

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions of the results, (4) conclusion, and (5) recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

##### **5.1.1 Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to find out and focus on what the attitudes of customers towards e-Customs. The sub-objectives of this study were to (1) to look for and find out the advantages of using e-Customs, (2) to investigate the constraints that customers face when using e-Customs, and (3) to find out customers' suggestions to offer The Thai Customs Department improvement for the services.

##### **5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures**

The subjects in this study were 115 respondents working in shipping business in Bangkok. The study design used for this research was the descriptive cross-sectional study. The instrument had a form of a questionnaire which included both closed-end questions and opened-end questions. A self-administered questionnaire with 36 questions was used as a tool to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts, consisting of (1) demographic information of the respondents, (2) attitudes towards e-Customs divided into 3 aspects that were analysis with the service procedures, service staff, and knowledge and understanding of e-Customs, and (3) their suggestions. To measure levels of feeling and opinion, the Likert scale was used by presenting a series of statements regarding five aspects.

The data collection took place between 22- 26 December, 2008. All subjects completely stated their opinions, and all questionnaires were collected after the respondents completed answering them.

The data obtained were analyzed by using the SPSS, version 15. The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean) are used to illustrate and compare the respondents' answers.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

### **5.2.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents**

There were a total of 115 respondents in this study. Forty two respondents were male and seventy three respondents were female. The majority of the respondents were 26-30 years old. Most employees graduated with a Bachelor's degree. Almost three quarters of the employees were single. The majority of the respondents worked in the logistics and shipping field (52.2%). Finally, most of the respondents had been working in shipping business for above 4 years.

### **5.2.2 Attitudes towards Service Procedures of e-Customs**

The study results reveal that almost half of the respondents used the web-based Thai Customs system more than 10 times during 22 – 26 December 2008. The results also show that the level of attitudes towards satisfaction with the suitability of e-Customs procedures was uncertain in this process. More than half of the respondents were satisfied with the convenience of document submission via the Internet. However, the respondents were less confident that the paperless system can save costs in submission procedures. More than half of the respondents agreed that a paperless system can save their time and nearly half of them agreed with the paperless system instead of the paper-based system. Almost half of the respondents didn't believe this new system can reduce corruption and more than half of the respondents were uncertain about whether the level of satisfaction with the e-Customs services was always good or not. Furthermore, half of the respondents agreed that it was very difficult to use the service via the Internet when lacking knowledge about customs process. The results also show that one third of the respondents were uncertain whether Thai Customs officials provided updated useful information about their services. When asking if information on e-Customs web page was useful, nearly half of the respondents were uncertain with this service. Moreover, more than half of the respondents were uncertain that the information on the e-Customs web page was concise and clear.

Finally, the overall results of satisfaction with the e-Customs procedures were at an uncertain level.

### **5.2.3 Attitudes towards Service Staff of e-Customs**

Nearly half of the respondents were uncertain when asked whether the staff would always help to solve their problems. Moreover, most respondents were uncertain that the staff were always polite and had good manners. The results also show that nearly half of the respondents were uncertain whether the staff had strong humanity. However, most respondents believed that the staff had expertise in performing in their duties. In addition, more than half of the respondents were uncertain that the staff could explain the e-Customs procedures and give clear advice on total understanding of the process. Furthermore, nearly half of the respondents were uncertain when asked whether the number of staff was sufficient. Finally, most of the respondents were uncertain with whether they would ask the information from staff when they didn't understand e-Customs procedures.

### **5.2.4 Attitudes towards Knowledge and Understanding of e-Customs**

Half of the respondents were uncertain with the privacy during using the customs service via the Internet. The study results reveal that more than half of the respondents were also uncertain with the total understanding about e-Customs.

However, the majority of the respondents agreed that they would like to learn more about e-Customs and Thai customs should expand e-Customs knowledge to users and related people.

Furthermore, more than half of the respondents believed that public relations can help them to know more about e-Customs. The majority of respondents also believed that training and seminars can help them to understand this new innovation.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents believed that the Thai Customs Department should provide e-Customs knowledge to related people and put more emphasis on its development and none of the respondents disagreed with this point.

### **5.2.5 Respondents' Comments and Suggestions**

According to the third part of the questionnaire, the respondents were quite satisfied with the new Customs implementation. However, some respondents request the Thai Customs Department improve its services in some areas.

Regarding the suggestions about the service procedures, the respondents suggested that the e-Customs system should decrease the procedures to submit or amend the manifest. Moreover, it should have a variety of channels to contact the Thai Customs when there was difficulty using the service via the Internet. The respondents also suggested that the Thai Customs Department should update this system to support their needs. Furthermore, there should clearly be concise details on the web-page and fully updated useful data in the e-Customs system. Finally, some of the respondents preferred to have more choices to submit the manifest, such as EDI and Manual System, the same as e-Customs procedure, because it was better to not depend on this system in one way.

For the service staff, some of the respondents added that Thai Customs officials should be more responsible for their duties in order to reduce and solve respondents' problems. There should be more staff to support and explain e-Customs process. Moreover, Thai Customs officials should be more knowledgeable and fully understand the e-Customs process. Finally, some of the respondents gave suggestions that staff should be excellent in work and be strongly service minded.

The respondents also gave suggestions related to knowledge and understanding of e-Customs. They suggested that the Thai Customs Department should have promoted this service at the first stage so that customers could have updated and accessed it more easily.

Moreover, some respondents requested that the Thai Customs Department should always provide enough necessary training courses and seminars to allow the respondents to understand and apply this new implement smoothly.

### **5.3 DISCUSSION**

In this part, the findings of the study are discussed in order to answer the research problems proposed in Chapter 1. The discussion on each aspect is as follows:

5.3.1 According to Dr. Satit Limpongpon, the Former Director General of the Thai Customs Department, e-Customs could enable clients to reduce the cost of transactional business activities. However, the results of the study show that the respondents do not believe this system can save cost of submission procedures. This outcome relates to the report of e-Customs efficiency. (NESDB, 9 Nov, 2004).

It states that one of the barriers to e-Customs implementation is to provide linking transactions information and database system through a centralized platform. Moreover, the result of this study reveals that respondents are not quite satisfied with the overall e-Customs procedures. The finding is consistent with The Nation's report, which indicates that e-Customs had some limitations and barriers to persuade customers to accept the new system.

5.3.2 Concerning the attitudes towards knowledge and understanding of e-Customs, the results of the study reveal that the respondents are uncertain about privacy in terms of using customs service via the Internet. These findings are consistent with the relevant study conducted by Ratchanakitumnua and Speece (2004) which indicates that lack of privacy in the system leads to distrust of the web-based operations. Moreover, according to Meuter et. al, (2005), customer readiness is the key point of accepting the new technologies. Therefore, the result shows that respondents strongly request that Thai Customs Department should help them to understand more about e-Customs. Furthermore, referring to the study of Steinhagen and Kerrebroeck (2006), the good conception of e-Business is to link the necessary data and essential supplementary information to support fully customers' needs. However, the findings of this study show that Thai Customs Department does not provide the updated data of their services and useful information to the respondents. Therefore, the e-Customs system is still not satisfying in the current respondents' viewpoints.

This implies that the Thai Customs Department should pay more attention to this feedback and try to solve this problem in order to meet the respondents' needs and further develop the service.

5.3.3 This study has several limitations. Although the study included employees working shipping business, it does not include operational employees who contact Thai Customs Officials directly. However, this should not limit the generalization of the findings. Moreover, most of the respondents in this study are female employees whose working experience exceeds 4 year in the shipping field. Therefore, the results may be show only one aspect future study could be equal in gender and have a wider proportion of working experience. In addition, the sample groups of study are taken from only one of the Japanese shipping companies, its

subsidiaries, and their clients in Bangkok. Future studies should study and extend a variety of other shipping companies in order to examine and compare the results.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussions above.

5.4.1 The results reveal that most of the respondents who work in a Japanese shipping company, its subsidiaries, and their customers were female. The age range was between 26 and 30 years. Most of them had Bachelor's degrees.

5.4.2 Referring to this study, it can be inferred that the respondents' attitudes towards service procedures of e-Customs were at an uncertain level (mean = 3.33). Most of the respondents were satisfied with the convenience of manifest submission via this system and accepted e-Customs helping them save their time. However, most of the respondents were unsure in level of satisfaction whether e-Customs services were always effective and efficient or not.

5.4.3 The results indicate that the respondents' attitudes towards service staff of e-Customs system were uncertain about the performance of Thai Custom officials. Most of the respondents were also uncertain whether staff can explain e-Customs procedures and can give suggestions about the process clearly.

5.4.4 The outcomes of the study show respondents' attitudes towards knowledge and understanding of e-Customs were uncertain concerning understanding about e-Customs processing. They also would like to learn and study more about this system. Moreover, most of the respondents believed that training and seminars can help them understand this system.

In conclusion, according to the objectives of this research, the study attempted to focus on attitudes towards e-Customs. From the results, it can be concluded that respondents were less satisfied with service procedures and service staff. They also commented that the Thai Customs Department should expand customers' knowledge and give clear directions to implement the e-Customs system properly. Moreover, the findings derived from this study could be beneficial for the Thai Customs Department to improve its services and develop further steps in e-Customs.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based on the findings, discussion, and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for future research.

5.5.1 Further study on attitudes towards e-Customs in shipping business should take place over a longer period of time in order to have more subjects.

5.5.2 Further research should be done with a broader target group and should be conducted in a variety of shipping companies and related businesses in order to gain more details.

5.5.3 Further research should study other attitudes towards e-Forms, such as e-Declaration, e-Payment and e-Licensing in order to investigate and compare its results with the results of this study.

5.5.4 Further study should be conducted to explore the causes and barriers of e-Customs implementation so as to understand and satisfy people who work in the shipping business and related persons.

5.5.5 The questionnaire in this research covered only the measurement of attitudes towards e-Customs with procedures, service staff, and valued knowledge. A questionnaire for further research should include a large area of attitudes. Questionnaires on attitudes towards convenience of usage and readiness of the system should also be included to fulfill more understanding in effective direction for further development.