

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews the literature in four main areas along with a summary: (1) Theory of resourcing, recruitment and selection, (2) the concept of online degrees, (3) relevant research, and (4) summary.

*Education has changed from an orderly world of disciplines and courses to an ionosphere in which communication technologies are increasingly important. While education is changing, it is not changing fast enough. It is clear that in the future we will see a major restructuring of our social, industrial and educational institutions, and an increased reliance on computers and telecommunications for work and education.*

*(Molnar, 1997, cited by Kearsley, 2000, p.147)*

#### **2.1 THEORY OF RESOURCING, RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

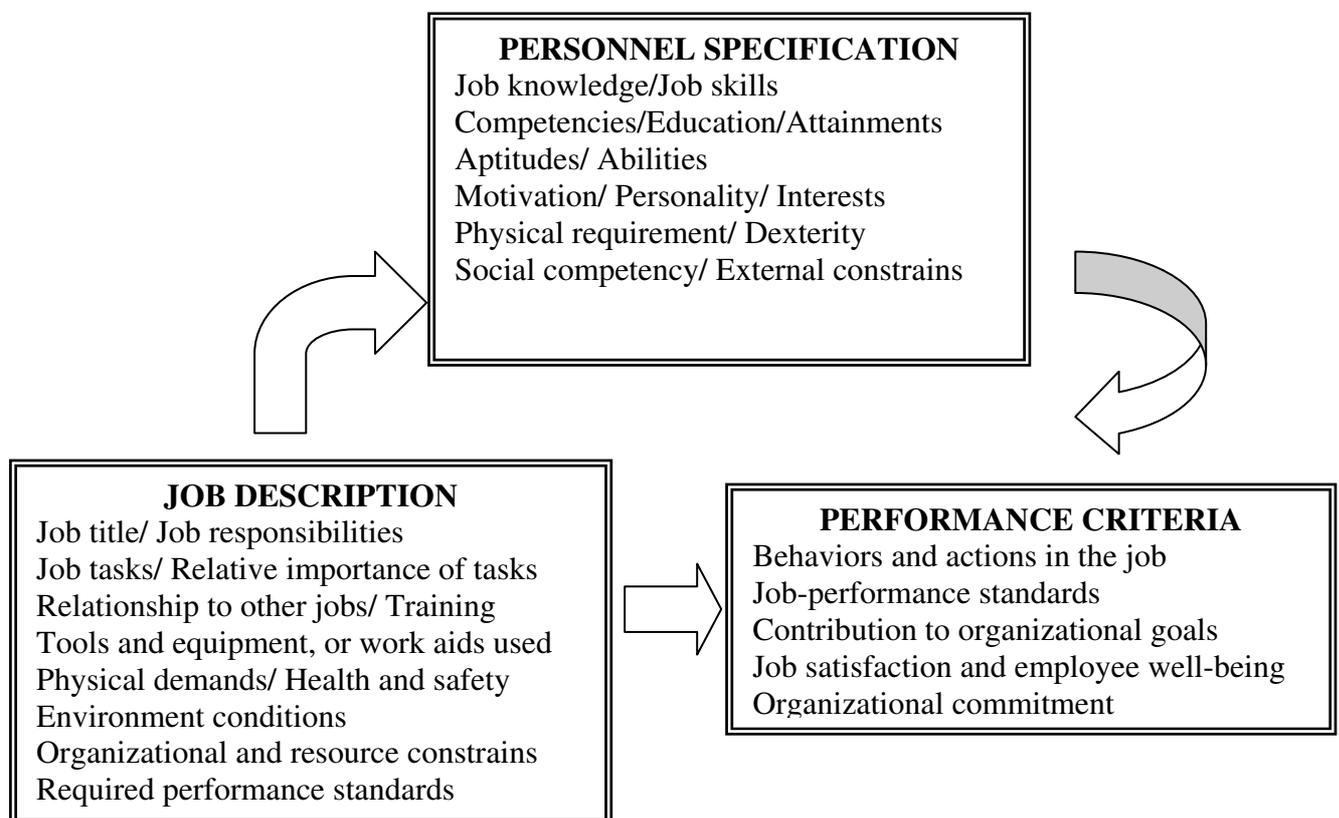
McKeanna and Beech (1995) define that recruitment is a process of attracting candidates to fill in a vacant position. Meanwhile, selection is a technique choosing new members from the available candidates. In short, it is a decision about who will be successfully selected to be a new member. Mandell (1964) mentions it is a careful selection of an employee. This is to ensure that the selected are physically, mentally and temperamentally fitted to the jobs. This should be made in an impartial and objective way, so that the utilization of necessary skills and experience will lead the company to success. When considering selecting a person to join an organization, McKeanna and Beech mentioned that the recruitment procedures start as follows:

Firstly, the company will conduct a job analysis to describe the duties and what is involved in the vacant position, such as the desirable skills for a successful performance. The company will also put the job description, which contains an outline of the jobs, tasks involved, responsibilities and other related conditions. Moreover, they may add other job specifications which might concern the person's capabilities of executing the tasks successfully. Rodger (1952) mentions that the company would also consider the candidates' attributes: physical type (health and appearance); attainment (education, qualification and experience); general intelligence

(intellectual capacity); special aptitudes (communication skills); interest (culture, sport, etc.), and special circumstances (an ability to work at odd hours, travel, etc.). Additionally, Fraser (1950) reveals that employers also consider the impacts on others, acquired qualifications (education, training and experience), innate attitudes (appetite for learning), motivations (set goals and determination to achieve them), and adaptability (related well with others, stability in a stressful situation)

Cooper and Robertson (1995) elaborate the strategies to identify the recruiting needs as follows:

**Figure 1. Strategies of Recruiting Needs**



*From: The Psychology of Personnel Selection (p.33), by D. Cooper and I. Robertson, 1995, London: Routledge.*

As for the process of selecting the right and best candidate, McKeanna and Beech (1995) present the procedures as follows:

1. Interview

2. Psychological test (intelligence and personality)
3. Work-based test, an “in-tray” test, or a representative sample of the work that one has to do if appointed. The advantage is that it can test an applicant’s competence in realistically carrying out tasks.
4. Assessment centers: These centers will schedule interviews, group exercises (such as role playing) to assess interpersonal skills in a group exercise
5. Biodata/Curriculum Vitae (CV) or information related to age, education, and personal history, current and past employment.
6. Reference: Referees will provide confirmation that any information given by the candidates is true.
7. Graphology or the prediction of the future from handwriting.

## 2.2 THE CONCEPT OF ONLINE DEGREES

### 2.2.1 The Characteristics of Regular Versus Online Degrees

A regular degree is a traditional degree type offered by a physically present university. In this traditional learning style, the students-teachers, or the students-students interaction is face-to-face communication. Thus, students and teachers must be physically present in the same location and learning will be in a classroom setting. As for those people pursuing degrees from abroad, it means that they must leave their home country and live in a foreign country for a number of years. For this reason, it obviously costs a lot of money and therefore becomes exclusive only to a few privileged people. As for the students’ role in this regular education, they will take a passive role in controlling the direction of their studies. Kearsley (2000) mentions that the university and the instructors will decide the curriculum, determine the direction of learning, e.g. course schedule, classroom, and provide learning facilities.

Meanwhile, an online degree is a degree earned over the internet. Technologies, such as computers and teleconferencing, are employed to facilitate the learning (Gilbert, 2001). Chaiyong (2004) defines that the Internet Distance Education (IDE), a part of distance learning, is operated and evaluated by using the Internet. The two main objectives of this degree are to provide an educational opportunity to people and to share learning resources, such as teachers, information,

etc. It is obvious that the Internet plays the most important role in this type of education while other materials, such as CDs and videotapes are subsidiary. Gilbert (2001) exemplifies that the distance-learning equipment are televisions, videotapes, and audio, as follows:

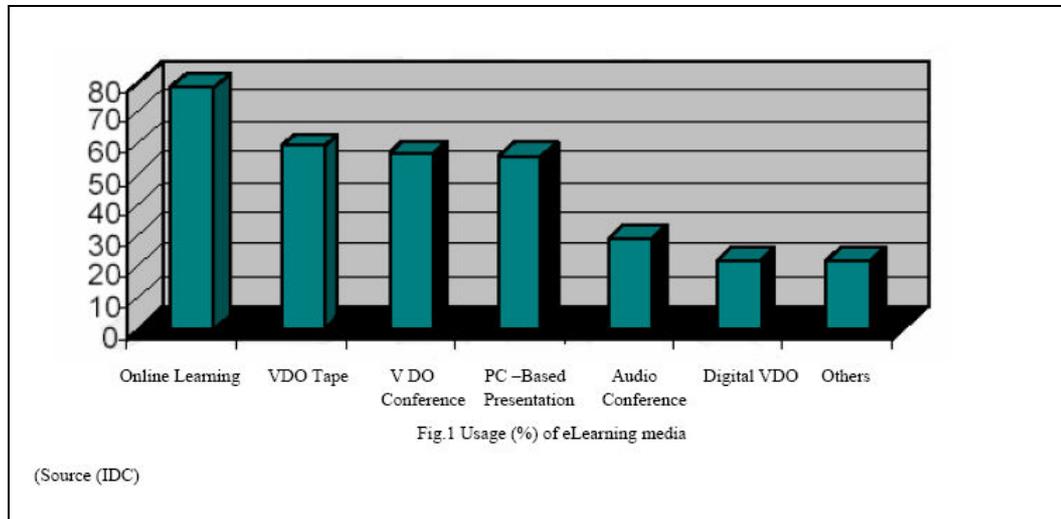
***Table 1. Distance Learning Equipment***

<b>The forms that Distance Learning take include:</b>	<b>The equipment students need are:</b>
Mail	Mailbox
Video	TV and/or VCR
Television	TV
Radio	Radio
Videotapes	TV and VCR
Audiotapes	Tape Player
CD-ROM	Computer with a CD drive
Internet Access	Computer with Internet
Streaming Video	Computer with enough memory
Computerized Data	Computer with appropriate software and a delivery system

***From How to be Successful Online Students, by S. Gilbert, 2001, n.p., USA: R.R. Donnerlly & Sons.***

Phongchai (2004) mentions that several types of media have been used for distance learning as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Media used in Distance Learning**



*From Trends and Forces for eLearning in Thailand (p.132), by Phongchai Sirinaruemit, 2004, Bangkok: Assumption University Press.*

Besides, those who have difficulty going to traditional universities can obtain a degree almost like regular students can (Adams & DeFleur, 2006). Since students' class attendance is not mandatory, some institutions offering online degrees have no physical campus. Therefore, the university is called a virtual university (Gilbert, 2000).

### 2.2.2 Themes Shaping Online Education

According to Kearsley (2000), online education involves information sharing activities between teachers and students in different places. Online education is believed to increase more tendencies of collaboration since it is easy to interact online. Students can simply connect with many students or even directly with instructors or expert in their fields of study. Meanwhile, the traditional classroom setting is more self-contained and a limited unit. Collaboration may occur only among peers or small groups. Computer networks can help create a virtual community, which does not have constraints to any physical locations, but contains people who share the same interests. Also, an online education offers an opportunity for students to study anywhere, anytime in the world with an Internet connection. Online degrees break the traditional style and boundaries of regular education that emphasizes learning in a

classroom setting. Also, students can access knowledge networks, such as actual databases and research information. Employees can study a new course at work or home. Lastly, Kearsley mentioned that learning is more effective when involving various sensory channels. Multimedia technology, available mostly over the Internet, can enhance the learning process. Even though it cannot be compatible with direct and firsthand experience, online education is better than the “talk and chalk” style of teaching. For example, a video can provide face-to-face communication with online learning and allow people to come close to person-to-person contact that is associated with classroom learning.

### 2.2.3 Online Degrees in Thailand

Online education in Thailand was initiated at primary school level. In 2006, it was reported that 12,221 primary schools, including 400 Muslim schools in the southernmost provinces, such as Pattani, Yala and Satun, joined a distance-learning program from Wang Klaikangwon School. Currently, there are 642 projects in provincial and sub-district administration, with a budget over 2,400 billion Baht (Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, 2008). The Ministry of Education has also expanded online learning to higher education. In 2003, the ministry appointed a committee to work on implementing and regulating the guidelines for the Internet-based distance education programs in colleges and universities (Chaiyong Brahmawong, 2004). Some examples of available courses is a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Naresuan University and a Bachelor of Science in Software Engineering from Chulalongkorn University. Not only do the state universities provide such offers, but Sukhothai Thammathirat University, the very first university that pioneered distance education in Thailand, has also offered an online doctoral degree. Meanwhile, public universities also participate in new learning. In 2002, Assumption University established the College of Internet Distance Education, which targeted 100,000 online students per year (Srisakdi Charmonman, 2005, p.111). The university offers degrees, such as, a master’s degree in Management and a doctoral degree in eLearning Methodology. The number of students from 2006-2008 is presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2. Number of the 1<sup>st</sup> year Students of Doctoral Degrees in eLearning Methodology, Assumption University**

Number of Students (First Semester)		
Year 2006	Year 2007	Year 2008
7	8	5

*From Assumption University, College of Internet Distance Education. Number of the 1<sup>st</sup> year Students of Doctoral Degrees in eLearning Methodology. Retrieved July 11, 2008 from: [http://www.elearning.au.edu/PhDeLm/stu\\_list.php](http://www.elearning.au.edu/PhDeLm/stu_list.php)*

Moreover, it has cooperated with other counterparts such as UKeU and Middlesex University, as shown in Table 3:

**Table 3. Courses Offered at Assumption University, with Partnership from UKeU**

University	Courses Offered
UKeU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- B.A. (Enterprise)</li> <li>- B.Sc (Business Information Systems)</li> <li>- M.A. (Public Policy and Management)</li> <li>- M.Sc. (Bioinformatics)</li> <li>- M.Sc. (Biomedical Science)</li> <li>- M.Sc. (Coastal Zone Management)</li> <li>- M.Sc. (Computer Science)</li> <li>- M.Sc. (Energy Management)</li> </ul>

*From An E-Learning Project for 100,000 students, (p.115), by Srisakdi, 2004, Bangkok: Assumption University Press.*

In higher education, the Office of the Commission for Higher Education established Thailand Cyber Space University (TCU) with goals to promote access to higher education and to promote a knowledge-based society. Currently, there are 33 counterparts, such as Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, and Naresuan University, etc. TCU, which operates as the center, coordinates with its

counterpart universities to develop online courses by using the Inter-University Network (UniNet). Then, each university who owns the course will grant the degree to its students. Table 4 below, illustrates the number of users enrolling in online courses since the first opening on January 12, 2005.

**Table 4. The Number of Students and Teachers Enrolled in Courses Offered by TCU**

No. of registered users	61,176
- Students	58,379
- Teachers	2,797
No. of courses	513
No. of study programs	16
No. of course registrations	112,033
No. of times students have studied courses	1,571,924
Universities in Consortium	36

(Last updated : January, 2009)

*From Thai Cyberspace University. The Number of Students and Teachers Enrolled in Courses Offered by TCU. Retrieved February 22, 2008, from <http://www.thaicyperu.go.th/#>*

It is foreseen that eLearning will eventually become mainstream while the classroom-based learning will be a supporting part (Srisakdi Charmonman & Natanicha Chorpothong 2004).

### 2.3 RELEVANT RESEARCH

In their research, “Do Online Students Perform as well as lecture students?” Dutton and Perry (2002) stated the disadvantages of online education as being that it allowed less disciplined students to fall irretrievably behind in class work. Moreover, they had lower completion rates than traditional lectured students. Kim and Bonk (2006) explain the factors which deflect the success of distance education, as presented in Table 5:

**Table 5. Factors that will most significantly affect the success of online programs**

<b>Response Option</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Response Rate (%)</b>
Monetary Support	131	24.7
Pedagogical Competency of Online Instructors	121	22.9
Technical Competency of Online Instructors	81	15.3
Improvement in Online Technologies	57	10.8
Marketing	47	8.9
Rigorous Quality Management in the Accreditation Process	42	7.9
Other	38	7.5
Joining a Consortium	12	2.3
Subtotal	529	95.3
No response	33	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*From The Future of Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, by Kim, K. J. & Bonk, C. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EQM0644.pdf>*

Moreover, the authors refer that the empirical studies on the effectiveness of using technologies in online education are missing. Thus, they surveyed the prediction of how the quality of online learning could be assessed, as Table 6 shows:

**Table 6. Predictions about how the quality of online learning will be measured**

<b>Response Options</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Response Rate (%)</b>
Student achievement compared with live classroom setting	237	43.8
Student performance in simulated task of real-world activities	80	14.8
Student course evaluation	47	8.7
Course completion rates	36	6.6
Course interactivity rating and evaluations	24	4.4
Other	24	4.4
Student placement into jobs	23	4.3
Student satisfaction questionnaires	17	3.1
Computer log data of student usage and activity	1	0.2
Subtotal	541	97.5
No response	21	2.5
Total	562	100.0

*From The Future of Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, by Kim, K. J. & Bonk, C. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from [http://net.educause .edu/library/pdf/EQM0644.pdf](http://net.educause.edu/library/pdf/EQM0644.pdf)*

They found out that the respondents strongly focused on face-to-face interaction, as they believed that it provided a solid standard for teaching and learning assessment. Consequently, online performance should meet these criteria. According to Alex (2006), he studied how a selecting committee perceived the credentials of online degree holders. He found out that employers opted to choose a traditional degree compared to online ones. The employers reasoned that an online

education was a distrustful degree provided by profit-oriented institutions. The institution only aimed to draw a large number of students. Moreover, the respondents were doubtful with the quality of online degrees. They believed that only attending classes in a traditional setting could yield a fruitful interaction between instructors and peers. Besides, these so called “diploma mills” could lead to an “easy” degree in terms of less difficult work, as mentioned earlier. These negative issues were the faux pas of online degrees in those employers’ opinions. According to Adams in “The Acceptability of Online Degree Earned as a Credential for Obtaining Employment”, he studied whether a job applicant who completed a bachelor’s degree entirely or partially online has the same chance of being hired as the traditional degree holders. His project was focused on whether these different degrees holders received an equal employment opportunity. His questions were exemplified as Table 7 follows:

***Table 7. Summary of Checkbox Answer***

<b>Questions</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
1. The type of college or university ( <i>virtual v. traditional</i> ) from which the applicants obtained his/her degree would be of no importance as a hiring criteria in our organization	16%	<b>72%</b>	12%
2. The mix of <i>online vs. traditional</i> <i>courses</i> taken by the applicants to complete the degree would be of little importance in our organization	30%	<b>56%</b>	14%

(Continued)

Questions	AGREE	DISAGREE	OTHER
3. I have some reservations about the quality of a degree earned with a mix of traditional and online instruction	56%	30%	13%

*From The Acceptability of Online Degree Earned as Credentials for Obtaining Employment by Adams, J. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://pilotmedia.com/adams/xPDF/DLBusiness.pdf>*

The findings indicated that the candidates with an online degree were treated differently as these types of degrees were viewed with suspicion and skepticism. The hiring managers considered that interaction, classroom experience, quality, reputation, skills and experience were important criterion. The skills and knowledge gained in classroom was deficient. Adams received some feedback that the managers believed that a candidate receiving an online degree might lack interpersonal skills. This was because they did not interact face-to-face with their peers and instructors. Also, the quality of the degrees was doubtful since students were given too much freedom and flexibility. Less honest students could make up their credentials. Some respondents recognize that when considering promotion, those graduates with an online degree were considered later.

## 2.4 SUMMARY

People aim to gain higher education for a better job opportunity. Online degrees are an alternative that can fulfill their ambitions. Online degrees allow students greater freedom, flexibility to attend the class and manage their learning schedules. The degree gives people more opportunity to gain higher education without attending a real physical campus. Besides, they can avoid the overlapping time between studies and other commitment. However, there are some doubts regarding the degree quality and social interaction, especially when compared with the regular

degree. Recruiters indicate that those important criteria have been missed and might affect their productivity.

As for Thailand, online degrees are new in the country; consequently, not many hiring people have ever met candidates with online degrees. Nevertheless, the growing popularity of global education will increase and online degrees will be another gateway people choose to further their career path.

The previous studies indicated that most hiring people are doubtful about the degree, particularly social skills and acquired knowledge. This research focuses on whether or not, as for Thailand, the findings will yield the same results with the studies investigated in the West.