 3) the suitability of the applicants. Even in time when labour is readily available, it is always good practice to aim to produce attractive and informative advertisements. When placing an advertisement in the press, whether local, national or specialist, the organization is going public. Therefore its public image and reputation are at risk to a certain extent. This is why some organizations, public sector as well as commercial, spend a good deal of effort on establishing a high-quality, standard format for their entire job advertising (Cole, 1998).

According to Bernhard Hodes, president of a Chicago advertising firm, a successful recruitment advertisement is based on the answer to four questions: 1) what do you want to accomplish? 2) who do you want to reach? and 3) what should the advertising message convey? (Maurice and Cuming, 1985). According to Carrell in 1995, it is to be needed find out how and where should advertise for its effectiveness. Cole listed out

few features to be evaluated the effectiveness of advertisement as 1) it identified the organization and/or its industry with a few brief references, 2) it provides brief but sufficient details about the salient features of the job, 3) it summarizes all the essential personal features required by the job holder, 4) it refers briefly to any desirable personal features” 5) it states the main conditions of employment, including the salary range for the job, 6) it states how and to whom the enquiry or application made, 7) it presents all the above points in a concise but attractive form and 8) it confirms to legal requirements (Cole, 1988). Carrel identified few criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement of job vacancies as 1) distinctive headlines, 2) effective graphics, 3) clever and creative, 4) avoids sounding too glamorous, 5) specifies nature of job and qualifications, 6) sells the employee, 7) avoids stereotyping and 8) helps candidate identify self (Carrell, 1995).

In this study, identification of the organization/industry, sufficient details about the salient features of the job, summarizing the all the essential personal features required by the job holder, main condition of employment (salary etc), conciseness and attractive form, creativity, contact person and impairment for several minority parties were considered to measure the effectiveness of newspaper advertisements for job vacancies.

**Hypotheses**

The study is based on few hypotheses, which are;

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is an impact of identification of organization/industry to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is an impact of sufficient details about the salient features of the job to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is an impact of summarizing the all the essential personal features required by the job holder to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is an impact of main condition of employment to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>5</sub>: There is an impact of conciseness and attractive form to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>6</sub>: There is an impact of creativity to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>7</sub>: There is an impact of contact person to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- H<sub>8</sub>: There is an impact of impairment for several minority parties to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

**Empirical data**

The empirical data are presented based on the sizes of advertisement and the content information of the advertisement for job vacancies. Table No 01 illustrates the how identification of organization/industry which affects to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement.

Table 01: Identifies the organization and/or its industry with a few brief references

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std.	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
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				<b>deviation</b>			
Small Size	3.10	3.00	2	1.153	1.330	0.126	-1.343
Medium Size	2.62	2.00	2	1.013	1.026	0.469	-1.117
Large Size	1.36	1.00	1	0.560	0.314	1.633	3.690

According to the table No 01, all statistical data present that small size advertisement is less effective than the large size advertisement for job vacancies. Then it presents the tendency of increasing effectiveness from small size to large size of the advertisement. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>) is accepted. Then, there is an impact of identification of organization/industry to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

Table No 02 illustares the impact of sufficient details about the salient features of the job and the effectiveness of the newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

Table 02: Brief but sufficient details about the salient features of the job

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Small Scale	2.8265	2.0000	2.00	1.05543	1.114	0.302	-1.126
Medium Scale	2.3200	2.0000	2.00	0.98350	0.967	0.810	-0.221
Large Scale	1.4400	1.0000	1.00	0.64071	0.411	2.110	8.262

There is increasing tendency of the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement which consists of salient features of the job with the sizes of the advertisement. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (H<sub>2</sub>) is accepted. Then, there is an impact of sufficient details about the salient features of the job to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

The impact of essential personal features required by the job holder to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement is presented in table No 03.

Table 03: The essential personal features required by the job holder

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Small Scale	3.5464	4.0000	4.00	1.07064	1.146	-0.773	-0.293
Medium Scale	3.6800	4.0000	4.00	1.02376	1.048	-0.760	-0.202
Large Scale	1.4388	1.0000	1.00	0.61033	0.373	1.628	4.170

According to the statistical data, the effectiveness of small size advertisement is less than the medium size advertisement. However, the highest effectiveness is given by the large size of newspaper advertisement of personal features required by the job holder. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (H<sub>3</sub>) is accepted. Then, there is an impact of summarizing the all the essential personal features required by the job holder to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

Table No 04 depicts the impact of main condition presented on the advertisement and the effectiveness of the advertisement for job vacancy.

Table 04: The main conditions of employment

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Small Scale	4.1735	4.0000	4.00	0.81260	0.660	-1.272	2.447
Medium Scale	3.5200	4.0000	4.00	1.07760	1.161	-0.325	-1.230
Large Scale	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	0.85391	0.729	0.922	0.616

According to the table No 04, the information of the main conditions of employment in small size advertisement is less effective and large size advertisement is highly effective. It also presents the increasing tendency of the effectiveness of advertisement when the size is increased. Therefore, hypothesis 4 (H<sub>4</sub>) is accepted. Then, there is an impact of main condition of employment to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

The impact of conciseness and attractive form of the advertisement and its effectiveness are given in the table No 05.

Table 05: Conciseness and attractive form

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Small Scale	4.0309	4.0000	4.00	0.83484	0.697	-0.936	0.761
Medium Scale	2.9600	3.0000	2.00	1.10937	1.231	0.216	-1.099
Large Scale	2.2424	2.0000	2.00	1.08882	1.186	0.662	-0.492

According to the table No 05, there is an increasing tendency of the effectiveness of advertisement and the size of the advertisement. Therefore, hypothesis 4 (H<sub>4</sub>) is accepted. Then, there is an impact of conciseness and attractive form to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

The creativity and the effectiveness of the newspaper advertisement are illustrated in the table No 06.

Table 06: Creative of the advertisement

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Small Scale	3.9896	4.0000	4.00	0.92332	0.853	-1.126	1.431
Medium Scale	3.3776	4.0000	4.00	1.06988	1.145	-0.550	-0.946
Large Scale	2.2245	2.0000	2.00	1.01057	1.021	0.634	-0.382

The effectiveness of creativity of the newspaper advertisement presents the increasing tendency from small size advertisement to large size advertisement (table No 06). Therefore the hypothesis 6 (H<sub>6</sub>) is accepted. Then, there is an impact of creativity to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

The effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for the job vacancy on the contact person and place are depicted in the table No 07.

Table 07: Contact person and place are given on the newspaper advertisement

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
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Small Scale	1.4592	1.0000	1.00	0.76210	0.581	1.852	3.222
Medium Scale	1.8200	1.0000	1.00	1.11355	1.240	1.305	0.759
Large Scale	1.2245	1.0000	1.00	0.52819	0.279	2.762	8.861

According to table No 07, there is no significant difference between small size advertisement and large size advertisement for job vacancy in the sense of contact person and place to be addressed the applications. Therefore the hypothesis 7 (H<sub>7</sub>) is rejected. Then, there is not an impact of contact person to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

Impairment of several minority parties on newspaper advertisement for job vacancy and its effectiveness are given in table No 08.

**Table 08: Impairment for several minority parties**

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Small Scale	3.9898	4.0000	4.00	1.08879	1.185	-1.398	1.587
Medium Scale	4.2500	4.0000	4.00	0.74366	0.553	-1.344	3.564
Large Scale	3.9100	4.0000	4.00	1.09263	1.194	-1.288	1.203

According to the table No 08, there is no significant relationship impact of impairment for several minority parties on the effectiveness of the newspaper advertisement for job vacancy. Therefore the hypothesis 8 (H<sub>8</sub>) is rejected. There is not an impact of impairment for several minority parties to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

### **Findings**

The major objective of the study is to identify the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement on its content information and sizes. Then the empirical data reveal the following major findings.

- There is an impact of identification of organization/industry to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is an impact of sufficient details about the salient features of the job to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is an impact of summarizing all the essential personal features required by the job holder to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is an impact of main condition of employment to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is an impact of conciseness and attractive form to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is an impact of creativity to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is no impact of contact person to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.
- There is no impact of impairment for several minority parties to the effectiveness of newspaper advertisement for job vacancy.

### **Conclusion, Recommendation and Limitation**

The findings of the study reveal that identification of organization/industry, salient features of the job, personal features required by the job holder, main condition of employment, conciseness & attractiveness, and creativity are the significant factor to determine the effectiveness of a newspaper advertisement for job vacancy. These findings can be proved by using the idea given by Carrel in 1995. However the idea given by Carrel in 1995 is not confirmed by the study finding.

The size of the newspaper advertisement and its content information are important factor to consider when designing to publish an advertisement on newspaper. Therefore, when designing to publish an advertisement on newspaper, management of the company should be considered its size and the information given to the job seekers. However, the finding may be varied on different situations. Here, the study sample was drawn from the undergraduates of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. It is difficult to generalize for the entire situation. Divergent results can be found from different samples. Therefore, researchers suggest conducting mass scale study to better findings on this research phenomenon.

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