

*Determining Demand in Thai Job Market for Communications-Related Degree Title:
A Survey of an Online Job Website*

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the extent of the demand for graduates of communication-related academic degrees in the Thai job market. To accomplish this, the study utilized content analysis, which involved monitoring on a weekly basis (for six consecutive weeks) the number of available job ads that require a communications-related academic degree in the Thailand version of online job search website, JobsDB.com. The results were tabulated using the SPSS program.

This study found that BA Communication Arts is the degree title that job recruiters in the job search website most often sought for vacant job positions in communications. Most of the work functions of said jobs indicated those involving public relations. Almost all the vacant job positions are staff level and are mostly found in private companies.

Keywords: communication, degree, career

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In the past, most job positions in media companies were filled up by graduates of a variety of bachelor's degree courses. In recent decades, with the increase in the number of media companies—whether in print, broadcast or new media—and the deepening academic interest into mass media and their role in and impact on society, bachelor's degree programs in the field, whether these come under the academic degree titles of Journalism, Mass Communication, Communication Arts or Media Studies, have been introduced in the program offerings of numerous universities.

Such a degree program properly equips a student, in both academic aptitude and technical skills, and prepares him/her for a job in the mass media industry.

Employers, whether in the private sector, the government service, or non-government organizations, have also recognized the value of hiring a graduate of a communications-related academic degree to perform communication tasks in their respective organizations. A quick scan of the websites of the leading universities in Thailand revealed that they offer such a degree program albeit under varying titles.

Thammasat University's international program offers BA Journalism (Thammasat University, n.d.); Chulalongkorn University's international program has BA Communication Management (Chulalongkorn University, n.d.); Bangkok University International College offers BA Communication Arts (Bangkok University International College, n.d.); Assumption University likewise offers BA Communication Arts (Assumption University, n.d.); as does Rangsit International College (n.d.); while Webster University offers BA Media Communications (Webster University, n.d.) and Stamford University (Thailand) offers BA Communication Arts with a specialization in Advertising (Stamford University, n.d.).

Aside from print publications like newspapers, employers can now also tap the power of the Internet in announcing vacant positions in their organizations. Online job search websites have become one of the tools through which new personnel can be selected and hired.

According to surveys done in the Philippines (Cortado, 2010), and in the UK (Peacock, 2011; and Sedghi, 2011), graduates of degrees in communication have a very high chance of being employed.

A research study (Olufemi and Adebola, n.d.) found that an appropriate academic degree for the job vacancy is crucial in the decision-making process of recruiters.

Giang (2013) wrote that degrees which develop public relations and social media skills will be highly marketable in 2013. On the other hand, Rampul (2012) wrote that job functions like technical writing and specialization in media are among the top in-demand jobs in the future.

B. Research Objectives

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How many vacant positions requiring graduates of communications-related degrees appear on the two job search websites over a six-week period;
2. How much of these vacancies are for staff positions and how many are for management positions;
3. What specific academic degree titles are job recruiters looking for?
4. What types of organizations are seeking graduates of communications-related academic degrees, whether they are government agencies, private companies or non-government organizations / international agencies?
5. What communication functions (i.e. providing print and online news content, broadcasting tasks, advertising and public relations functions) do job recruiters seek to fill up in their respective companies?

C. Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to the following:

1. The MUIC Executive Committee: That results of this study will provide concrete data of market demand for graduates of a communication-related bachelor's degree;
2. The MUIC Academic Division: That results of this study will serve as a guide to which academic degree title is in demand among job recruiters (i.e. BA Communication Arts, BA Mass Communication, BA Journalism, etc.)
3. The MUIC Academic Division: That results of this study will serve as a guide on what communications job functions companies are looking for in graduates of a communications-related bachelor's degree, whether it is providing news and other content to and/or performing related tasks to print, online and broadcast media, or performing advertising and public relations duties, hence giving the MUIC Academic Division a clear idea to construct corresponding curricula and syllabi for such an academic program.
4. Scholars and Other Academicians: This study will serve as a resource for scholars and other academicians as they pursue their respective researches that also touch on the same field.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Content analysis has been defined as “a methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken or published communication by systematic, objective and quantitative analysis” (Zito, 1975, as cited in Berger, 2000.) Charles Wright (1986, as cited in Berger, 2000) states that “Content analysis is a research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain usually predetermined categories”(p. 173). Wright clarified also the limitations of this type of research design: “Content analysis itself provides no direct data about the nature of the communicator, audience or effects. Therefore, great caution must be exercised whenever this technique is used for any purpose other than the classification, description and analysis of the manifest content of the communication”(p. 173).

Berger (2000) states that content analysis as a research method has the following advantages: unobtrusive, relatively inexpensive, uses material that is relatively easy to obtain and work with, and yields data that can be quantified.

Williams (2007) noted that 14% of hirings came about as a result of using job search websites. Though research showed that job ads posted in employers’ respective websites facilitated a higher number of hiring, it has been decided that job search websites will be used as the primary survey material for this study, as Johnson (2012) notes that these websites offer better “funneling” or “qualifying” tool. She also quoted a study undertaken by Microsoft that said 79% of all employers now search for applicants through job websites and databases.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study will use content analysis as its research design. Under this design, media content (i.e. job ads) will be monitored and tabulated in order to spot trends or any indication about the phenomenon being investigated. Job ads in one ~~two~~ job search websites in Thailand, namely, JobsDB.com (www.thai.jobsdb.com) will be monitored because it offers the most number of job ads that require graduates of communications-related degrees.

B. Data-gathering Instruments

1. Online Job Ad Monitoring

The researcher will monitor classified ads of vacant job positions requiring applicants who are graduates of communications-related academic degrees on JobsDB.com <http://th.jobsdb.com/th>

The website will be monitored once a week. The researcher will note down relevant job listings and tabulate them.

The monitoring process will have a duration of six weeks, to ensure that there is a variety of relevant job listings.

2. Tabulation – the data gathered will be tabulated.

- ##### **3. Content Analysis - The content analysis will be conducted in such a way as to:**
- a. Determine the total number of job vacancies on Thaijobsdb.com www.th.jobsdb.com which specifically require candidates who hold a communications-related degree

- b. Tabulate the demand for specific bachelor's degree title (i.e. Communication Arts, Mass Communication, Journalism, etc.)
- c. Note the level of each vacancy indicating if the vacant post is staff- or management-level;
- d. Classify the job recruiters by their organizational nature: private companies, government agencies, or non-government organizations
- e. Classify the job functions of the vacant positions (providing content for print, broadcast or online media, or performing advertising or public relations duties).

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
Academic Degree Titles

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Total
Communication Arts	14	13	18	17	14	13	89
Mass Communication	5	6	21	10	11	9	62
Journalism	7	9	12	6	16	12	62
Advertising	6	12	11	10	7	5	51
Public Relations	8	10	14	6	7	5	50
Total	40	50	76	49	55	44	314

Eighty-nine out of 314 or 28.34% of posted job vacancies require a bachelor's degree in Communication Arts.

Sixty-two out of 314 or 19.74% of posted job vacancies require a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication.

The same percentage goes for a bachelor's degree in Journalism.

Fifty-one out of 314 or 16.24% of posted job vacancies require a bachelor's degree in Advertising.

Fifty out of 314 or 15.92% of posted job vacancies require a bachelor's degree in Public Relations.

Level

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Total
Staff	13	20	28	21	24	13	113
Managerial	11	13	25	15	9	14	87
Total	24	33	53	36	33	27	200

One hundred-thirteen out of 200 or 56.49% posted job vacancies are staff positions while 87 out of 200 or 43.5% are managerial positions.

Type of Organization

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Total
Private	23	31	52	36	33	27	202
Government	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Non-Government Organization	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Total	24	33	53	36	33	27	206

Two hundred-two out of 206 or 98% of posted job vacancies are from private companies while 1 out of 206 or 0.48% of posted job vacancies is from a government agency. 3 out of 206 or 1.45% of posted job vacancies are from non-government organizations.

Type of Media Function

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Total
Public Relations	21	27	39	29	28	16	160
Advertising	4	6	4	4	2	2	22
Print	0	0	2	0	3	2	7
Online	0	0	5	2	0	0	7
Broadcasting	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Others	0	0	3	0	0	4	7
Total	25	33	53	35	33	27	206

One hundred-sixty out of 206 posted job vacancies or 77.66% have a public relations function.

Twenty-two out of 206 posted job vacancies or 10.67% have an advertising function.
Seventeen out of 206 job vacancies or 8.25% are concerned with the function of providing content for print, online and broadcast media
Seven out of 206 posted job vacancies or 3.39% have functions in other fields.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings:

1. More than a fourth of all degree titles in the job vacancies posted during the survey period in the website used “BA Communication Arts.” Hence, it is the most familiar, if not the most marketable, among the degree titles used. The degree titles “BA Mass Communications” and “BA Journalism” are tied in second place, indicating that they can be alternative degree titles that can be offered by the university, with the latter more geared towards skills training in news gathering, writing, and disseminating.
2. Majority of job vacancies posted in the website during the survey period were staff positions, indicating the bigger demand for graduates of bachelor’s degree courses in communication who are trained in basic skills required for entry-level positions.
3. Almost all vacant job positions posted on the website during the survey period came from private companies, indicating the higher demand for the type of skills set that are required in private companies as opposed to government or non-government types of skills set. This result also implies that the salary rates available to graduates of communications degrees are based on private sector standards.
4. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the vacant job positions posted on the website during the survey period required chosen candidates to perform public relations functions. This indicates that whereas BA Communication Arts is the most popular degree title, offering a specialization in public relations is advisable in order to make the graduates more competitive in the job market. Another specialization, this time in advertising, is also recommended, as 10% of vacant job positions surveyed indicated that they require advertising work functions (coming in second place after public relations).

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