

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

According to UNESCO, education improves the quality of humans and the capacity of institutions, and it is also defined as a key issue to national development as it is closely related to the changes of economy, society, culture, and demography. Moreover, education has a deep impact on individual aspirations and achievements because it provides necessary skills and knowledge to the person. Education, therefore, plays an important role in developing the quality of human resource and the progress of the country (Yamagushi, 2004).

Like other countries, education has been a key issue in every National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand aiming to provide basic education for people in every class. According to the Office of the National Education Commission, the education in Thailand can be categorized into two levels: compulsory and post-secondary education. Compulsory education includes primary and lower secondary school education, and post-secondary education is upper secondary school level (พักตร์วิภา โพธิ์ศรี, 2543).

Currently, most Thai students completing their secondary school education anticipate attending the university in the prospective faculties (พักตร์วิภา โพธิ์ศรี, 2543). Both schools and teachers, thus, try to give them information about how to select the faculties, which fit their skills and abilities the most. Nevertheless, one problem still occurs; that is, some of them make wrong decisions in choosing their prospective faculties. For example, although they can pass the University Admission Exam and study in the faculties they select, they still feel unhappy. As a result, some students fail their studies and eventually have to retire from the university before graduation. Also, some students waste their time for at least one year in order to move to another faculty they prefer.

Indeed, there are many reasons causing this problem. For instance, the faculties selected by those students do not really fit their abilities, or the faculties' curriculum or atmosphere do not meet their expectations or real needs. The

government thus makes a lot of attempts to solve this problem and one of them is to abolish the Entrance System as it is believed that the problem may be caused by the ineffectiveness of that system. Since the Entrance System (1998-2005) puts great emphasis on the scores students get from the Entrance Examination only without considering much about grade point average (GPA) students get from studying in schools, urban students, who can get easier access to study in tutorial schools, have better chances to pass the Entrance Examination than those living in rural areas (ประเสริฐ ชิตพงษ์ as quoted in เกษร สิทธิทิว, 2548 ).

In 2006, therefore, Thailand changed the Entrance System to Central University Admissions System or Admissions System as the government believed that the new system could solve the problem. Hence, the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS) was established in order to set the standards and policies of examination of the Admission System and be responsible for arranging the examinations at educational institutes in every region (Matichon Weekly Newspaper, 2548). According to Sarakadee Magazine (2006), the students' scores that will be counted in Admissions System come from four different kinds of scores: 20% for grade point average (GPA), 10% for Cumulative GPA (GPAX), 70% for Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) plus Advanced National Educational Test (A-NET). Ms.Sumontha Prombun, the rector of Srinakharintarawiroj University said in Matichon (2001) that the Admissions System can reduce the students' stress as they have fewer tests, and it does not separate poor students from smart students as every student has his or her own way to be able to study in the university. Moreover, Doctor Prasert Chittapong, the rector of Songklanakarin University said in Sarakadee Magazine (2005) that one of the advantages of the Admissions System is that it decreases the students' needs to take additional courses in the tutorial schools, so the opportunities of both rural and urban students to study in the prospective faculties in the university are more equal. Having to use GPA (Grade Point Average in six terms) for 20% and GPAX for 10%, the students have to concentrate more on studying in schools rather than studying in tutorial schools. In addition, the Advanced National Educational Test (A-NET) is an analytical test; therefore, the students cannot rely on the tutorial schools to give them guidelines about the test like they did in the past.

Nevertheless, Doctor Kamonpan Cheewapunsri, the president of Parents-Youth Network for Educational Reformation, in her interview for Sarakadee Magazine (2005) contends that the Admissions System in Thailand is unlike the system used in other developed countries as each school has different standards in grading students. Besides, the Admissions System increases more tests such as O-NET, and A-NET, which can result in the students' stress. Furthermore, because this new system increases the students' GPA proportion, the students are forced to take more additional courses in tutorial schools to achieve better grades. This means that many tutorial schools still exist in Thai society and some parents continually have to spend a large amount of money on this matter.

Suandusit Poll, Rachapat Suandusit University, has surveyed 1,527 Matthayom 5 and 6 students for their opinions towards the Admissions System. One question in the survey asked the students for their opinions about which system between Entrance System and Admissions System is more effective. Nearly half of them (47.94%) agreed that the former is more effective and better while only 23.97% thought that the latter is better. 20.43% of the respondents thought that both systems are equally good whereas 7.66% of them did not give their opinions.

Whether or not the Admissions System will be more effective than the Entrance System, it seems that a number of students still face the problem of moving from one faculty to another as they find out that they do not fit well with their first choice. Hence, this problem may not be caused by those two systems only, but the problem may occur as students cannot make their decisions effectively in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's Degree. Therefore, it comes to people's interests what or who influences Mathayom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties in Bachelor's Degree.

In Thailand, making the decision to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's Degree has been considered one of the most important times in one's life as this can predict what kinds of jobs he or she will do in the future. The Mathayom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's Degree depend on many factors such as teachers and friends' guidance, current trends of jobs, the ability of students, or the students' own preference. In addition to those factors, parental influence may be one of the most significant factors affecting

students' decisions since parents are the most significant educational supporters of students.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 Does parents' income influence decisions made by Matthayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree?

1.2.2 Does parents' occupation influence decisions made by Matthayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree?

1.2.3 Do parents' educational levels influence decisions made by Matthayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree?

1.2.4 Do parents' expectations influence decisions made by Matthayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree?

1.2.5 Does parents' academic support influence decisions made by Matthayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree?

1.2.6 What opinions do the students have about their freedom in expressing their opinions and making decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree and about their parents' participation in helping them make those decisions?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are the following:

### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

To investigate the parental influence on decisions made by Mathayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's Degree according to the following aspects:

- parents' income

- parents' occupation
- parents' educational levels
- parents' expectations
- parents' academic support

### 1.3.2 Sub-objective

To explore the attitudes of Mathayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas towards their parents' participation in helping them choose to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's Degree.

## 1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The variables and definitions of terms of this study are as follows:

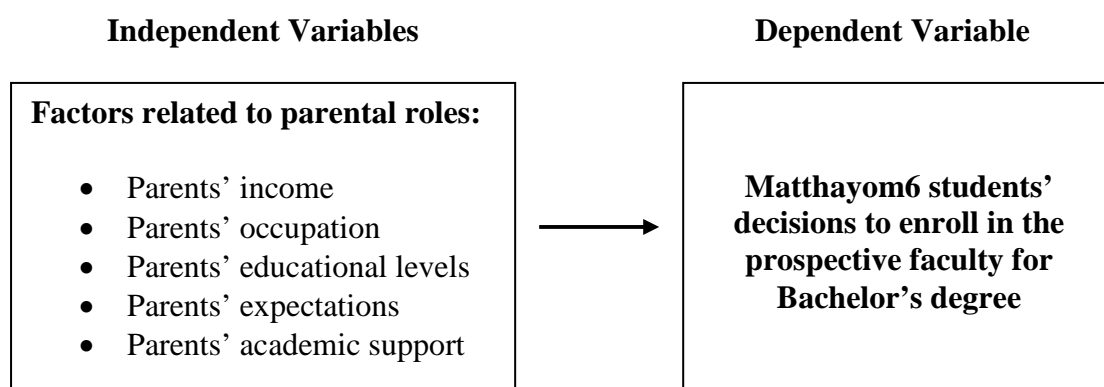
### 1.4.1 Variables

#### Independent Variables

Factors related to parental roles including parents' income, educational levels, occupation, expectations, and academic supports are the independent variables in this study as they are expected to have influence on Matthayom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree.

#### Dependent Variables

The result caused by the independent variables is the Mttthayom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree. These decisions can be shown as either affected or unaffected by parental influence.



### 3.4.2 Definitions of Terms

In order to understand the terms used in this survey, the researcher provides the definitions of terms as follows:

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Conceptual Definitions</b>	<b>Operational Definitions</b>
<b>1. Influence</b>	The effect that somebody or something has on the way a person thinks or behaves.	The influence of parents on Matthyom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's Degree.
<b>2. Parents</b>	A person's father or mother.	A Matthyom6 student's father or mother or anyone who gives educational support.
<b>3. Matthayom6 Students</b>	Students studying in grade 12 high schools.	Students studying in grade 12 at high schools under the Ministry of Education in Bangkok areas.
<b>4. Income</b>	The amount of money that a person earns from work in a certain period of time.	The amount of money that Matthayom6 students' parents earn from work in a certain period of time.
<b>5. Occupation</b>	The characteristics of a particular job.	A particular Matthayom6 students' parents' job's characteristics.
<b>6. Educational Levels</b>	The level of educational degree that is approved by the Ministry of Education.	The level of educational degree of Matthayom6 students' parents that is approved by the Ministry of Education.
<b>7. Expectations</b>	A strong belief about the way something should happen or how somebody should behave.	A strong belief of Matthayom6 students' parents about their children's education or the way Matthayom6 students' parents would like their children to do about their education.
<b>8. Academic Support</b>	Giving a person money or anything that can contribute to the progress of his or her education.	Giving Matthayom6 students' money or anything by their parents that can contribute to the progress of their education.

### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study will be limited to Matthayom6 students studying in Bangkok areas and focuses only on students studying at St.Francis Xavier Convent School, Streewitthaya School, and Wat Bowonniwet School. However, the study has the potential of being applied to students studying in other provinces or in up-country areas.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

As this study focuses on parental influences influencing Matthayom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree, we will know how much impact each parental influence has on the students in making those decisions. Furthermore, the data as well as the knowledge gained from the study can be used as a guideline for parents to realize their influences on their children's educational decisions so that they can appropriately balance those influences. It can also increase parents' understanding of their children's attitudes towards their influences so that they can deal with their children more effectively. In addition, teachers will know and understand more about their students with different family backgrounds. Consequently, they will be able to find more appropriate ways to give each student suggestions or advice about choosing to enroll in faculties for Bachelor's degree. Also, the schools as well as teachers can use the findings from the study to make their students' parents, especially those who have great influence on their children's decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree, be more aware of their verbal and non-verbal actions, some of which may create too much influences on their children's decisions and may result in students' unhappiness or even failure in studying in a faculty they do not like or a faculty that does not fit with their skills and abilities .

### **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study of parental influence on Matthayom6 students' decisions in choosing to enroll in the prospective faculties for Bachelor's degree in this paper is divided into five parts: Introduction, Review of Literature, Methodology, Results and Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations. The first chapter provides the general

idea of the study, including introduction, problem statement, objectives, limitations, terminology, and significance of the study. The second chapter reviews related literature of family theories and other documentation that informs about factors influencing students' educational achievement. The third chapter provides the methodology of the study with details of subjects, instruments, procedures, data analysis. The fourth chapter discusses the results of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter summarizes the study and the findings and provides recommendations for further research.