

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on managers' attitudes towards the competencies of candidates with online degrees. The study aims to present the employers' attitudes towards the qualifications of the applicants with online degrees and the perception of the candidates' abilities. The study examines whether these perception have any effect on the employers' hiring decision.

The participants consisted of 77 graduate students in the MBA programs for executives at three large universities in Bangkok. From the study, even though more than ninety percent of the participants responded that they knew what an online degree was, sixty eight percent of them were unclear about the teaching delivery. Besides, sixty one percent were doubtful with the quality measurement.

While the degree holders from other types of distant education were often viewed as highly disciplined individuals, this was not applicable to online degree holders. Half of the recruiters were undecided that online degree holders shared the same virtue. Besides, approximately 29 percent of the participants commented that an online degree was easier to achieve than a regular one. About 47 percent of the managers reflected that an online degree was not compatible with a regular degree. Nearly 72 percent of employers perceived that online degree holders may have difficulty working as a team in a company.

The findings show that nearly 65 percent of the managers were hesitant to hire online degree candidates. The results confirmed that the respondents were doubtful about the credibility of online degree holders and they prefer candidates with traditional degrees. By using a traditional degree as a benchmark, half of the respondents viewed an online degree as less equal in terms of quality, teachers' guidance, and students' interpersonal skills. Moreover, according to the respondents' comment, an online degree may not be suitable in certain fields of study, especially those requiring much practice and close guidance from teachers. Additionally, a classroom setting gave learners an opportunity to socialize and to brainstorm with their peers and teachers. They suggested that the students studying online should participate in social activities and should have an internship or training. This would boost people's confidence with the degree.