

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and setting

Farmers are an essential component in agricultural development and they are the majority group of the country. At present, the people of Thailand comprises 33,387,300 females and 32,179,100 males and it is found that the number of females is higher than that of males in all regions. Based on agricultural aspect, there are 5,456,700 female workforces and 7,290,200 male workforces. Also, with regards to the investigation on workforce data, it is found that female workforce abandon agricultural occupation rather than male workforce (Gender and development research institute, 2007). This may imply that housewife farmers are often ignored to participate in agricultural activities. Consequently, potential developments of farmers on knowledge and information transfers focus on male. Therefore, this may be one reason why agricultural development in Thailand cannot be sustainably progressive.

Previously, researcher both inside and outside the country aimed to investigate roles of women in agricultural sector such as researcher in the United Kingdom (Gassan, 1980; Symes and Marsden, 1983), United States of America (Pearson, 1979; Sachs, 1983; Rosenfeld, 1985; O' Hara, 1998), Canada (Koskie, 1982; Martz, 2006) and Thailand (Legsomboon, 2002; Buaban, 1993; Natpracha, 1991 and Patkul, 2001). The social structure of Thailand in the past and present clearly determines roles and duties of women and men. Women play important role in economic aspect. That is, they are responsible for livelihood and survival of family members. Thus, it can be said that housewife farmers are very important and they play important roles on farm production, child care-taking, and provision of agricultural workforce, capital, decision making, and various management for the development of quality of life. Besides, decision making of housewife farmers is essential in family farming since it shows housewife participation in decision making and planning with their husband. However, general research findings reveal that most housewife farmers take part in a

particular case of decision making such as occupation, production factor, and residence. Meanwhile, their husband still plays more roles in general decision making than them. This may be because the norm of Thai society still admires men to be the breadwinner of the family and they also play important roles in decision making.

Currently, the Thai people adopt the philosophy of sufficiency economy initiated by His Majesty the King. It is used as a guideline for earning a living and development. Moreover, the government encourages organizations and agencies of both government and private sectors as well as the Thai people to adopt the philosophy of sufficiency economy for their life security in the age of globalization and rapid changes. In fact, the government agencies have adopted the philosophy of sufficiency economy to be in the issue on the standard of life of farmers development (The United Nations, 2007). This causes farmer families are suggested to do mixed-farming instead of mono cropping (Mongsawad, 2007) and they also tend to do new-theory farming. This will result in self-reliance of the farmers and they will be able to generate revenue from agricultural yields selling. It can be considered as a good immune for the farmers as well.

As mentioned above, it can be seen that the adoption of the sufficiency economy philosophy for daily life activities helps farmer families have a better standard of living with life security. The degree of the philosophy of sufficiency economy adoption depends on the decision of the husbands or housewives. Nowadays, however, there are few researches concerning about roles of farmer housewives on the participation in decision making on sufficiency economy farming. Therefore, the researcher wished to investigate roles of farmer housewife in decision making concerning farming through Sufficiency Economy. This research was expected to be useful for various organization concerning with agriculture. Results of the study can be used for planning and encouraging housewife farmers to participate in the decision making on doing sufficiency economy farming for sustainable development.

1.2 Objectives of the study

This study was aimed to investigate the following:

1. Roles of farmer housewives in decision making on doing the sufficiency economy farming
2. Factors related to roles of farmer housewives in decision making on doing the sufficiency economy farming
3. Impacts of housewives in decision making on doing the sufficiency economy farming on a better standard of living of farmer families.

1.3 Research question

This research aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How much role do agricultural housewives take a decision making on doing the sufficiency economy farming?
2. What factors influencing decision making to do agriculture in accordance with sufficient economics?
3. What factors influencing to farmer housewives to do agriculture in accordance with sufficient economics?
4. Does decision making of agricultural housewives to do agriculture in accordance with sufficient economics affect the well-being of farmer families?

1.4 Null hypothesis

This research requires the following null hypothesis:

- H₀-1: None of variable results to be statistical significantly relate or conjointly explain or predict variability of decision making of farmer housewives to do agriculture in accordance with sufficient economics.
- H₀-2: None of variable results to be statistical significantly relate or conjointly explain or predict variability to do agriculture, in accordance with sufficient economics, of farmer housewives.
- H₀-3: Decision making to do agriculture, in accordance with sufficient economics, of farmer housewives is not related to well-being of agricultural families with statistical significance.

1.5 Alternative hypothesis

H_A-1: There is at least 1 or more variables that statistical significantly relate or conjointly explain or predict the variability of role in decision making to do agriculture, in accordance with sufficient economics, of farmer housewives.

H_A-2: There is at least 1 or more variables that statistical significantly relate or conjointly explain or predict the variability of to do agriculture, in accordance with sufficient economics, of farmer housewives.

H_A-3: Decision making to do agriculture, in accordance with sufficient economics, of farmer housewives has statistical significantly relate to well-being of agricultural families.

1.6 The supposed advantages of the study

Organizations concerning with agriculture can use results of the study for planning, development, strategic determination, and encouraging housewife farmers to participate in sufficiency economy farming for a better standard of living.

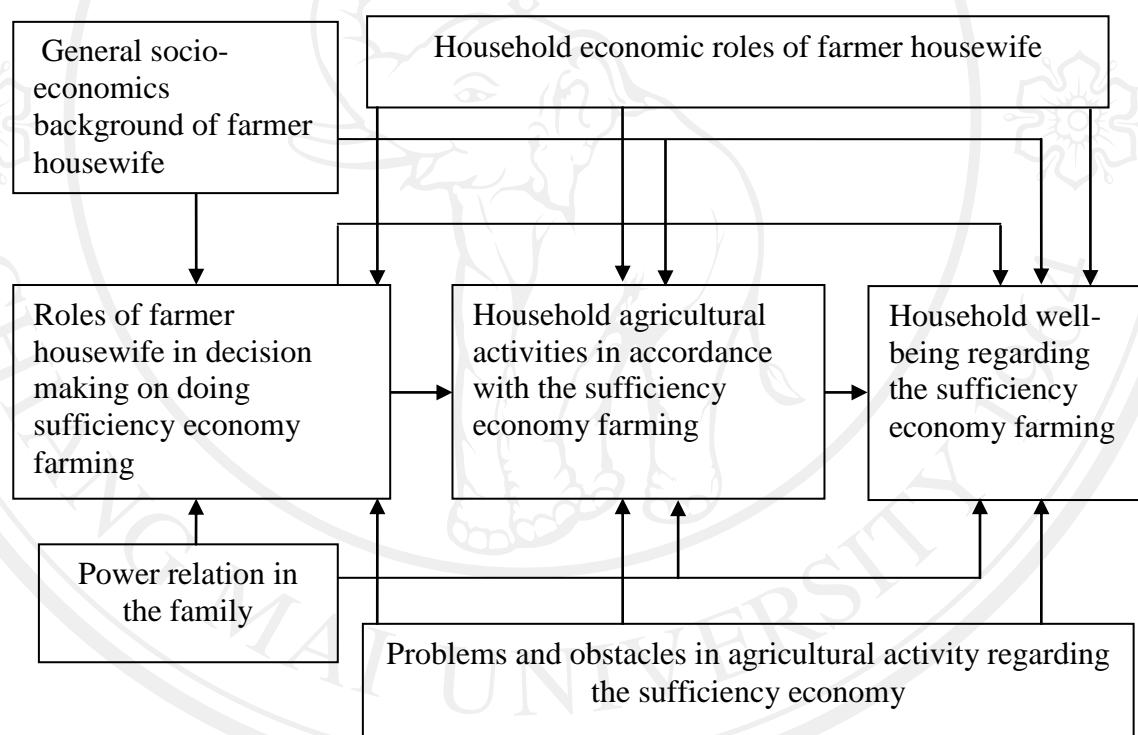
1.7 Definition of terms

1. **Farmer housewife** – Wife of farmers in Chiang Mai province and live with their husband while research.
2. **Farmer** – farming through sufficiency economy.
3. **Power relation** - Male predominance values, power relation between husband and wife that appears in family. That includes status of farmer housewife after marriage, different in dividing up the work, and disadvantageous of farmer housewife.
4. **Family well-being** - Household well-being regarding the sufficiency economy farming: health, work, income, family life, and environment of living.
5. **Agricultural activities** - earning a living by doing agriculture and adhering to the principle of sufficient economics in aspects of moderation, reasonableness, self-immunity, knowledge, and morality.
6. **Role in decision making of agricultural housewives** - how much role farmer housewives take in the process of decision making.

7. **Agricultural activities of family according to sufficient economics** - agricultural activities that is concordant with the principles of sufficient economics such as task division in each household, saving, or rotation of resource utilization.

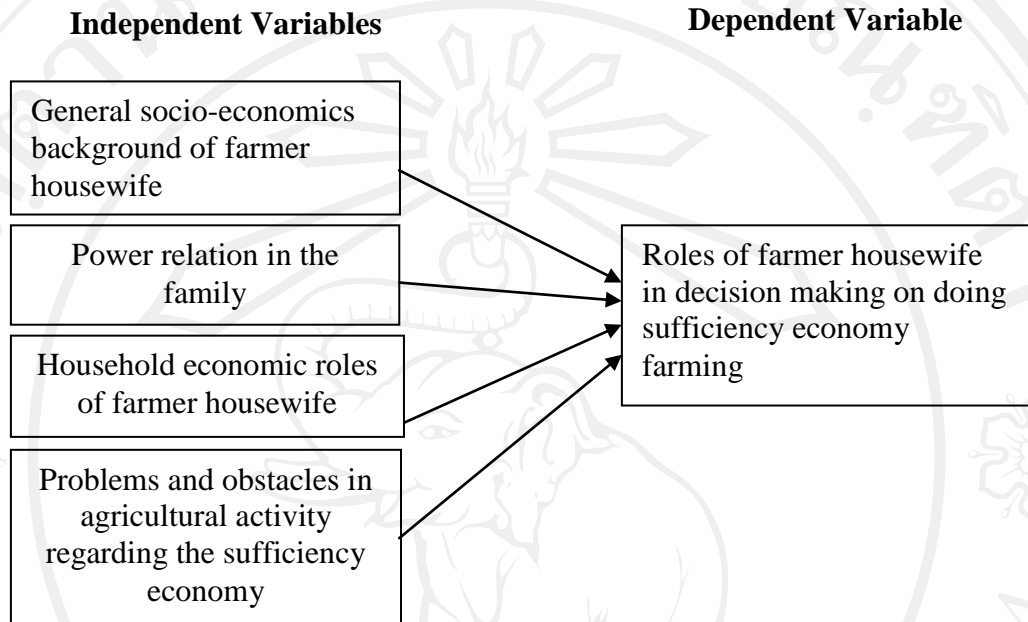
1.8 Theoretical framework

From the study of principles, theories and researches related to the research title, the researcher has designed a conceptual framework under the relation of the prospective variables as follows:

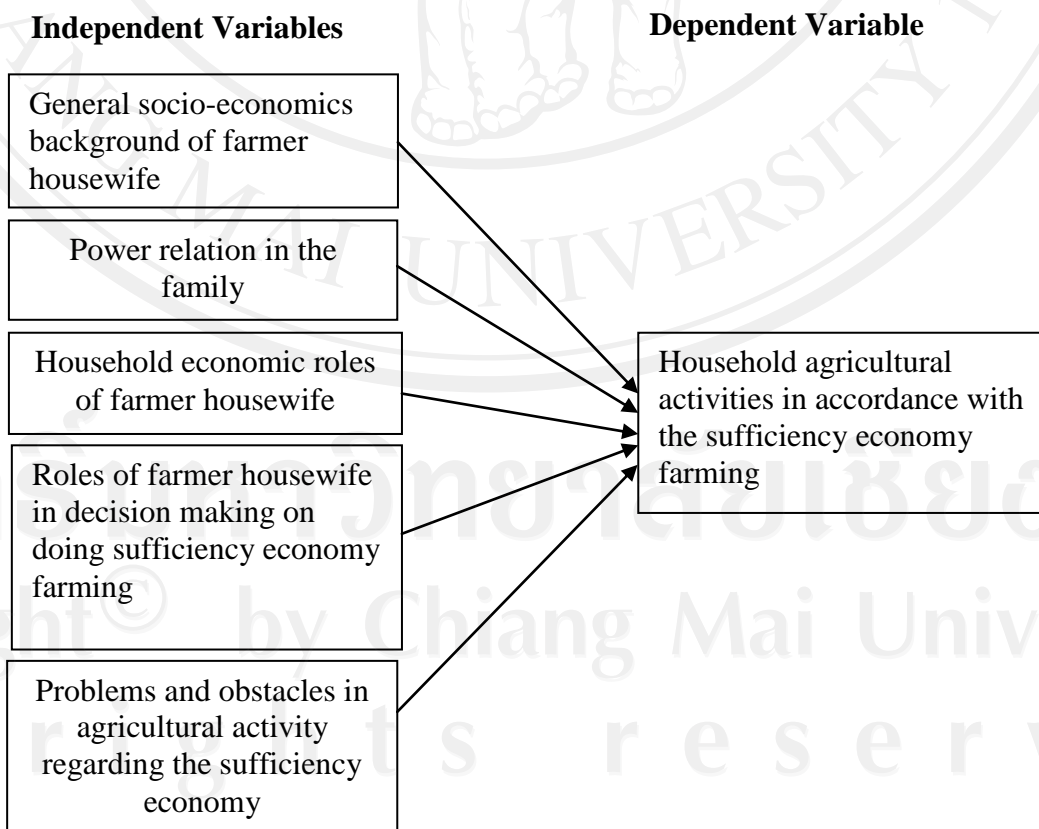


In testing the three null hypotheses mentioned, the researcher applied the three following models:

1st model: testing $H_0 - 1$



2nd model: testing $H_0 - 2$



3rd model: testing H₀ - 3**Independent Variables****Dependent Variable**