CHAPTER 5

DECISION MAKING IN THE CHOICE OF COLLEGE AND COURSES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1995, about 50,600 Malaysian students were enrolled at the degree level overseas (Malaysia, 1996, pp.313) and 6,100 students were enrolled at the degree level at the local private institutions (Malaysia, 2000, pp1). The enrolment in degree courses in all public institutions in 1995 was 89,600. These figures show that 36.09% of the tertiary level students had gone overseas and 4.35% were pursuing higher education in private colleges locally. Thus, it is obvious that the government-sponsored institutions were insufficient to absorb 40.44% of the students pursuing tertiary education. With the economic down turn in 1997 and 1998, the increased demand for degree courses at local private institutions has increased sharply. Recent development in the private education sector has opened vast choices for students. Information on factors influencing the choice of colleges and programmes is of great interest to the private colleges and students. In this chapter, the decision making on the choice of the college and the programmes under study will be examined.

5.2 DECISION MAKING IN THE CHOICE OF COLLEGE

In this Chapter, the analyses will be based on about 500 students (depending on the completeness of information for each of the study variables), and these include those who were pursuing degree courses.

In this survey, about 51.5% of the students decided on their own to study in this college, 8% reported that their parents decided on their behalf, and 40.5% mentioned joint decision with parents or after consultation with family members. Based on these findings, it appears that targeting secondary school students would be an effective recruitment strategy. At the same time, parents of potential students should also be given the necessary information for them to help their children in making choices with respect to college and the programmes.

The older the student is, the more likely that the student will make own decision on the choice of college. 69.7% of students with age 20 years and above made their own decision whereas 47.2% of students between 16 to 17 years of age decided on their own. There is only a slight variation between male and female students in decision making to join this college. Table 5.1 shows that 55.1% of the male students decided on their own compared to 48.1% of the female students.

The decision on the choice of college is affected to a large extent by parents' education level. Better-educated parents tend to play a more important role in the decision-making process with respect to children's education as compared to parents with little or no schooling. Table 5.1 shows that 81.6% of students whose mothers had only primary education made their own decision, as compared to only 38.4% among those whose mothers had tertiary education. Mothers with higher education were in a better position to provide advice and guidance to their children in choosing the colleges and programmes, while mothers with primary education would leave it to their children to decide on their own. Similarly, fathers with tertiary education also tend to be more likely to be involved in deciding

where to send their children for further education as compared to those with lower education. Table 5.1 shows that 48.6% of students whose fathers had tertiary education were involved in making joint decision rather than leaving it to the children to decide on their own. For students whose fathers had completed only primary education, 69% of them decided on their own, without parental involvement. Be that as it may, 27.6% of those whose parents had primary education had arrived at the decision jointly.

Parent's occupation also has a significant effect on the choice of college. Table 5.1 shows that mothers who are professionals were more likely to participate in decision making with regard to their children's education. On the other hand, students whose mothers are housewives or businesswomen were relatively more likely to be left on their own to choose the college. Part of these differences may be attributed to the differentials in mothers' educational level, as alluded to earlier. Students whose fathers are working in the commercial sector also tended to make decision on their own, probably due to their busy work schedule. Fathers who are professionals were much more likely to be involved in the decision making on choice of college for their children (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Percentage distribution of students by decision making according to age group, gender, parent's education and occupation, course enrolled and countries intended to pursue further education

	Decision making				
	Own self	Parents	Joint decision	Total	n
Age Group*					
16 – 17 years	47.2	4.8	48.0	100.0	125
18 – 19 years	51.3	9.0	39.7	100.0	343
20 years & above	69.7	9.1	21.2	100.0	33
Gender*					
Female	55.1	6.8	38.1	100.0	236
Male	48.1	9.0	42.9	100.0	266
Mother's Education**					
Primary	81.6	6.1	12.2	100.0	49
Secondary	56.1	7.9	36.0	100.0	253
Tertiary	38.4	8.1	53.5	100.0	198
Father's Education*					
Primary	69.0	3.4	27.6	100.0	29
Secondary	60.5	9.2	30.3	100.0	185
Tertiary	43.7	7.7	48.6	100.0	286
Mother's Occupation*					
Businesswoman #	51.5	8.8	39.7	100.0	68
Professionals	26.1	4.3	69.6	100.0	23
Others	41.1	7.8	51.1	100.0	141
Housewives	59.0	8.1	32.9	100.0	271
Father's Occupation**					
Businessman #	56.9	8.9	34.2	100.0	325
Professionals	36.8	3.9	59.2	100.0	76
Others	43.9	8.1	48.0	100.0	98
Programme enrolled*					
SAM	46.4	11.2	42.4	100.0	125
CAL	47.5	6.1	46.3	100.0	244
Others	63.4	8.2	28.4	100.0	134
Countries intended to go to*					
Malaysia	42.0	16.0	42.0	100.0	69
Australia or NZ	56.0	7.4	36.6	100.0	175
USA	58.0	4.5	37.5	100.0	88
UK	49.6	3.0	47.4	100.0	135
Others	33.3	29.2	37.5	100.0	24

Includes Businessmen or businesswomen, managing directors, chief executive officers and managers.

Pearson Chi-square test significant at $p < 0.05$* and $p < 0.01$**

Decision on choice of college is significantly related to the course students intended to take up and where they intend to go for their tertiary education. Table 5.1 shows that of the students who have joined the CAL and SAM programmes, the proportions who made their own decision and those who made joint decision with parents are quite evenly split (between 42 and 48 percent). In contrast, almost two-third of those who registered for "Others" programmes made their own decision (See Table 5.1).

Majority of students who intended to further their tertiary studies overseas would normally complete their pre-university level at the local private institutions. The decision on the choice of college differs significantly in terms of the country where the students intended to further their education after completing their course work in this college. Students who intended to further their education in Australia, New Zealand or United States which offer twinning programs were more likely to make their own decision in choosing this college. For students who intended to study in other countries, 29.2% of them reported that their parents were the main decision-makers in sending them to this college.

5.3 POLYTOMOUS LOGISTIC MODEL ON DECISION TO CHOOSE THE COLLEGE

Similar polytomous logistic regression models discussed in the preceding chapter (equations 4.1 & 4.2) are used to fit the data on "who made the decision to join the college". The two logit functions are defined by:

$$f_1(x) = \ln\left[\frac{P(Y=1 \mid x)}{P(Y=0 \mid x)}\right]$$
$$f_1(x) = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}x_1 + \beta_{12}x_2 + \ldots + \beta_{1p}x_p \qquad (5.1)$$

and

$$f_2(x) = \ln\left[\frac{P(Y=2 \mid x)}{P(Y=0 \mid x)}\right]$$
$$f_2(x) = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}x_1 + \beta_{22}x_2 + \ldots + \beta_{2p}x_p \qquad (5.2)$$

The dependent variable Y is defined by "Who made the decision of choice of college" takes values 1 (Own decision), 2 (Parent's decision) and 0 (joint decision, the reference category). The coefficients, standard errors and the p-value for the two logit functions with the Univariate Wald test are presented in Table 5.2. The variables x_j were considered inclusion as candidates for the multivariate model when the p-value is smaller than 0.25. Both "Gender" and " Father's education level" were tested insignificant ($p > 0.25$).

Table 5.2 : Univariate test (Wald Test) with reference to logit function $f_1(x)$ in (5.1) & $f_2(x)$ in (5.2) on choice of college

Variable	Logit $g_1(x)$ Coefficient β_{jk}	Std Error	p-value	Logit $g_2(x)$ Coefficient β_{jk}	Std Error	p-value
Mother's education level = 2 (Secondary)	0.734	0.408	0.072	0.754	0.365	0.039
Mother's education level = 3 (Tertiary)	1.504	0.450	0.001	2.212	0.399	0.000
Stream = 2 (Science)	1.336	0.323	0.000	0.840	0.243	0.001
Know about college = 2 (Relatives & word of mouth)	0.449	0.254	0.077	0.288	0.219	0.188
Know about college = 3 (Live nearby)	0.324	1.427	0.820	2.095	1.053	0.047
Age group = 2 (18-19yrs)	-1.219	0.429	0.004	-2.053	0.391	0.000
Age group = 3 (> 19 yrs)	-3.338	0.732	0.000	-4.080	0.612	0.000
Father's occupation = 2 (Professionals)	-0.982	0.269	0.000	-1.357	0.632	0.032
Father's occupation = 3 (Others)	-0.596	0.243	0.014	-0.419	0.436	0.335
Mother's occupation = 2 (Professionals)	-0.960	0.526	0.068	-1.204	1.090	0.270
Mother's occupation = 3 (Others)	0.305	0.235	0.195	-0.098	0.405	0.808

Mother's education level = 1 (Primary), How students came to know college = 1 (Advertsements) and Father's occupation = 1 (Business) are reference categories respectively.

The importance of each variable included in the model would be assessed within the multivariate context. The statistic used in assessing the significance of an independent variable in the polytomous logistic model is again the likelihood ratio G. Table 5.3 shows the G statistic and the corresponding p-value when the model with one variable is compared to model with constant term only. Based on the significance of each variable in the two tests, two variables, Arts or Science stream and mother's occupation were removed from the list. Thus the variables selected for the polytomous logistic regression include "Mother's education level", "Father's occupation", "How students came to know the college", and "Age group".

Table 5.3: Results of fitting one variable into the constant model on choice of college

Variables	-2log L	df	G statistic	df	p-value
Constant	911.911	499			
Mother's education level	813.420	495	38.491	4	0.000
Stream	908.017	497	3.894	2	0.143
How students came to know the college	892.100	495	19.811	4	0.001
Age group	900.637	495	11.274	4	0.024
Father's occupation	892.891	495	19.020	4	0.001
Mother's Occupation	902.703	495	9.208	4	0.056

The variables chosen in Section 5.2.3 were used to fit the polytomous logistic regression. The significance of the fit was assessed for each of the variable that was entered in the multivariate model. The G statistic is presented in Table 5.4. The variable "Age group" was tested insignificant and dropped from the polytomous logistic regression model.

Table 5.4 : Results of stepwise analysis when fitting variables into the model on choice of college

Variables	-2log L	df	G statistic	df	p-value
Constant	911.911	499			
Mother's education level	873.420	495	38.491	4	0.000
How students came to know the college	853.439	491	19.981	4	0.001
Father's occupation	842.802	487	10.637	4	0.031
Age group	839.445	483	3.357	4	0.500

The results of fitting the survey data into the polytomous logistic model are presented in Table 5.5. The two logistic function f_1 and f_2 for the polytomous logistic regression model are given by formulas 5.3 and 5.4.

$$f_1(x) = 2.122 - 1.415ME(2) - 2.106ME(3) - 0.213KC(2) + 0.300KC(3) - 0.612FO(2) - 0.513FO(3) \quad (5.3)$$

$$f_2(x) = -1.543 - 0.818ME(2) - 0.887ME(3) + 1.431KC(2) - 6.080KC(3) - 1.327FO(2) - 0.507FO(3) \quad (5.4)$$

Note: The abbreviation for the variables is defined in Table II (Appendix III).

The positive coefficients indicate an increase in the log odds and consequently the increase in the probability of students with the given characteristics making own decision as against joint decision. The negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the probability.

Table 5.5: Results of fitting polytomous logistic regression on decision making with regard to choice of college according to selected variables

Logit		Coefficient β_{jk}	Standard error	p-value	Odds	Confidence interval
$f_1(x)$	Constant	2.122	0.455	0.000		
	Mother's education level = 2 (Secondary)	-1.415	0.461	0.002	0.243	(0.098, 0.599)
	Mother's education level =3 (Tertiary)	-2.106	0.472	0.000	0.122	(0.048, 0.307)
	How students came to know the college = 2 (Relatives & word of mouth)	-0.213	0.202	0.292	0.808	(0.544, 1.201)
	How students came to know college = 3 (Live nearby)	0.300	0.579	0.605	1.349	(0.434, 4.198)
	Father's occupation = 2 (Professionals)	-0.612	0.281	0.030	0.542	(0.313, 0.941)
	Father's occupation = 3 (Others)	-0.513	0.253	0.042	0.599	(0.365, 0.983)
$f_2(x)$	Constant	-1.543	0.806	0.056		
	Mother's education level = 2 (Secondary.)	-0.818	0.757	0.280	0.441	(0.100, 1.947)
	Mother's education level =3 (Tertiary.)	-0.887	0.769	0.249	0.412	(0.091, 1.859)
	How students came to know college = 2 (Relatives & word of mouth)	1.431	0.469	0.002	4.181	(1.668, 10.480)
	How students came to know college = 3 (Live nearby)	-6.080	32.237	0.850	0.002	(0.00, 6.3e24)
	Father's occupation = 2 (Professionals)	-1.327	0.648	0.041	0.265	(0.074, 0.945)
	Father's occupation = 3 (Others)	-0.507	0.442	0.252	0.602	(0.253, 1.434)

Mother's education level = 1 (Primary), How students came to know college = 1 (Advertisement) and Father's occupation = 1 (Business) are reference categories respectively.

Based on the log-likelihood values for the polytomous logistic model, the value of the test statistic was calculated to be $R_L^2 = 7.6$. This figure shows that the model explains only approximately 7.6% of the variations in decision making on the choice of college.

The odds ratios of the above independent variables of the polytomous logistic

regression are shown in Table 5.5. Controlling for other variables, students whose mothers have secondary and tertiary education were less likely to make own decision in choosing the college rather than engaged in joint decision as compared to those whose mothers had only primary education. Data show that students whose mothers had primary education is 8.2 times and 4.1 times more likely to decide on their own as compared to those whose mothers had tertiary education. As mentioned earlier, parents with primary education are generally not in a position to give advice to their children on issues related to academic matter, especially when their children are applying for either pre-university or tertiary courses.

Students who live near to the college are 1.35 times more likely to decide joining the college on their own rather than joint decision as compared to those who learnt about the college from advertisements. Students who learnt about the college from relatives or word of mouth are 4.18 times more likely to have their parents making decision rather than own decision as compared to those who learnt from advertisements. This reflects the active roles of parents in making arrangements for their children's education if they learnt about the college from advertisement. These parents had probably been collecting information about private colleges.

Father's occupation is found to be an important determinant on the decision making to join the college. The odds ratios of making own decision rather than joint decision among students whose fathers are professionals and engaged in other occupation as compared to students whose fathers are businessmen are 0.54 and 0.60 respectively. Thus, students whose fathers are businessmen are 1.9 times

and 1.6 times more likely to make own decision rather than joint decision as compared to those whose fathers are professional or engaged in other occupations. The probability of making own decision rather than joint decision is twice among students who drive to the college as to those who did not drive to the college. This implies children from families that are financially better off tend to make their own decision to join the college. This could probably be due to their busy work schedule, and the fact that they are probably not as well informed as the professionals with respect to the current state of education in the country.

5.4 DECISION MAKING IN THE CHOICE OF COURSE

The courses offered by most of the private colleges can be classified into 3 main categories: 100% external assessment system, partial internal assessment system and 100% internal assessment system. The CAL programme is a 100% externally assessed programme whereas SAM programme requires a partial internal assessment based on student's course work and projects. The other programmes offered by the college are based purely on course work assessment.

Table 5.6 shows that 63.4% of students who have registered for "Other" courses had decided on their own as compared to 50.4% of CAL students, and 48% of SAM students. Parents generally do not make decision on the courses taken by their children without consultation.

Students from the Chinese medium schools tended to be more likely to choose courses on their own as compared to students from other medium of instruction (see Table 5.6). Parent's education level has significant effects on the decision in choosing courses. Parents with higher education are in a better position to advise

their children on the type of courses to take. Table 5.6 shows that more than half of the fathers and mothers who are graduates were involved in choosing the courses for their children. On the other hand, parents with primary or secondary education generally left the choice of courses to their children.

Table 5.6: Percentage distribution of students by decision making on choice of course by selected variables

	Who made the decision				
	Own-self	Parents	Joint Decision	Total	n
Programme*					
SAM	48.0	10.4	41.6	100.0	125
CAL	50.4	6.1	43.4	100.0	244
Others	63.4	5.2	31.3	100.0	134
Medium of Instruction**					
Malay	51.4	6.4	42.1	100.0	311
English	48.5	8.3	43.2	100.0	132
Chinese	72.4	6.9	20.7	100.0	58
Father's Education**					
Primary	72.4	6.9	20.7	100.0	29
Secondary	64.9	6.5	28.6	100.0	185
Tertiary	43.4	7.3	49.3	100.0	286
Mother's Education**					
Primary	75.5	10.2	14.3	100.0	49
Secondary	60.5	5.5	34.0	100.0	253
Tertiary	38.4	7.6	54.0	100.0	198
Father's Occupation*					
Business	57.8	8.0	34.2	100.0	325
Professionals	38.2	3.9	57.9	100.0	78
Others	50.0	6.1	43.9	100.0	98
Staying With*					
Parents /Relatives	50.8	5.6	43.5	100.0	354
Others	59.1	10.1	30.9	100.0	149
Place to pursue further education*					
Malaysia	46.4	8.7	44.9	100.0	69
Australia & NZ	63.4	7.4	29.1	100.0	175
USA	55.7	3.4	40.9	100.0	88
UK	43.7	4.4	51.9	100.0	135
Others	45.8	29.2	25.0	100.0	24

In general, fathers who are working in the commercial and industrial sectors would leave it to their children to decide on the study programme. Data show that 57.6% of them left the decision-making entirely to their children. In contrast, fathers who work as professionals were more likely to be involved in the decision making process. As expected, students who stayed away from their parents tended to be more independent in making a decision on the courses. Table 5.6 shows that 58.5% of students who stayed away from their parents or relatives made their choice, and only 31.3% had discussed with their family members before choosing the course. About 63.2% of students who intended to pursue higher education in Australia and New Zealand made their own decision to register for the course they like.

5.5 POLYTOMOUS LOGISTIC MODEL ON DECISION TO CHOOSE A PROGRAMME

The Polytomous logistic regression is used to fit the survey data on the decision of the choice of courses. The dependent variable "Decision on choice of course" is denoted by Y which takes the values 1 (Own decision), 2 (Parent decide) and 0 (Joint decision, as reference category). Hence the two logit functions that defined the polytomous logistic model are given by (5.5) and (5.6).

$$h_1(x) = \ln\left[\frac{P(Y=1 \mid x)}{P(Y=0 \mid x)}\right]$$

$$h_1(x) = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}x_1 + \beta_{12}x_2 + \ldots + \beta_{1p}x_p \qquad (5.5)$$

and

$$h_2(x) = \ln\left[\frac{P(Y=2 \mid x)}{P(Y=0 \mid x)}\right]$$

$$h_2(x) = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}x_1 + \beta_{22}x_2 + \ldots + \beta_{2p}x_p \qquad (5.6)$$

The independent variables x_j chosen for the model after the Univariate Wald test (see Table 5.7) and the significance test on fitting each variable to the constant polytomous model (see Table 5.8) was "medium of instruction in previous school", "father's education level", "mother's education level", "father's occupation" and "staying with whom". Table 5.9 gives the analysis of the significant variables in the polytomous logistic model.

Table 5.7 : Univariate test (Wald Test) with reference to logit function $h_1(x)$ in (5.5) & $h_2(x)$ in (5.6) on decision of choice of course

Variable	Logit $g_1(x)$ Coefficient β_{jk}	Std Error	p-value	Logit $g_2(x)$ Coefficient β_{jk}	Std Error	p-value
Mother's education level = 1 (Primary)#						
Mother's education level =2 (Secondary)	-1.082	0.434	0.013	-1.479	0.653	0.023
Mother's education level = 3 (Tertiary)	-2.020	0.439	0.000	-1.564	0.644	0.015
Father's education level = 1 (Primary)#						
Father's education level = 2 (Secondary)	-0.419	0.491	0.394	-0.387	0.877	0.659
Father's education level = 3 (Tertiary)	-1.389	0.479	0.004	-0.805	0.849	0.343
Father's occupation = 1 (Business)#						
Father's occupation = 2 (Professionals)	-0.926	0.267	0.001	-1.216	0.635	0.055
Father's occupation = 3 (Others)	-0.378	0.240	0.116	-0.500	0.487	0.305
Medium of instruction = 1 (Malay)#						
Medium of instruction = 2 (English)	-0.100	0.217	0.646	0.235	0.408	0.565
Medium of instruction = 3 (Chinese)	1.076	0.347	0.002	0.780	0.625	0.212
Staying with parents or relatives =1 #						
Staying with others = 2	0.486	0.213	0.022	0.920	0.381	0.016

reference categories

Table 5.8: Results of fitting one variable into the constant model on decision of choice of course

Variables	-2log L	df	G statistic	df	p-value
Constant	890.418	499			
Mother's education level	850.219	495	40.199	4	0.000
Father's education level	861.626	495	28.792	4	0.000
Father's occupation	875.580	495	14.838	4	0.005
Medium of instruction	877.528	495	12.890	4	0.012
Staying with whom	882.062	497	8.356	2	0.015

Table 5.9: Results of stepwise analysis when fitting variables into the polytomous logistic model on decision of choice of course

Variables	-2log L	df	G statistic	df	p-value
Constant	890.418	499			
Mother's education level	850.219	495	40.199	4	0.000
Medium of instruction	845.462	491	4.757	4	0.313

The variables from Table 5.8 were used to fit into the polytomous regression model. The variables " Father's education level", " Father's occupation" and " Staying with whom" were found not significant under the stepwise regression analysis.

The independent variable "Medium instruction from the previous school" is included in the regression model because the usage of English varies from one programme to other. Thus this variable will have some affects on the choice of course at an institution. Hence the polytomous logistic regression model is defined by the two logit functions $h_1(x)$ and $h_2(x)$:

$$h_1(x) = 1.433 + 0.053MD(2) + 0.734MD(3) - 0.948ME(2) - 1.838ME(3) \quad (5.7)$$

$$h_1(x) = -0.535 + 0.230MD(2) + 0.499MD(3) - 1.378ME(2) - 1.474ME(3) \quad (5.8)$$

Results of the multinomial logistic regression are given in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Results of fitting polytomous logistic regression to the survey data with reference to logit function $h_1(x)$ & $h_2(x)$ on decision of choice of course

Logit		Coefficient β_{jk}	Standard error	p-value	Odds	Confidence interval
$h_1(x)$	Constant	1.433	0.431	0.001		
	Mother's education level = 2 (Secondary)	-0.948	0.440	0.031	0.388	(0.164, 0.918)
	Mother's education level =3 (Tertiary)	-1.838	0.447	0.000	0.159	(0.066, 0.382)
	Medium of instruction = 2 (English)	0.053	0.229	0.817	1.055	(0.673, 1.653)
	Medium of instruction = 3 (Chinese)	0.734	0.361	0.042	2.084	(1.027, 4.227)
$h_2(x)$	Constant	-0.535	0.634	0.399		
	Mother's education level = 2 (Secondary)	-1.378	0.664	0.038	0.252	(0.069, 0.927)
	Mother's education level =3 (Tertiary)	-1.474	0.664	0.026	0.229	(0.062, 0.841)
	Medium of instruction = 2 (English)	0.230	0.417	0.581	1.258	(0.556, 2.848)
	Medium of instruction = 3 (Chinese)	0.499	0.649	0.441	1.648	(0.462, 5.876)

Mother's education level = 1(Primary) and Medium = 1 (Malay) as reference categories

Based on the log-likelihood values for the polytomous logistic model, the value of $R_L^2 = 5.05$. This figure shows that approximately 5.05% of the variations in the decision of choice of programme is explained by the model. This low value of R-square indicates the decision making process is very complex. There are too many factors that need to consider when it involves decision making in choosing a course. West et al. (1998) asserted that the decision process was embedded with consultations, compromises, arguments as well as other personal attributes.

The odds ratios in Table 5.10 show that students whose mothers have secondary or tertiary education were less likely to decide on their own rather than a joint decision as compared to students whose mothers have completed primary education. These figures imply that mothers with primary education when compared to mothers with secondary and tertiary education are 2.6 times and 6.3 times more likely to let their children decide what courses to pursue than to discuss with them. Likewise mothers with primary education when compared to mothers with secondary and tertiary education are 4 and 4.4 times more likely to let their children decide what courses to pursue than to decide on their behalf. Students from the Chinese medium when compared to the Malay medium student are twice as likely to decide on the choice of course on their own than to discuss with family members. However, with respect to decision making on choosing the courses, those from the English medium do not differ much from their Malay medium counterparts.

5.6 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The low R-square values obtained in the polytomous logistic regression models in sections 5.2 and 5.3 indicate that there are many other underlying factors that affect the choice of college and courses. Thus a few focus group discussions were conducted to supplement the information required to investigate the factors affecting the decision making process. The participants in the FGDs were asked to discuss factors that affect their choice of course and college. Table 5.11 shows the factors considered essential by 25% or more of

the students who participated in the discussions. They were asked to identify 3 main essential factors.

Table 5.11: Factors affecting choice of college

Factor	SAM	CAL	Others	Total
Good track record & reputation	14	18	5	37(86%)
Good quality of education	11	12	5	28(65%)
Tuition fees & other expenditure	9	10	5	23(53%)
Medium of instruction from previous school	9	10	1	20(46%)
SPM or O Level results	6	7	1	14(32%)
Suit one's need	5	7	1	13(30%)
Small class size	5	5	0	10(23%)

As can be seen, the factors mentioned most frequently as being essential were related to the quality of education offered. But the medium of instruction and the relevancy of the course are important too.

Some of the comments by participants in the FGDs are quoted below:

> *Tan from SAM programme: "We, I mean my family members, took a long time to arrive at a decision. Whether to choose college A or B? and whether to enroll in SAM or CAL ? Both my parents are professionals, they have gone through this stage and their advice is very useful but the only difference is that there were only a few private colleges in the past."*
>
> *Alvin from UTS programme said" I still remembered I came to this college by myself. I made my own decision on the course I am taking now and my*

tertiary education were more likely to be involved in the decision making process. Parents who are working as businessman or businesswoman or in the commercial world prefer their children to make their choice.

In this chapter, two polytomous logistic models were discussed. The logistic model for the decision making on the choice of college and the model for the decision on the choice of course. This study confirms findings from previous research on factors affecting the choice of courses. Parent's education level (Averett and Burton 1996), parent's profession (Weiler 1996), medium of instruction (Eide and Waehrer 1998), relevancy (Child's interest, Ball et al. 1996), mode of transport as proxy of economic status (Social class, Reay et al. 1998) and how students came to know the college (West et al.1998) are among the variables mentioned by the previous study. Some other important variables found in the literature are unavailable in this survey. These include family income, the total cost of college education, educational loan, scholarships, financial aids and quality of education.