

MOTIVATION AND ANTECEDENTS OF USER ENGAGEMENT WITH JOB ADVERTISING WEBSITES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

With the intense advancement of technology, in order to seek new job opportunities, young people tend to use social media and the internet. This behaviour has been accelerated by some positive influences such as ease of navigation, attractiveness, information provision as well as usability of the website of online job advertising sites. Despite the fact that Sri Lanka has a large number of job advertisement websites, job seekers only use a select handful of them to look for employment. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the influence of pre-identified factors through the pilot study on users' engagement with job advertising websites in Sri Lanka. Moreover, through this study, it was expected to explore what features users enjoy most on job promotion sites that drive them to re-visit and recommend them to their peers. Data collection for this study was completed through self-prepared questionnaires, which are distributed to final-year students of the University of Ruhuna and selected 300 undergraduates based on a purposive sampling technique. Data analyses were done as descriptive statistics, and Coefficients to find the influence of the variables using SPSS. The results demonstrated that the ease of navigation has a significant impact in favor of users' engagement and website usability has less significance. The findings of this study revealed the three factors respectively ease of navigation, attractiveness, and information provision that have a significant impact on users' engagement. The findings of this study are very much beneficial to online job promotion website developers and through this study, the researchers reflected some features that have to gain the attention of online job promotion website developers such as the accuracy and consistency of information, the attractiveness, ease of navigation and website usability.

Keywords: *Advertising sites, Job advertising, Job promotion, Job seeking*

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Introduction

The global economy has grown alive and dynamic, and every firm must always look for ways to increase their productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness if they want to lead their respective industries. According to Mansourvar et al. (2010), businesses should commit to becoming ready for the big global game by increasing their efficiency and competitiveness to provide high performance. Therefore, in order to increase productivity, market share, and shareholder value, businesses should make an effort to entice the appropriate candidates with the right abilities into the right roles.

Moreover, due to globalization, communication converts as an essence for daily activities in every firm. As a result, communication methods have developed rapidly while touching new technologies. Information resources have become a key player and their rapid development has contributed to the firms being the pioneers of their expertise. Also, information resources help to increase productivity and human capacity. When considering modern communication tools, internet service is the most effective and useful tool, and the World Wide Web (WWW) is a very popular method for internet services.

To attract the right people to the right position at the right time, many organizations tend to use E- recruitments methods and Job posting websites are playing a vital role. By aggregating and advertising available telecommuting and local openings, job-posting websites act as the current version of classified adverts. Using a job posting website is one of the greatest and most effective ways to search for and apply to thousands of possibilities. Job posting websites got millions of postings, extra services like career coaching, resume writing, and blog entries full of useful ideas (Cober et al., 2004).

According to Calder et al. (2009) internet job search is not a new way to look for work. It has an aspect of every worker's job search strategy, which that strategy is different from person to person. Nowadays, a lot of job searchers use the internet to get employment. Additionally, a lot of businesses post job openings on their portals, companies have no choice but to use this strategy if they want to get top-notch human resources. Some internet users in Sri Lanka are gathering job vacancy information via using internet job portals such as topjob.com, observerjobs.lk, and dreemjobs.lk, etc (Shezad, 2021). Even though most of the young generation is technology savvy and uses these modern methods, still some people do not use the internet to find jobs and they use traditional ways for job search like newspaper advertisements.

Organizations have taken the advantage of modern information services and have used them for their recruitment. They use the internet as a service in several ways like posting an

advertisement on an internet job board, posting an advertisement on a company website, or a professional-organization website. The e-recruiting is providing the right type of information, at the right time, to the right person with several clicks. Additionally, job seekers can find hundreds of competent applicants for jobs at any level by simply getting into the Internet. Cober et al., (2004) identified four variable influences on the quality of e-recruitment. According to the study's results, e-recruitment procedures fluctuate significantly depending on the organization type, size of the organization, and respondent group. This is indicated by the associates' comments regarding the substantial importance of these activities. In contrast, the organization type gives e-recruitment identical weight. However, there isn't yet agreement on how to accurately operationalize and evaluate the usability of websites (Cober et al., 2003).

When using computer-based technologies, the concept of "user engagement" incorporates behavioural, cognitive, and emotive reactions (Alwreikat & Rjoub, 2021). As mentioned by Doherty (2010), progressive user engagement starts with interactive media interfaces, user evaluation of those interfaces, deeper consumption of media material, and behavioral impacts

Due to the dynamic and complex nature of user engagement, the scale components' stated fluidity, and the need to determine whether the measure allows meaningful comparison across various work contexts and program features, more research is required. Comparing user engagement in response to various software sensory cues also requires research.

As a pilot survey to this study, researchers had taken details from recruitment website administrations to identify user engagement with their websites. Based on the overviews of user engagement of each website, the researchers could be able to recognize that there is a difference in user engagement on each job posting website. As past researchers have conducted research on user engagement on particular websites in their contexts, the researchers were motivated to continue the research to find out what kind of factors affected to have the gap in user engagement in Sri Lanka's job posting sites. Because though there are several websites in Sri Lanka that post job openings, only a small number of them are used by job searchers, and that scenario has motivated researchers to conduct this study.

The main aim of this study is to determine the factors affecting user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka. The following hypotheses were developed to test.

H1: Ease of navigation of websites makes an impact on user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka

H2: The attractiveness of websites makes an impact on user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka

H3: Usability of the websites makes an impact on user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka

H4: Information provision of websites makes an impact on user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka

The results of this research are very important to identify the factors affecting user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka. Also, this study helps to identify the influences of the factors to improve behaviour of job searching through the internet. Further, this study is very important for website designers and managers, because, creating a user-credible website is very hard, and if the website is very poorly designed, the users move away from the site. Limitations of this study are the study is limited to the University of Ruhuna and it is better if this can cover the entire university system in Sri Lanka. The lack of availability of previous research relating to this study, especially in the Sri Lankan context is also another limitation.

Literature Review

A. Recruitment

Recruitment is both practices and activities to identify the “organization's primary purpose and identifying and attracting potential employees”. Also, Recruitment is an important function of human resource management it executes the important function of human assets in the organization (Alwreikat & Rjoub, 2021, p. 3).

i) E-recruitment: Many businesses deliberately assess e-recruitment for growth potential and viability in order to get the right candidate at the right time for the right price. However, everything has altered because of the Internet's evolution. The standard Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) is used by the Internet, a worldwide network of interconnected computer networks, to connect more than a billion devices. It consists of many networks. Therefore internet communication was expanded wide area. Sri Lankan internet users are growing day to day (Teoh, Tan & Chong, 2013).

The rise of the Internet for job search and recruitment reduces traditional recruitment channels. Also, the internet and the development of e-recruitment processes have the power to alter organizations' and job seekers' perspectives on the recruiting process (Sharma & Medury, 2010). This type of recruitment is earning more advantages. The main advantage is reducing application-processing costs and can attract more job seekers that are qualified within a few

days. In another word, e-recruitment was able to attract and retain high-quality people and gain competitive advantages (Van Birgelen, Wetzels & Van Dolen, 2008). Today, recruiters are aware of the advantages of using e-recruitment to find and hire the top candidates on the market. The E-recruitment process performs the activities associated with recruitment more quickly and accurately while also enhancing the recruiting process. It is also a more beneficial and effective means of hiring than previous approaches.

ii) *Traditional recruitment and e-recruitment*: The conventional manner of recruiting has also changed in the Internet Age. Newspaper advertisements were the primary formal external method of posting a job opening and luring applicants, according to Webster et al. (2006). But with the increasing use of the internet, many numbers of organizations and individuals are using the internet and electronic mail for the recruitment process. Also, internet recruitment may be more effective than newspaper ads (Malthouse & Calder, 2010). The internet has helped in attracting suitable candidates to an organization or business from the special recruitment process. It is called Electronic Recruitment (E-recruitment) and known as Online Recruitment, or Internet-based recruitment. But E-recruitment is not the only alternative to traditional recruitment, because e-recruitment is more than the traditional way. And also Puncheva-Michelotti et al. (2018) said the recruitment process has changed in recent years with e-recruitment.

iii) *Methods of E-Recruitment*: E-recruitment can be done by several methods. Commercial Job Boards and Corporate websites are very famous and main methods. Commercial job boards like classified ads in the newspaper and it is a common website for any organization and job seeker. A major advantage of the job board is many people/job seekers watch, and the organization's cost is low. Those websites also provide useful information about an organization as well as vacancies for jobs. It is the main advantage of this method. (Khan, et al., 2013)

iv) *Website design*: Web design around many different skills in the production and maintenance of websites. The different areas of web design like interface design, graphic design, software engineering, programming, and search engine optimization. If a website didn't have a perfect website design, some users do not see that website. More than 20% of job seekers have rejected job opportunities simply based on poorly designed websites (Whitfield et al., 2010)

B. User Engagement

When using computer-based technologies, the concept of "user engagement" incorporates behavioural, cognitive, and emotive reactions. Users' initial "evaluation of, and

interaction with, interactive media interfaces, followed by deeper absorption in media content and behavioural effects" are the first steps in the user engagement process (Rivers, 2016, p. 5). As a result, it offers a "succinct lens" through which to integrate and deal with a number of well-established branches of human-computer interaction research.

i) Key Design Elements for User Engagement on Job Posting Sites: A website that focuses solely on job seekers or careers is called a job posting site. Many jobs posting websites, also referred to as job boards, are created to enable companies to list job requirements for a position that needs to be filled. A potential employee can find the job application on a job website, complete it online, and submit their resume for the open position. When defining and operationalizing each of these components, the research investigations revealed that easy access to pages (many pathways and minimal clicks/backtracking) and navigation aids (e. g., visible links) are prerequisites for effective navigation.

C. Theories Related to Information Seeking Behaviour

Most researchers suggested many models for research and investigation of the individual acceptance behaviour on information technology/information systems, i.e. the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of planned behaviour (TPB), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT).

i) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): Technology Acceptance Model has been developed by Davis in 1989 to identify computer usage behaviour and factors influencing with acceptance of technology (Thuseethan et al., 2014). Technology Acceptance Model was based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) introduced by Davis, Bagozzi, and Waeshaw in 1975.

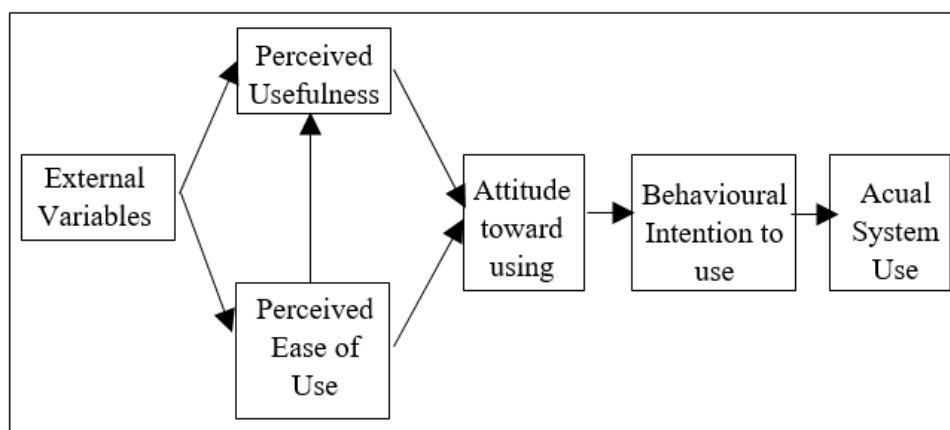


Figure 1: Framework of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

(Davis, 1989, p.8)

According to Davis, Technology Acceptance Model has two main constructs. One is Perceived Usefulness, this is the degree how much enhances the user's performance. The new technology or system was more useful, the more positive is user's attitude toward using the new technology or system. The second one is Perceived Ease of Use, this measures how simple it is to use a new system or piece of technology. The user's attitude toward using the technology or system will improve if the new system is relatively simple to use. Davis also uncovered two more constructs: behavioural intention to use and attitude toward using. Davis (1993) claimed that the following characteristics were part of the TAM model, which fully mediated the impact of system design features on usage: attitude toward using, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use.

D. Empirical Review

O'Brien & Toms (2010, p.1) proposed six dimensions of user engagement, including (1) "Aesthetics, the visual appearance of the website; (2) Endurability, perceived task-technology fit resulting in intention recommend to others; (3) Felt Involvement, cognitive immersion in the task; (4) Focussed Attention, flow state that results in temporal and environmental disassociation; (5) Novelty, pleasurable cognitive stimulation and (6) Perceived Usability, the degree of cognitive effort and affective frustration experienced during use".

Ojedaja (2016) researched to determine the elements that affect university students' impressions of Internet recruitment in Malaysia. Three specific elements formed the basis of that investigation. User-friendliness, information availability, and website usability are taken into account. The researcher's main finding is that younger generations, especially college students, have favourable attitudes regarding e-recruitment methods. Additionally, a lot of employers today offer their opportunities on their portals, and many job seekers search for work online.

To determine the elements affecting Online Customer Satisfaction from Sri Lankan Perspective, Khan et al. (2013) conducted a study. The researchers identified the precise factors of online consumer happiness in order to accomplish the study's goal. As a result, the researchers had to choose a valid procedure for determining the factors that affect online consumer satisfaction and that can be applied to the creation of a conceptual model that can be supported by data. The researchers were able to identify various online consumer satisfaction factors such as website security, user participation, customer service, useful product information, ease of the purchasing process, further information, navigation, and product offerings.

A descriptive study on the effects of e-recruitment on human resource supply chain management was done by Mansourvar et al. (2010). It is anticipated that the study's recommendations will provide some guidance for organizations looking to increase the efficacy of their online recruiting efforts. In a nutshell, employment sites must be user-friendly, and website designers must take into account all the qualities that satisfy youthful job seekers' expectations while building a website's interfaces (Puncheva et al., 2018). Government organizations with employment portals and online recruitment firms must regularly assess the usability and friendliness of their websites and make any necessary aesthetic adjustments.

Khan et al. (2013) conducted a study on Internet job search and unemployment lengths to determine the categories of jobless workers who looked for work online and whether they found new employment more rapidly. The authors concluded that internet job search does speed up reemployment and is more common among workers who exhibit the qualities that are often linked to speedier reemployment. The authors made the point that using the internet to find a job could greatly enhance search results for criteria like employment quality, which they did not examine in their study.

Whitfield et al. (2010) evaluated the viewpoints, career expectations, and job-searching behaviours of a sample of business students for their study on the future generation at work. The authors performed a field survey with 20,771 students across Canada to examine university students' perceptions of careers, organizations, and careers as well as how they view their organizations. The study's multiple regression analysis revealed that cooperative students reported higher levels of self-assurance, appeared to have more reasonable expectations, and had a deeper understanding of their talents and objectives. It also showed that the respondents had low expectations for the career centers at their schools to assist them in finding work and intended to use the internet more frequently in their job searches. This suggested switching from outdated recruitment techniques to more contemporary ones, such as the internet.

Additionally, high-tech sectors are not the only ones using the Internet for finding and hiring. Enterprises with a connection to computers are indeed more likely to find online hiring useful. However, the majority of recent college graduates now consider the Internet to be a key resource for assistance in finding career prospects, with non-technical professions accounting for 65% of all Internet job seekers (Marcel et al., 2008)

Methodology

A. Conceptualization of Variables

A research framework is constructed as shown in Figure 2, The framework shows the relationships between the independent variables (Ease of navigation, Attractiveness, Information provision, and Website Usability), and the dependent variable (User engagement of online job advertising sites).

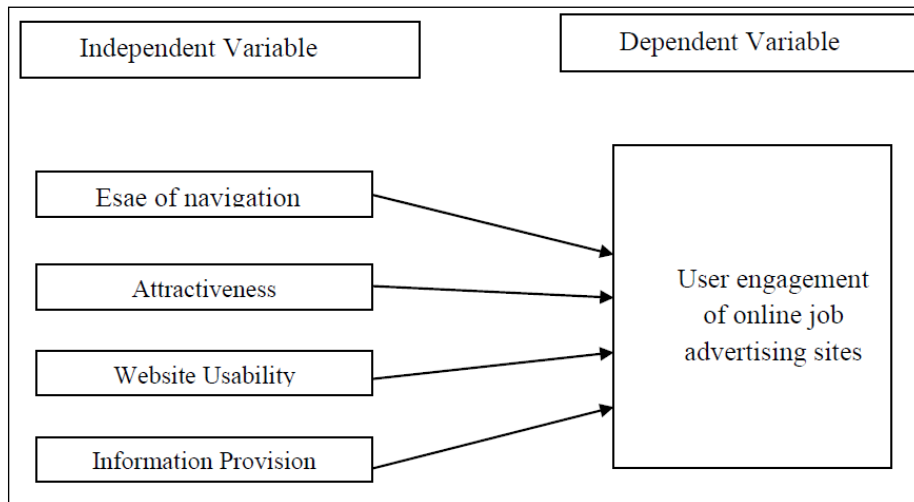


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

B. Operationalization of Variables

According to the above conceptual framework, the operationalization has been developed as follows

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
Ease of navigation (Independent Variable)	Less effort	Online job portals provide immense service to job seekers
		Ability to find a job opportunity easily
		Filtering facilities are available on the websites
	Saving Time	Can find more jobs within less time
Job Websites' efficiency is high		
Attractiveness (Independent Variable)	Graphics	Sites display attractive colours to the eyes
		Appropriate images and icons have been used
		Appearance increases the willingness to search for jobs

	Professional look	Professionals look to the right place that can remind
	UX/UI Design	Effective interfaces are providing
Website Usability (Independent Variable)	Effective Use	Can apply for a job through the site itself
	Ease of Use	An effective set of navigations is provided
	Clean	Unnecessary information is avoided
	Consistency	Advertisements are maintaining consistency
Information Provision (Independent Variable)	Correctness	Ambiguity information is not provided
	Trustworthy	Looks like admins maintaining a good relationship with job offers
		All the important information have has been provided
	Timeliness	Websites are updated frequently
User engagement of Job advertising sites (Dependent Variable)	Frequency	Frequency of visits to the sites
		Staying many times at one site
	Recommend	Recommendation for online job searching
	Willingness	High willingness to search for jobs online

Figure 3: Operationalization

C. Methodology

The study was based on a quantitative research design and the research steps applied were in accordance with scientific research design. Explanatory research served as a foundation for the current study. It was defined as an effort to link concepts to comprehend cause and effect, i.e., researchers are trying to explain what is happening. The explanatory study also examines how elements combine and communicate with one another. There is enough knowledge from this research to date to start making rather accurate predictions about what will happen next. Numerous academics assert that studies that test hypotheses or provide an explanatory framework frequently find correlations or differences between groups on a particular variable or set of variables. The goal of this study is to identify the variables influencing Sri Lankan online job posting site users' participation. In order to ascertain how independent factors, affect the dependent variable, this study is a hypothesis investigation. There are many other ways to gather data, including experimentation, survey research, observation, case studies, and action research. The survey method was employed in this study to get the data. When the researcher is aware of precisely what is required and how to measure

the variables of interest, questionnaires are an effective method for gathering data. The distribution of questionnaires can be done electronically, by mail, or in person. In this study, the researchers distributed the questionnaires online.

This research is very related to final-year students because final-year students are very close to the job market. The researcher selected the 300 participants' final year students of the University of Ruhuna. The sample of this research was selected using the purposive sampling technique after using a simple random technique. The researchers specifically selected few job advertising websites in Sri Lanka to observe the user engagement behaviour towards the advertising posts in the websites. *Topjobs.lk*, *observer jobs*, *ikman jobs*, *dream jobs*, *express jobs*, *mytutor jobs*, and *careerfirst*.

The primary data evaluated using a structured questionnaire, which was consisting of two sections. Section one was about the demographic information of the respondents and section two was about their information-searching behaviour. The unit of analysis was an undergraduate.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in this study to support the quantitative aspect of the data gathering. Measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and measures of dispersion are typically used in descriptive statistics (variance, standard deviation, etc.) The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression, and correlation coefficient. The relationship between variables is explained through correlation. To determine the link between the dependent and independent variables, the study employed correlation analysis. The data analysis tool utilized was the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the time spent by final-year students seeking jobs online. Out of the sample, the majority of respondents are female students and it is about 56%. When considering the time, all the respondents are engaged in seeking online jobs through visiting online job advertising sites and the majority of respondents (147 – 49%) spend more than 02 hours per week seeking job opportunities advertised online.

Table 1: Gender Vs. Time is taken to seek jobs online

Time consumes for job seeking on the internet	Male	Female
Less than 1 hour	25	18

From 1 to 2 hours	58	62
More than 2 hours	48	99
Total	131	169

Moreover, the study considered the following demographic factors gender, age, faculty, and degree. According to sample data analysis, factors affecting user engagement in online job advertising sites are different with gender and faculties. But age and education areas are not influenced by the user engagement of online job advertising sites. Mostly the respondents are engaged in websites such as express job, ikman jobs, topjobs.lk, and mytutor jobs for seeking job opportunities.

Internal consistency of the variables was checked by running the Reliability analysis test and Cronbach's alpha values were in a range of 0.74 – 0.86 (Table 2). It can be concluded as the data collection tool and its content was internally consistent with each other.

Table 2 : Reliability Analysis Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Ease of navigation	0.866	5
Attractiveness	0.892	5
Website usability	0.807	4
Information provision	0.861	4
User Engagement	0.746	4

Descriptive statistics were calculated to test the basic nature of the responses provided by the respondents. Mean, Standard deviation and Skewness shows different aspects of the responses. All the mean values as shown in table 3, range from 3.27-3.49. The values have reached a moderate level of agreement with the provided statements when collecting data. Therefore, it can be concluded as there is a moderately high agreement in engaging and seeking jobs advertised online.

Standard Deviation of considered factors for the study ranged from 0.72 – 0.78. All the values are moderately high and it implies all the responses were spread out over a wider range of values. When considering the skewness, there is a negative skewness and it has a kind of distribution in which more values are concentrated on the right side (tail) of the distribution graph.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

	No. of Respondents	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
User Engagement	300	1	5	3.27	0.787	-0.150
Ease of navigation	300	1	5	3.49	0.722	-0.370
Attractiveness	300	1	5	3.37	0.733	-0.405
Website usability	300	1	5	3.46	0.734	-0.474
Information provision	300	1	5	3.42	0.742	-0.257

In order to understand how independent factors affect the dependent variable, regression analysis was performed. Regression analysis demonstrates the overall fit of the model, and the results are shown in table 4. Multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the theory. According to the result, adjusted R² was 0.634 and it implies that 63.4% of user engagement of online job advertising sites was described by the selected independent variables and the rest 36.6% was represented by the other factors which have not been considered by the researchers.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.780 ^a	.634	.603	.518	1.941
a. Predictors: (Constant), IP, Attractiveness, EN, WU					
b. Dependent Variable: User engagement of online job advertising sites					

Then the regression coefficient test was performed to identify the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. Based on those values the acceptance/rejection was decided. When the sig. values less than 0.05, the hypotheses were accepted, and the following table shows the test results.

Table 5: Coefficient Results

Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t.	Sig.
	B.	Std. Error	Beta		

(Constant)	0.042	.154		.275	.784
Ease of navigation	0.426	.069	.391	6.209	.000
Attractiveness	0.205	.069	.191	2.967	.003
Website usability	-0.022	.079	-.020	-.276	.783
Information Provision	0.330	.071	.314	4.625	.000
a. Dependent Variable: User engagement of online job advertising sites					

According to the above table, except for the website usability factor, all other factors were statistically supported that they made an impact on the user engagement of the online job posting sites in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study is based on four independent variables of ease of navigation, attractiveness, website usability, and Information provision. The results of this study showed that four factors significantly affect how users interact with Sri Lankan online job posting websites. Amongst the four factors, ease of navigation appears to be the strongest predictor. In this study, it was found that website usability had little impact on the user engagement of online job advertising sites in Sri Lanka.

According to sample data analyses ease of navigation, attractiveness, and Information provision are significantly important for increasing user engagement in online job advertising sites. But website usability is not significantly for the user engagement of online job advertising sites. Finally, the researcher recommends that while designing the internet job site should focus on the information provided and have to consider the ease of navigation and attractiveness, same time should give a little attention to website usability.

Identification of the most significant factors in user engagement on job advertising sites will be useful to design and develop websites for the job-advertising firm and designing and recreate organizational strategies. Instead of paper advertisements, job-advertising sites facilitate new updates regarding vacancies and advanced searching facilities by keywords simply for many categorical users. In addition, a more comprehensive study using several other influences of job advertising websites on User Engagement hypotheses can be examined in the future. The impact of job marketing websites on user engagement could be tested and predicted using a larger sample size and additional factors. Additionally, a variety of job advertising companies that were not the subject of this study evoke varied user motives for interaction with their content. Further research can be done on these businesses.

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